



UNITED KINGDOM

Bradford Co-coaching Forum

13th September 2018

Theme

Focus on listening

Overview

An opportunity to explore how good our listening is and what we need to enable us to listen at our best.

Activities

- Introductions
- Focus on listening
- Landing exercise – finding and sharing our ‘listening at our best’ metaphors
- Practice as a whole group using two techniques:
 - Tamsin Hartley’s Listening Space
 - Nancy Kline’s Thinking Partnership

Quotes, Poems and Stories

To be interrupted is not good. To get lucky and not be interrupted is better, but to know you will not be interrupted allows you to truly think for yourself. *(Nancy Kline)*

Listening is a magnetic and strange thing, a creative force.... When we are listened to, it creates us, makes us unfold and expand. Ideas actually begin to grow within us and come to life. *(Brenda Ueland)*

Transformative listening is nearly a work of art. It comes from a genuine interest in where your partner will go in their thinking, and from your courage to trust their intelligence. *(Nancy Kline)*

When someone deeply listens to you it is like holding out a dented cup you've had since childhood and watching it fill up with cold, fresh water. When it balances on top of the brim, you are understood. When it overflows and touches your skin, you are loved.

When someone deeply listens to you the room where you stay starts a new life and the place where you wrote your first poem begins to glow in your mind's eye. It is as if gold has been discovered!

When someone deeply listens to you your bare feet are on the earth and a beloved land that seemed distant is now at home within you. *(John Fox)*

The quality of everything we do depends on the quality of the thinking we do first. And the quality of that thinking depends on the attention we are getting from people while we think. *(Nancy Kline)*

When I ask you to listen and you start giving advice, you have not done what I have asked. When I ask you to listen and you start telling me why I shouldn't feel the way I do, you are invalidating my feelings. When I ask you to listen and you start trying to solve my problems, I feel underestimated and disempowered. When I ask you to listen and you start telling me what I need to do I feel offended, pressured and controlled. When I ask you to listen, it does not mean I am helpless. I may

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be faltering, depressed or discouraged, but I am not helpless. When I ask you to listen and you do things that I can and need to do for myself, you hurt my self-esteem. But when you accept the way I feel, then I don't need to spend time and energy trying to defend myself or convince you, and I can focus on figuring out why I feel the way I feel and what to do about it. And when I do that, I don't need advice, just support, trust and encouragement. Please remember that what you think are irrational feelings always makes sense if you take the time to listen and understand me. *(An adolescent's plea to adults)*

A young black South African woman taught some of my friends a profound lesson about listening. She was sitting in a circle of women from many nations and each woman had the chance to tell a story from her life. When her turn came, she began quietly to tell a story of true horror – of how she had found her grandparents slaughtered in their village. Many of the women were Westerners, and in the presence of such pain, they instinctively wanted to do something. They wanted to fix it, to make it better, anything to remove the pain of this tragedy from such a young life. The young woman felt their compassion, but also felt them closing in. She put her hands up, as if to push back their desire to help. She said, “I don't need you to fix me. I just need you to listen to me.”

She taught many women that day that being listened to is enough. If we can speak our story and know that others truly hear it, we are somehow healed by that. During the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings in South Africa, many who testified to the atrocities they had endured under apartheid would speak of being healed by their own testimony. *(Margaret Wheatley)*

Creating a Thinking Partnership – Nancy Kline

Adopt this attitude and general behaviour as you listen:

- Settle back
- Keep your eyes on the eyes of your partner as they speak
- Cultivate a fascination with what your client will say next
- Achieve a composure that is wildly dynamic
- Do not interrupt
- Trust that not uttering a word is one of the most effective things you can do
- Know that your job is to help your partner think, not to think for them
- Remember that the expression of feelings is often a part of the thinking process
- Be aware that much of what they say will be the result of your effect on them

Exercise

- First ask:
 - **What would you like to think about and what are your thoughts?**
- When thinking subsides, ask:
 - **And what more do you think, or feel or want to say?**

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Questions for Creating a Listening Space – Tamsin Hartley

Questions for Creating a Listening Space

STEP 1: Starting the session

What would you like to explore?

STEP 2: Establishing a tethering post

Key embodied (or repeated) word(s) 'X'



STEP 3: Exploring the tethering post

Repeat back key words and ask Clean questions about the tethering post 'X':

(And) **what kind of 'X' is that?**

(And) **is there anything else about 'X'?**

(And) **where/ whereabouts is 'X'?**

(And) **does 'X' have a size or a shape?**

(And) **is 'X' on the inside or the outside?**

STEP 4: Ending the session

And what do you know now about 'X'?
And what difference does knowing that make?

And would that be a good place to leave it?

Reflections on Learning

- It was obvious that you weren't thinking of the next question – coachee
- These techniques ensure the coach is not charging ahead or having a conversation in their own heads about the coachee's stuff
- The sessions were emergent, not plotted
- I felt this approach was very freeing – coach
- Working with the metaphors produced during the landing exercise was helpful
- I noticed how calm and still the sessions were

Resources

Books

Time to Think by Nancy Kline

The Listening Space by Tamsin Hartley

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Right Listening by Mark Brady (now called Noble Listening)
The Wisdom of Listening Edited by Mark Brady

Upcoming Events

- **19th September**, 6-9pm, AC Regional Event – Embodied Coaching with Jenny Stacey, Leeds
- **11th October**, 6-9pm, Bradford Co-coaching Forum – Embodied Coaching – an opportunity to practice ideas delivered at September’s regional event

All Bradford co-coaching events can be booked via Eventbrite