

Listening Approaches

Personal Listening Profile®



Your **Listening Profile** illustrates how often you use certain **Listening Approaches** — most of the time, some of the time, or not very often. To communicate most effectively, you want to use the Listening Approach that is most appropriate for the environment or message.

Consider Motivations

When choosing a Listening Approach, we are usually attentive to our motivation for listening, but we may pay less attention to the motivations of the speaker. This is, however, crucial information for effective communication. Below are four common goals that might motivate a speaker.

To persuade: to convince the listener about an idea or course of action

To inform: to convey information and ideas

To self-express: to share personal feelings, values, and experiences

To please: to entertain, comfort, or bring enjoyment to another person

Choose a Listening Approach

Communication is usually most effective when we choose a Listening Approach that considers both our motivations and those of the speaker. Consequently, we need to determine if we will focus on the information presented, the feelings expressed, or some combination of the two. We also need to choose our mode of listening. Sometimes we simply want to receive a message with a discerning or appreciative approach. Sometimes we need to understand the message with a comprehensive or empathic approach. And sometimes we prefer to judge the information with an evaluative approach.

Act with Behavioral Indicators

Listening is not just an internal process. Speakers look for verbal and non-verbal communication signals from a listener, called behavioral indicators, that can be used to determine how their messages are being received. When behavioral indicators are appropriate for the situation, the communication between the sender and the receiver is more likely to be a positive experience.

