

# TEN COMMANDMENTS OF GOOD LISTENING

by Keith Davis

## 1. STOP TALKING.

You cannot listen if you are talking.

Said Polonius (in Hamlet), "Give every man thine ear, but few thy voice."

## 2. PUT THE TALKER AT EASE.

Help him feel that he is free to talk. This is often called a "permissive environment."

## 3. SHOW HIM THAT YOU WANT TO LISTEN.

Look and act interested. Do not read your mail while he talks. Listen to understand rather than to reply.

## 4. REMOVE DISTRACTIONS.

Don't doodle, tap, or shuffle papers. Will it be quieter if you shut the door?

## 5. EMPATHIZE WITH HIM.

Try to put yourself in his place so you can see his point of view.

## 6. BE PATIENT.

Allow plenty of time. Do not interrupt him. Don't start for the door or walk away.

## 7. HOLD YOUR TEMPER.

An angry man gets the wrong meaning from words. "He who angers you, conquers you."

## 8. GO EASY ON ARGUMENT AND CRITICISM.

This puts him on the defensive. He may "clam up" or get angry. Do not argue, "if you win, you lose."

## 9. ASK QUESTIONS.

This encourages him and shows you are listening. It helps to develop points further.

## 10. STOP TALKING.

This is first and last, because all other commandments depend on it. You just can't do a good listening job while you are talking.

"Nature gave man two ears but only one tongue, which is a gentle hint that he should listen more than he talks!" by Unknown