

## PLEASE STOP TALKING

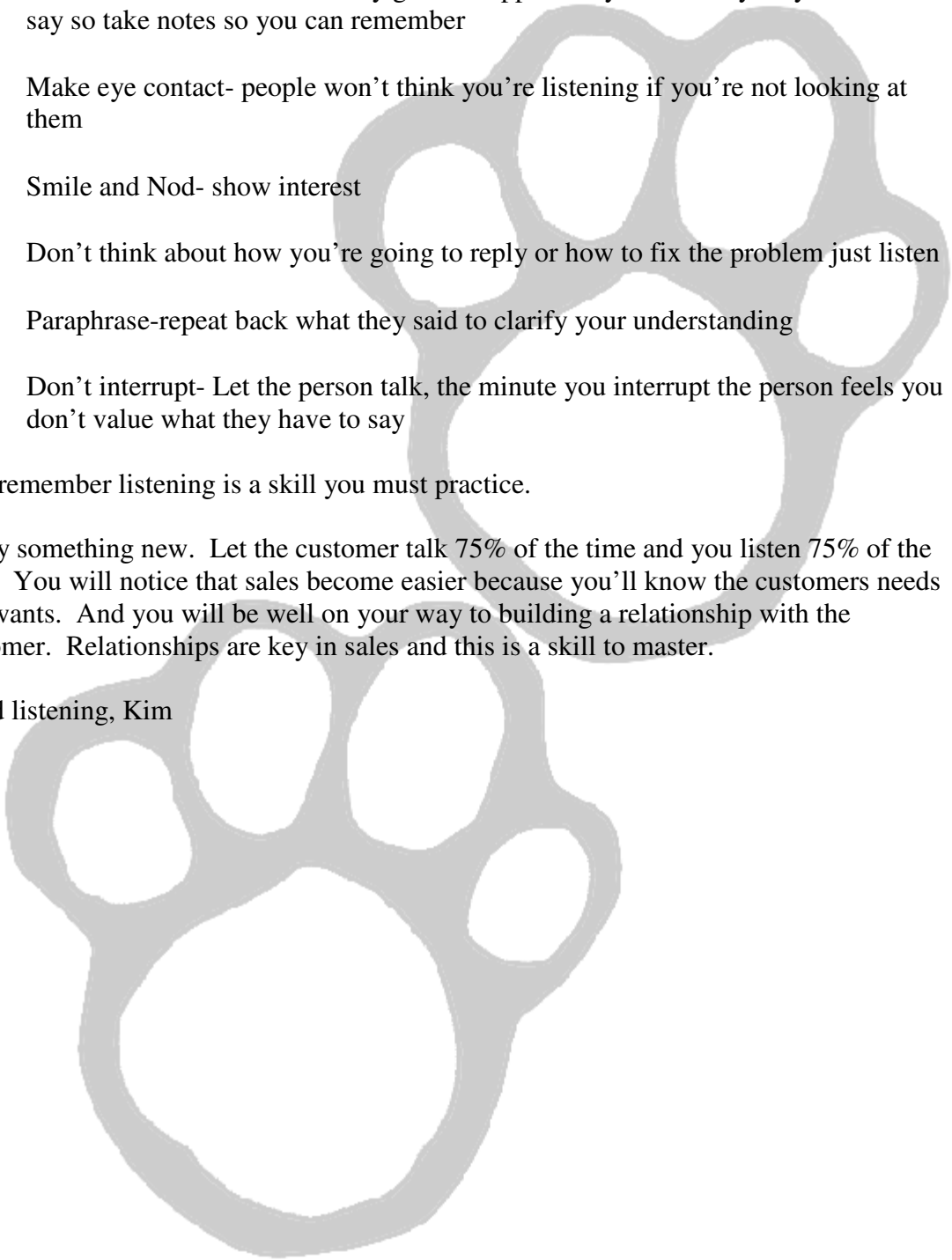
So you have the Salesperson approach you and it starts. This person is the expert on what they're selling and in the next few minutes to an hour considering what you are going to buy all you are going to do is hear them talk. If we are entering this situation don't we want to Buy? Why doesn't the salesperson take the time to find out what it is we want to buy and then give us the best product that meets our needs? Salespeople should talk 25% of the sales presentation. That means that the remaining 75% of the time they should be listening. When was the last time you experienced this in a sales situation? You probably haven't experienced this very often. Why? Well there are a few reasons why we are going to explore.

Let's start with the fact that Salespeople feel the only way they can close the sale is to prove to the prospect that they have the most knowledge about this product and they must share it with you. They need to make you an expert by the time they're done and then you will be educated and do business with them. Don't we seek out these experts so they can help us? Most of us don't have enough time in the day to accomplish what we need, let alone become experts in another field that once we make this decision we may not need to visit again.

Let's also look at the fact that "Perception is Reality". When someone develops a perception that becomes their reality. This tends to lead us to prejudge our customer and decide we know what is right for them. We may not offer all of our products because we know they can't afford them. Or they don't need all those bells and whistles. Is that truly our choice to make? No. We are there to give the customer options and let them decide. We don't know how they spend their money and it's truly not our choice. And similar to prejudging our customers we also tend to jump back and forth across the line of Seller and Buyer. What do you mean by that? Simple, we tend to think that all buyers think like us. I know that I wouldn't pay for a maintenance agreement on a product I could maintain myself so why would anyone else. Well, I know how to fix things and maintain them but most people don't. As a salesperson you must remember to remain in your role of sales so that you don't make decisions for your customer.

And the most common reason salespeople talk more than 25% of the sales presentation is that people in general are poor listeners. If we allow our customers to talk 75% of the time and we practice our listening skills our job actually becomes much easier. Why? Well the more the customer talks the more information we gather about them and the easier it is to make the sale. First they basically will tell you what they want and we can tailor our offerings to their needs. Second people are more interested in how much you care rather than how much you know. And third, how many times do people actually listen to us. We are so used to people rushing us or interrupting us that we grow frustrated. Think if someone actually gave you 100% of their attention and actually let you talk. Wow, what a feeling, someone cares about what I have to say. But listening is an acquired skill that we must learn and practice. Some things to try:

- Focus- make this person the most important person in the world

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- Take notes- if someone actually gets the opportunity to talk they may have a lot to say so take notes so you can remember
  - Make eye contact- people won't think you're listening if you're not looking at them
  - Smile and Nod- show interest
  - Don't think about how you're going to reply or how to fix the problem just listen
  - Paraphrase-repeat back what they said to clarify your understanding
  - Don't interrupt- Let the person talk, the minute you interrupt the person feels you don't value what they have to say

And remember listening is a skill you must practice.

So try something new. Let the customer talk 75% of the time and you listen 75% of the time. You will notice that sales become easier because you'll know the customer's needs and wants. And you will be well on your way to building a relationship with the customer. Relationships are key in sales and this is a skill to master.

Good listening, Kim