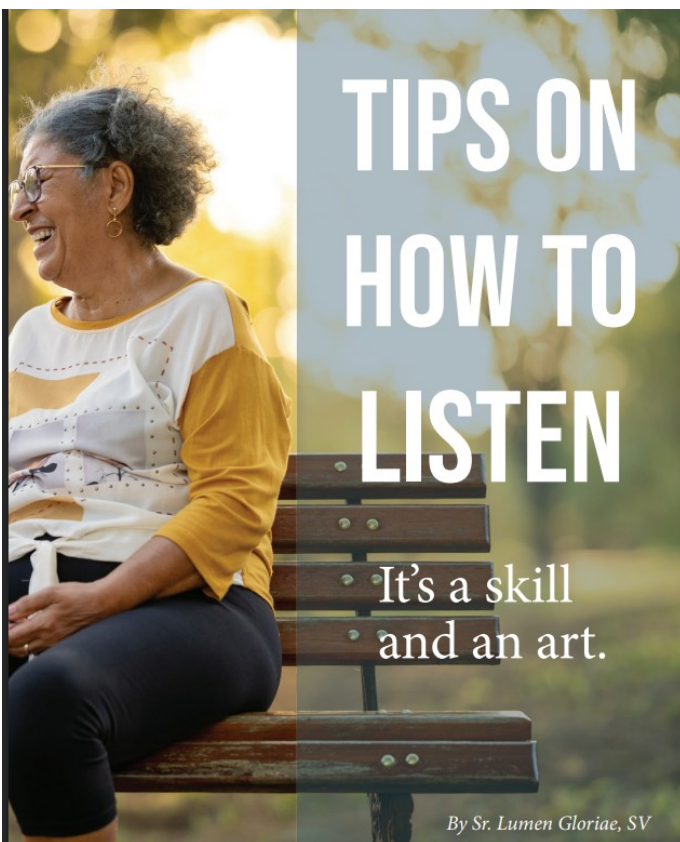




TIPS ON HOW TO LISTEN

It's a skill
and an art.

By Sr. Lumen Glorise, SV

Taken from
the Magazine "Imprint"
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"The Power of Listening"

Barriers to Good Listening

When we listen to others, we want to give them space to "empty the bucket" — to share everything on their heart they were hoping to express. We also want them to experience that we understand them. But there are some common barriers to communication that, while not bad in and of themselves, can be detrimental to the conversation when used too often or too soon.

The first is **giving advice**.

It's important not to jump in with advice too soon, because it can make others feel dependent, or incapable, or that we are taking control when it isn't our place. We might also miss what is actually at the heart of what someone is sharing with us. Letting them share completely, and then listening and reflecting to them what we've heard is necessary before we ask if they are open to hearing our advice.

GIVING ADVICE



The second barrier is **agreeing or disagreeing**.

It's okay to let the other know that we are following the conversation. But if we agree or disagree right away, we can shut down fruitful communication. This can turn the conversation's focus back on ourselves when we want to be focused on the other person.

AGREEING/DISAGREEING



Another barrier is **assurance**.

It can demonstrate that we haven't understood, especially when the other person is sharing something difficult. Trying to paint a silver lining around a situation too soon can be hurtful, since the one sharing with us may still be struggling in some way and may just need us to listen and be present in the difficulties.

ASSURANCE



Adding our own story is another barrier to

communication. While someone is speaking to us, we want to let them share without turning the focus onto us. To share our story, even when it seems related, prevents others from being able to share their experience with us.

ADDING OUR OWN STORY



One final barrier to communication

is **asking questions that lead people off course**. Meaningful questions that help us to clarify what they are saying and demonstrate that we are following the conversation can help communication. But we can derail a conversation and stop the other from emptying the bucket if we ask too many questions, or questions that don't help them to share what they need to share with us.

UNNECESSARY QUESTIONS

