Hello!

Welcome to lesson 3 of the course Diplomatic English.

This lesson is about the strategies you need for effective communication.

We spend a fair amount of our time exchanging information with colleagues and customers - sharing daily updates, collecting customer requirements or discussing product delivery. However, effective communication is more than just the exchange of information from sender to receiver. Productive and meaningful communication is a complex,  **two-way process** which includes both  **the ability to speak** and **the ability to listen.**

In this lesson we are going to practice the **L.I.S.T.E.N. model** that involves  **six strategies** you need to follow to make your meaning clear and avoid misunderstanding. Each letter illustrates a certain strategy.

**‘L’** stands for strategy number one: **‘Look and sound interested’**

When talking to someone, make sure you ‘Look and sound interested’. In a face-to-face meeting you can achieve that by making eye contact. If it’s an online meeting and your camera is off, make sure you make short polite comments that indicate interest, for example  *Right, I see, I understand, Yes, Of course, Really?, Oh that's interesting, Uh huh.*

**'I'** stands for  ***Inquire*,** which basically means asking for more information. To ask for more details about particular ideas, you can say:

*What exactly do you mean by [word]?*

*Could you clarify what you mean by.. ?*

*Could you say a little more about?*

*Could you run through that again, please?*

The next letter is **'S**', which represents  **Summarize**. Summarizing is an important communication strategy*.* If you realize that other people don’t understand you, you should be able to explain your ideas in a different way. To make your own meaning clear, use such expressions as  *:*

*I mean;*

*What I mean is;*

*What I am trying to say is;*

*What I’m saying is…;*

*In other words;*

*Ok, let me put it another way.*

**T’** stands for **‘Test if you understand’.** In other words, it’s checking understanding.  A common way to check your understanding is to paraphrase what the other person has said using your own words. You can say**,**

*So, what you are saying is ….*

*So, just to be clear, …  right?*

*Sorry, are you saying that….?*

*So, what you mean is ….*

**‘E’** represents  **‘Encourage’.** Another important strategy that ensures effective communication is encouraging questions and engaging the listener. We can achieve that by asking

*Do you have any questions?*

*Is everything clear so far?*

*Do you see what I mean?*

*Did that make sense?*

Last but not least, we arrive at **'N'**, which stands for **'Neutralize'.** Sometimes we need to say that something is not clear to us. But we should do it politely without blaming others for the misunderstanding. Avoid saying  ‘I think you are wrong’, instead say ‘*Maybe I've got it wrong...’* Other alternatives for neutralizing this kind of messages are

*Perhaps* ***I****'ve misunderstood...*

*I'm afraid* ***I*** *don’t follow...*

*Sorry, I don’t quite see what you mean. …*

In this lesson we’ve presented the L.I.S.T.E.N. model consisting of 6 strategies. When speaking, you will most likely need to use strategies such as Summarize and Encourage. While listening, make sure you Inquire and Test if you understand.  Two strategies of the L.I.S.T.E.N. model, however,  can be used both when speaking and listening.  They are Look and sound interested and Neutralize.

I hope you’ve found this information useful. Now let’s see how the strategies work in real life situations. Please go to the practice section, listen to 4 short conversations and identify the strategies in each.

Good luck with your studies!