

# 5 habits of poor listeners



Regardless of your profession, role or level within an organization, the most critical skill you can hone is your ability to listen. To be an exceptional listener, you must break these habits:

**Being quick to judge.** If you immediately think someone is “just whining again,” lying, exaggerating or whatever the case may be, you will never truly hear what the person has to say. Even if you have a legitimate reason (e.g., you are speaking to a chronic complainer) don’t rush to judgment. Listen to what the person is saying right now.

**Interrupting to correct mistakes.** The person says one thing that is wrong, and you can’t wait to set the record straight. If you’re focused on your own response, you aren’t listening. Take note of mistakes, but fully hear people out before you comment.

**Ignoring the bad stuff.** Hearing negative feedback isn’t easy, and you can be tempted to tune out or put an end to any critical comments. Don’t. When people are frustrated or venting, that’s when you really need to focus.

**Trying to fix the problem too soon.** You want to solve problems and help people. Just make sure you don’t interrupt them to offer a solution before they’ve had a chance to fully share what’s on their mind. Let them get it all out, and then work together on a solution.

**Assuming you know what is really on the person’s mind.** Don’t project your own biases and feelings onto the other person and assume they think the same way you do. Don’t psychoanalyze them as they speak. If you do, you won’t hear the actual words they are saying to you.

— Adapted from [“5 Barriers to Active Listening \(And How to Avoid Them\),”](#) Rick Goodman, Business2Community, [www.business2community.com](http://www.business2community.com).