



"Now In Our 38th Year"

From *the desk of David Simpson*

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"Do not listen to the person who has the answers. Listen to the one who has the questions."

-Albert Einstein (March 14, 1879 – April 18, 1955) German theoretical physicist

Einstein, who was not given a middle name at birth, just like his father, Hermann, is best known for developing the theory of relativity ($E = mc^2$) and his contributions to quantum mechanics (atomic properties of nature). While he became (and remains) world-famous for his impact on science, it is not so well known that Einstein's brain was stolen upon his death and the fate of his daughter, Lieserl, remains a mystery to this day. Einstein never spoke of her, and scholars did not learn of Lieserl's existence until more than 30 years after Einstein's death!

Research (Accenture, 2015) shows that 96% of people consider themselves good listeners yet retain less than 50% of what others say immediately after the words are said – so the struggle with listening is clearly not a long-term memory issue. One of the apparent reasons for these poor listening skills is that people often get distracted thinking about what they are going to say next during a conversation. Investigations further suggest that women, in general, are better listeners than men. When it comes to listening, it might be helpful to consider the TED Talks by Julian Treasure. His session on "How to get people to listen" has received 47 million views and the one on the "5 ways to listen better" has received only 5 million views. You can develop your listening skills by the doing the following: don't assume; be curious; ASK QUESTIONS; realize that not everything is about you; allow for silence with a pause; monitor body language; clarify the thoughts of others; and remove distractions. As for your team, good listening skills need to be a cornerstone in your decisions for those who get promoted. For follow up reading, consider picking up a copy of *"Listen Like You Mean It"* by Ximena Vengoechea.

Born exactly 143 years ago this month, it goes without saying that Albert Einstein knew something about asking questions.

Perform better!