

Is Anybody Listening?

Listening may seem simple, but it's far from it. In fact, it's not so much an art as it is a discipline—one backed by skills that, unfortunately, seem to be fading.

Take the media, for instance: insightful interviews are increasingly rare. Journalists interrupt, harangue, and often ask questions designed to make a point rather than to seek understanding. Recently I heard an interviewer forget the topic mid-conversation—it was clear their mind was elsewhere! And let's not talk about politicians.

This lack of role models affects workplaces too. Poor listening leads to misunderstandings, conflict, and bad decisions. On the flip side, quality listening could enhance intercultural understanding, collaboration, and overall well-being.

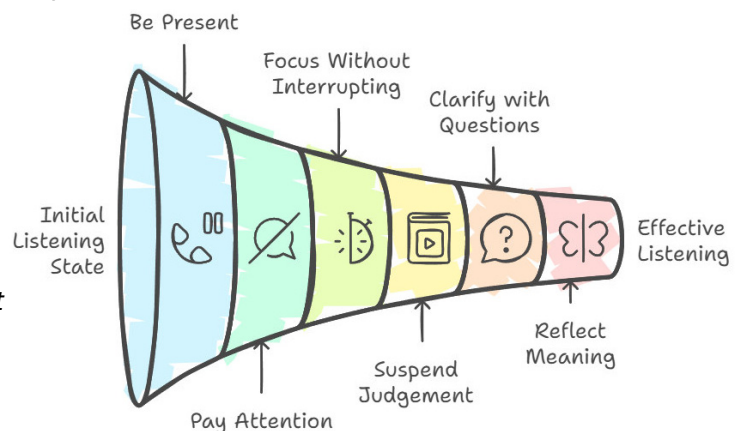
Early in my career, someone shared a valuable piece of advice:

| You have two ears and one mouth – use them in that proportion

While I can't say I always follow this perfectly, it's a powerful reminder to balance speaking and listening. Mastering this balance can transform interactions.

Here are a few listening practices to keep in mind:

- Be present
put your phone down!
- Pay attention
silence your inner voice
- Focus without interrupting
- Suspend judgment
listen to understand, not to react
- Ask clarifying questions
- Reflect back what you've heard



Listening well takes effort, but the rewards are worth it. Let's bring this essential skill back into focus—at work, in media, and in everyday life.

Leonie Black
Principal Consultant
www.cadence.co.nz