



Lend Me Your Ear

By Emma Symons

Listening and communicating may not be the first thing that comes to mind when you think about wellbeing, but actually listening is vital to making us feel valued and therefore supports our happiness and wellbeing. In fact, the success of 'talking therapies' proves that we need to be listened to.

I'm sure we've all encountered those occasions when we've really felt the need to talk to someone about a concern or issue so we confide in a colleague, friend or family member only to find that person is more concerned with telling us about when they had the same issue and how it affected them.

Here are the five levels of listening. Have a read and see which level you see yourself in the most.

Level one: Interrupting

Not only not listening, but not even allowing the person to finish. Have you ever felt that someone was simply waiting for your lips to stop moving, so that they can say their piece?

Level two: Hijacking

Stealing the agenda by telling the speaker what happened when you had a similar experience. At least here what you have said has been heard but the other person has hijacked the conversation by jumping in with their own experience.

Level three: Advising

Giving advice can be valuable, but not until you have really explored the issue and encouraged the person to come up with their own solutions. One of the reasons why it is not a good idea to give advice too early on is because you may not



understand the full background. Jumping in with advice also means you run the risk of hijacking. You need to use the level four and five listening below before you explore ways to solve the problem.

Level four: Attentive listening

Listening to what the speaker is saying and inviting more. Allow the speaker time to think, and show you are listening by looking at the speaker. What a luxury it is when someone simply asks to hear more, and how rarely does it happen, both at home and at work?

Level five: Active listening

Listening behind the words and between the words, listening to the silences, using your intuition, prompting the person to explain further and making suggestions – all make the person feel valued and that they matter. As you can see there are lots of ways to listen, but, most people only tend to use level one and two which can result in people feeling undervalued and that their issues aren't that important. This can lead to lowering of self-esteem and bottling up of problems which affects mental and physical health.

Next time you are having a conversation, think about how well you are listening, and try to move up from level one or two to level four or five – and see what difference it makes.



Quarantini time...

The Lychecco

Fill a quarter of a champagne flute with chilled lychee liqueur (top tip – Aldi, Amazon and Lidl all sell good lychee liqueur). Fill the remainder with chilled Prosecco – simple yet elegant, but don't be fooled, this packs a powerful fruity punch! Thanks Elaine!

Wellbeing with Elaine

An interesting thing I read this week about was beer of all things! Beer can be good for joints and bones. Studies show that women who drink two to four beers a week are 31% less likely to develop rheumatoid arthritis and can increase bone density. Beer also contains fewer calories than a glass of wine, as well as having more protein and B vitamins. For all you fitness fans, researchers have found that a pint of beer post-workout is better at hydrating than water. Remember, drink in moderation!

Boosting blood circulation

Bad circulation is very common and symptoms can include cold hands and feet, numbness, muscle cramps, tingling and dry/cracked skin, especially on the feet. There are ways to improve bad circulation by simple exercises such as going for a walk, swimming or just doing some stretches each day. Some foods that can also improve circulation – these include citrus fruits which are high in vitamin C, fresh ginger, garlic, foods high in omega 3 such as avocados, oily fish and dark chocolate (min 70% cocoa). Dark chocolate is high in flavonoids – white or milk chocolate do not contain any flavonoids unfortunately! The magic spice cinnamon is wonderful for circulation as well as lowering blood pressure. Try a quarter of a teaspoon of dried cinnamon in some fresh lemon juice first thing on an empty stomach. This has been in earlier editions of the wellbeing newsletter – an added vitamin C hit will work wonders too!



Eat Out to Help Out

This week saw the government launch their controversial 'Eat out to help out scheme' entitling diners to a 50% discount on food or non-alcoholic drinks to eat or drink in (up to a maximum of £10 discount per diner) every Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday between 3 and 31 August in participating eateries across the country. The news has had mixed reviews, as it comes alongside a national push for healthier eating; however it's not just Nandos and McDonalds taking part. Many local cafes, pubs and restaurants are participating, with many a healthy choice on their menus. So, if you're sick of cooking or short of inspiration, search by postcode at the link below to see who's participating in your local area and think carefully about what you choose: burger or bulgar wheat, naan bread or nigella seeds? The decision is yours...enjoy!

www.tax.service.gov.uk/eat-out-to-help-out/find-a-restaurant



Don't let your ice cream melt while counting somebody else's sprinkles!