

1. a). I believe there is evidence of congruence between each speaker because of the 3 components shared effectively by each person in the video. To speak with congruence is to use proper verbal skills, non-verbal skills, as well as indicative body language (Chapman, 2017). These 3 elements are the important factors that dictate whether a person is communicating effectively and properly or not. To achieve congruence means that these 3 elements are all aligned with one another and in union, portray the same image to the listener. This means that the words, the facial expressions, tone, as well as the body language from the speaker must all together, as one, unify their expression of communication to the listener to convey information most effectively. In this video it is seen that the visual, vocal, and verbal expressions are the steps to aligning communication. These 3 elements to congruency in communication are essential, and when they are not aligned, people are not as trustworthy, and are less respected (YouTube, 2017). In the video from lecture week 9, both people show a great use of hand gestures to describe their speech. For example, at one point the coach describes confidence from support group as a reason for successful accountability in his career. As he describes this, he positions his hands in a way that describes a foundation-like visual image that allows the listener to really visualize and comprehend that the support group acts as a foundation for him. His hands are positioned in a way that emphasizes the backbone of his support group as he explains verbally and through facial expressions what helps him take accountability in his workplace. Another point in the conversation that was very strong in supporting the argument that both these people are engaged in the discussion is the eye contact and facial expression (non-verbal expression). At one instance in particular, the coach says, "look inside yourself and say, what could I have done better?". As he does this, his facial expression shows concern and questioning as well as an element of self-reflection, which aligns directly with his words. He also positions his hands towards his chest showing an inner self-reflection through his gestures, which fully allows the listener to understand his point further than his simple few words. In terms of engagement, right after this happens, Kevin is seen nodding his head as well as responding with a "yeah"

between the coaches breaks, showing his engagement and acknowledgement of his expression. His tone in the way he nods expresses the understanding of the coaches point. He says yes in a way that indicates his comprehension of the communication, which exemplifies his engagement in the conversation. This agreeance through nodding and saying “yeah” gives engagement to the speaker and shows active participation and listening. Moreover, the body language of both individuals is supportive of the engagement between the two people. They are sitting straight up with good body posture, showing good energy, facing each other, not with arms crossed or hunched over or looking elsewhere in the room, and showing their care to discuss and communicate. The eye contact is another element of this conversation that strongly indicates engagement among the two individuals. Kevin is always seen to be maintaining eye contact with the coach, and although the coach may look away at his hands to describe a non-verbal or visual expression, he reestablishes that eye contact before and after these points which is showing engagement on both parts.

1. b). In this video, the listener is not fully engaged in the conversation towards the end of it. Kevin is seen twice to be losing interest in the conversation, showing what seems to be a lack of interest. This may not necessarily be the case, but this is what bad listening skills show. When he looks away twice from the coach as he is speaking, he loses eye contact, showing that his thoughts are elsewhere and not invested into the conversation. Perhaps he did not clear his mind and allow himself to fully grasp the conversation, which is an important thing to do when being a good listener, as explained in the week 9 lecture. The coach searches for that eye contact from Kevin but this is not fully maintained which shows the lack of listening skills from the listener. The coach kept his hand gestures and verbal expressions well implemented and I think he kept his congruency. To improve the discussion, the interviewer (Kevin) should maintain eye contact and remain actively participating in the conversation, instead of having wandering eyes and showing disinterest. This doesn't have to necessarily mean speak more or ask a follow up question. This can be as simple

as showing engagement from a listening perspective. Building trust by establishing and keeping eye contact is the way the interviewer could have improved the discussion. A second point to improving the discussion, as mentioned in the week 9 lecture, is something as simple as smiling throughout is an effective way of putting your speaker at ease (McGuire, 2022). The interviewer keeps a straight face for majority of the interview and is seen to not genuinely smile. The most that is seen is a smirk that could easily come across the wrong way as it is significantly different than a resting smile throughout majority of the discussion. The interviewer almost looks intimidating at certain points, and this may be proved in the speaker's words as he stutters a few times repeating the same word. This could be a byproduct of feeling a lack of comfortability and overall uneasiness due to the interviewer's lack of positive feedback through his lack of emotion. A simple smile would uplift the discussion, give feedback, and create a less strict or uneasy environment for the coach.

I enjoy the value adding the B Roll gives to the interview from a viewer's perspective for a few reasons. When it is used appropriately, it helps with understanding the points talked about as it creates a visual representation of the words you are listening to. It paints a literal image in the viewer's head that is made accurately by the conveyer of the information, which only allows better expression, rather than the viewer having to create their own mental image of an argument (allowing for misinterpreting of communication). It allows the listener to not only hear a point, but also to fully see the point in action to further make it easier to fully grasp or comprehend. It makes listening require less skill, which allows takeaway and understanding from the speaker to increase overall, which is the goal in communication in its entirety. Seeing the points as they are being heard also helps make the argument more convincing, as not only you are hearing to believe, but you are also seeing it. Seeing the argument in front of your eyes makes it more believable and essentially proves it to the viewer.

2. What surprised me about the listening strategies in the reading was the part describing good listening including interactions that build a person's self-esteem (Zenger, 2019). It really intrigued me learning the two sides or components in the listening process. In a reading designed for listening, it manages to refer to the significance of the speaker's feelings in the process, and this was very surprising to learn how important the other side of things are. I figured this reading would entirely focus on the listener; however, it is obvious that it is much deeper than that. And this is exactly what surprises me because one wouldn't suspect being a good listener involves the self-confidence of the speaker! The way that this reading describes the importance of the way you as a listener should make your speaker feel is very insightful and humbling. This is what I would classify as my biggest takeaway. I did not focus on, or even consider, that the way I listen to someone can drastically affect the self-esteem or confidence they carry throughout a conversation. Knowing now, after this reading that listeners are considered great when they relay a positive experience for the other party, and by not being passive or critical, I will most certainly think about and analyze the confidence I feel the speaker I listen to shows to me. I will keep in mind how I act in a conversation is reflective towards the speaker's self-esteem, and that it's not entirely about me when I think about being a good listener. Asking others whom I converse with how I act as a listener and if I make them feel comfortable and confident in their speech is a question I have now thought about and would like to learn about to fully assess the way I listen. This part of the reading was most interesting to me because it really allows others to give you an honest opinion, and I bet it would be a humbling experience to ask others how they feel speaking with you. Despite it possibly not being what you want to hear, it will most certainly allow you to reassess your listening skills and this, ultimately, will allow the most growth in listening development, which is why this point in the reading really stuck out to me.

One strategy I know I must develop to become a better listener is the ability to make listening a “cooperative conversation”. Sometimes when I have a conversation and there are points that I disagree with, I may be inclined to zone out in a search for an argumentative response, clearly ignoring the speakers’ words, and therefore, fully not listening at all. Becoming defensive about specific comments is another thing that I have caught myself doing before, when I argue with people whose opinions matter a lot to me. In displaying these bad habits, I have reflected and can conclude I have had many moments where I showed brutal listening skills. This strategy in the reading has made me self-reflect and realize it is not competition, or about winning. Debates are different than listening, and I believe that listening should be apparent in both settings, nonetheless. I want to implement the strategy of not taking things personally, as well as not making a conversation a competition where someone wins or loses, rather, an exchange of opinion that smoothly interacts like a back-and-forth bounce of information exchange whereby it is symbiotically beneficial for both parties. Lastly, another point I need to focus on to further develop my listening skills was not in this reading, but it was mentioned in lecture week 9. Kevin referred to lack of focus as another aspect of bad listening skills. I feel sometimes I forget to clear my mind of all else and fully allow myself to focus and engage in a conversation. My focus can bounce off the walls and I will be thinking of other thoughts while a speaker is speaking to me, thus being a bad listener. I must implement the strategy of clearing away physical distractions as well as mental ones. Clearing my mind of other topics and keeping it that way throughout the conversation is essential to being a good listener, and I feel that now that I have realized this, I will keep it in mind before my next conversation. Thinking in depth and thoroughly about the topic at hand prior to and during the conversation is another essential skill to being a good listener that I feel will improve my skillset in this field.

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