

COMMUNICATIONS

BLOCKS TO LISTENING

There are 12 blocks to listening: you will find your favorite among them. This is NOT a good or bad thing. Blocks simply get in the way of effective listening.

1. **COMPARING** mine is better, worse, the same as yours. If they did it my way . . . ! Boy if they think that is tough, let me tell you how tough it can be. It is hard to listen to their experience if you are constantly comparing. Stops compassion.
2. **MIND READING** constantly drawing conclusions based on vague misgivings, hunches, or projections. “They probably think I’m dumb - They don’t really want to talk to me.” We are more concerned about OUR feelings than they are !!
3. **REHEARSING** “Looking” interested while you are busy rehearsing your responses to their words. You have a point to make, a story to tell., Or an objection to interject. You spend your time ready to rebut, defend or maneuver your ideas.
4. **FILTERING** The object here is to avoid problems. If you are afraid of anger you will pay attention to “angry” signs -- perceiving none, your mind wanders. You listen enough to see if a particular problem is coming, if not, fog out.
5. **JUDGING** Almost everybody’s favorite. Quick judgments based on our own prejudice or opinion allow us to write off someone as stupid, uninformed, a pinko, a hippie, or whatever. Judgment is best done after knowing background.
6. **DREAMING** Their words trigger your own private thoughts and associations and away you go! “I just got back from San Francisco and I . . .” You are gone back to the time when you . . . And when you “return” they are talking about something else.
7. **IDENTIFYING** Everything they say triggers your experiences about a similar incident and, unrestrained, you launch happily into your own story about you!
8. **ADVISING** Another all-time favorite. While you’re giving great advice on how to solve this or that, You are missing their pain or joy, haven’t acknowledged their situation. You haven’t “been”there. They are alone in their joy or pain.
9. **SPARRING** often starts with looking for things with which to be disagreeable. Continues with put-downs and discounts. “Are you still doing that?” “You don’t know what you are talking about” or more subtle versions, and ends badly.
10. **BEING RIGHT** Low self esteem means you have trouble with criticism or corrections so you go to great lengths in order to be “rights”. You may override others with a loud voice, insults, twisting facts, rigidity and other tactics.
11. **DERAILING** Two fast ways to derail somebody: (1) an abrupt change of subject when you get uncomfortable or bored, (2) “joke-it-off” -- nothing is serious.
12. **PLACATING** Of-course!, yes, really, Terrific!, Incredible!, Right!, Wow!, You want to be liked at almost any price -- agree with everything -- feed them mush.

adapted from MESSAGES: The Communications Book, M.McKay, PhD, M. Davis, PhD,P. Fanning
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**OPINIONS AND FEELINGS ARE FREQUENTLY A PERSONAL TRIUMPH OVER GOOD THINKING
YOU DEFINE REALITY BY WHAT YOU KNOW, WHAT YOU BELIEVE, AND WHAT YOU DO ABOUT IT.**