



# DAIRY ADVISORY TEAMS

## Didja Hear That?

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We often have opportunities to learn from others, many times by careful listening. But listening takes skill, just like talking. The following points can help you improve your listening skills so you can learn more.

1. **STOP TALKING.** You can't listen while you're talking.
2. **EMPATHIZE WITH OTHERS.** Try to put yourself in his/her place. This will help you understand.
3. **ASK QUESTIONS.** When you don't fully understand, ask for clarification. When you want to show someone you're listening, and have them like you more for your interest in their message, ask a question. But don't overdo it.
4. **DON'T GIVE UP TOO SOON.** Don't interrupt the other person. Allow time for him/her to get it all out.
5. **CONCENTRATE ON WHAT IS BEING SAID.** Focus your attention on getting the meaning of the ideas, as well as the feelings being expressed.
6. **LOOK AT THE OTHER PERSON.** Make the speaker feel like you are listening with full attention. Seeing his/her expressions, eye movement, and gestures assist with message communication.
7. **SMILE AND GRUNT APPROPRIATELY.** This shows you comprehend the points without interrupting. But don't overdo it.
8. **LEAVE YOUR EMOTIONS BEHIND.** Try to prevent your frustrations from interfering with your listening and grasping the message.
9. **GET RID OF DISTRACTIONS.** Put down papers, pencils, etc., and throw your energy into listening.
10. **SEEK OUT THE MAIN POINTS.** Focus on the main concepts or ideas rather than the illustrative/supportive material. Examples - stories, statistics, etc., can depict how a concept is applied, but the main points are usually more important.
11. **REACT TO IDEAS, NOT TO THE PERSON.** Don't allow your reactions to a person overly influence the message that is spoken. The ideas may have value, even if you don't care for the speaker.
12. **DON'T ARGUE MENTALLY.** Preparing a mental rebuttal will keep you from hearing the total message. An argument will set up a barrier.
13. **LISTEN FOR WHAT IS NOT SAID.** Sometimes you can learn a person's broader position or motives by what he/she leaves out of a message.
14. **LISTEN TO HOW SOMETHING IS SAID.** A person's attitudes and emotional reactions often reveal as much or more than what is said.

## SUMMARY

The burden of listening is on the listener, not the speaker. Sit up and pay attention. Don't allow your eyes or your mind to wander away from the task of receiving the message. Try to see the major points that are being made, and avoid sidetracking. Everyone knows something that could be useful to you. Try to get it!