



Keeping My Ears Open

The Importance of Listening

Many think a successful attorney needs good research skills, excellent recall, and an argumentative spirit. Those things certainly help, but the ability to listen carefully to people you serve matters more than most realize. July 18 is World Listening Day, so I've been reflecting on the importance of this often-overlooked skill.

I began my career 19 years ago in family law, so it's probably no surprise that initial client meetings could get emotional. My boss didn't think it was necessary to stay for these conversations. He'd meet the client, then get up and leave while they told their stories to me.

I learned pretty quickly that walking away when someone is telling you about the worst time in their life is not the way to build trust. A person going through a divorce wants someone who cares about them and takes time to hear their hopes and fears. I'm not a therapist, but many of my client conversations would resemble counseling sessions. Sometimes, the client felt I was the only one they could talk to.

But it's not easy to get a long and complicated story out of an emotional person. That's a skill I had to develop over time, and it takes a lot of patience and empathy. There is a difficult balance to uphold. The client needs space to express their feelings. But the attorney must also drive the conversation toward information they need to secure the outcome the client wants.

It's a skill I still use today when helping my estate planning and business law clients. People rarely visit lawyers for fun, so I've found

over the years that every client has a story that explains why they're in my office. Their story can sometimes be as important as the actual requests they are making.

Particularly in estate planning, many people come to my office because a family member died without a will. The frustrating experience of sorting out their assets has driven home the importance of having an estate plan. They often have specific scenarios they want to avoid, and that information is helpful to me.

Good listening skills as an attorney also require leaving space for people to ask questions. Sometimes I need to proactively read between the lines to get to the heart of their concerns. If clients leave my office unsure about how the process will work, it doesn't matter how thoroughly I've prepared their documents — I haven't done my job. People need peace of mind just as much as they need practical help.

It's equally crucial to hear the questions my clients don't ask. Many of the people I serve have never created an estate plan or set up a business before. They are likely missing information without even realizing it. I have to use my experience to fill in the gaps. For example, most people don't know to ask about health care documents. But they're a crucial part of any estate plan. Also, people don't frequently understand how to handle their cryptocurrency assets or retirement plans.

Other times, what a client asks for may not be what they really need. It's common for someone to come into my office asking for a "simple will," only for our discussions to unveil that a trust would be much more appropriate for their wishes. The client makes the ultimate decision, but it's my job to listen to all the details and make the best recommendation possible.

Since my earliest days in family law, my ability to empathically listen to people has helped me build a stronger connection with clients. Many years later, some of those people still turn to me when they need legal help because I was the one who supported them during a difficult period. I'm proud to have built those relationships. Trust takes time — but it also takes a sensitive and sympathetic ear.

- Andrew M. Ayers



'Mom, Dad, There's Nothing to Do!'

Keeping Kids Entertained Through Summer

Kids look forward to summer vacation all year long, but it often only takes a few days before the "I'm bored" whines begin. It gets worse; many kids will happily spend months staring at their devices, wasting time they'll never get back. So, how do you get children active and keep them entertained?

Make a summer bucket list. It even happens to adults: We blink, and the season is over. All those things we "meant" to do somehow end up having to wait another year (or more). Don't let that happen to you or your kids this year. Make sure everyone gets their fill of summer fun by making a list of can't-miss activities. Include staples like visiting the pool or the zoo — but also entertain ideas about backyard crafts and water balloon fights. Don't forget to incorporate plenty of things the kids can do at or near home. The next time they're bored, point them to the list and urge them to complete one of their activities.

Learn something new. Hear us out — this is designed to be fun. The goal here isn't to make your kid memorize multiplication tables over summer break. (Though, if you suggest it, they might find



something else to do very quickly!) What interests do your kids have? Whether it's firetrucks, dinosaurs, fashion, or something else entirely, they have countless opportunities to learn more through your local library or the World Wide Web. You don't have to restrict them to book learning, either. Your kid might love the opportunity to try countless hobbies like sewing, sculpting, or even gardening.

Camp close to home. Most kids love the outdoors, and they're easily distracted by a bit of novelty. You don't have to travel far to enjoy nature — you just need a backyard, a tent, and some sleeping bags. The prospect of spending the night outside will sound thrilling to most kids. If you have young children, make it a family affair with a campfire, roasted marshmallows, and songs. Let older kids invite some friends for a unique sleepover, complete with flashlight tag and scary stories.

Summer will be over before you know it, but you and your kids can have more to show for those months — and great memories, too! Forget about "I'm bored," and prepare yourself for a new mantra: "When can we do that again?"

He's So Fined

George Harrison's Plagiarism Saga

In November 1970, George Harrison released his first solo single and biggest hit, "My Sweet Lord." The song shot to No. 1 internationally and achieved the rare feat of bringing religious devotion to the pop charts. Only one problem arose — despite what the record label said, George Harrison didn't write it.

"He's So Fine" was written by Ronnie Mack and recorded by The Chiffons only seven years earlier. It became a hit in its own right, with Billboard ranking it as the fifth-biggest single of 1963. Though Harrison had dramatically rearranged the song and written new lyrics, the similarities between "He's So Fine" and "My Sweet Lord" were undeniable to even the casual listener.

Despite Harrison's lyric that "it takes so long," the song's owner, Bright Tunes, wasted no time filing a plagiarism lawsuit in February 1971. It also didn't take Harrison long to realize his mistake. In fact, the "quiet Beatle" later confessed to the similarities in his book "I Me Mine," asking, "Why didn't I realize?"

Harrison's manager, Allen Klein, thought he could make the matter go away by throwing money at it. He suggested that the wealthy Harrison buy Bright Tunes so that he would own the rights to both songs. Bright Tunes rejected the offer, and the case went to court. The judge found Harrison guilty of "subconscious plagiarism" in 1976 and ordered him to pay lost royalties.



But Klein had a ruthless reputation and made an unexpected move. Having been fired by Harrison in 1973, Klein began pursuing a purchase of Bright Tunes on his own starting around 1975. By 1978, Klein owned the catalog and had effectively switched sides in the case, leaving Harrison stunned. It took several more years of legal wrangling (the case was finally resolved in 1998!), but in 1981, Klein sold Harrison "He's So Fine" for \$587,000. Many experts declared that price to be a steal.

Despite the public spectacle, Harrison had few regrets about his copycat hit. "I don't feel bad or guilty about it," he wrote in his autobiography. "It saved many a heroin addict's life. I know the motive behind writing the song in the first place far exceeds the legal hassle." In fact, the ordeal served as inspiration for his tongue-in-cheek single, "This Song," released in 1976 — proving that a good artist can find inspiration anywhere.

TAKE A **BREAK**



SUMMER CRAB AND LEMON CARBONARA

Fresh crab and lemon make this crowd-pleasing pasta dish perfect for summer.

Ingredients

- 12 oz bucatini pasta
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- 2 tbsp garlic, finely chopped
- 1/4 cup drained and rinsed capers, chopped
- 1 tsp coarsely ground black pepper
- 6 large egg yolks, beaten
- 3 oz Pecorino Romano cheese, grated
- 1/2 cup fresh chives, thinly sliced
- 8 oz fresh crabmeat
- 1 tbsp grated lemon zest
- 1 tbsp fresh lemon juice
- Sea salt or kosher salt, to taste

Directions

1. In a pot of boiling water, cook pasta until not yet al dente. Drain and reserve 1 cup cooking liquid.
2. In a large skillet over medium heat, cook oil and garlic until lightly toasted. Add capers and black pepper, then stir for 2 minutes.
3. Add reserved cooking liquid to skillet and bring to a boil over medium heat. Stir in pasta and cook until al dente. Remove from heat.
4. Stirring constantly, pour egg yolks quickly into the mixture. Add cheese and chives, stirring well until sauce is creamy. Add crab, lemon zest, and lemon juice. Toss together and season with salt.

Inspired by FoodAndWine.com

OVERCOMING INATTENTION

Strategies to Fight Distraction

With our phones always on standby, we're more easily distracted than ever. Then there are also interruptions by coworkers or family members, emails or instant messages that divert our attention, household chores that will "only take a minute," coffee breaks, and daydreams. Constant distraction hurts us more than we realize, creating a feedback loop of inattention. It's time we understand what all this multitasking is doing to our minds and figure out how to break the cycle.

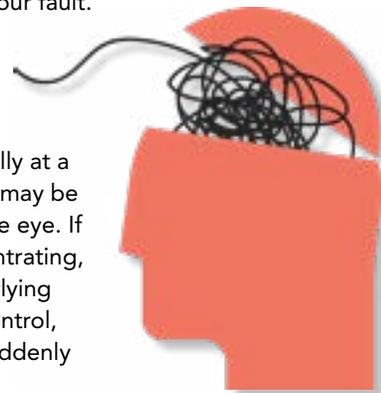
No matter how good you think you are at it, multitasking doesn't exist. What we're really doing is called task-switching. Our brains can concentrate on only one thing at a time, and the quicker we go back and forth between tasks, the less we pay attention, and the more likely we are to make mistakes. Even worse, research says it takes us a whopping 23 minutes to regain our concentration after being interrupted.

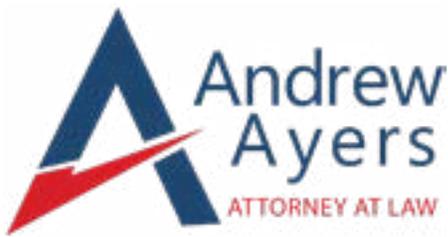
But what can you do? If you've ever been on a diet, you know that willpower has its limits. Simply promising you won't check your email or phone rarely results in long-term success. But if technology is a big part of the problem, it can also be part of the solution. Try putting your email or phone notifications on silent. Or, consider a website blocker to keep you off distracting websites and an app that will lock distracting features on your phone. Low-tech solutions like a "do not disturb" sign and putting your phone in another room can also help.

And mental tricks can still have their place. You probably tend to become productive when you've got a deadline crunch, and there's a reason for that. Tasks have a way of stretching out unnecessarily when we don't have to follow any restrictions. So, make some! Determine how much time you need to complete a task, and then don't allow yourself anymore. Ask a colleague for help staying accountable. You'll be amazed at how much you get done.

Though we each have to fight our own battles, this isn't entirely our fault.

Popular apps make billions of dollars by sucking our attention away from everything else, so we're automatically at a disadvantage. And there may be even more than meets the eye. If you have difficulty concentrating, stress could be the underlying culprit. Get that under control, and distractions might suddenly lose some of their allure.





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Cozy Up With 'The Repair Shop'

A Slower, Kinder Type of TV

Reality television can be a great way to turn off your mind, but most options are full of petty drama and sarcastic remarks. For some of us, it can get a little tiring. One show out of the U.K. is taking a refreshingly gentler approach. "The Repair Shop" follows passionate craftspeople as they fix antiques, and every object they work on has a story behind it.

There are no high-stakes prizes or biting comments in "The Repair Shop." Instead, viewers peek inside a warm and inviting workshop filled with collaboration and sentimental stories. In each episode, you watch the experts perform amazing transformations and hear heartwarming tales about the connections people build with family heirlooms.

The main cast includes upholsterer Jay Blades, woodworker Will Kirk, clock repairer Steve Fletcher, leatherworker Suzie Fletcher, ceramicist Kirsten Ramsay, and metalworker Dom Chinaea. They are joined by a painting restorationist, stuffed animal repairers, and experts in glass, jewelry, and musical instruments as needed. The eclectic mix means viewers are in for a new treat every episode. The cast may work on a grandfather clock and rocking horse in one episode, only to restore a beloved teddy bear and repair a pinball machine in another.



Some of the best moments happen when the craftspeople work together. When an old writing desk has a leather inlay or an antique clock needs a newly painted face, everyone in the shop is glad to pitch in and help restore any object. They do so with good humor, a collaborative spirit, and dedication to their craft.

But the show's real heroes are the guests who bring in their beloved keepsakes. From war mementos to antique furniture and favorite toys passed down from parents, each person who visits has a deep connection with the object that needs repairing. They tell their stories, and we see their emotional reactions to their items receiving new life.

U.S. viewers can catch "The Repair Shop" on BBC One or stream it on Discovery+. Cozy up with a cup of tea — plus a box of tissues, if you're the sentimental type — and prepare to be moved.