

LEADERSHIP TR@CKS

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The Listening Leader

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In a recent issue of *Harvard Business Review*, Maureen Chiquet, Global CEO of Chanel recalled an experience she had when she was working at *The Gap* with then CEO, Mickey Drexler. After a contentious meeting with him and the marketing chief, Drexler called her into his office for a private session. "Maureen!" he bellowed, "I'm going to give you some important advice. You're a terrific merchant. But you've gotta learn to *listen!*" ¹

R-E-S-P-E-C-T

Listening is one of the most tangible ways we can express respect in the modern workplace. *Go ahead, I'm listening.* Say it genuinely and authentically and it tells people that they are valued and respected. Think I'm wrong about this? Then think about how you feel when someone says this to you—
Shut up. I'm talking now.

Rapport

Be a good listener and guess what? People will think you're a great conversationalist! The easiest way to build rapport with other people is to let them talk and be an attentive, engaged listener. Try it sometime.

Listen and Learn

You aren't learning a thing when you are talking. The learning begins when the listening begins. If you want more information, greater perspective on important issues, and better ideas... start listening more.

Whose Problem?

If you do all the talking, whose problem is it? There's a simple principle in play here—we are more likely to support that which we help create. When it comes to problem-solving and decision-making, the more input you allow from other people, the more ownership and buy-in you gain for the resulting solution or decision. Listen to others... and win their support. It's how you build better collaboration across department and division lines, too.

Fair Is Fair

Fairness is a big deal in today's workplace. And listening is all about fairness. Think about it. If I want YOU to listen to ME, I have to be willing to listen to YOU. It's only fair.

The Winner Is...

If you want to resolve conflict more effectively, you've got to learn how to listen more carefully. Listening is how you gain an understanding of another person's point of view. Once you understand their point of view, you are in a position to find better, more agreeable solutions, and build strong emotional bridges through empathy and validation.

Show Them How

Good listening also provides the right model for your people. Give them a good example of how to listen and they will be able to start doing the same. They will follow your lead, and you will gain a better team. Teach them what Maureen Chiquet learned: *to lead effectively and achieve real business results as the head of any enterprise, you have to listen. You've got to constantly ask questions and seek out diverse opinions, and remain humble enough to change your mind...* ¹

Don't Stop Now

Get the matching issue of *The Personal Trainer* and find out how well you listen. Use the assessment tool provided, then apply the tips to help you become a better listener.

¹ *Harvard Business Review*, November 2008.



Leadership Tracks is a resource for growing leaders edited by Dr. Jim Dyke, the Founder and Director of **Corporate Leadership Initiatives, Inc.**—an organization dedicated to equipping men and women with skills and principles pertinent to the role and life of a transformational leader of the 21st century. For more information, you can log on to the website at:

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