**JPA’s Top Ten Tips for Effective Listening**

* **Choose a quiet location with no distractions.** It is hard to fully attend to someone if you are standing in a noisy open plan office. When in a quiet room try to ensure that you are facing away from distractions like computers or windows.
* **Sit squarely.** Face the person full on rather than sideways to demonstrate your intention to listen and engage with them.
* **Keep an open relaxed posture.** Keep your arms uncrossed (crossed arms can indicate that you are feeling defensive or unreceptive) and try to relax. The more tense you are, the more uncomfortable the other person will feel.
* **Maintain some eye contact.** Eye contact is an important indicator of a person’s authenticity and interest in the other person.
* **Smile, nod or show concern as appropriate.** A smile is a warm and positive gesture, a nod gives the speaker confirmation that you understand or agree. All facial expressions and gestures are important signals of your interest and engagement.
* **Pay attention to non-verbal clues.** Sometimes our words say one thing and our face or behaviour suggests something else. If your boss says they’re listening whilst fiddling with their pen or watching the clock, they are probably not.
* **Don’t fidget.**  Fidgeting is a distraction and can be off putting for the other person. Keep your hands and feet still and, if you don’t need it, put the pen down.
* **Don’t interrupt, speak over the person or impose your view.** Avoid the temptation to give your own view, disagree or jump in with your own story. If you must respond, wait until the other person has finished speaking.
* **If taking notes, don’t lose all eye contact.** Taking notes is a useful way of showing interest and understanding – especially if the topic is complex. But make the notes brief and don’t lose all eye contact with the other person.
* **Summarise.** If you can summarise the conversation you have obviously been listening. And a good summary ensures there is no misunderstanding about what has been covered and agreed.