



PERSONAL VILLAGE



NEWSLETTER

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The Steps In Effective Listening

Stories — retold and unfolding — are the heart throb of community life. They are called history, legend, breaking news, the daily report and gossip. But a story needs a listener — without that it is dead. Story, and hence community, only comes alive when it is told and heard. Listening is at the core of healthy community life.

Listening is not a drive-by event. Listening demands full attention. Listening takes time. Listening is receiving the expression of another which then marinates within, leaving us changed and uplifted. The basic steps for all types of listening are: 1. Pause; 2. Relax; 3. Open to a place of receptiveness; 4. Trust the emerging moment; and 5. Curiosity.

1. **Pause** — Stop everything. Put that book down. Shut down your web browser. Turn off the cell phone. Let go of that important thought. Set “pretended listening” aside. Discontinue multi-tasking. Let everything become still.
2. **Relax** — Usually our bodies and minds are in a chronic state of alertness and agitation ready for that next urgent demand. Ordinary life is too often like a race car driver on an adrenalin high. By relaxing we soften our bodies, take a breath and let down. Only in the relaxed state can we hear.
3. **Open to a place of receptiveness** — Take a breath. Let go of any expectations. Become calm, aware and filled with kindness. Receptiveness is a form of meditation, stillness inside and yet fully alert.
4. **Trust the emerging moment** — Listening is often hard work. So in our receptiveness we open to trusting that what ever is said and emerges in the unfolding story will be filled with wisdom and knowing. Even if we are bored, irritated or disagree, if we trust deeply enough a new level of knowing will arise. This is a an art form that takes practice and patience to develop.
5. **Curiosity** — When these first four: Pause, Relax, Openness and Trust are in place then we can truly become curious about what is being said or felt or experienced. Centered in our full attention toward inquiry, we dive into an excitement of understanding. Curiosity is simply an enthusiasm and eagerness to know more deeply.

Listening is applied curiosity. By listening we unfurl the stories of our fellows and that is the bedrock upon which community is built. We can only listen to others to the degree that we listen to ourselves. Next month — listening to ourselves.

**Listening is hearing the song in the heart of another
as if it were our own song.**

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