

PRESENTATION GUIDE: RESOURCE 5

Getting Presentations Started: For Listeners

Presentations should contribute something new to benefit the listener.

As a listener, you should reflect on the content and how it makes you react. What did the presentation teach you? What was confusing?

What was memorable and why? Reserve judgment long enough to be able to understand the presenter's goals and appreciate that they are sharing this information with you. If providing feedback, take notes, define goals, ask clarifying questions, and react to content before focusing on quirks and fillers. Use this guide to get started on becoming a better listener. Note: These suggestions are intended as reminders and personal checkpoints rather than used as a formula. Feel free to skip suggestions that do not work for you or the situation you are in – make it your own!

Be Interested

- 1) Remind yourself to be genuinely interested in the presenter and the content. Set aside judgment and open your mind to new ideas.
- 2) Show that you are interested with your facial expressions and non-verbal behavior.
- 3) Take notes and be curious about why this content is being shared.

Listen for Goals

- 1) Listen for the purpose of the talk and what objectives the presenter is trying to achieve. Focus on what they want to cover, not on what else they could have covered.
- 2) If giving feedback, make sure to ask the presenter beforehand what feedback is needed and only focus on helping with these goals.

Appreciate the Presentation

- 1) Make sure to applaud. Regardless of what you thought of the talk, show your appreciation for the viewpoints and information shared with you. Reserve judgment.
- 2) Stop and think about what you appreciated about the experience of listening to the talk. What point of view did it offer?

Clarify First

- 1) Write down clarifying questions first. What confused you? What do you need more information about? What assumptions do you want to check? If interacting with the presenter, start by asking these types of questions first.
- 2) Think deeply about your reaction and reflect on what brought it on.

Go Beyond Little Things

- 1) Avoid getting overly caught up in technical things like filler words and whether they said “um”. Listen to their ideas, not just on whether the presenter is stumbling or has speaking habits you find odd.
- 2) When giving feedback, you should mention what distracted you, but only after reacting to the content.

Provide Just Enough Help

- 1) Only give feedback when someone asks for it. Feedback should be specific, helpful, kind, and actionable. Remember to say what was memorable and what resonated with you.
- 2) Limit feedback to what is most important and don't overwhelm. Watch their face as you comment.

