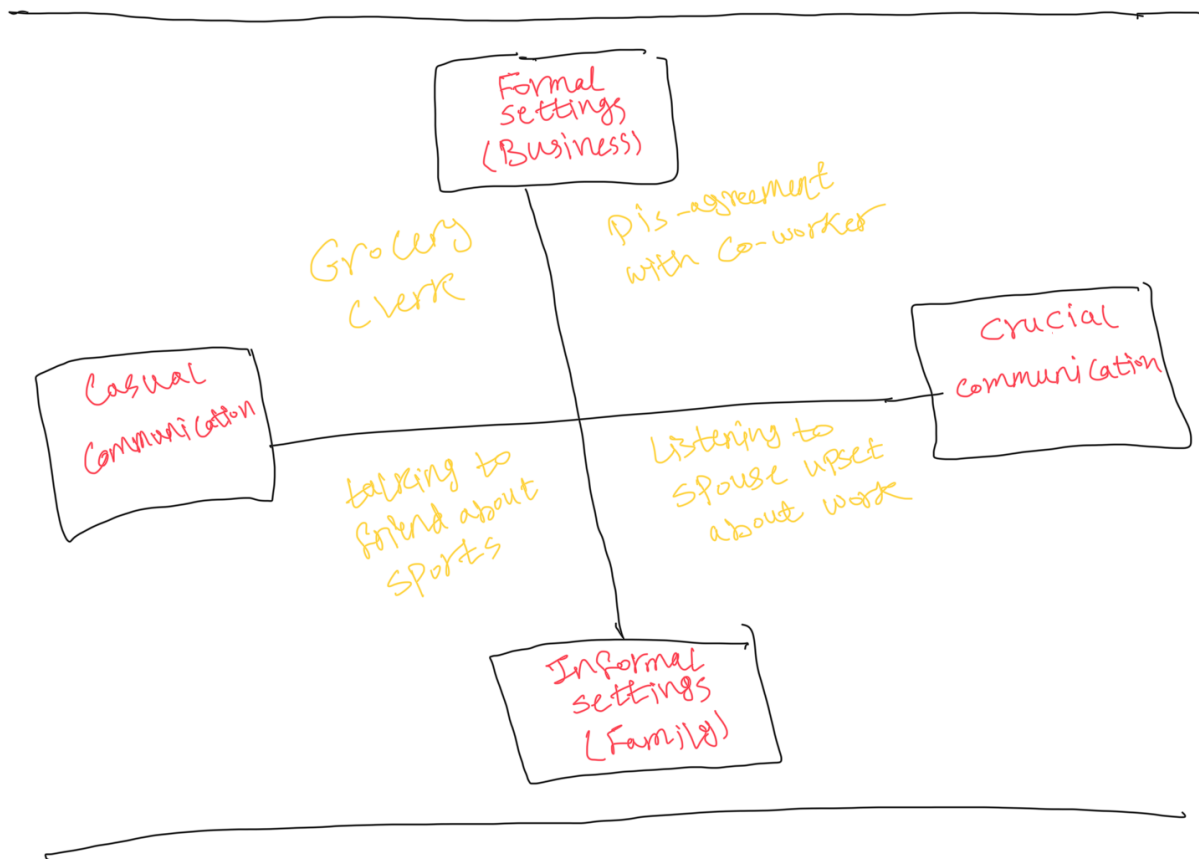


# Active Listening

## Listening:

- Suspending judgment and being fully present with another person to understand his opinion or point of view.
- It involves hearing more than the words of the speaker but taps into the deeper meaning. Unspoken needs and feelings conveyed. It is something that is done with the heart as well as the mind. It is showing that we not only understand what they are saying but also value and respect them. We not only communicate information but build and transform relationships.
- As you listen to people in your organization, you not only get better information for making decisions and solving problems but also help them feel valued in a way that they want to put out and give the job their best.

[Message Sent = Message Received]



## The Power of Deep Listening:

- Connect others
- Share Information
- Build Unity & Trust
- Strengthen your Relationships
- Increase Motivation and Personal Empowerment
- Promote Deeper Personal Growth

## Most Successful Families:

- They paid attention to their children's emotions.
- They recognized emotions as opportunity for closeness.
- They listened empathically and validated feelings.
- They helped their children name their feelings.
- They set limits while helping their kids solve their own problems.

>> Listening can be hard when you feel threatened or attacked, but the key is to make good listening as a response whenever one person is communicating to another.

## Reasons for why we are not Good Listeners:

- Our minds get bored and wander because we think at least three times faster than someone speaks.
- Our natural tendency is to evaluate and agree and disagree with what we hear.
- We listen to respond rather than understand.
- We want to solve problems.

## How to remain attuned to the Speaker?:

- Train your brain to stay focused.
- Give the speaker your full and undivided attention.
- Listen for the main points.
- Hear between the lines.

## Poor Listening Responses:

- **Formulating Response:** This is thinking about what you are going to do next instead of giving your full attention to the speaker in order to understand their message and point of view. You only catch a part of what they say because you are so busy thinking about your next words.
- **Disagreeing and Arguing:** It is judging what somebody is saying and letting them know why they are wrong or why they are right instead of hearing them out to understand their point of view.
- **One-Upping:** You hear what somebody says but you come back with something else like, "**You think that's bad, here's what happened to me or it reminds me of...**". In other words, you insert your own experience into the conversation rather than creating space for the speaker to feel heard. It is ok to share your own experience but you need to be aware of doing so, so you are not simply cutting someone off, interrupting their flow and taking a conversation away, when you want to keep the focus on them.
- **Ignoring:** This being distracted or multitasking or simply not giving importance to what somebody has to say, and not giving your full attention.
- **Lecturing and Moralizing:** This is telling others how they should think and feel, it is designed to guilt them, and get them to change their thinking or behavior.
- **Criticizing and Comparing:** This is finding fault or making negative comments about another's behavior or character or the words that they are using in order to get them to do what you want.
- **Giving Advice:** Telling somebody what to do and how to solve their problems. The intent here is usually good but it may not fit the speaker's situation and it also fails to respect the responsibility on the speaker to resolve his own problems. The advice will oftentimes be rejected and even if it is accepted, what it does is breed a dependency and a lack of faith in one's self. Of course there are times when advice is helpful and called for but usually further into a conversation, once the speaker has really been heard and become open and receptive to input.
- **Fixing:** This is taking over of fixing something for someone even. This is taking over and doing something that they could be for themselves.

- **Sympathizing:** Feeling sorry for someone, it may seem caring but it reinforces a person's complaining or negative feelings and rewards them for feeling bad instead of taking an action.
- **Rescuing or Soothing:** Similar to sympathizing. This is trying to make somebody feel better rather than allowing them to own their experience. It is making somebody feel better by trying to minimize or undo the consequences of their actions.
- **Giving In:** This is allowing the feelings or desires of another to cause you to back off your boundaries or point. Deep Listening means that you hear out what others have to say but it doesn't necessarily mean that you have to agree or more importantly what I'm talking about now is accommodate their wishes just to keep the peace.
- **Choosing Sides:** This is deciding that somebody is right and somebody is wrong instead of going for a deeper understanding and allowing a couple of people to talk through their differences. It perpetuates feelings of injustice and lack of understanding of each person's point of view.

## Poor Listening Responses Problems:

- Invalidate the feelings and experience of the speaker.
- Make it unsafe for someone to talk and so close down communication.
- Rob the speaker of self-responsibility.

[Listening and Trust Building precede Problem Solving]

## Active Listening as someone is going through Grief:

### • Bad Responses:

- It is important to realize that you don't have to take away their pain.
- Your purpose should be to be present to their pain rather than try to take it away. Be present to them in a non judgmental way.
- Avoid saying things like: "**I know how you feel**", you really don't even if you have gone through a similar experience it doesn't mean that you know exactly how they are thinking or feeling or processing their experience.
- Avoid trying to soothe them or make them feel better with comments like: "**He is in a better place now**".
- Avoid saying anything that implies what or how they should feel, especially avoid using words like: "**at least**" for example: "**At least he is no longer suffering**", "**At least you still have your other kids to love**".

### • Helpful Responses

- I am so sorry for your loss.
- Losing a loved one is hard.
- I wish I had the right words.
- I know how much you loved her.
- You are in my thoughts.
- I will miss her/him.

## Bedrock:

It is getting deep enough into a conversation to know that you are dealing with real issues, bedrock requires respect, safety and openness. You don't get the bedrock when you don't listen, when you rush in with your solutions. By getting to bedrock, you not only get at the root cause of problems but you're also able to engage with others in ways that promote their growth and development as well as greater trust and collaboration. You're not searching for deep bedrock every time you talk to someone. The purpose of good listening isn't to get to bedrock but to make sure the speaker feels heard.

## Example of Bedrock:

1. Teams are a waste of time.
2. We can't make decisions.
3. I like to work with my hands.
4. I'm not good at book learning.
5. I'm afraid of looking bad (**Bedrock**).

## Characteristics of Bedrock:

- **There is an Attitude of Mutual Respect:** The speaker feels your respect even when there is a difference in age or position or authority.
- **It feels Safe:** The speaker can open up because they know you are not going to judge them. They know that you sincerely want to understand their point of view.
- **You are Authentic:** You're not playing games. You are being real with each other. The information that is shared is deep and honest. The Speaker is telling the truth not simply saying what you as a listener, want to hear.
- **Trust is High:** Each party trusts the motives of the other.
- **Concern for "US" not just "ME":** You're not pitted one against another. You're not really fighting each other but you are working together to understand or solve a common problem.

## Respond BIDS:

- **Turning Towards:** By good listening and/or engaging.
- **Turning Against:** By disagreeing or arguing.
- **Turning Away:** By ignoring.

## Assumptions:

Positive assumptions predispose you to listen. Negative assumptions lead you away from listening. Positive assumptions leads to deep listening and deep listening leads to positive outcomes.

## Goals of Deep Listening:

- Understand accurately the message of the speaker.
- Creating safe and trusting conditions.

## 7 Guidelines for becoming a better Listener (Effective Listening):

- **Be Totally Attentive or Present.**
- **Have an Open, Non-Judgmental Mindset.**
- **Use Prompts:** Use facial expressions, comments or simple phrases that let the speaker know you're engaged and you want to encourage them to continue, for example: "**Uh hu**", "**Okay**", "**Wow**".
- **Hear the Meaning.**
- **Ask Clarifying Questions:**
  - Could you share more about you mean by that?
  - Can you help me understand how you arrived at that conclusion?
  - What interpretation did you make of that comment/situation?
  - What did you feel when that occurred?
  - What else was going on?
  - What happened next?
- **Restate what you're hearing (Active Listening):** By paraphrasing or word mirroring back what you're hearing, phrases like:- "**Let me see if I understand**", "**Is this what you're saying?**"
- **Be Okay with Silence.**

## Group Dynamics:

- **Atmosphere:** What's the overall atmosphere or tone of the group? Is it warm and friendly? Is that argumentative and competitive?
- **Participation:** Who is participating? Who's not participating? How and how much do people participate in the group?
- **Influence:** Who has influence and how do they exert that influence? And what's the style of influence that different people in the group use?
- **Relationships:** How would you describe the bond and the quality of relationships between members? Are they engaged and attached? Do people feel included? And who are the harmonizers? Who are the people that try to keep some cohesion and how do they fulfill this role?
- **Task-Focus:** How focused is the group on accomplishing a task ? How do various members contribute toward the accomplishment of that task? Who facilitates moving toward the accomplishment and who gets in the way or impedes the accomplishment of the task?
- **Decision Making:** What kinds of decisions does this group make and how do the members make decisions and who's involved and who's not involved?

## The Valuing Process:

Asking Questions which help people explore what they want and actions they can take to make it happen. If you give a man a fish you feed him for a day. If you teach him to fish you feed him for a lifetime. Giving advice as giving a man a fish. Using the value in skill is teaching him how to fish.

## Valuing is based on Questions:

- Questions place responsibility properly.
- Invite the person to think for him or herself.
- Help the person access their own motivation and find their own answers.
- They not only help people solve their problems but also help them become more self-sufficient and emotionally mature.

## Kinds of Valuing Questions:

- **Consequences:** These questions bring people face to face with what's now happening and the consequences of what's happening.
  - What is happening?
  - What will happen if this continues?
  - Will things get better or worse?
  - Is that what you want?
- **Vision and Direction:** These questions help people begin to formulate a vision to help them look at what they want. Where they are headed?
  - What do you want?
  - How would you like things to be?
  - What is important to you?
  - What is possible?
  - What do you need to happen?
  - What are the outcomes you want from this situation?
  - Anything else?
- **Option and Action:** These questions help people get into action and move them from vision to steps that they can take to make that vision a reality.
  - What choices do you have? anything else?
  - What solutions do you see?
  - What can you do to make that happens?
  - What do you control? Not control?
  - What might happen if you do this or that? How would that work?
  - How and by when will you do that?

## Valuing Questions keep the Responsibility on the Speaker:

- What thoughts do you have about this?
- How would you like things to be?
- What ideas do you have to make this happen?
- What can you do?