Dr. Jim Petersen's Why Don't We Listen Better?

Using excellent and logical methods, “Why Don’t We Listen Better?” uses the expertise of Jim Petersen in counseling in enhancing the interaction and relationships of people. A Talker-Listener Card procedure and detailed listening methods for immediate use teach the readers the way to turn win-lose interaction into participative cooperation.

Dr. Petersen’s logical guide to improved interaction not only provides solutions to the question that is inscribed the book, but takes the reader on an adventure into a better quality of life. Excellent relationships begin with excellent interaction of assumptions, emotions, and wishes. They develop positively when people aid one another listen well to the deeper implication of what people say by being just and fair with one another and by providing equal opportunity to their partners to voice out and be heard well.

Peterson utilizes creative imagination to pertain to inferior communication behaviors and the common disharmony that happens when people are unable to listen to each other. He has used the term flat brain to discuss what occurs when people permit their feelings to control their mind which in turn impacts their relationships. Peterson states that the mind describes the mental functioning of people connected to realities. People utilize their minds to arrive at conclusions or assess realities and eventually make their stand. The heart portion pertains to the true wish to relate. In its basic state, it functions from a win-win state. It gives and takes, hears and talks. The author suggests that healthy interaction demands a person to utilize his mind to cite the truths, his stomach to voice out the way he feels regarding the truths and his heart to utilize that data to communicate to another person in a just, caring manner.
While I was reading this book, I couldn’t help but agree to the points and tips being stated by Dr. Peterson. It was hard for me to argue the fact that listening was really the key towards establishing effective relationships. I was saying to myself, “This guy is right. Why haven’t I been doing these things all along with my girlfriends?” I figured out that it wouldn’t hurt me that much if I would try and apply Dr. Peterson’s guidelines in myself and to my future relationships with my loved ones.

I remembered my own failed relationships in life and how I became bitter and hopeless because of them. I didn’t have the proper mentality towards taking care of my relationships with people, my goals and the way I handled my relationships. I lost my girlfriend because my boastfulness and terrible attitude. I always took her for granted because I always thought I won’t be hurt so bad even if I lost her, that it would just be easy to replace her. We quarreled all the time because I did not care to listen to her side of the story. I was always busy and even if I was noticing her making moves to save our relationship, I didn’t really appreciate it. Fortunately, I recovered just in time to make the most out of my life and future relationships.

Reading this book made me think and feel stupid to have acted that way when I was involved with a special person. It was so immature of me to have acted that way. It made regret about the crazy things I did in the past that disappointed my girlfriend who believed in me. I felt sorry for myself for not being a good listener and thinking straight during the times when my relationship with my girlfriend was on the rocks. I figured that there’s no way those painful memories would be erased from the mind of my girlfriends that I’ve hurt in the past, no matter how sorry I maybe today.
LOOK!

I learned two ideas that were specifically helpful: (1) The 'flat brain' idea & (2) The 'talker-listener' card technique. The 'flat-brain' concept discussed the reason why it was difficult to listen when feelings were being considered. And the author's idea of the 'talker listener' card technique gave a comprehensive and well-explained process for both listening and being heard.

Petersen provided a remedy to solving the vicious cycle of flat brain interaction. He recommended that those learning to enhance their interaction skills print out a Talker/Listener card to utilize as a reminder of the responsibilities and objectives of every person. The Talker part pertained to the objectives of talking to voice out the emotions and to share the ideas of people. It then recommended that this is done without criticizing, confronting or accusing. The Listener part of the card mentioned the objectives of the listener which were to offer safety, to comprehend, and to clarify. These objectives must be done without accepting, disagreeing, or defending. I did this activity together with a friend and I was satisfied with the results.

After carefully analyzing the responsibilities and objectives of the talker and listener, Petersen finishes the book with a description at other interaction strategies like what questions not to ask, means to indicate empathy, and the ways to properly manage anger. I was able to totally relate with all these tips Petersen recommended and learned more on how to effectively manage personal relationships using these methods.

Indeed, Petersen’s book was able to enlighten me regarding the importance of valuing my relationships with other people, as they will be able help me grow further as a person. I hardly found anything wrong with the ideas of Petersen because all of them were practical and true to life.
Reading Dr. Cloud’s suggestions renewed my confidence to recover and have a great life ahead of me. He made me think that I was not alone with my previous failed relationships. Other people have also been in cases where they weren’t heard and felt hopeless. Other people have also experienced not being able to listen effectively to somebody they love and felt sorry. All people have participated in relationships where the problems caused by lack of effective listening never really stopped until the relationship died. People have all experienced trouble since they did not understand their customers, partners, kids, pupils and peers.

With the talker-listener card method that I learned from Petersen, I intend to use this knowledge so I can start experiencing improved relations with the people around me. I may have failed in my previous relationships, but if other people have bounced back from the same predicaments that I had, then I can also do the same. I believe it’s not yet too late for me to have a fresh start and I am confident that Petersen’s suggestions would work well for me.

I realize that it would definitely take some time for me to be an effective listener. I intend to prepare myself towards facing harder obstacles and challenges along the process of my learning experiences. I cannot allow myself to be haunted by my mistakes in the past, but I have to believe in myself that I can do well for as long as I put my best effort on it.

In the end, though, all that matters is whether I end up having somebody to love me or not. For me, this is the only measurement of success in relationships. I believe that once I am able to experience loving and being loved, I can be the happiest guy in this world. It may take a long time for me to get there, but I am willing to take the risks in building and losing relationships if necessary.