COMMUNICATIONS
REAL vs. PSEUDO-LISTENING

Being quiet while someone is talking does not constitute real listening. Real listening is based on the intention of the listener to one of four things:

1. Understand someone
2. Enjoy someone
3. Learn something
4. Give help or solace

Real listening is impossible to avoid with the 4 above intentions. Pseudo-listening can often masquerade as real listening when we have hidden agendas:

1. Making people think you're interested so that they will like you.
2. Being alert to see if you are in danger of being rejected.
3. Listening for one specific item and ignoring everything else.
4. Buying time to prepare for your next comment.
5. Half-listening so someone will listen to you.
6. Listening to find their weak spot or to take other advantage.
7. Looking for "holes" in their talk so you can be ready to counterattack.
8. Checking their reaction, making sure you produce the "desired" effect.
9. Half-listening because a "good, kind person" would do that.
10. Half-listening because you can't leave without "hurt" or "offense".

We all do most of the above sometime or another. The real problem is not that we do these things, but (1) how much (2) with whom (3) the consequences.

Spend a week keeping track of how you listen, with whom, and what percent of time (in a conversation) you are in real vs. Pseudo-listening. Do this at work, at home, with family and friends. Is it different with men, women, children, people in authority, or people subordinate to you?

Ask yourself these questions also:
1. Who are the people you listen to best?
2. How do you "see" or "feel" them to be different to get your interest?
3. Who are the people you listen to worst?
4. How do you "see" or "feel" them to be different to get your disinterest?
5. What makes it hard for you to listen to some people? What do you feel?
6. What makes it easy for you to listen to some people? What do you feel?

Then choose one person with whom you would like a better relationship. Spend a week listening to them, keeping your focus on the 4 intentions:

1. Understand someone
2. Enjoy someone
3. Learn something
4. Give help or solace

Two things may begin to occur when doing this exercise:
1. You may begin to become aware of more of your hidden agendas.
2. Maybe the other person has more to "say" than you might have thought!