

# Covey's concept of empathic listening essay sample



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Management 501, a curriculum rich in principles regarding issues both personal and professional, has presented a myriad of concepts which represent tremendous truths applicable to the concept of self improvement. Senge, Sholtes and Covey, internationally renowned authors, provide a wealth of knowledge which empowers individuals to effect life changing decisions through the planning, doing, studying and acting (PDSA) upon these concepts. It is amazing that as others witness change in us, via the practical application of these principles, many are encouraged to affect the same in themselves. Of all the many concepts and principles I've studied throughout the "journey" of this course, the many hours of reading and analysis, nothing has touched me or affected me more than the concept of "empathic listening". This is difficult for most because our focus is not on what others have to say, but what we desire to say.

We listen with impatient politeness, waiting for an opportunity to express our thoughts, without sincere empathy for the concerns of others. And even during the course of vocal interaction, our desire is not one of dialog but of competitive discussion, where we interact with a defensive emphasis of proving our point versus compassion for our colleague's or friends interests. Using the PDSA formula (cycle), I have made a personal commitment to master this concept. Mastering this model in my opinion, will add tremendously to myself as a person, and do much to make deposits in the emotional bank accounts of others. The formula, so to speak, involves a set of four developmental stages that we use as blueprint to monitor our progress. This culminates in the ability to demonstrate, though our

interaction that we are truly giving our heartfelt attention to what the other person is trying to communicate to us.

Since this is somewhat a living document in nature, I have already begun practically applying empathic listening with those I have been interacting with for the past two weeks. I explained to my wife Susan the new concept of listening I had recently learned via Covey and her response was “ so you’re learning to become an “ empath”, and began to recite a list of known empathis. I smiled and thought to myself, “ If you were aware of this concept, why haven’t you been using it.”

During interactions with my daughter, I have had the joy of watching much different reactions and responses as I implement empathic listening. Her responses are less defensive as she feels less the need to defend her position and more open to engage in dialog versus discussion. I have tested empathic listening with my wife Susan, and watched her responses become more amiable as she doesn’t feel challenged as we engage vocally. Conversations in general seem to go smoother as dialog replaces defensive conversation.

I also noticed while attempting to engage in emphatic listening/dialog with one of my older children, in which she repeatedly attempted to change the conversation from dialog to defensive discussion. I had the fun of explain to her that this was “ dialog” not “ discussion”, giving her the definition of both terms and explained that neither of us needed to defend our position, just talk about it.

Per the PDSA cycle, I will “ act” by continually working to improve my listening skills and seek opportunities to teach others the importance of emphatic listening and the benefits it brings to relationships. How much do we improve as individuals, what kind of emotional deposit do we make in someone's account, when we take time to show we really care about their concerns though the use of empathic listening.