

Quantum Healing



Seven Principles for Powerful Listening

Introduction

This may sound a little trite and a 'blinding glimpse of the obvious' but our individual and collective listening skills are at best fair and generally poor. The skill of listening is one that we could all improve upon. As a project manager, partner, father, and friend, I know that this is the case – and it applies to all of us! It never ceases to amaze me as a healer and life coach that a major source of our problems relating to others is based on our ability to listen.

Personal Relationships

Let's get personal. What are your personal relationships like? - with your spouse or partner, your children, friends and extended family members. From my experience, there isn't one category in my relationships that could not be improved.

A friend once said to me that the time that she felt most loved was when I didn't say or do anything but simply listened, and observed, and gave her my complete attention. Just last week, a hypnotherapy client of mine in his mid 50s, was able to resolve a major issue in his life when, for the first time in all those years, he felt that his mother had finally heard and understood the pain of what he had been through between the ages of 5 to 13.

We all desperately need to feel heard and understood, especially by our loved ones, but also by our work colleagues. Sometimes, by just anyone – ask a taxi driver, hairdresser, massage therapist or bar tender what they regularly hear! As a healer and life coach, 90% of what I do is listening. It is funny, but now in retrospect, I have realised that listening is 90% of what I did as a successful project manager.

Business Relationships

What you do at home you also take into the workplace. Your skills do not suddenly change when you walk in the front door at work. Your motivation and the effort you put into the work environment can sometimes make you work harder at listening but your basic skills do not change.

All effective and successful businesses are based on a foundation of effective relationships whether they are relationships with clients who purchase a product or service, suppliers, or internal organisational elements. Successful project teams, whether internal to an organisation, or teams based on cooperation and collaboration between organisations, are developed and maintained in an environment where members or groups of members feel that they are heard and understood.

It is sad that the attention we place on listening at work often falls dramatically when we arrive home. Our most important relationships in our lives are usually at home, and they suffer because we are tired, we have a lot on our mind from a busy workday and the effort required to truly listen to the most important people in our life seems to escape us.

Seven Principles for Powerful Listening

So how do we change things? We can improve all of our relationships very quickly if we adopt the following principles and guidelines for Powerful Listening.

1. Maintain Confidentiality

What we hear (and see) that is personal or specific to another person should be kept confidential and not shared with anyone else. If you are sharing with a third party, then keep the sharing to the essence of someone else's story without any names or specific details, and always share it in a honouring way that celebrates the wonderful qualities of that person.

I would not be inclined to share anything with someone who breaches the trust I placed in them by sharing my thoughts and feelings. This applies to every situation, including work situations where the current lack of confidentiality is appalling in many instances.

2. Be Totally Open

Try to listen with a 'beginner's mind'. In other words release evaluating or comparing what you are learning from the other person. Listen as if this is the first time you have heard anything like it before. Allow yourself to absorb everything that is being said and sit with it for a while. You may just hear something you have never heard before – at least not in the same way it is being expressed.

3. Positive Focus

Focus on the 98% that is working because what you focus on grows/expands. When you are listening, look for the positive aspects in the other person and in what they are saying, for when you do, you may be surprised to see that person's energy literally expand. For example, if you see confidence and power (irrespective of what the person is literally saying) and hold that energy within yourself – you will start to see that expand in the

other person. If you are hearing of struggle and frustration, try focusing your attention on compassion or strength and watch the other person receive and respond to that energy.

A good friend of mine calls this 'creative listening' – creating the experience of a communication through positive listening. Try it, I am sure you will be surprised at just how much you can create for the person speaking through simply listening positively and holding the power of intent within your own body as you openly listen to every word spoken.

4. Connect at the Heart Level

Try listening with your heart rather than your head. Allow yourself to feel in your heart the essence of what the other person is saying, and release the need to evaluate or judge, at least for that moment – there is always plenty of time for that later ... if you need to.

Leave yourself open to the real meaning of what is being conveyed. What is this person really saying?

5. Be Present

Be 100% present and focus your positive attention on the person speaking – “What you perceive in others you are strengthening in yourself” (A Course in Miracles T,73). Whether you are listening on your own or with other listeners, this includes refraining from side talk, cross talk, interrupting, or drawing attention to yourself.

Release the temptation of anticipating or 'knowing' what that person is sharing with you. Look for the 'gifts' being shared with you – their vulnerability, insights, intelligence, experience, etc. Refrain from formulating what you want to rebut or add to what is being shared – try and stop your mind from racing ahead to what you want to speak about!

6. Feedback and Acknowledgement

In the realm of active listening and providing feedback and acknowledgement, be authentic, keep it simple and speak to the essence of what you have heard. Always make eye contact with the person you are speaking to and speak in 'I' statements.

Again, positively focus on the 98% that is working ... the positive qualities of what you have heard and experienced. If you can refrain from value statements, such as, 'that was good' and speak from your heart on what that experience was for you (what you heard and felt speaking in 'I' statements) then you are inviting the other person to really hear your positive acknowledgement (we all have a tendency to deflect acknowledgement and not let it really 'land'). They cannot deny your experience of listening to them.

7. Take Responsibility for Yourself

If you are not in a good space to fully listen because you are tired, or need a better time for yourself to truly listen, then say so. "Honey, I'm tired and need a cup of tea and then can we talk?" is far better than not truly listening. It is a matter of speaking your truth, and if you always speak the truth the other person will learn to trust you.

In a work situation, you can always say something like, "I just need to finish what I am in the middle of and then can we talk so I can give you 100% of my attention". I have always been impressed by the comment from others when they say about someone, 'they were really listening and I felt like I had all the time in the world to get my points across'. In other words, 'I felt heard and understood because I had their undivided attention for as long as I needed.'

I wonder if you have heard the words spoken in this article – if you have truly listened? I invite you to play with these seven principles at home and at work and see what your experience is.

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About the Author

Allen is an intuitive healer whose healing modalities include professional qualifications as an Orion Theta Healing Technique practitioner, Metaphysical Hypnotherapist, Body Harmony™ practitioner, Rei-Ki Channel, and Emotional Freedom Technique (EFT) practitioner. Allen is also a professional Life Coach and qualified Spiral Dynamics - Values, Leadership & Change Management Consultant.