

**Table 1. The Seven Habits of Highly Effective Listeners**

1. Do not generalize. When we feel we have heard it all before, we are most often wrong. And if we have heard it before, we need to hold in mind that the experience being relayed is new and possibly troublesome to the speaker. This is not the time to tune out the speaker and begin to multitask.
2. Listen to the content of the message, while considering the delivery style. Even emotional and angry speakers have a content that needs to be listened to and addressed that can be overlooked if we focus too heavily on the style of delivery.
3. While listening to content, take note of the ideas and emotions that may be underlying the statement that may or may not be expressed in the delivery style. Frequently, it is these unstated ideas and emotions that should take precedence over the content of what is stated.
4. Wait to respond. Allow the speaker to complete the entire thought so that the response can more accurately reflect the intended message.
5. Listening is not a passive enterprise. Exhibit an active listening posture, maintain good eye contact, take a seat if the talker is seated, lean in toward the talker, and ask reflective questions for clarification.
6. Remember that thought is faster than speech. While listening, we have time to mentally summarize, and to listen between the lines to the speaker's tone of voice. This is not the time to formulate our own response to what is being said before the speaker has even finished his or her statement.
7. Do not rush in to fill the void. Capitalize on the value of silence.