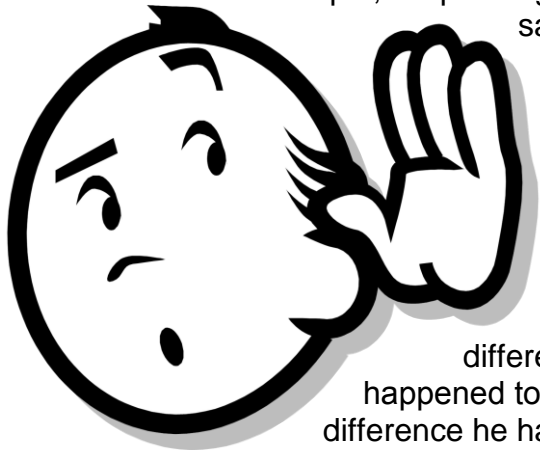


Listen, Listen, Listen

A salesman began to lose his hearing. Reacting quickly and courageously, the salesman learned to read lips. Going even further, he incorporated lip-reading into his sales routine and developed it into one of his professional strengths.

Far from being simply a compensation for the hearing loss, lip-reading helped the salesman focus intently and continually on the person with whom he was talking. For example, in speaking to one of his most important customers, the



salesman always sat as close to the customer as politeness would allow, focused on his face (especially the mouth), and ignored every distraction – even the customer's assistant entering the office.

After one particularly significant sale to this customer, the salesman rewarded himself by buying a high-quality hearing aid. He noticed the difference in his very next sales meeting, which happened to be with that same customer. But it wasn't quite the difference he had expected.

As he sat down to talk, he realized that he didn't have to sit so close, listen so hard, or fear every distraction. When the customer's assistant walked in, he was able to smile and say hello and still track the conversation. Or was he?

Not according to the customer, who surprised and embarrassed the salesman by saying that he felt that he wasn't being listened to as well or shown as much respect now that the salesman could hear better.

The salesman realized that sometimes what seems like a solution may simply change the nature of the problem.

And he never forgot what the customer taught him about making people feel special: listen to them as if you're hard of hearing.

So then, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath (James 1:19).

– Beecher Hunter