

being in relationship and the 3rd way of listening

How much you hear is equal to how much you are here. How much you are here is equal to how much you hear.

You never experience 'the world'. You only experience 'your world'. Likewise, you never hear 'the world'. You only hear 'your world'. Communication is the number one factor in generating successful relationships. For the past 16 years of delivering personal and professional development trainings worldwide I have heard story after story of failure and success in business and relationship from thousands of people. Fully 90% of the reasons cited for either failure or success had to do with communication. Communication is a direct indicator of the quality, depth, health, and overall effectiveness of any relationship, personal or professional. The 3rd Way of Listening is a practice for radically improving the effectiveness of all levels of communication, including with others, you, the world, and life.

**"What you are looking for is who is looking."
-St. Francis of Assisi**

The simplicity of the technique is its greatest asset. Long involved and complicated techniques generally don't get utilized. They can become as arduous as no solution at all. Keep it simple. Don't let simplicity fool you though. Simple, yet powerful, ideas can be overlooked and not applied due to simplicity. This is because most people have a belief that life and success is a complicated process. If it weren't complicated they wouldn't have an excuse for their own lack of progress. Therefore they believe all effective tools must be as complicated. This just isn't so. The most profoundly impacting ideas and practices are usually simple. This is one of those techniques that is simple and yet, powerful and effective. It is a challenge for most in spite of its simplicity because a commitment is required to produce results. This is where everyone fails, from a lack of commitment. I say there are no communication breakdowns, only the absence of commitment. There are no communication gaps, only a lack of commitment. If you want to have this technique work, or any technique for that matter, you must bring a commitment to have it work.

What is your commitment right now regarding this work? Can you really say you are committed to have your communication grow by leaps and bounds? Without commitment nothing happens. Get committed and use this technique over and over until you have created a habit.

There are two ways we learn, through repetition and emotional involvement. It is through repetition and emotional involvement that we create our habitual beliefs, behaviors and feelings. Get committed to continually practice this technique and emotionally connect with your reasons for doing it. Why do you want your communication to improve? What will be the benefits? What are the prices you are willing to pay, hard work, persistence, or what? Be specific. Write down the benefits and the prices. There is no free lunch.

"To make headway, improve your head."

-B. C. Forbes

There are two parts to any communication, giving and receiving or simply, speaking and listening. The quality of our communication is in direct proportion to our ability to do both effectively. Excelling in just one would be like only breathing in one direction. You can't just continue to exhale and still live. You will eventually run out of breath. You must also be as good at inhaling as exhaling. You must also excel in listening to be effective in your communication. This assignment focuses on our ability to receive or generously listen, to inhale in the experience of communication. This will result in an increase of depth or effectiveness of our communication. The quality in any given communication is in direct proportion to our listening skills. Listening generously includes hearing the words, as well as feelings, intuition, attitudes, past experiences, beliefs, paradigms, and what isn't being said. With practice you will begin to be aware of the communication that isn't verbally expressed as well. There are some steps to uncovering The 3rd Way of Listening. The first step is to notice there are only two ways of listening that most people have ever mastered. Here they are:

Agreement

This is the state of mind generated by the listener when what is heard is consistent with already known information or belief systems. In this listening what is being heard is filtered through already decided upon opinions, beliefs, judgments, needs, or agenda. If what we hear matches, we automatically agree.

Disagreement

This is the state of mind generated by the listener when what is heard is

inconsistent with already known information or belief systems. In this listening what is being heard is also filtered through already decided upon opinions, beliefs, judgments, needs, or agenda. If what we hear doesn't match, we automatically disagree.

"A great many people think they are thinking when they are rearranging their prejudices." - William James

From these two ways of listening you already know something and are being right about what you already know. Both of these ways of listening reinforce an already known belief system and are mired in the past. While you are listening any one of these two ways nothing new gets in. We are merely confirming or not confirming what we hear as consistent with what we already know. This is great for gathering information or evidence in order to be right, but limited in creating extraordinary relationships and results. People that consistently listen from agreement or disagreement usually learn to defend positions rather than truly communicate. These two ways of listening are great for unconsciously arguing for your own limitations. (It is important to note you always win that argument.) Most people simply know how to agree or disagree, like or dislike, or believe or disbelieve as a listening skill. They are constantly stuck in their interpretations of everything they hear and are listening for evidence to support those interpretations. There is however another way of listening to the world that lives outside of like or dislike, agree or disagree, and the ability to cultivate this way of listening is crucial to learning new things. It is crucial for declaring and creating new possibilities. It is a simple and yet powerful way to experience communication at all levels, including communication with others, yourself, the world, and life.

The 3rd Way of Listening has these two practices:

1. Be Here Now (or at least More)

This means that we present ourselves more than just physically. It requires that we present ourselves completely. That means we present ourselves physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. This means we are expressly intent on receiving whatever communication is being given. You know the difference when someone is just physically present versus present as a complete package. This takes practice. Start by consciously deciding that the other person expressing the communication is important to you. This is merely the act of making a decision. In my experience most people fail to notice that all meaning and importance is assigned, whether consciously or unconsciously. Consciously decide. When you declare the importance of something or someone then all communication or contribution from them is also assigned importance and

meaning. It is that simple. Stay awake in your listening. Give them your complete and full attention. Sincerely desire to hear what they have to say and desire to understand. Listen as though it was the first time you ever heard them. By being fully present you make possible the reception of the communication. Stay connected to them. Notice as much as you can about them, physically and emotionally. Notice as they speak how you respond emotionally. Notice the tone of their voice. Notice your reactions and focus on them some more. Play a game of seeing how much you can notice about you and them as you listen. Have your goal be that they really feel heard. The depth and richness of any communication will be in proportion to the depth of your presence. How much are you being present right now as you read? Has your reading become automatic? Stop right here and consider all that you have just read in the preceding paragraph.

How does The 3rd Way of Listening apply to your life? Have you decided perhaps that it doesn't apply? Are you acting as though you already know something? Are you reading this material through agreement and disagreement? The point isn't if you agree or disagree with any of it.

How much you are here is how much you are hearing.
How much you are hearing is how much you are here.

2. Listening Generously

This quality of listening allows for completely new experience, possibility, and information. Become large enough to include all viewpoints. Be less interested in 'being right' and more interested in relationship. What is more important to you, being right or being successful?

Listening generously means to listen with:

No opinion

If there was one commodity we will never run out of, it is opinions. There is no shortage of opinions. Listening with no opinion does not mean that you are entirely without opinion. It means you realize that affirming or creating an opinion is not the purpose of listening. You are not listening to reinforce your opinions or beliefs. Notice you always have an opinion and leave it at that. Go back to listening.

No judgment

What you like or dislike about what you are hearing is irrelevant to the process. The point with this practice is to increase the fullness and depth of

communication. You have complete control over that. Constantly judging what you hear only serves to create defensiveness in the communication. It isn't so much that you do judge, but rather you don't have your judgment be so damned important. When you are listening generously there is no 'good news' or 'bad news', just the news. You practice listening without attachment to your judgments.

No need

Watch out for listening to satisfy your needs of approval, attention, being right, looking good, being liked, doing it right, or any other background noise of being 'needy'.

No agenda

This means to listen without unspoken motives on your part other than the desire to really hear what someone has to say. Listening to get them to like you or do something for you is not the point. Listening to wait for your turn to talk is not The 3rd Way of Listening.

No expectations

Don't listen with any expectations of what you will hear or what you want to hear. Listen with a clean slate. Listen just because you can not because you expect a particular quantity or quality of experience.

Listen the 3rd Way. You will hear you hearing.

In the next chapter you will discover the major four ways people have organized their world and how this affects their ability to communicate. You are about to become a world-class listener.

<http://www.being.com/relationship.html>