

Self-Teach Workbook

Listening Skills

Active Listening & Listening with Purpose

***Listening Skills** - Watch the Self-Teach Video*

Durham University Leadership Programme

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How To Use This Workbook

This workbook is intended to support the 'Self-Teach' modules and will provide additional activities, explanations and resources you can use in your leadership role.

Work through the self-teach video and, where directed, or as you feel appropriate, pause the video and refer to the workbook. In the video there will be opportunities for you to take a '60 second thought capture,' (indicated by a 🕒 symbol). Feel free to use the space provided in this workbook to jot down your thoughts. Alternatively, you can pause the video at any point to allow more time to consider the questions.

Take away resources (i.e. those that you can use separately as a 'tool' or resource in your leadership role) will also be highlighted by a 📁 symbol. This will prompt you to copy the resource for later use if you wish.

What to expect from the Module (video and workbook)

- Models, Tools & Tips - 🔧
- Reflective Questions - 🕒
- Post-session Resources and Exercises 📁

How to Use the Self-Teach Module

- Block out the time (sufficient time to watch and complete the activities)
- Download the PDF workbook
- Complete the exercises
- Pause/ rewind/ revisit any time
- Complete the post session activities
- Drop into the Q&A sessions planned

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What we mean by 'active listening'

Thought Capture Exercise



Consider the phrase 'active listening.' What do you think it means and what is involved?

Jot down your thoughts here:



How good a listener do you consider yourself to be? Do you get easily distracted? Are you quick to jump in and respond? Are you known as a good listener? What aspects of listening do you need to improve upon?

Jot down your thoughts here:

What we mean by 'active listening' (continued)

Active Listening

Active listening is the careful listening and observation of non-verbal cues, with feedback in the form of accurate paraphrasing.

Basic Ingredients

- Being 'in the Room' - fully present
- Absorbing all information - verbal and non-verbal
- Noticing and Noting
- Checking Understanding

Thought Capture Exercise



What do you think prevents effective listening? Think of past experiences where you have been (or not been) listened to. What affected the quality of the experience?

Jot down your thoughts here:

Common Listening Errors

- Rehearsing: *running through in your head how you will respond (as the other person is talking to you)*
- Judging Negatively/ Stereotyping *allowing our unconscious bias to place the person or the issue they are talking about into a category, or applying a label and acting accordingly*
- Identifying with... *perhaps you've had that exact experience or problem so you assume it's the same for them and you know what they need to do to solve it.*
- Advising *being quick to suggest solutions or offer advice on how they can deal with the issue*
- The Need to Be Right *perhaps you are having a disagreement and the need to be right takes over the process of simply exchanging views and listening to one another*
- Derailing or Placating *you feel uncomfortable with the topic and without realising it attempt to shift the focus away from that issue, or you see they are upset or in emotional pain or angry and focus on making them feel better or happier rather than dealing with the issue thoroughly*
- Distracted *you have a lot on your mind, your phone keeps pinging, there's lots of things going on around you, the TV is showing an interesting 'breaking news' story and your attention is everywhere but on the conversation and the content*
- Jumping ahead (thinking speed) *you are way ahead of the person speaking, you can see where the conversation is going and what they are really trying to say, so you rush them or cut them off or zone out until they get to the conclusion.*

Common Listening Errors *(continued)*



Thought Capture Exercise

What listening errors are you prone to? Not sure - ask some trusted friends.

Jot down your thoughts here:

What could you do to combat these errors?

Jot down your thoughts here:

LEAPS an approach to listening

The LEAPS aide memoire, is a useful guide to keeping in mind the key ingredients to an effective listening interaction. The aim is to listen, and move forward to the what next phase. In order to do that, we need to be confident that we have fully understood and to leave the person feeling like they have not only been listened to but heard and understood:

The L.E.A.P.S. Model

Listen *Listen with full attention and presence.*

Epathise *Acknowledge that their 'lived experience' is valid*

Acknowledge/Ask *Check/ acknowledge your understanding*

Paraphrase *Check understanding of sections of the conversation by repeating back what you feel you have heard*

Summarise *Provide an overview of the entire conversation in summary to show you have listened and to enable clarification/ correction*

Empathy

...the ability to the emotions of another, and the ability to imagine what someone else might be thinking or feeling

- *Cognitive empathy: identify and understand the emotions of another*
- *Affective empathy: the emotional responses we get in response to another's emotions.*

LEAPS an approach to listening (continued)



Thought Capture Exercise

Consider the listening errors covered previously. How can empathy prove both useful and problematic when actively listening?

Jot down your thoughts here:

LEAPS an approach to listening (continued)**Empathy*****The Benefits:***

- *Rapport*
- *Showing you Care*
- *Builds Trust*
- *Shows you get it*
- *Motivated to support*

Potential drawbacks:

- *Over Identify*
- *You Assume too much*
- *Become 'rescuer'*
- *Stereotype*
- *You feel overwhelmed*

Active Listening Techniques

- *Encouraging* *Can You Tell Me More?*
- *Clarifying* *When did this happen?*
- *Restating* *So, you would like...*
- *Reflecting* *You seem upset by this*
- *Summarising* *These are your main points?*
- *Validating* *Thank you for taking the time to...*

Non-Violent Communication Model

While studying the factors that affect our ability to stay compassionate, I was struck by the crucial role of language and our use of words'

*Marshall Rosenberg (2000) (*1)*

'At the root of every tantrum and power struggle are needs unmet'

*Marshall Rosenberg,
Non Violent Communication (*1)*



- Needs are the motor of human behaviour
- Human needs - autonomy, reliability, freedom, peace
- Feelings are signals of needs unmet
- Violence (including verbal violence) is an expression of needs unmet

How Could This Help?

- *In Recognising Unspoken Pain - Encouraging articulation*
- *Recognising your own feelings and unmet needs - are they getting in the way?*

How?

Recognising feelings are different to observations

Sticking to Observation

Encouraging the Avoiding Evaluation

Non-Violent Communication Model (continued)

Case Study



Read through the case study and identify where you think the speaker is engaging in 'evaluation'

A member of your team has asked for 'ten minutes' with you to discuss a problem they have with another team member. When you sit down with them to talk it through, they inform you that they had a problem with Jay. In their own words:

'I asked Jay to help carry in the audio equipment from the storage. They said they would, but later when I came back - I was really busy the day by the way, they had only brought in the big speaker. I needed them to bring everything in - the cables, the deck and some lighting that was there too. I'm getting frustrated because I seem to be the only one doing anything around here - everyone else is lazy. They do the minimum to get by and I am the only one who seems to care about making things work!'

Thinking of this from an NVC perspective:

What feelings are you appearing to observe as they speak?

What judgements (evaluations) do they seem to be making about Jay and the rest of the team?

Are these judgements based in fact (on the information you have).

If you were to communicate back to this team member what you observe (avoiding any judgements), how can you present what has been said as observation?

Non-Violent Communication Model (continued)

Suggestions:

Adopting an observational approach, you probably observe that your team member is frustrated and angry, perhaps feeling let down by Jay and possibly other team members.

They seem to have judged that Jay didn't fully complete the task requested because of laziness. It seems that they believe other team members are also lazy and don't care about the work they do.

It is easy to jump to a conclusion - they are lazy, they don't care, especially when frustrated or angry. And perhaps there are past experiences that support this. However, recognising that there could be alternative explanations is useful.

Considering the LEAPS model, you have an opportunity to empathise (without agreeing - I can tell you are frustrated by this). You can then paraphrase to check your understanding whilst removing the 'evaluation from the statements. Stating your understanding of what happened avoiding evaluation, may sound something like:

'So you asked Jay to move the audio from the cupboard. He removed one thing but not the rest. Is that right?'

You could encourage them to reflect on their interpretation by asking:

'What other explanation for Jay not moving all the equipment might there be?' Or 'let's assume for a moment it wasn't laziness, what other explanations might there be?'

You could offer suggestions if nothing forthcoming - 'perhaps they weren't sure what audio equipment you meant, or thought you just meant the speaker?' What might Jay have needed to help him be clear?

The essence of NVC is to help remove the power of emotion and evaluation in our interactions. Practice with some low level conversations.

Non-Violent Communication Model *(continued)*

Tips:

- *Prepare where possible*
- *Slow things down and understand that emotions need airing*
- *State what you see, hear or understand - avoid presenting your comments as final*
- *Ask them to expand on what they say - explore more, explain more*

Listening With Purpose

Why listen? What's the point? Clearly it is a powerful process that can validate, enrich relationships and lead to new understanding. As a leader, it is also important to recognise the purpose of active listening within an interaction. What are you aiming to achieve?



Thought Capture Exercise

Consider some of the interactions you have with your team - those where active listening is required of you. What is the point of the listening? What outcome is being sought? By them; by you?

Listening With Purpose (continued)

Ultimately, as a leader, the point of active listening is to empower the individual, encourage movement forward - towards a solution and/ or greater understanding.

Time To Think...

'The quality of person's attention determines the quality of other people's thinking'

Nancy Kline, Time to Think

Key Components:

Attention - being present, undistracted and non-judgemental

Ease (ease creates, urgency destroys) - allowing a luxurious amount of time

Place - conducive to feeling at ease, not rushed, safe and comfortable

Encouragement - Positive body language and actively acknowledging the value of what is being said

Incisive Questions - asking specific questions to encourage shifting of perspectives to arrive at new insights

Preparing them for the process

- Prepare them to expect the opportunity to think through this together
- This is not about providing them with the answers
- It is about encouraging them to think things through to ideas and solutions

Listening With Purpose (continued)

The Process (watch the self-teach video):

- **Encouraging them to say everything**

What is it you want to talk about / What are you thinking about this?

Is there anything more?

Is there anything more?

Repeat until...

- **What do they want from the meeting/ interaction/ conversation?**

What Do You Want To Achieve?

What issue or problem do you want to focus on?

What do you want from our conversation at this point?

- **Identify the limiting assumption**

What are You Assuming is true that may not be?

That's possible, but what are you assuming that stops you solving this issue?

What is the positive opposite of this assumption?

- **Asking an incisive question**

If you knew that [add in the positive - freeing assumption} were true,

What ideas would you have to...

(Solve the problem, achieve the goal, move forward?)

May need repeating

Listening With Purpose (continued)

- **Writing it down and taking action**

Capture the incisive question exactly

Give them a copy of it

Ask them what they will do next and encourage them to reflect on the question away from the conversation

Note: Don't cut them adrift - if this doesn't work for them

- **Appreciation**

Ensure that you finish with some positive appreciation - the effort they made, the ideas they generated, etc.

Overleaf is a 'time to think' resource sheet to assist you in having a 'time to think' interaction.

Time to Think Prompt sheet:



1. Saying Everything

- i. Is there anything else? Do you want to say anything else?*

2. Recognising what you want from the session

- i. Get them to summarise this succinctly in their own words.*

3. Finding the limiting assumption

- i. Identify it (I never seem to, I don't have enough...)*
- ii. The ask - what is the opposite of that*
- iii. Define the limiting assumption and the positive opposite*

4. Asking the incisive question

- i. Make a note of it - exact words*
- ii. If you knew...*
- iii. That (opposite positive)*
- iv. What would you do... to live differently, etc (the what they want from the session)*
- v. Ask it again and again until no longer required*

5. Writing it down

- i. Write it down exactly and share with them...*

6. Appreciating Each other

Action Planning

- Review your Activities
- What aspect of active listening do you most need to practice?
- What listening approach could you practice with your colleagues?

References

1. Rosenberg, M. B. (1999). Nonviolent communication: A language of compassion. Del Mar, CA: PuddleDancer Press.
2. Kline N, (1999), *'Time To Think'* Ward Lock, London

Further resources

Consider the following self-teach modules to support your development:

- Conflict Resolution
- Mediation
- Time Management - Delegation and Manager as Coach