

Listen, v

1. to give attention with the ear; attend closely for the purpose of hearing; give ear.
2. to pay attention; heed; obey (often followed by to):

Synonyms: hear, attend, pay attention, hark, be attentive, be all ears, lend an ear, hearken (archaic), prick up your ears, give ear, keep your ears open, pay attention, observe, obey, mind, concentrate, heed, take notice, take note of, take heed of, do as you are told, give heed to

Taking It Home:

Activity: Listen Deeply to One You Love

It's often true that we treat the people closest to us the most loosely, and sometimes fail to pay attention because we expect them to always be there.

Your assignment: Take someone you love out for date, or stay in. Mark the time aside, light a candle, or find a dark corner of a café, and ask them what's going on for them and listen deeply. It could be a lover, spouse, child, parent or friend.

Book:

Practicing the Sacred Art of Listening: A Guide to Enrich your Relationships and Kindle Your Spiritual Life- Kay Lindahl

Article:

The Art of Listening Well- Eugene Raudsepp
<http://www.inc.com/magazine/19811001/33.html>

Video:

The Power of Listening – Leon Berg
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6iDMuB6NjNA#t=20>

These materials are part of the small group ministry program at Jefferson Unitarian Church. For more information on using them, or to set up your small group, please contact Rev. Eric Banner.
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Jefferson Unitarian Church 2014 Small Group Session: Listening Deeply

**Opening/
Chalice
Lighting:** Here we have gathered, gathered side by side;
circle of kinship, come and step inside! May all
who seek here find a kindly word; may all who
speak here feel they have been heard. Sing now
together this, our hearts' own song.
— Alicia Carpenter

Check In: Up to 2 minutes per person to share what they
bring with them since the last time the group
met

Reading: We cannot really experience anything without
being present to it. True presence requires that
we be attentive to what is happening... here and
now. It is an offering of our awareness, our
participation, and our willingness. This is a basic
and profound courtesy. By such courtesy we are
deeply transformed... When we are present,
deeply attentive, we cannot be busy controlling.
Instead we become beholders – giving ourselves
up to the mystery of things. We become more
willing to let things be. And, as a consequence,
we can also let ourselves be. - Gunilla Norris

**Resting in
the
Silence:** Take 2 minutes to just sit. If your group is up to
it, go longer, as long as you let people know how
long the silence will be.

**Questions
and
Quotes
From The
Common
Bowl:** Pass around the bowl with the questions and
additional readings. Have each person take one
question/reading. When all have a
question/reading, go in a circle with each person
sharing what is written on their piece of paper. After
each person has read theirs, read them aloud a
second time.

**Sharing/
Deep
Listening:** Allow each person up to five minutes to share what
has come up for them about today's topic. If
someone does not use the full five minutes, make
sure you count to ten full breaths before moving on
to the next person, in case the speaker is not truly
finished.

**A Second
Share:** If time allows, you may have a brief second share
from those who have found they have more to say,
keeping in mind your commitment to going no
longer than ninety minutes.

**Closing
Reading:** If it is language that makes us human, one half of
language is to listen. Silence can exist without
speech, but speech cannot live without silence.
Listen to the speech of others. Listen even more
to their silence. - Jacob Trapp

**Extinguish
the
Chalice:** Join hands and say the following together:
“As we go into the week ahead, may we remember
that we have two ears and only one mouth. May we
listen deeply for all that is our life.”
And then, extinguish your chalice until you meet
again.

“When I ask you to listen to me and you start giving advice, you have not done what I asked. When I ask you to listen to me and you begin to tell me why I shouldn’t feel that way, you are trampling on my feelings... All I asked was that you listen, not talk or do - just hear me.” - Ralph Emerson Roughton

Think of a time when you were really listened to about something that was close to your heart. Describe what happened, how it felt, and what it meant to you.

Think of a time when you didn’t feel heard. Describe what happened, how it felt, what it meant to you, and how it could have happened differently.

“Listen ... There is another sound ... The breath of our neighbor calls us outside ourselves; calls us to be companions; calls us to be allies; calls us to be partners.” - L. Annie Foerster

“Perhaps one of the most precious and powerful gifts we can give another person is to really listen to them, to listen with quiet, fascinated attention, with our whole being, fully present. This sounds simple, but if we are honest with ourselves, we do not often listen to each other so completely.” Kay Lindahl

How do you remember to listen?

“It comes back to the notion of time. If we are always busy if we create an atmosphere of busyness around us, we don’t have to penetrate anything in depth. We live on surfaces. We don’t have time for connections. But if we spend time with people, listen, see them for who they are, relationships develop, accountability arrives and stereotypes shatter.” Terry Tempest Williams

Has listening to someone ever altered your view on something you thought you knew? How? How did that experience change your life going forward?

“After many years of marriage, I said [to my wife], 'You know, you're really funny!' She said, 'I've always been funny. You've never listened to me before.'” - Earl Grollman

“To listen well, is as powerful a means of influence as to talk well, and is as essential to all true conversation.” - a Proverb

“Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around. “ - Leo Buscaglia

When the founder of Hasidic Judaism, the great Rabbi Isreal Shem Tov, saw misfortune threatening the Jews, it was his custom to go into a certain part of the forest to meditate. There he would light a fire, say a special prayer, and the miracle would be accomplished and the misfortune averted.

Later, when his disciple, the celebrated Maggid of Merzritch, had occasion, for the same reason, to intercede with heaven, he would go to the same place in the forest and say: "Master of the Universe, listen! I do not know how to light the fire, but I am still able to say the prayer," and again the miracle would be accomplished.

Still later, Rabbi Moshe-leib of Sasov, in order to save his people once more, would go into the forest and say, "I do not know how to light the fire. I do not know the prayer, but I know the place and this must be sufficient." It was sufficient, and the miracle was accomplished.

Then it fell to Rabbi Israel of Rizhin to overcome misfortune. Sitting in his armchair, his head in his hands, he spoke to God: "I am unable to light the fire, and I do not know the prayer, and I cannot even find the place in the forest. All I can do is to tell the story, and this must be sufficient."

And it was sufficient.

- As retold in "The Spirituality of Imperfection: Storytelling and the Search for Meaning" by Ernest Kurtz and Katherine Ketcham (pgs 7-8)