

Kenji Matsushita on Communication ANSWER KEY

Pre-listening

- A. **Understanding vocabulary.** The following words are from an interview you will hear. Match the word to the best definition by writing the letter in the correct box.

| Vocabulary | | Definition |
|---------------------------------------|---|--|
| A. Communication (adjective, noun) | C | To think that something is true without any evidence or proof. |
| B. Challenge (noun) | E | Important but hidden; something that is underneath or basic to something else. |
| C. Assume (verb) | A | Related to the process of expressing ideas, feelings, or information. |
| D. Issue (noun) | F | A deep understanding of something. |
| E. Underlying (adjective) | D | A problem or worry; an annoyance; a topic that are people discussing or debating |
| F. Insight (noun) | B | A difficulty to overcome; something that is difficult; something that tests you |

- B. **Understanding expressions.** The following expressions are used in the audio clip you will hear. Match the expression to the meaning by writing the correct letter in each box.

| Expression | | Meaning |
|--|---|--|
| A. “to rub off on someone” | D | to find out what the real problem is |
| B. “to open up” | C | to become infected (literal meaning); to get worse because you don’t deal with something |
| C. “to fester” | B | to share your deep feelings or your true opinions |
| D. “to get to the bottom of something” | A | to make another person similar to you in some way |

C. **Using vocabulary and expressions.** Now complete the following sentences with the correct academic word or expression from the previous page (Note: you may need to change the number or verb form):

1. He has great communication skills. He should lead our on-site safety workshops.
2. Instead of telling her manager how she felt, she let her anger fester in her mind.
3. I generally assume that people are honest, while my co-worker generally assumes that people are trying to cheat us. (*same word, different forms*)
4. When I first arrived in Canada, I faced a lot of challenges. I needed to learn English, find a job, find place to live, and help my kids adjust.
5. After working together for many years, they have started to rub off on each other. They like the same manufacturers, choose the same products, and even wear similar work clothes.
6. The speaker provided us with fascinating insights into why accidents occur.
7. Sally misses a lot of work. I'm going to sit down and talk to her, and get to the bottom of it.
8. One of the underlying causes of machinery breakdown is poor maintenance.
9. She finally opened up and explained to her manager why she felt she needed to quit.
10. She has issues with employees who text during work hours. (Note: this could have two meanings. It could mean that she is annoyed with texting employees. Or it could mean that she has the problem of texting employees.)

D. Think of the best manager you've had, and the worst. Make a list of the characteristics that made those people particularly good or bad leaders.

| Good leader characteristics | Bad leader characteristics |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| Any reasonable answer | Any reasonable answer |

- E. **Predicting.** In the interview, Kenji Matsushita, a successful businessman, is asked what communication skills he has developed to be an effective leader. Brainstorm. What do you think he might answer?
Any reasonable answer

During Listening

- A. **Listening for the main ideas.** Listen to the audio and check off the 4 ideas Kenji mentions as important communication skills:

- Listening
- Asking questions
- Not assuming you know what someone is talking about
- Any of the following: Stop talking/Not talking too much/Getting people to open up/deal with true feelings
- Not letting people fester problems

- B. **Listening for details and drawing conclusions.** Read the questions below. Predict the answers, then listen again and answer the questions:

1. What was the most important thing Kenji **did** and **did not** do when talking to the engineer from India?
Did: He listened.
Did not do: He didn't assume.
2. What does "Your tongue can make you deaf" mean?
If you talk, you don't listen; If you talk, you might miss something that someone else is saying.
3. How did Kenji's mother influence her son?
She taught him how to get people to open up; she taught him to get people to share their true feelings; she was a social worker and taught him the same listening skills that she used in her job; she taught him to be a good listener.
4. Imagine that one of Kenji's employees is upset about something. He starts to tell Kenji his problem, and then says "Never mind. It's not a big issue." How do you think Kenji would respond?
Sample answer: "No, no, let's get to the bottom of this. I don't want things to fester."

Post-listening

- A. **Applying knowledge to real life.** Read the following conversation. Based on what Kenji said in the audio about communication skills, what advice do you think Kenji might give to Trina, the manager?

| Conversation | Advice |
|--|--|
| <p>Devon: Hey Robin, how's your new project going?</p> <p>Robin: OK. Well... mainly OK. A few minor challenges...</p> <p>Devon: Yeah...as long as they are minor. But isn't that the way it always goes! There are always issues! The other day I had troubles with the mainframe, and I needed our IT hardware guy to come in. He never answers his phone! And I left messages for him. Nothing. Sometimes I wonder if the people in that department are even there! And then we weren't able to complete the project we were working. Now our timelines are messed up. These issues can be frustrating. It's probably to do with the timelines, right?</p> <p>Robin: Well, kind of...</p> <p>Devon: Ah, no worries. You're so good at solving problems. I'm sure you'll have no trouble getting it running smoothly!</p> | <p>Dig. Go a little deeper. Get to the bottom of the problem.</p> <p>Quit talking! Your tongue is making you deaf!</p> <p>Don't make assumptions! It may have nothing to do with the timelines.</p> <p>Listen! Ask her to explain!</p> <p>Don't make assumptions. She may not feel she's good at solving problems. She might have trouble getting it running smoothly.</p> |

| | | |
|--------|--|--|
| Robin: | Yeah...it's no big deal. Things always work out in the end. | Help people open up and tell you their true feelings - these aren't her true feelings! |
| Devon: | Great! I'm glad to hear the project is going so well. Hey...I've got to run. Talk later, OK? | Your tongue has made you deaf. She didn't say the project was going well! |
| Robin: | Sure... See you later. | |

A. Writing (on your own) or Speaking (with a partner):

On your own: Re-write the dialogue as you think the conversation SHOULD have gone. Use your imagination to fill in details about Maria's project.

Sample dialogue

| | |
|--------|--|
| Devon: | Hey Robin, how's your new project going? |
| Robin: | OK. Well... mainly OK. A few minor challenges... |
| Devon: | Oh, that happens. Anything I can help you with? |
| Robin: | Oh... I think I'll be fine. I didn't want to bother you... |
| Devon: | No problem. Really. So what's the issue? |
| Robin: | Oh... nothing too bad. It's just, I'm having a hard time contacting all the distributors. I have a few names... but not all of them. And I'm not sure where to get their contact information. I just need to figure out who to ask.... |
| Devon: | Distributors? Distributors for...? |
| Robin: | Oh...you know, all the distributors for the XXX product. |
| Devon: | The XXX product. Oh, you know what? I think maybe Jim can help you. He has lists of distributors for all of our products. Check with him. Any other issues? |
| Robin: | No... I think that was the biggest problem. Hey, thanks - I'll check with Jim! |

Devon: Well...if anything else comes up, let me know!