

# Empathy Based Listening



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## ***6 Distractions of Listening***

Imagine entering conversations with the confidence you can build the relationships that will empower you to wield the influence necessary to achieve your dreams. Quite literally the keys to this success surrounds us in those we interact with everyday. Despite this, so much opportunity is lost in connections and conversations that aren't fully realized because one or both parties are distracted. Distracted by their own thoughts and sensations, people let opportunities to truly connect continually pass them by. By first becoming familiar

with these distractions you can take the first step in the journey of Empathy Based Listening.

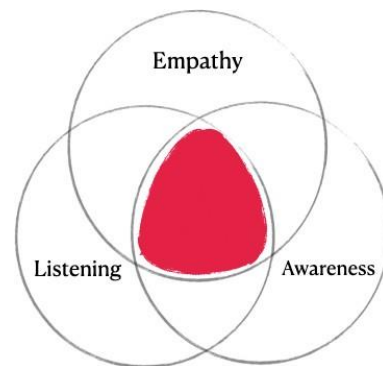
Pioneered by the same techniques Eric used rewriting the rules of interrogation, ones built on a foundation of listening and trust, these are techniques everyone can take to their daily conversations in order drastically improve communication. It is strong communication that builds empathy, and empathy that is the key to building trust.

## Abstract

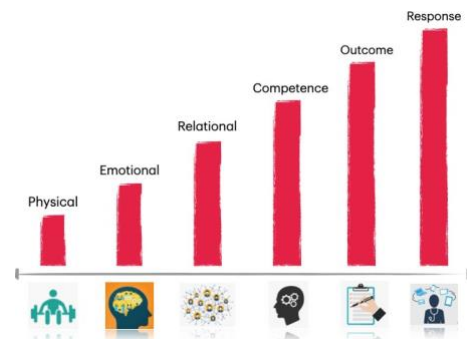
The most effective form of listening is Empathy Based Listening. On average, the typical person only listens to 25% of a conversation at hand. This lack of listening results in lost trust and ultimately missed opportunities to influence. Trust is built through the practice of listening, empathy and awareness in conversations. It is by combining these three elements that you are able to build on the generalized professional trust you entered the conversation with, and in turn build deeper Empathy Based Trust. In order to gain this trust and maximize influence you must increase your listening capacity to above 75%, this is the essence of Empathy Based Listening. This, however, can only be achieved by consciously working to remove your listening distractions. This white paper will first increase your listening awareness by introducing you to the six listening distractions. After you have familiarized yourself with these distractors you can then set out to remove them as you enter conversations, only then you can implement Empathy Based Listening. The accompany worksheet will provide you the opportunity to practice removing these distractors, and set you on a path to building a positive listening habit.

# 25%

*Average amount of information a person listens to during a conversation.*



*Building Empathy Based Trust creates greater value.*



*The 6 Distractions of Listening in rank order of level of impact.*



### ***Immediate, non-biased distractors (Physical State)***

- Short term, physical or less important mental distractors.
- Examples: lack of sleep, loud setting, a head cold, temperature of the room.
- Distractors that would exist regardless of with whom you are talking.
- Impact will vary depending on who you are talking with.



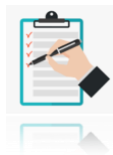
### ***Personal biases towards the subject (Relational State)***

- Biases which the listener holds towards the subject.
- Examples: negotiation position, political views, age, gender, education, personal appearance, physical stature.
- New relationships breed the most mistakes in assessment.
- We make as many positive mistakes in assessment as we do negative.



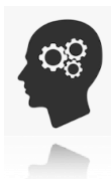
### ***Personal, non-biased distractors (Emotional State)***

- Entrenched issues that cannot be marginalized by changing the environment.
- Examples: chronically ill family member, marital problems, financial difficulties.
- Particularly impactful if the conversation is not related to the issue.
- Impact will be great until the issues are resolved.



### ***Listener objectives, agenda and fears (Outcome State)***

- To some extent all of us have purpose/outcome desires in our conversations.
- Focusing too heavily on these outcomes is a major listening distractor.
- Examples are salespersons talking with clients, both parties in a job interview, and both sides of a negotiation.
- Complex issue and requires the most diligence and practice to overcome.



### ***Lack of topic/issue familiarity (Competence State)***

- Unfamiliar terms, subjects and themes in a conversation.
- 50% reduction in listening until the listener can mentally move on.
- Example: personal story relayed of which you have no familiarity.
- With multiple unknown terms a listener will become frustrated and tune out a conversation.



### ***Listener response distraction (Response State)***

- The most significant distractor during a verbal conversation - thinking about what you are going to say next.
- Micro distractor - immediate desire to influence or gather information.
- Difficult to predict these distractors, but simple to identify post-conversation.

## Summary

Empathy Based Listening is the key to building trustful relationships, and ultimately wielding greater influence. To reach a level of listening that endears those you seek to influence permission to grant greater trust, you must first strive to reduce your listening distractions. Six key categories of distractions prevent you from accomplishing this. It is first by identifying

these distractions you can take the key steps to develop a practice of positive, distraction free communication.

Moreover, by applying key measures before and during conversations you can enter conversations more fully present and pivot more quickly in these conversations.



*Eric Maddox is a world renowned speaker, author and interrogator. His efforts interrogating over 300 individuals directly led to the capture of Saddam Hussein in 2003. It is through this innovative process he pioneered the concepts of Empathy Based Listening and its powers in gaining trust. These practices have been widely successful in business, negotiations and personal ventures. He can be reached at [eric@ericmaddox.com](mailto:eric@ericmaddox.com) or [www.ericmaddox.com](http://www.ericmaddox.com).*