



DIVISION OF
Arts and Sciences

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Dear Arts & Sciences Students, Faculty, and Staff:

Hello, I am Jason Stone, the Division Head of Arts & Sciences at OSU-OKC. Let's continue our conversation about your future. I am delighted that you chose to invest in yourself and attend to the next video in our series about the Habits of the Mind. The Habit that we are stressing in this video is listening with understanding and empathy. I am excited to talk to you about listening. I have 15 years of experience as a university professor teaching communication and listening skills. There are entire college courses about effective listening habits. In this video, we will briefly explore dialogical listening and conclude by touching on some recommendations for better listening.

Art Costa and Bena Kallick, the educational researchers who developed this list of Habits, emphasize the importance of good listening skills as a vital Habit of the Mind. Specifically, Costa and Kallick recommend holding in "abeyance" one's own thoughts, strategies, and feelings. Webster's dictionary defines "abeyance" as, "temporary inactivity", the synonym for this is "suspension."

So holding in suspension your own thoughts in order to actually perceive what the other person is saying is what this habit is about. One of my favorite quotations from literature that summarizes this is from the 1996 book by Chuck Palahniuk, *Fight Club*, "When people think you're dying they really listen to you, instead of just waiting for their turn to speak." If you are really holding in suspension your thoughts and really participating in the conversation, then you are not just waiting for your turn to speak. You are actually listening to the other person like they are dying. As morbid as that may sound, try this technique as a listening habit and see if it helps you become a more empathetic listener.

If you master this habit, communication researchers like John Stewart and C. Logan would refer to you as a dialogic listener. One of my mentors, Associate Professor of Communication at the University of Richmond, Scott Johnson, talks about this type of listening as mutually constructed meaning. Instead of waiting for our turn to speak, we cooperate with the other person to be engaged in the conversation.

Finally, I wanted to share a couple of general listening recommendations for you.

I came up with the acronym P.E.A.R.L. to describe some effective listening behaviors.



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Paraphrase: Good listeners interject into the conversation and summarize quickly what the other person is saying, so that the sender of the message understands that the message is being encoded and decoded correctly.

Empathizing: Good listeners display their empathy by identifying the emotions that the other person in the conversation is expressing. An example would be a statement like, "It sounds like you were disappointed when you heard that news."

Attend to the message: Focus on what that other person is saying. Get rid of distraction. Use your remote to pause live T.V. Turn the music in your cube off. Actually remove BOTH of the ear buds and listen.

Respond to and manage nonverbal messages: Show the other person you are listening to them by orienting both your shoulders and your feet towards them. Lean in. Nod your head in agreement. Watch negative signals like folding arms, breaking eye contact, shaking your head "no", or ill at ease facial expressions.

Look for key ideas: You may miss some details and some descriptions. Can you find a key idea about which the other person is communicating? If so, you can determine if you are listening for information, to support someone else, to nurture your relationship, or for entertainment.

Please join me and attend to the other videos in this series. Invest in yourself and your future. Attend to your thinking habits. Your mental habits will determine how far you go. Thank you for your time and attention.

Have a great day and Go Pokes!

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