



## Good leaders are good listeners

The reality is that if I am to make good, informed decisions for ALS, I need the advice and insight of the Alliance board members, colleagues and staff members. But, many of us are guilty of talking far more than we listen.

You may think you are a good listener, but there is a difference between simply hearing and actually listening. Hearing is the vibrations that take place in your ear, while listening is how you actually decode those vibrations in your brain. Many times our own interests prevent us from truly listening to another person's point of view. When leaders don't listen, they stop learning, the team stops communicating, and ultimately their indifference leads to reduced productivity and a loss of mission.

There are some wonderful examples of great listeners: the Dalai Lama, Lester B. Pearson (14<sup>th</sup> Prime Minister of Canada) and Martin Luther King Jr. to name a few. They were great leaders because they knew how to listen and truly hear what was being said. Good leaders are good listeners. To foster better listening habits:

1. Give the speaker your full and undivided attention. Stop what you are doing, and make eye contact. This will help you remain engaged and the speaker confident they are truly being heard!
2. Create an environment where you can listen effectively, with no personal distractions (i.e. turn off your cell phone and turn away from your computer screen).
3. Stop talking, and let your ears do the work. Listen to the whole story from start to finish. This sounds easy enough, but it may be the toughest thing you do in your quest to become a better listener.
4. Make notes, so you can follow up later, without interrupting the speaker.

As most of you know, I am quite a talker, so listening is a skill I struggle with on a daily basis. I think listening is a lot tougher than most of us are willing to admit. It takes discipline, practice, and most importantly, patience. Simply put, to listen well and be a good library leader, stop talking! Listen up and have a great week!!

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