

# LISTEN & LEARN

POINTS  
OF LIGHT

## WHAT IS IT AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

From the moment we are born, the words we hear around us shape who we become. In fact, 85% of what we know we've learned through listening.<sup>1</sup> And it's these lessons learned at home, school, in places of worship and in our communities that build the foundation of our belief systems.

Listen and learn represents an individual's need to stay informed, think critically and educate themselves before acting. The more informed you are, the better decisions you can make about how to best support your community.

But doing both of these things well requires

openness. To effectively listen, you must open your mind and set aside your own preconceived notions to understand what someone has to share. And to effectively learn, you must reflect on how the messages received affect your own life and beliefs.

Listening and learning isn't about changing your mind or someone else's. That's not to say it can't happen, but it isn't the primary goal. Instead, the goal is to have a greater understanding of what other people believe and feel. It's about finding empathy for others.

## PRINCIPLES FOR A BETTER ARGUMENT<sup>2</sup>



## FIVE THINGS TO CONSIDER ABOUT LISTENING & LEARNING



**1. Find alternate resources.** If your belief systems about an issue or cause are challenged by others, look for new resources on the subject to help you learn about that issue and how others may have come to their point of view.



**2. Get comfortable with being uncomfortable.** When exploring new information or differing points of view, it's okay to be uncomfortable. This discomfort confirms you're learning something new.



**3. Don't avoid the difficult conversations.** It's easier to avoid conversations around divisive topics than to embrace them. But it's important to remember that the ability to avoid these conversations often comes from being in a position where you're not directly impacted by the topic at hand.



**4. Being informed is not about being right.** When our beliefs are unwavering, we often seek sources of news that confirm our opinions rather than challenge them. Avoid this confirmation bias by exploring varied sources of news and information.



**5. Call in, don't call out.** When we hear someone say something offensive, even discriminatory, an immediate reaction is often to reprimand and silence that person. Rather than calling people out, call them in by opening up a dialogue. Doing so can create an opportunity to listen and learn – and hopefully grow.

<sup>1</sup> [6 Effective Ways Listening Can Make You a Better Leader](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Better Arguments](#)

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cont.



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## TAKE A DEEPER DIVE AND LEARN MORE



Instead of avoiding conflict, learn [How to Have Difficult Conversations When You Don't Like Conflict](#)



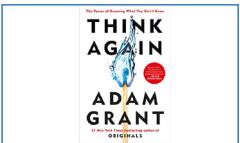
Is that true? [FactCheck.org](#) helps settle the debate between fact and fiction



Learn how to best share your point of view with resources from [The Better Arguments Project](#)



WATCH: [How to Lead Conversations Between People Who Disagree](#) (TED Talk)



BOOK: [Think Again: The Power of Knowing What You Don't Know](#) by Adam Grant

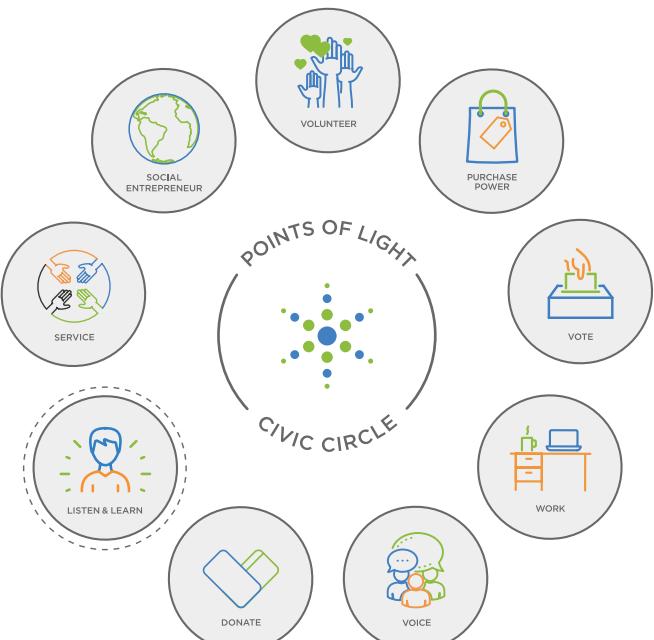
## THINK ABOUT IT...



- Where and how do you get your news? Why do you prefer these sources?
- When you think about the issues and causes you feel strongly about, how did you come to form these opinions? Who influenced you?
- How can listening and learning help support the issues and causes you care about in your community?
- Has there been a time when you changed your mind because of something new you learned?
- How would you influence others to better listen and learn?

## WHAT NOW? WHAT NEXT?

- For the issues and causes you care about, look for more diverse sources of information on these topics.
- Have a conversation with family, friends or even colleagues to share what you've learned.
- Listen & Learn is just one activity in the Points of Light Civic Circle that you can use to lead and lend support to causes you care about. To learn more, visit <https://pointsoflight.org/civiclife/>.



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The **Civic Circle** represents your power to lead, lend support and take action for causes you care about and to lead a civic life.