

## **Habit #5: Seek First to Understand, Then to Be Understood**

**12/13/19**

Often, whenever someone approaches us with a story or question, we often try to insert personal experiences and stories, assuming that what we experienced and did will work for everyone else. However, everyone's experiences are different, so what often happens is that the other person will feel discouraged since they may not feel that you are listening to their own experiences. Instead, we should practice empathic listening, not only trying to understand what is being said, but also try to understand the feeling that is being expressed. This includes the words that are spoken, the tone of the speaker's voice, and even the speaker's body language.

In general, there are five levels of listening:

1. Ignoring
2. Pretending
3. Selective listening
4. Attentive listening
5. Empathic listening

Similar to a doctor, we must first diagnose (understand the issue that is presented to us) before we can prescribe any medication (give advice, suggestions, rebuttal, response, etc.). Once we truly understand what the issue is, we can then form an appropriate response that will convey our understanding to the other party, which will help them understand what you are trying to say. This is reflected in the concept of ethos (personal credibility), pathos (empathic side or feeling), and logos (logic), in that order.

When presenting our viewpoint, we want the other person to feel that we actually understand the issue that was conveyed. One way to do this is to show that you empathize with them, by presenting your logic through their point of view. By doing this, you can present your reasoning for why they do not need to worry about their concerns, making an effective presentation.