A DOZEN COMMANDMENTS FOR GOOD LISTENING

1. STOP TALKING.
   All other commandments depend on this; you cannot listen if you are talking!

2. GET RID OF DISTRACTIONS OR SET A CONVENIENT TIME.
   Close the door, turn off the TV or radio. Don’t doodle or fiddle with things.
   “Give me 10 minutes to finish what I’m doing, I want to hear you”.

3. PUT THE TALKER AT EASE.
   Help the speaker feel he / she is free to talk. Value him / her as a person and realize his / her message is important.

4. LOOK AT THE TALKER.
   The face, eyes and hands all help convey messages. Listen to understand rather than to reply.

5. CONCENTRATE ON THE WHOLE MESSAGE.
   Listen for ideas, feelings and emotions. How the message is said may be as revealing as the words used.

6. LEAVE YOUR PERSONAL FEELINGS ASIDE.
   Try to keep unrelated problems out of it. Focus on the message being given. Deal with one problem at a time.

7. SHARE RESPONSIBILITY FOR COMMUNICATION.
   Signal your interest with smiles, nods, etc. Ask clarifying questions when you don’t understand.

8. BE PATIENT.
   Don’t interrupt. Allow the talker plenty of time. Don’t walk away.

9. USE THE RATE DIFFERENCE CONSTRUCTIVELY.
   You can think 4 times faster than he / she can talk. Avoid jumping to conclusions or assuming things. Use the time difference to fully understand and remember what is said.

10. HOLD YOUR TEMPER.
    An angry person gets the wrong meaning from words - and uses many he / she regrets.

11. GO EASY ON ARGUING & CRITICIZING.
    They put the other person on the defensive. The speaker may “clam up” or get angry. Don’t argue: even if you win, you both lose. Don’t even argue mentally - it prevents you from hearing.

12. RESPOND TO THE MESSAGE.
    Use significant phrases such as “I hear you”, “How can I help ?” or “I need some time to think about this, can we finish our discussion tomorrow ?”