



# ACCSS Associated Chaplains in California State Service

---

Paul Gordon, Treasurer

[accss@accss.org](mailto:accss@accss.org)

---

## ACCSS Newsletter

July 2017

In the last few weeks, I have been reminded just how important listening is as a part of our calling as chaplains.

Many times we concentrate on the message we want to deliver, the issue that is most pressing, or working to plan or implement a new program. However, focusing too much on our goals can become an obstacle to our work. We need to both listen and hear what people are saying to us.

I know this sounds so simple, but in reality, over and over again I've been reminded that as a society we've stopped listening to 'avoid the noise.' We concentrate on phones, tablets, computers, work schedules, etc., and not on each other. Emails have replaced conversations, and as I have been told by many teens, text messages are so much easier than talking.

We need to remember, to quote my mother, "to put our listening ears on." While this was being said to my 4 year old, it struck home. It reminded me that the most important thing I can do as chaplain is to truly be present, both listening to and hearing what someone is saying to me.

So many of us feel overwhelmed by all the demands placed on us by our work, family, friends and the world in general. People look to us as chaplains for strength, faith, guidance and direction. By being present, really listening and hearing what is said, we improve the chances of truly taking care of those who depend upon us.

As chaplains, we need to be mindful of all those who are in our care, both those in our institutions and our colleagues. A kind word, a moment of presence and a willing heart can make all the difference in the world.

Let's all "put on our listening ears" and see what happens.

With respect and blessing,

*Paul Gordon*

Paul Gordon  
Jewish Chaplain  
Central California Women's Facility & Valley State Prison