

communication barriers (ineffective listening skills)

Adverse advisers are easy to spot, but they're not the only impediments to effective listening. Here are some additional barriers. Which of these have you experienced lately?



1. IDENTIFICATION AND BUTTONS PUSHED -

When we hear a SPEAKER discuss an issue that we haven't resolved in our own mind, that may push our buttons and open us up to getting our feelings mixed up with the SPEAKER's and assuming that they feel about their situation the same way we feel about ours. This assumption blocks us from hearing how the SPEAKER truly feels about their problem.

2. JUMPING TO CAUSE AND JUMPING TO

CONCLUSIONS - We assume we know why a person feels a certain way and what they are going to do about it. This borders on judgementalism and blocks effective communication. An effective LISTENER will allow the SPEAKER to state his/her own causes and conclusions.

3. **OUR MINDS WANDER** - Our minds think at least five times faster than a SPEAKER can talk. This demands an enormous amount of energy from the LISTENER to want to focus strictly on a SPEAKER and his/her thoughts. In fact, active listening is work and a valuable discipline.



4. PERCEPTIONS AND EXPERIENCE DIFFER

- We actually perceive the world differently from others. When two or more people with diverse backgrounds try to communicate, they often find that accuracy and real understanding are difficult. Accurate and edifying communication requires patience, energy, active listening and dedication.

5. OUR THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS ARE HARD

TO VERBALIZE - Much of our inner life is a mystery even to us. As a result, it's no wonder that people find it difficult to express their feelings accurately. And beyond that, when we do express our feelings, we struggle with how deeply we're willing to expose ourselves.

- 6. **LACK OF PATIENCE** We are often in a hurry to solve someone's problem and move on. This not only shows disrespect; it communicates a lack of caring. Patience is not only a virtue; it is a necessity for good LISTENERs, and a lack of patience blocks effective communication.
- 7. **FEELINGS OF BEING OVERWHELMED** The intensity of another's feelings can cause us to feel inadequate and overwhelmed, leading us to withdraw from the relationship. Anger, depression, fear, and panic are the emotions that are often the most frightening. Effective LISTENERs know their weaknesses as well as their strengths. This requires that a LISTENER learn how to process his/her own inner life and get in touch with his/her own squishy spots, prejudices, values, and fears. LISTENERs who think they are personally immune to these weaknesses are in danger of helping ineffectively.