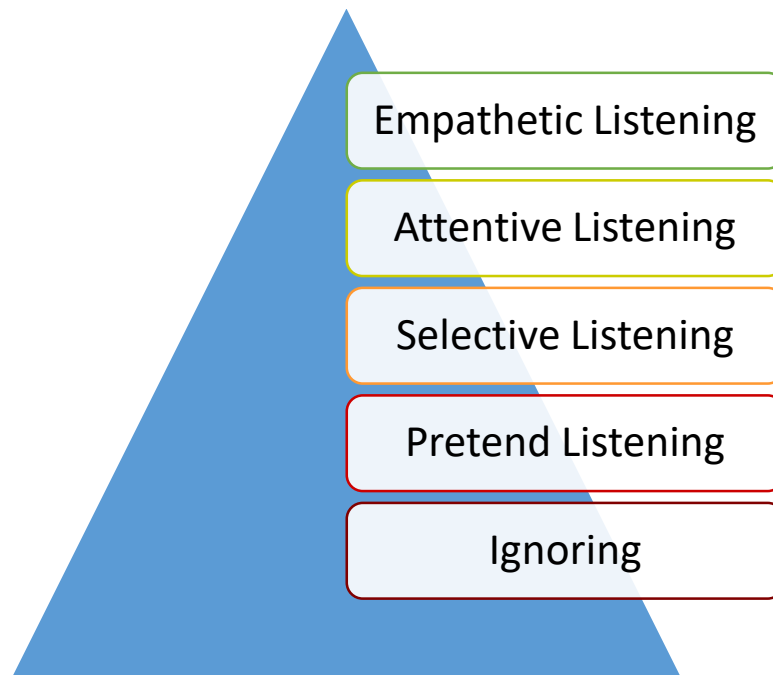


## The Five Levels of Listening



**Ignoring** is being so distracted you are not listening to the other person at all – for example, a customer is talking but another colleague is trying to talk to you at the same time, and you are focused on the conversation with your colleague.

**Pretend Listening** is when you are giving the impression that you’re listening to the other person – for example, by saying “I see” or “OK” to a customer as they are talking, while you are actually focused on writing an email.

**Selective Listening** is when you are only listening out for things you want to hear, agree with, or like to hear from the other person – for example, switching off when a customer starts talking at length about something you find uninteresting, or jumping to conclusions about what a customer needs as soon as they say something that sounds like a familiar issue, without taking the time to really hear them.

**Attentive Listening** is one of the most common levels of questioning we all use. It happens when you are listening to another person, but internally you are thinking about what you are going to say next – whether you agree or disagree, and how you will reply to what they’re saying. An example would be when a customer is talking about an issue, you feel you have got a handle on what they need but you are so busy figuring out what you’re going to say next you’re not fully considering their situation.

**Empathetic Listening** is the most difficult level of listening as it requires you to remove your own perspective from the conversation, put yourself in the other person’s shoes, and listen to the other person from their perspective. An example would be when a customer is calling about an issue that is familiar to you, but you can understand how familiar and confusing the issue might be to them, and listen carefully for things they are saying which allow you to see the problem through their eyes.