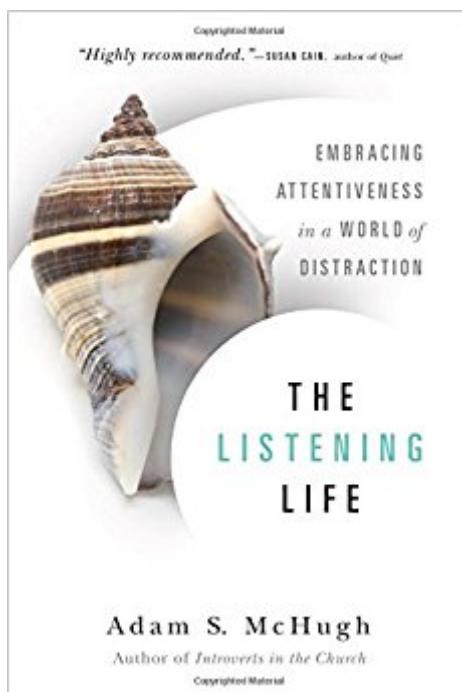


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# The Listening Life: Embracing Attentiveness In A World Of Distraction



## Synopsis

Christianity Today's 2017 Book of the Year Award - Spiritual Formation Logos Association Bookstore Award, Best Christian Living Book for 2016 Bookwise's Favorite Books of the Year, Non-Fiction "Be quick to listen, slow to speak." *James 1:19* How would our lives change if we approached every experience with the intention of listening first? In this noisy, distracting world, it is difficult to truly hear. People talk past each other, eager to be heard but somehow deaf to what is being said. Listening is an essential skill for healthy relationships, both with God and with other people. But it is more than that: listening is a way of life. Adam McHugh places listening at the heart of our spirituality, our relationships and our mission in the world. God himself is the God who hears, and we too can learn to hear what God may be saying through creation, through Scripture, through people. By cultivating a posture of listening, we become more attentive and engaged with those around us. Listening shapes us and equips us to be more attuned to people in pain and more able to minister to those in distress. Our lives are qualitatively different—indeed, better—when we become listeners. Heed the call to the listening life, and hear what God is doing in you and the world.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"At a time when we are drowning in words—both digital and spoken—this quiet little book throws us a life preserver. The Listening Life is gentle, thoughtful, biblical, and eminently practical. It outlines a broad theology of listening alongside specific and clear practices that teach

the reader to listen in a new way. Whether you are a loud lover of words or a shy lover of solitude, this book will likely convict you." (Tish Harrison Warren, Christianity Today, The 2017 Book Awards)"This book is an essential antidote and a welcome aid to listen wellâ€”to God and to one another." (Roy Howard, The Presbyterian Outlook, April 5, 2016)"I say this more often than I actually do it, but this is a book that I will read again. It is easier to read about listening than actually listen, as McHugh says, but this was a very good reminder of why listening is important, and how we can better listen to God, those around us, and ourselves." (Adam Shields, Bookwise, December 15, 2015)"McHugh is the author of *The Listening Life: Embracing Attentiveness in a World of Distraction*, in which he outlines a dozen traps people can fall into if they don't approach listening in the right way. . . . Good listeners are patient and unselfish, and they can recognize when it's their turn to speak. When they do so, they provide reassuring commentary or ask gentle, probing questions. That is the express lane to conflict resolution." (Chris Weller, Tech Insider, December 12, 2015)"Hearing is the first sense we develop and the last to go in death. But listening is not a natural capacity. The Bible is clear on this point. We do not automatically listen to God, others, or even ourselves. McHugh's book can change the way you approach your daily conversations. It may even change your life. You should listen." (John Koessler, Christianity Today, November 2015)"Throughout his wise and witty work, McHugh (*Introverts in the Church*) lobbies readers to prick up their ears. 'Listening,' he writes, 'comes first.' McHugh predicates this marvelous book on what lousy listeners we are, then proceeds to offer means for changing our habits. . . . McHugh writes humbly about learning to hear deeply, because 'the beginning of discipleship is listening.' He writes intimately, telling his own stories in the same tone as he retells tales from the Bible. McHugh mixes more formal writing with conversational sections, liberally quoting colleagues and resources (from John Coltrane to Homer Simpson) and including personal anecdotes, aphorisms, and loving admonishments tied together with keen humor. This is a persuasive book for those with ears ready to listen to what McHugh has to say." (Publishers Weekly, October 12, 2015)"Listening is one of the best gifts we can give or receive. Listening changes things. Listening, the way Adam McHugh describes it, could just change the world." (Ruth Haley Barton, founder and president, Transforming Center, author of *Life Together in Christ*)"Adam McHugh has been a significant contributor to the conversation about how introverts experience the world. His new book, *The Listening Life*, has the power to reshape how both introverts and extroverts make space for deep listening in a world that swims in the shallows. Highly recommended." (Susan Cain, cofounder of Quiet Revolution, author of *Quiet*)"The Listening Life is the kind of book that made me at times not want to turn the pageâ€”because I needed to! What the book did was still my soul and remind me to be still

before Godâ€“to silence the noise and open the closed doors to hear. In hearing we learn that in listening to God and to one another we enter into the graces of love. On every page Adam McHugh offers wisdom that slowly marches us into a deeper kind of life, one marked by listening to God in a way that teaches us how to listen to one another and to ourselves. There are two kinds of people: those who talk and those who listenâ€“the former need to read this book slowly and listen well to the lesson about reverse listening, while the latter will discover fresh light on a discipline now deepened." (Scot McKnight, Julius R. Mantey Professor in New Testament, Northern Seminary)"If it were possible to combine the voices of Dallas Willard, N. D. Wilson and Jim Gaffigan, then what you would get is Adam S. McHugh. His writing is profound, lyrical and self-deprecating in all the right ways. There are few books I want to start again once I've finished. The Listening Life is now one of them. I adore this stunning, important book and want to give it to everyone I know." (Emily P. Freeman, author of *Simply Tuesday*)"Adam McHugh is a voice worth listening to. His new book will be a gift to anyone who wants to cultivate what Jesus called 'ears to hear.'" (John Ortberg, senior pastor of Menlo Park Presbyterian Church)"Like many introverts, I can be vain about my listening skills, but reading McHugh's book forced me to reconsider my self-perception. It's true that being more quiet than talkative means that I am more available to hear, but do I really listen? Or do I only half listen to the person talking while the rest of me is listening to my own brain chatter? . . . . McHugh writes with considerable charm and a great deal of wisdom and he gave me lots to think about. . . . The Listening Life was not written for me. But it had something to say to me anyway. So I listened." (Sophia Dembling, *Psychology Today*, January 26, 2016)"Adam McHugh helps his readers to see that the skill of listening well begins with the heart, silent and open first to God for His word, then ready to hear others before speaking." (Michele Morin, *Living Our Days*, January 1, 2016)

Adam S. McHugh (ThM, Princeton Theological Seminary) is an ordained Presbyterian minister and spiritual director, and a regular contributor to Susan Cain's Quiet Revolution website. He has served at two Presbyterian churches, as a hospice chaplain and as campus staff with InterVarsity Christian Fellowship. He is the author of *The Listening Life*, which won the 2017 Christianity Today Book Award for spiritual formation, and *Introverts in the Church*, and lives on the central coast of California.

I cannot recommend this book enough. Thoughtful, well-written, insightful and both practical and poignant (with some well-placed moments of humor sprinkled throughout), *The Listening Life* spoke

to me on multiple levels. McHugh digs into unexpected terrain (listening to creation, for instance) and offers some creative and unique insights into aspects of listening I thought I understood inside and out (listening to others, for example). By the time I was done, dozes of sections were underlined, pages were dog-eared and I was eager to flip back to page one to re-read some of my favorite parts. We live in a loud, loud world in which we often find ourselves competing for a platform from which we can shout our views and opinions. The Listening Life encourages us to slow down, quiet our minds, mouths and souls and tune our ears and hearts to what God, and others, have to communicate to us.

A VERY thought provoking book. It is amazing to see how listening touches every part of life and what it really means. This is a timely read for me and so I took my time reading it pausing often to reflect and consider. I folded over pages I want to revisit and when I came to the end of the book discovered I may have folded over 1/2 of the book. I also found it validating in many ways as I am on a journey of writing my second book and Adam touched on numerous issues I am dealing with. Listening is a bigger deal than we realize and I aim to learn from it.

This book changed my life. My New Years resolution two years ago was to become a better listener. My husband and I took a class together at our church on how to listen and with reading this book it all came together. This book is one to read a little and then think a lot. Anyone who has been in pain, suffered loss, or has experienced tragedies will be able to put themselves in this book and become a better listener themselves. I highly recommend this book to anyone who has a desire to become a better listener or just a beginner listener.

I have really enjoyed this book and have read it slowly and thoughtfully over the course of several weeks since it has been the focus of my Sunday school class. One of the men in the group told me that if he had just seen the title, he might never have picked it up but he is really glad he did and has also gotten a lot out of this book.

Fantastic book. I learned a lot and especially enjoyed the portions about listening to God and listening to people in pain. I was convicted throughout it and also felt empowered and excited to use the practical tips he gives. This book is one I'll be thinking and praying about as well as practicing for many years to come!

I haven't finished this book yet... and may change the rating when I am done. Just wanted to say now that the introduction is worth the price of the book.

A truly profound book in many ways. ... rarely have I read a book that offers so much deep wisdom and insight on a particular topic. Listening is so needed in our culture ... in our homes and workplaces and in our churches... and especially in our political structures where it has all but vanished.

Easy to read, engaging, helpful in the art of spiritual disciplines and soul care. I highly recommend this book. Fast read, slow application.

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