

How to Hear What Is Not Being Said

To understand people, I must listen to what they are not saying, perhaps what they will never say.

Listening is a skill. Like any skill it can be improved through practice and feedback. Listening is also a presence. Knowing someone is willing to take the time and is in a caring attitude makes all the difference in the world to the talker in developing trust in you and opening themselves (maybe for the first time) to you.

Characteristics of a good listener

1. Eye Contact
2. Picking up on feelings
3. Not interrupting
4. Non judgmental
5. Being comfortable with silence
6. Picking up on non-verbals: body language, inflection, gestures, and sighs
7. Giving off positive non-verbals
8. Being totally present with a caring attitude

Listening 101 responses – fishing for feelings and stories

1. *It sounds like* - picking up an emotion and reflecting it back. “Casting lines in the feeling pool.”
2. *Tell me more* – invites the talker to elaborate
3. *Why, because* – always follow through with this to get “the rest of the story”

70% of all conversations are non-verbal. Most serious conversations start not by the talker talking but by the listener picking up on a non-verbal and then **inviting the talker into the conversation:**

1. *You don't seem to be yourself.*
2. *You seem distracted.*
3. *Seems like you are deep in thought.*
4. *Seems like something is on your mind.*

Feelings:

1. Are universal. You may not be able to relate to the experience, but you can to relate to the feeling.
2. Are neither good nor bad. They are just feelings.
3. Do not need to be solved – just heard. *Human soul doesn't want to be fixed. It just wants to be heard*
4. “Negative” feelings are hard to express and may come out through the “back door.”
5. FINE – *Feelings Inside Not Expressed*

Things not to say - The talker is speaking from their perspective, not yours.

1. *I know exactly how you feel.*
2. *You are making a mountain out of a molehill.*
3. *Things could be worse.*
4. *I think you might be overreacting.*
5. *Come on. Suck it up. It will be better tomorrow.*
6. *I know just how to fix that for you.*

Finding the right “Feeling Band” on the Feeling Radio Network

1. Feelings have general headings: mad, glad, sad, embarrassed etc...
2. The trick for the listener is to:

- a. Come up with where on the spectrum is the feeling you are hearing.
- b. Are they enraged or are they frustrated?
3. The only way to find out is to ask by casting a line in the “Feeling Pond.” *We don’t see things as they are, we see them as we are.*

Clarifying – If something is not adding up, politely interrupt and say:

1. *Help me to understand.*
2. *I’m confused.*
3. *If I heard you correctly.*
4. *Can you help clarify?*
5. *I think I am off the path.*

End of Life Conversations – from *Being Mortal*, Dr. Atul Gawande

1. *I wish things were different.*
2. *What is your understanding of the situation?*
3. *What fears do you have?*
4. *What are your goals if things worsened?*
5. *What tradeoffs are you willing to make or not to make?*

Outcomes of a Peak Listening Encounter

1. Venting
2. Sorting out and clarification
3. Someone cares about me
4. Being able to express emotions
5. Being heard
6. Telling my story of *who I am*
7. Healing
8. Understanding *Seek first to understand.*
9. Having a peak conversation v. everyday chit chat
10. Self revelation
11. Relief

Closing thoughts

1. Talking about past events often bring up unresolved feelings for listener. To be a better listener it is important to work on your own issues first. Can you express your emotions? *To bury a feeling, is to bury it alive.*
2. Follow your intuition/gut feelings.
3. Anger is a secondary emotion. *Don’t take it personally. It’s business!*
4. These are skills that can be used in all aspects of your life.
5. Reach out. They may not want to talk at the time, but you are laying groundwork for future. At the least, they know someone cares about them.
6. Incorporate giving and receiving specific feedback in your life. (You need to ask for it and probably will have to ask “Because?” after receiving it.)

Amazing Circles Workshops

Dave Kampfschulte

Email – dave@amazingcircles.net

cell -616 260-2761

website – www.amazingcircles.net