

Eliminating Listening Distractions

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One important way to improve your listening is to identify and eliminate distractions in your environment with this coaching tool. You can be great at many other facets of listening, but if your phone line is full of static or you are constantly interrupted, you'll still find it very difficult to listen well. Listening intently is hard work. Often simple changes like taking a few minutes before a meeting to get centered, purchasing a phone headset, or turning off your computer monitor while you are coaching can make a big difference.

Below is a tool designed to help you identify distractions in your environment that keep you from listening well. When taking the assessment, score yourself based on your last coaching session (if you aren't a coach, think of the last one-on-one you had.) Circle the statements that apply to you.

Negatives

- 1 Your e-mail or IM program is open in front of you
- 1 Your to-do list is sitting out in the open where you can see and read it.
- 5 You do e-mail, IM or work on other projects while you are coaching
- 1 You are sitting at your main work desk
- 1 You can hear a noticeable amount of background noise (others talking, a phone ringing, etc)
- 2 Your door is open or the place you are coaching in has no door
- 2 You finished another meeting, project or deadline within 15 minutes before this appt
- 2 You worked on other tasks right up to the moment the phone was ringing for this call.
- 2 There is a fair amount of stress and conflict in your life, or you are emotionally needy
- 1 You are hungry, thirsty or otherwise in a state of physical discomfort
- ___ **Total**

Positives

- +1 Your notes for this client are organized and easily accessible
- +3 You took at least 10 minutes before this appointment to get centered and review your notes
- +2 You've made a serious personal commitment to be all there while you are coaching
- +3 Your desk and screen are clear, or you have a separate place to coach away from daily work
- +1 You have a phone headset
- +1 You have a comfortable environment to coach in (correct temperature, good chair, etc)
- +1 You've prayed for this client this week
- +3 You don't have any calls, walk-ins or interruptions while you coach. Call waiting is disabled
- +2 Your appointments are scheduled at a time of day when you are alert, and you're well rested
- +1 Your connection is clear and totally reliable. You aren't using a cell phone or voice chat
- ___ **Total**



Now, add up your total points. If your score is negative, change your environment. If you are a professional coach or counselor, the bar should be higher: if your score is less than +7, make some changes!

Excerpted from [Leadership Coaching](#) by Tony Stoltzfus.

Tony is a professional coach and coach trainer who has authored many popular coaching courses and resources. He coaches ministry leaders in transition through www.CoachingPastors.com