

## Participants Kit



# INTERNATIONAL DAY OF LISTENING

SEPTEMBER 20, 2018

Listen Even When You Disagree

The International Day of Listening serves to bring people together through experiences that will help them:

- Become more aware of the importance of listening
- Listen to each other better
- Gain awareness of their listening behaviors

This will happen through conversations one topic at a time, with guides, how-to's, explanations, and tips on setting up and conducting a listening event and respectful conversations.

## How can you participate?

### 1. Host an event

Invite your family, friends, and/or colleagues to participate in an event. An event can be anything from a conversation between two people to an event to get disagreeing groups together to solve a problem. We suggest you use the Listening Café format. But there are many other possible formats. You will find some “model” events on the website to give you some ideas and templates and guidelines for planning and carrying out an event under Guides & Templates, or Activities.

Visit [www.internationaldayoflistening.com](http://www.internationaldayoflistening.com)

Be creative! Invent original events, design your own event, use unusual locations and venues, go to places where people don't always have the facilities to communicate easily. If you don't feel ready to tackle “disagreement” have a friendly conversation to build a better relationship or a learning experience involving listening and apply the Ten Listening Tips to become a more effective listener.

In any case contact [info@jfmathieu.com](mailto:info@jfmathieu.com)

### **Once you've planned your event:**

Share your plans on **our pages** and social media sites.

- Facebook: dayoflistening
- LinkedIn: International Day of Listening
- Twitter: @DayofListening
- YouTube: International Day of Listening

Share your plans on **your websites, blogs, and Social Media sites** too. Use the hashtags:  
#DayofListening #InternationalDayofListening #InternationalListeningAssociation  
Use the reply: @DayofListening

### **During the event,**

**Document your event as much as you can**, take pictures and videos, make drawings, use chat, write down or record your impressions, joys, difficulties... all this while keeping the flow of the conversation and respecting good listener behaviors. Let us know where you posted it.

### **After the event,**

**Share your experience.** Share on our Social Media sites too and compare with others in the world.

## 2. Participate as an individual

- Contribute to one of the many tasks needed to accomplish an impactful IDL.
- On the IDL, do a personal activity to enhance your listening awareness such as one suggested under [Personal Activities](#)
- Participate in an event. Have a look at [IDL 2018 Events](#) or just ask us to know if there's one near you.

See also [How can you help?](#)

Make a difference! Do something to promote better listening and help us become better humans by participating in the International Day of Listening. Let's aim for over 100,000 participants. (The population now is over 7.4 billion, but let's get started!)

Get the word out through your email contacts and social media sites, and pass the website and any appropriate information on to the schools in your area, to local government, local businesses, organizations, churches, etc...

In any case, like us, follow us, make comments, share and subscribe.



**International Listening Association**

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[www.listen.org](http://www.listen.org)



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Armed conflicts are currently going on in 17 countries in the world with deaths numbering over 1000 in the past year, (5 conflicts have deaths over 10,000 in the past year, and 21 additional countries have armed conflicts with between 100 and 1000 deaths in the last year). Also, according to a United Nations study, 437,000 homicides were committed worldwide in 2012, and there are increasing numbers of refugees and immigrants fleeing violence and turmoil, and violence in schools is also increasing. With so much conflict, the time seems ripe for helping people develop better listening skills when they are disagreeing.

Who knew—that this year we would need better listening around the world even more than last year? We seem to have forgotten how to have a “civil” disagreement. We see more people yelling their opinions at each, insulting each other, and even using violence to silence the other side. As a world, we can do better.

The International Day of Listening (Thursday, September 20, 2018) is designed to help us better listen to each other, particularly when we disagree. This year the theme is “Listen even when you disagree.” Perhaps you know someone who could do a better job of listening during disagreements. Perhaps you, too, could do a better job. But where do people learn how to listen to each other when disagreeing? Are we seeing effective models of how to do this type of listening?

Fortunately, help is here—only a few clicks away! Check out the International Day of Listening website at [www.internationaldayoflistening.com](http://www.internationaldayoflistening.com). You will find a wealth of information about how to conduct disagreeable discussions, as well as an invitation to participate in this year’s IDL activities. This year we are planning to hold Listening Cafes all over the world—where people will sit down together to discuss a controversial topic—perhaps over coffee, sodas, or light refreshments, and perhaps find solutions, rather than create more discord.

Let’s aim to have an impact on the future of humankind. Here is how:

1. Plan a Listening Café or a discussion with others on a topic they don’t agree on. Identify a controversial topic.
2. Invite people to participate in a discussion of this topic. But first, help them learn how. Visit the website at [www.internationaldayoflistening.com](http://www.internationaldayoflistening.com) to find out how. You will find templates and guidelines for planning and carrying out a Listening Café, and this can be for any number of people.
3. Check out the many resources to help your group members learn how to listen when controversial topics are being discussed. If we don’t listen to each other, we will never solve the problems. Check out the video series on Ten Listening Tips. And there is a downloadable “listenmark” (like a bookmark, only for listening) and posters on the IDL website.

Share your plans on our International Day of Listening Facebook page and social media sites and on your Facebook page and social media sites.

Like us and follow us on:

- Facebook: dayoflistening
- LinkedIn: International Day of Listening
- Twitter: @DayofListening
- YouTube: International Day of Listening

Use the hashtags: #DayofListening #InternationalDayofListening #InternationalListeningAssociation  
Use the reply: @DayofListening

Get the word out through your email contacts and social media sites, and pass the IDL website and any appropriate information on to other groups in your area, to local government, local businesses, organizations, schools, religious groups, or anyone that could benefit from better listening. There are tools that are appropriate for everyone.

Make a difference! Do something to promote better listening and help us become better humans by participating in the International Day of Listening.

Let's shoot for over 100,000 participants. The population now is over 7.4 billion, but let's get started!

Regards,  
Jean Francois Mathieu and the International Day of Listening Team

**Please share your experience with the rest of the world.**



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# INTERNATIONAL DAY OF LISTENING

**September 20, 2018**

## **Title: How to host a Listening Café**

**Author: Laura Janusik**

**Subject:** Listening Cafe Model

**Interest Area:** Personal, Professional and Education

**Appropriate Age:** Anyone can benefit from a conversation from a very young age. The idea is to choose something that is of concern to them around this topic.

**Time required:** the time you will allow for this conversation depends on your situation

## **Purpose**

### **Objectives:**

- Bring people to face-to-face conversations
- Practice effective listening

### **Skill Development:**

- Practice effective listening strategies

## **Materials Needed**

### **Material:**

Tables and chairs.

Water, snacks if desired, or people can bring their own lunch. Drawing paper, pens, flowers...

### **Location:**

### **Number of participants:**

## **Instructions**

To develop a Listening Café, invite people to some old-fashioned face-to-face conversation with no external distractions (cell phones or other mobile devices, room noise, heating, lighting...)

Determine how many chairs and tables you need so that participants can comfortably interact with each other. It's better to have several tables of 4. If there are between 4 and 8 persons, all can be seated at one table.

While snacks can be provided, the focus is on interacting.

Print out the "Ground Rules" and put them on the table.

You can time Listening Rounds to make sure everyone can tell his/her story and be listened to.

Each participant will be in turn the teller, the listener, the observer or the guarantor of good listening.

## **Listening Guidelines and Tools (How to listen more effectively)**

See Templates & Guides <http://internationaldayoflistening.com/templates-guides/>

10 Listening Tips <http://internationaldayoflistening.com/10-listening-tips/>

See **Ground Rules** below.

### **Resources**

International Day of Listening website: [www.internationaldayoflistening.com](http://www.internationaldayoflistening.com)

International Listening Association Website: [www.listen.org](http://www.listen.org)

Other Listening Cafés

World Cafés

Conversations Cafés

...

### **Outcomes and Evaluation (What should participants have accomplished, and how will you/they measure success?)**

The outcome is that people walk away feeling good, having been heard and understood.

In past Listening Cafés, many people commented on how nice it was to have the cell phone ban, and how they plan on doing that at future dining events.

Try having a Listening Café at home with your friends! You might want to establish a monthly Listening Café, to which anyone can be invited or choose to show up.

**Please share your experience with the rest of the world.**

# Ground Rules for a Listening Café

## General

- Be open to interacting with some people you do know and some you might not know yet. They are all really cool people.
- Please, no cell phones during the conversation. That means that cell phones need to be turned off and put out of sight.

## Stumped on how to Listen? Here are Ideas...

- Don't worry... you get to talk, too. But, try to gauge others' interest by watching their nonverbal expressions. Share the floor.
- Ask what others think before you tell them what you think.
- Listen both in your mind and with your body. *Show* you're listening (eye contact...)
- Don't know what to add? Try these...
  1. "That's really interesting! Tell me more!"
  2. "Don't stop now!"
  3. "I need to process that"
  4. "Let me think about that"
  5. "I'm just listening"

## Advanced listening tips

### especially for 2018 topic "Listen—even when you disagree"

- Don't think about your response; concentrate on listening to understand.
- Paraphrase what someone said and then ask a follow-up question.
- Disagree respectfully by saying:
  1. "I have a slightly different perspective"
  2. "I see it a little differently"
  3. Let's explore what we agree on first. Then we can talk about our differences.



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# INTERNATIONAL DAY OF LISTENING

**September 20, 2018**

**Topic for this year:**

**Listen even when you disagree.**

Modern community is disintegrating; people are lonelier; and social media are distracting from the honesty and connection of face-to-face listening and communication. Without relationship and connection, face-to-face interaction is only a thin presence, a limited human connection. We need experiences that can support community building--listening and dialogue are strong candidates.

**Title: Listening to Differing Opinions**

**Author: Harvey Weiss**

**Subject:** Disruptive Ideologies

**Interest Area:** Personal, Professional and Education

**Appropriate Age:** High School/college and beyond.

**Time Required:** Minimum of 15 minutes

## **Purpose**

**Objectives:**

- Dealing with and identifying emotional filters and biases.

**Skill Development:**

- Recognize facts vs. non-supported claims.
- Be open to contrary possibilities outside your comfort zone regarding religious or political Ideologies.

## **Materials Needed**

**Material:**

**Location:** Attend a service, rally, protest, or something like this that is different from your beliefs, to get to feel really uncomfortable with your established mind set.

**Number of participants:** Can be any number of participants.

## **Instructions**

Get ready to be threatened with all the contrariness you will see and feel at whatever exposure/experience you choose.



## **Listening Guidelines and Tools (How to listen more effectively)**

Enter these situations with a clean slate of your past knowledge and feelings. Identify them and accept them but make room for possible alterations. Change is painful.

See Templates & Guides <http://internationaldayoflistening.com/templates-guides/>

10 Listening Tips <http://internationaldayoflistening.com/10-listening-tips/>

## **Resources**

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## **Outcomes and Evaluation (What should participants have accomplished, and how will they measure success?)**

Better understanding that ideologies are more complex than you thought, and that there is a lot of information swirling around any ideology. Also, that there are no bumper sticker solutions to complex issues, both personal, and political.

**Please share your experience with the rest of the world.**



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### **Title: Discussing Issues**

**Author: Michael Purdy**

**Subject:** Discussing issues in a dialogue group: Dialoguing to learn to listen.

**Interest Area:** Personal, Professional and Education

**Appropriate Age:** Anyone can benefit from a “disagreeable” conversation even from a very young age. The idea is to choose something that is of concern to the person around this topic.

**Time required:** the time you allow to this conversation depends on the people involved and your situation

### **Purpose**

**Objectives:**

Learning to listen in a dialogue setting where people connect and interact in a face-to-face setting.

**Skill Development:**

- Skills of listening, thoughtful sharing and the all-important skill of community development

### **Materials Needed**

**Material:**

**Location:** You will need a quiet, comfortable setting. Consider having some light refreshments and snacks. This seems to help put people at ease.

**Number of participants:** A group of 9-15 people or so works best, though David Bohm in the resource on dialogue suggests much larger groups. However, our experience is that smaller dialogue groups provide more focus on learning to listen, sharing, getting to know others, and especially building community.

## Instructions

1. Identify someone willing to help choose a topic and to organize the group—this position can change for each dialogue meeting.
2. Topics can vary but we usually choose interesting life issues, like “aging,” “being creative,” “what is life all about,” “humor,” play.”
3. The group facilitator can get things started with an introduction to the topic of discussion.

## Listening Guidelines and Tools (How to listen more effectively)

The most important listening attitude for this activity is that we are listening to learn and share, and that one’s position on an issue is not all that important.

See Templates & Guides <http://internationaldayoflistening.com/templates-guides/>

10 Listening Tips <http://internationaldayoflistening.com/10-listening-tips/>

## Resources

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International Listening Association website: [www.listen.org](http://www.listen.org)

Other internet resources:

<https://www.nytimes.com/2018/04/16/opinion/facebook-social-wealth.html>

<https://hbr.org/cover-story/2017/09/work-and-the-loneliness-epidemic>

<https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2017/09/has-the-smartphone-destroyed-a-generation/534198/>

<http://www.david-bohm.net/dialogue/>

## Outcomes and Evaluation (What should participants have accomplished, and how will they measure success?)

Success is simple here: to enjoy listening and conversing, and especially learning and sharing. If people enjoy themselves and want to come back for another conversation, you have been successful. We have had dozens of conversations over several years. One series was about life issues, the other about politics, and both have been enjoyable because people learned to listen.

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**Title: Listening to Opposing Viewpoints**

**Author: Sheila Bentley**

**Subject:** Listening to people that you disagree with

**Interest Area:** Personal, Professional and Education

**Appropriate Age:** Anyone can benefit from a “disagreeable” conversation even from a very young age. The idea is to choose something that is of concern to the person around this topic.

**Time required:** the time you will allow to this conversation depends on the participants and your situation.

## **Purpose**

### **Objectives:**

- Be able to listen to someone who has differing viewpoints, opinions, practices or beliefs with respect and in a way that allows each party to feel free to express their views.
- Understand that you can listen to someone you disagree with, understand their perspective, and still not agree with the person.
- Accept that there will be some topics that you will not be able to reach an agreement on.

### **Skill Development:**

Develop emotional control through the ability to express opinions and beliefs in a way that allows others to hold differing viewpoints and opinions, without feeling threatened or disrespected.

## **Materials Needed**

**Material:** No materials are needed, but you could download the “ListenMark” and keep those listening suggestions in mind and/or near you.

**Location:** A comfortable location that will allow participants to share thoughts and opinions in a non-threatening, private place and one that enables everyone to hear each other. Consider offering light refreshments.

**Number of participants:** Any number of people can participate, as long as people can hear each other and have the opportunity to speak as well as listen.

## Instructions

1. Invite someone that you disagree with to have a conversation (or a group of people with differing opinions). Let the others know that you would like to understand their position.
2. Before you engage in listening to someone that you disagree with, ask yourself why a “reasonable, rational, logical person” could possibly hold a different belief, especially this belief. This will help you adopt an attitude of curiosity and help you be able to listen with a more open mind.
3. Remind yourself that you can do an excellent job of listening, and still disagree with the person.
4. Before you engage in the conversation, set a goal of being able to listen to the person’s statement of their beliefs and summarize or restate what the person said back to the person without judging or disagreeing or evaluating--just listening and understanding.
5. Ask for clarification if you don’t understand their exact position.
6. Again, verify that you understand what the person has said (saying that you understand does not mean that you really do understand). Let them know that you have listened and understood by restating what they have said back to them. Ask if you have captured what they said.
7. Once you are sure that you understand the position, explore where you agree. Even if they are minor points, start with what you agree on. This helps keep the conversation on a logical plane, rather than an emotional one, and helps keep the dialogue open.
8. At the end of the conversation, summarize what you have learned from the speaker. You don’t have to agree with the position. Again, your goal is to understand the position.
9. If you are trying to collaborate, solve a problem, or just want to continue on good terms with the individual, revisit the points that you agree on. Then explore the possibilities for compromise, cooperation, and collaboration.
10. You can’t really solve a problem from someone else’s perspective until you understand that person’s perspective. **That should be your listening goal.**

# Listening Guidelines and Tools (How to Listen while Disagreeing)

## Follow this plan:

1. Listen with an open mind. Keep your body language, facial expression, and tone of voice neutral and open.
2. Try to be objective.
3. Think about the speaker's credibility and intention, but don't start by assuming that they are not credible or have negative intentions. Remember, you want to learn about this speaker's viewpoint.
4. Next examine the speaker's use of evidence, reasoning, and emotional appeals.
5. Notice which statements can be verified as facts. Even if they aren't true, factual statements can be verified as true or false.
6. Notice which statements are based on emotions ("I just feel that way." "I believe this way.")
7. Identify which statements use faulty reasoning.
8. If you need to disagree, say it in a non-hostile way, "I disagree with that." "I have a different perspective."

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10 Listening Tips <http://internationaldayoflistening.com/10-listening-tips/>

## Resources

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## Outcomes and Evaluation (What should participants have accomplished, and how will they measure success?)

You will have been successful if you can restate the other person's viewpoint to their satisfaction, if you have learned something, and if you still have at least a respectful relationship with the other person.

**Please share your experience with the rest of the world.**



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## 7 BAD HABITS - for Listening when you Disagree

When people disagree, they often engage in poor listening behaviors, such as:

1. Avoiding exposure to the opposing viewpoint. (Avoiding people you disagree with, or not listening to the news when it presents the other side.)
2. Not listening when someone is talking to you about the opposing position.
3. Not trying to find anything that you have in common with the other side or other person.
4. Focusing on insignificant details rather than the big picture.
5. Listening for only what you can disagree with.
6. Attacking the person sharing their point of view, rather than the point of view.
7. Arguing to win rather than to solve the problem or understand the issue.

**Results:** You don't become aware of any of the differences. No progress is made. The problem doesn't get solved. You may become angry and aggressive. And now, you may also have a bad relationship with the person you disagree with and will avoid that person. So, you go back to square one.



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# INTERNATIONAL DAY OF LISTENING

SEPTEMBER 20, 2018

## 10 GOOD HABITS - for Listening when you Disagree

1. Seek out opportunities to listen to the opposition. Practice keeping an open mind until you have at least heard the other side. Then you can disagree, but listen first.
2. At the beginning, make sure that you are each defining the issue or the problem the same way. Ask each person to state what they think the problem/issue is.
3. Have people share what their concerns are regarding the issue. Make sure you hear from everyone in the group.
4. After one person speaks, have someone else echo what they heard (restate in their own words), and then they can share their concerns. Make sure everyone has a turn sharing their concerns and echoing what someone else said.
5. Listen for what you have in common. List this somewhere that everyone can see.
6. Identify where the differences are, and have people suggest possible solutions.
7. When someone suggests a solution, have someone else state “what is right with that?” instead of finding fault with the idea and “shoot it down.” This requires that people listen for how that solution would be a benefit. (Note: agreeing with the solution is NOT a benefit. Require that a specific benefit be named.) Sometimes the solution is piecing together the good parts of several solutions. And sometimes, there isn’t a perfect solution, but you can find ways to improve the situation.
8. Use a multi-voting or weighted-voting technique to identify which solutions have the most support.
9. Explore how the solutions could be implemented. It may be helpful to implement several solutions. Decide what the order should be of implementing the ideas.
10. Plan for follow-up. How will you determine whether the solutions are helping to resolve the problem/issue.

**Results:** You managed to politely and effectively talk together, even while disagreeing. You did get aware of the differences. Review what you have accomplished and what has been agreed upon. Now, you still have a good relationship with the person you disagree with and will meet that person again.



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