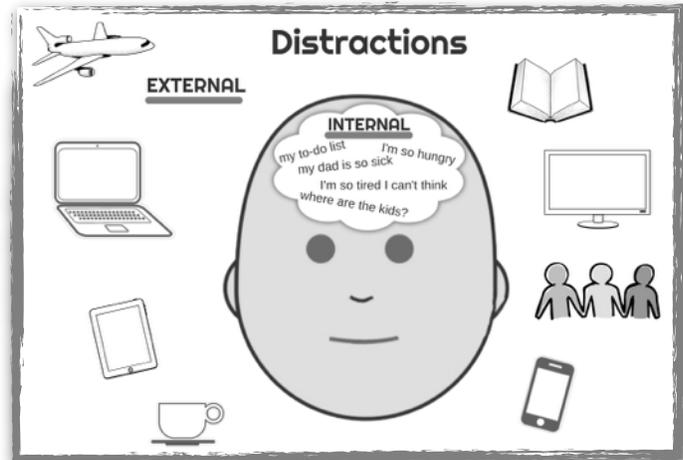


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## Distractions ....

**The word LISTEN contains the same letters as the word SILENT.** Alfred Brendel

Of all of the ways we learn, **85% of our learning comes from listening.** It is our most used form of communication but the least taught. Less than 2% of us have any formal education experience with listening.

To be serious, effective listeners, people must **learn how to resist the distractions** that cross their path so they can better focus in on what they are trying to hear.

**Distractions can be internal or external.** Internal distractions can be everything from thinking about my to-do list, what my

friend said to me earlier, my hunger, something that is upsetting to me, or wondering where the kids are.

**External distractions** can range from outside noises (plane flying over), computer screen, TV, tablet, cell phone, reading material, other people, or food.

**If I really want to change my listening skills,** I start by eliminating as many distractions as possible. **My spouse deserves my attention** while talking to me. My children and friends deserve my full attention.

**To get rid of the internal distractions,** I may need to ask the other person for a moment

to jot down a thought in my mind that I don't want to lose. I can **choose to focus on the words and expressions** of the other person to **keep my mind from wandering.** To stay focused, I can think about **how to rephrase** what is being said and give feedback.

**To minimize external distractions,** we may need to move to a quieter location. I will close the computer, put down the tablet or cell phone, and turn off the TV. **I want to value the person in my presence.**

It takes an intentional effort to eliminate as many distractions as possible **and LISTEN!!!**

## Technology ....

*So whether you eat or drink or whatever you do, do it all for the glory of God.* 1 Corinthians 10:31

**Technology has made it infinitely easier to communicate around the world and locally.** We can text our colleague in Zambia and the message arrives instantly!

**Electronic devices have severely changed the way we communicate and what is**

**important to us.** Some people are **more focused on** getting acquaintances to like a post on **Facebook** than to get their own family to like their in-person communication. A painful scene that I observed recently was a mom looking at her phone while walking her kids to school, missing a special time together.

**Being tied to any electronic device can be a barrier** to face-to-face communication. To

enhance face-to-face communication at home, consider the following:

- **Make tech-free zones for the kids and adults.** They can include the dinner table, riding in the car (at least some of the time), and bedrooms.
- **During family activities, put away cell phones** (mom, dad, kids), including date night for husbands and wives.