

The Art of Listening Slowly

Charles Swindoll is a Christian pastor, author and radio preacher who founded *Insight for Living*, headquartered in Plano, Texas, which airs a radio program of the same name.

Swindoll admits he once found himself with too many commitments in too few days. “I was snapping at my wife and our children, choking down my food at mealtimes and feeling irritated at those unexpected interruptions through the day,” he recalled in his book *Stress Fractures*.

“Before long, things around our home started reflecting the pattern of my hurry-up style. It was becoming unbearable.”

Swindoll related an incident that shook him up. “I remember after supper one evening the words of our younger daughter, Colleen. She wanted to tell me something important that had happened to her at school that day. She began hurriedly, ‘Daddy, I wanna tell you somethin’, and I’ll tell you really fast.’

“Suddenly realizing her frustration, I answered, ‘Honey, you can tell me, and you don’t have to tell me really fast. Say it slowly.’

“I’ll never forget her answer: ‘Then listen slowly.’”

Are you guilty of failing to listen slowly? I certainly need to do a better job of that.

Listening is the ability to accurately receive and interpret messages in the communication process. Listening is the key to all effective communication. Without the ability to listen effectively, messages are easily misunderstood. As a result, communication breaks down and the sender of the message can easily become frustrated or irritated.

If there is one communication skill you should aim to master, then listening is it.

Richard Branson, English business magnate, investor and founder of the Virgin Group, which controls more than 400 companies, believes it. “Effective listening is a skill that underpins all positive human relationships,” he said. “Spend some time thinking about and developing your listening skills – they are the building blocks of success.”

And because Life Care and Century Park are in the relationships business, we need to heed this advice.

The Bible has much to say about listening, including this:

He who has ears to hear, let him hear (Matthew 11:15 ESV).

– Beecher Hunter