

Hanna Perez

Dr. Sharron Greaves

Communication 107

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### **Study Case Four: Family Hour**

#### **1. What examples of ineffective listening are evident in this dialogue?**

In general, people could be better listeners; actually, we are generally bad listeners. Some people do not care about what the other person says or cannot interpret the non-verbal language of their interlocutor when he or she is sending signals of tiredness, nervousness, or boredom. Usurpers of speech consciously monopolize a communicative situation, often to demonstrate their superiority and, of course, to impose their opinion.

From the beginning, we see ineffective communication between Josh and his father. Starting the conversation, when Josh sits next to him, we can clearly see how Josh's father is monopolizing the situation. Josh approaches to talk about him, but quickly the father's first instinct is not to listen but to talk about his college experience, which causes Josh to have to listen to him before making his request. This occasion is not the only one, as throughout the conversation, we see this behavior repeatedly. Josh's father did not listen to his son to understand him but to respond. Another form of ineffective listening that I could see was defensive listening, as Josh's father seemed to take what his son was saying as a personal attack and thus responded in kind.

#### **2. If you could advise Josh's father on listening effectively, what would you tell him to do differently?**

For the proper functioning of the family, it is essential to develop effective and positive communication. Communicating allows us to be understood and understand others without making biased interpretations of situations. A fundamental part of communication is listening. Listening to others lets us know and understand them and helps us put ourselves in their place. Listening to the other person makes him/her perceive our attention, feel supported and notice our affection. As I said earlier, Josh's father did not show effective listening, which did not allow the conversation to end in a good way, and we can even sense that in the future, Josh may have severed the relationship with his father.

I would recommend that you first have the psychological readiness to talk to your son, be prepared to listen to him, observe him, and identify the content of what he is saying, his goals, and his feelings. I would also tell you to express to Josh that you are listening to him with verbal and nonverbal communication so that Josh is aware that he is being heard. As for elements I would recommend avoiding, I would tell you not to be distracted, not to interrupt Josh and listen and wait for him to finish expressing himself to speak, avoiding telling your story when Josh needs to talk to you; also, I would tell you not to judge him, not to reject what your child is feeling, not to counter-argue or avoid sounding like the expert and just giving advice when all you have to do is listen.

Even if you don't share your child's ideas, you should respect what he or she is telling you.

**3. What advice would you offer Josh on listening more effectively to his father?**

In our twenties, we are more likely to talk to our friends than to our parents because the situations we face make us think that only people our age would understand. However, it's still great to have help, advice, and support from parents, even when it seems difficult at times, as in Josh's case. I would encourage Josh to think about how he feels and put his feelings into words before he talks to his father next time. Also, I would tell him to think about what he wants to say before he has the conversation because that way, he will have a bigger picture of the information he wants to give and will be able to say it in a better way, which is the usual way adults are used to, to have all the information. Finally, I would tell him to pick a good time to talk, a time when he knows that his father will give him his full attention. As for listening, I would tell him to try to understand his father when he gets frustrated because, deep down, all his father is looking for is what is best for him.