

“ DISCOVER
THE SECRET TO
GETTING THROUGH
TO ABSOLUTELY
ANYONE

Just Listen

MARK GOULSTON

FOREWORD BY
Keith Ferrazzi
AUTHOR OF *NEVER EAT ALONE*
AND *WHO'S GOT YOUR BACK*

”

ADVANCE PRAISE FOR *JUST LISTEN*

“I read *Just Listen* on a weekend plane ride, started putting the lessons to work on Monday, and have been using them routinely ever since. I’ve already ordered copies for everyone in Mattel’s senior leadership team and for each of my grown kids.”

—Bob Eckert, CEO and Chairman, Mattel

“For far too many people, introspection is an elusive quality. But in his new book, *Just Listen*, Mark Goulston teaches us the power of introspection. He shows us how to look at ourselves and our relationships with others as a way to unlock powerful insights that can make us more effective at work and at play. You may think of yourself as confident and passionate, but could just as easily be seen by others as arrogant and impulsive. The gap between those perceptions is often the difference between success and failure. Goulston has written an important book to help us bridge that gap and to hone our introspective skills.”

—John Byrne, Executive Editor, *BusinessWeek*

“Communication is not just *saying* something, it’s being heard. Mark Goulston brings new meaning to ‘getting through’ to others. *Just Listen* is the indispensable guidebook for the journey to greater listening, caring, guiding, and fulfillment. We thank you, Mark.”

—Frances Hesselbein, Chairman and Founding President,
Leader to Leader Institute

“Mark Goulston provides the blueprint for connecting with people and building meaningful relationships in your personal and professional life. This is clearly Mark’s most important work to date and a must-read for anyone focused on improving their personal effectiveness.”

—Wayne Gattinella, President & CEO, WebMD

“Dr. Goulston brilliantly and practically shows us how to operationalize the ‘Golden Rule,’ treating others the way we would want to be treated.”

—Michael Critelli, retired CEO and Chairman, Pitney Bowes

“For most of my life, I thought I could talk my way out of any problem and into any party. *Just Listen* and Mark’s advice helped me ‘listen my way . . .’ to the next level. This book is an instant classic and a must-read for any business leader.”

—Jason Calacanis, Internet entrepreneur, CEO, Mahalo

“Want to master the one critical skill that’s essential for success in both business and life? Read *Just Listen*. Goulston’s simple, easy-to-apply techniques are powerful—and the results will amaze you.”

—Ivan R. Misner, Ph.D., Founder and Chairman, BNI;
author of *The 29% Solution: 52 Networking Success Strategies*

“In this time of breathtaking developments in technology, it’s easy to lose sight of what really connects us to one another. Mark Goulston’s easy-to-absorb advice will help the reader build productive relationships at work, and grow closer to family and friends. This compelling mix of how the brain functions and how to break down barriers to effective communication will make you eager to apply Goulston’s practical suggestions. In other words, just read *Just Listen*.”

—Tom Nelson, COO, AARP

“*Just Listen* shows that it’s much less important what you tell others than what you enable them to tell you. Goulston listened very well because this is not only one of the best books, but the easiest and most enjoyable one you could read on the power of listening.”

—Cathy Greenberg, author of *What Happy Women Know*

“To anybody who wants to improve their relationships at home, at work, or in the world, *Just Listen* is a must. Mark Goulston has written a masterpiece of a book that will improve every reader’s life by making it much easier to communicate productively. Just read *Just Listen*.”

—David Feinberg, M.D., M.B.A.; CEO, UCLA Hospital System

“Mark’s wisdom is not only knowledge-based, but useful. I have read hundreds of books, but few that I can actually apply to my business and relationships. Mark shares real issues and real usable solutions.”

—Stephanie Allen, President
Food Development, Dream Dinners

“Goulston emanates deep caring like few I have known, and his ability to help us see ourselves without armor is both his gift and his gift to us. This book speaks straight from the heart, and it is now up to us to listen.”

—Josh Waitzkin, author of *The Art of Learning*

“In a world where everyone wants to talk, the secret to success is the art of listening. Some great leaders are excellent speakers, and others are not—but *all* of them are great listeners. In this book, Mark Goulston deciphers the real secrets about listening. *Just Listen* will be one of the most influential books for the next ten years for the business world and beyond.”

—Dr. Andreas Salcher, author of *The Talented Kid and His Enemies*
and *The Wounded Human*, and co-founder of the
Sir Karl Popper School

“Full of lively, practical advice that will help you in every interpersonal interaction. Mark Goulston understands that communication is less about strategies and techniques than it is about making meaningful connections with people. His insights into human behavior are real gems.”

—Steven B. Sample, President, University of Southern California,
author of the best-selling *The Contrarian’s Guide to Leadership*

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Discover the Secret to Getting
Through to Absolutely Anyone

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FOREWORD BY KEITH FERRAZZI

Author of Never Eat Alone and Who's Got Your Back

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To Warren Bennis, mentor, friend, and inspiration,
who taught me that when you “deeply listen” and get where people
are really coming from, and then care about them when you’re there,
they’re more likely to let you take them where you want them to go.

In Memory

“If you listen for hurt, fear, and pain or for people’s hopes and dreams,
it is nearly always there. And when the other person feels you listening
and *feeling* them, they will let down their guard and open their minds
and hearts to you.”

—Edwin Shneidman, pioneer in the field of suicide prevention,
founder of the Los Angeles Suicide Prevention Center, and
cherished mentor

And to my readers, that I may pass on this important
lesson to you.

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FOREWORD

Managers, CEOs, and salespeople often tell me, “Talking to so-and-so is like hitting a brick wall.”

When I hear those words, I reply: “Stop hitting your head against the wall and look for the loose brick.” Find that loose brick—what the other person really needs from you—and you can pull down the strongest barriers and connect with people in ways you never thought possible.

And that brings me to my friend and colleague Mark Goulston. Mark has an almost magical ability to reach everyone—corporate CEOs, managers, clients, patients, warring family members, even hostage takers—because he always finds the loose brick. He’s a genius at reaching unreachable people and, in this book, you’ll find out just how he does it.

I originally met Mark through his books *Get Out of Your Own Way* and *Get Out of Your Own Way at Work*. His books, his work, and, most importantly, Mark himself so impressed me that I pursued him and now we’re business partners. He’s one of the thought leaders at Ferrazzi Greenlight and a trusted adviser to me. After watching him work, I can tell you why everyone from the FBI to Oprah pays attention when Mark talks about reaching people: his techniques, simple as they sound, *really work*.

Oh, and don’t be put off by the fact that Mark’s a psychiatrist. He’s also one of the best business communicators I’ve ever encountered. Put him in an office where everyone’s at war or the sales team can’t get buy-in from clients or morale and productivity are tanking, and he’ll solve the problem—fast—in a win-win way where everyone comes out ahead.

If you’d like to achieve that kind of success, you’ll find no better guide than Mark. He’s brilliant, funny, kind, and inspiring, and his stories about everyone from unwelcome holiday guests to F. Lee

Bailey make his words as entertaining as they are life changing. So enjoy—and then use your powerful new skillset to turn the “impossible” and “unreachable” people in your life into allies, devoted customers, loyal colleagues, and lifetime friends.

Keith Ferrazzi

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Of all my books, I am proudest of and most enthusiastic about this one. Yet if it succeeds, it will only be because of the wise, caring, loving, critical, and generous input and support of many people.

First and foremost, I thank my readers, patients, clients, and customers, who entrusted me with their outer and inner hopes and fears and enabled me to pass on to you what I've learned from helping them.

I am also grateful to Bill Gladstone and Ming Russell, my supportive and steadfast agents at Waterside Productions, for their input and guidance and for hitting me upside the face when I gave in to a tendency to get in my own way. Many thanks are also due to Ellen Kadin, Executive Editor at my publisher, AMACOM Books, for having the love for this project and sound judgment to say when it was steering off path from delivering on its promise to my readers. The more useful and immediately usable tools you get from this book are largely due to Ellen's capacity as rudder and centerboard for this voyage. I am grateful as well to Alison Blake, whose input aided me in clarifying my message, and to my ever-supportive former editor John Duff at Penguin Putnam.

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THE SECRET TO REACHING ANYONE

Some lucky people seem to have a magic touch when it comes to getting people to buy into their plans, goals, and desires. But, in reality, reaching people isn't magic. It's an art . . . and a science. And it's easier than you think.

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