

## **LISTENING**

### **112. Now Hear This! Listening Is the Ultimate "Core Competence."**

Listening\* is ...

(\*And when you read "listening," please substitute "OBSESSION with listening.")

Listening is ... the ultimate mark of *Respect*.

Listening is ... the heart and soul of *Engagement*.

Listening is ... the heart and soul of *Kindness*.

Listening is ... the heart and soul of *Thoughtfulness*.

Listening is ... the basis for true *Collaboration*.

Listening is ... the basis for true *Partnership*.

Listening is ... a *Team Sport*.

Listening is ... a *Developable Individual Skill*.\*

(\*Though women are *far* better at it than men.)

Listening is ... the basis for *Community*.

Listening is ... the bedrock of *Joint Ventures that work*.

Listening is ... the bedrock of *Joint Ventures that last*.

Listening is ... the core of *effective Cross-functional Communication*\*

(\*Which is in turn Attribute #1 of organizational effectiveness.\*)

Listening is ... the engine of *superior EXECUTION*.

Listening is ... the key to *making the Sale*.

Listening is ... the key to *Keeping the Customer's Business*.

Listening is ... the engine of *Network development*.

Listening is ... the engine of *Network maintenance*.

Listening is ... the engine of *Network expansion*.

Listening is ... *Learning*.

Listening is ...the *sine qua non of Renewal*.

Listening is ...the *sine qua non of Creativity*.

Listening is ...the *sine qua non of Innovation*.

Listening is ... the core of *taking Diverse opinions aboard*.

Listening is ... *Strategy*.

Listening is ... *Source #1 of "Value-added."*

Listening is ... *Differentiator #1*.

Listening is ... *Profitable*.\*

(\*The "R.O.I." from listening is higher than that from any other single activity.)

Listening underpins ... *Commitment to EXCELLENCE*.

Do you agree with the above?

*If you agree, shouldn't listening be ... a Core Value?*

*If you agree, shouldn't listening be ... perhaps Core Value #1?\**

(\* "We are Effective Listeners—we treat Listening EXCELLENCE as the Centerpiece of our Commitment to Respect and Engagement and Community and Growth"—or some such.)

*If you agree, shouldn't listening be ... a Core Competence?*

*If you agree, shouldn't listening be ... Core Competence #1?*

*If you agree, shouldn't listening be ... an explicit "agenda item" at every meeting?*

*If you agree, shouldn't listening be ... our Strategy—per se? (Listening = Strategy.)*

*If you agree, shouldn't listening be ... the #1 skill we look for in Hiring (for every job)?*

*If you agree, shouldn't listening be ... the #1 attribute we examine in our Evaluations?*

*If you agree, shouldn't listening be ... the #1 skill we look for in Promotion decisions?*  
*If you agree, shouldn't listening be ... the #1 Training priority at every stage of everyone's career—from Day #1 to Day LAST?*  
*If you agree, what are you going to do about it ... in the next 30 MINUTES?*  
*If you agree, what are you going to do about it ... at your NEXT meeting?*  
*If you agree, what are you going to do about it ... by the end of the DAY?*  
*If you agree, what are you going to do about it ... in the next 30 DAYS?*  
*If you agree, what are you going to do about it ... in the next 12 MONTHS?*

### **113. Are You an "18-Second Manager"?**

*"He [Christopher] had learned when he was still very young that if he kept quiet, the other person would eventually fill the silence: 'Everyone has a story to tell, if only you have the patience to wait for it and not get in the way of it.'"—Charles McCarry, Christopher's Ghosts, on the protagonist, Paul Christopher, a CIA field officer*

In *How Doctors Think*, Dr. Jerome Groopman reports that ... *the best source of evidence ... on a patient's malady is ... the patient*. Then he trundles out research demonstrating that docs interrupt their patients, on average, 18 seconds after the patient starts speaking. I cannot point to equivalent research (though it's doubtless out there), but I will bet you a beer, or a 6-pack, or a case, or a Bud truck's full of brew that there are, per capita, as many "18-second interrupters" among managers as among docs.

So ...

Stop.  
Quit bloody interrupting.

### **114. Get the Story.**

*"It was much later that I realized Dad's secret. He gained respect by giving it. He talked and listened to the fourth-grade kids in Spring Valley who shined shoes the same way he talked and listened to a bishop or a college president. He was seriously interested in who you were and what you had to say."—From *Respect* by Harvard professor Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot*

*Everybody has a story!*

It's your job-opportunity ... as consultant, boss, project-peer, whatever ... to get it!  
"Get it" as in extract it—and as in understand it and hence understand, a bit, the storyteller.