



Keyword: Questions

Be a Better Listener with These Great Questions

by Kevin Eikenberry

At some point we've all wished we had listened more carefully (for me it's at least once per day).

And I'm sure you have been speaking at some time and wished the person you were talking to was listening more intently.

It is obvious that more effective listening helps us better understand what is being said. Perhaps less obviously, better listening also helps us hear what isn't being said - helping us get the meaning behind someone's words.

Perhaps most importantly, listening effectively is one of the best ways to build relationships with others. Paying close attention and seeking to understand what someone is saying matters deeply to the other person. It shows our respect and caring for both the person and their message, and it is an incredibly supportive behavior.

While some people may think of listening as a passive process ("just shut up and listen"), the best listeners know they must be actively engaged to listen most effectively. One of the best things we can do to be better listeners is to ask better questions.

Reasons Great Listeners Ask Questions

There are specific purposes for the questions asked when trying to listen more successfully. They fall into four basic categories:

- Questions to confirm understanding
- Questions to learn more
- Questions to understand meaning or feelings
- Questions to encourage and show support

This short bullet list itself is helpful because if you keep these purposes in mind, you will be able to formulate a good listening question at the appropriate time.

So, you may be wondering, what is a really good listening question? The rest of this article provides you with specific questions that you can use to become a better listener.



Be a Better Listener with These Great Questions (continued)

Questions to confirm understanding

- So what you are saying is . . .(fill in the blank). . . is that correct?
- How did you come to your decision?
- What factors were most important?

Questions to learn more

- Can you explain that further?
- Can you say more about that?
- Can you help me understand?
- Can you elaborate on that?

Note – Adding “please” to these questions is a great idea!

Questions to understand meaning or feelings

- How do you feel about it?
- How do you mean?
- What is your biggest concern?

Questions to encourage and show support

- What did you have in mind?
- What is exciting about this to you?
- How can I help or support you?

Start using some of these questions today – you will find opportunities in nearly every conversation you have. While these questions will work great when used verbatim, I encourage you to modify them (or create new ones) to make them truly “yours.”

To really be effective, your questions need to be in “your voice” and meet the needs of your conversation.

Any questions?



Kevin Eikenberry is a bestselling author, consultant, trainer, speaker, coach, leader, learner, husband and father. He is the Chief Potential Officer of the Kevin Eikenberry Group (www.KEIKENBERRY.COM) and the Creator of the Remarkable Leadership Learning System (www.REMARKABLE-LEADERSHIP.COM), both of which are dedicated to life-long learning and helping Clients unleash their remarkable potential. Interested in becoming the remarkable leader you were born to be? Go to www.REMARKABLE-LEADERSHIP.COM today!
