

Gildan Media

Companion PDF

LISTEN

by

Dale Carnegie & Associates

## The “Can You Hear Me Now?” Quiz

Most people would say that they pretty good listeners. In fact, in 360-degree surveys of managers (where the manager is rated by his or her boss, peers, and direct reports), there tends to be a huge gap between the manager’s self-perception as a good listener and what other people have to say.<sup>1</sup> In other words, you may THINK you’re an excellent listener. Are you?

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*You may THINK you’re an excellent listener. Are you?*

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To test your listening skills, take the following self-assessment quiz.

For the following questions, answer on the following scale. Try to be as honest with yourself as possible.

Not at all      Rarely      Sometimes      Often      Very often

1. When I’m on the phone with someone, it’s fine to respond to e-mails and text messages at the same time as long as I’m listening.

2. When listening to another person, I start to get upset and react emotionally.

3. I feel uncomfortable with silence during conversations.

4. If I have a relevant story to share, I’ll interrupt the other person in order to tell it and then get back to letting them talk.

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<sup>1</sup> Patrick Barwise and Seán Meehan, “So You Think You’re a Good Listener,” *Harvard Business Review*, April 2008; <https://hbr.org/2008/04/so-you-think-youre-a-good-listener>; accessed Aug. 16, 2016.

5. People seem to get upset during some conversations with me, and it seems to come out of nowhere.

6. To keep the conversation flowing, I ask questions that can be answered with a simple “yes” or “no” response.

7. I play “devil’s advocate” to help the other person see a different side of what they are saying.

8. If someone wants to talk about something over and over again, I’ll just tell them what they want to hear to get them to stop.

9. As I listen, I am figuring out what I am going to say back to the other person.

10. I’m uncomfortable when people talk to me about sensitive subjects.

11. If another person has a different view on something I feel strongly about, I don’t want to talk about it.

12. I don’t really pay much attention to things like the environment of the conversation or body language. What matters is what the other person is actually saying.

13. If the other person is struggling to say something, I’ll fill in with my own suggestions.

14. If I’m interrupted from doing something when someone wants to talk, I feel impatient for them to finish so I can get back to what I was doing.

To determine your score, give yourself the following points for each answer:

Not at all = 1 point

Rarely = 2 points

Sometimes = 3 points

Often = 4 points

Very often = 5 points

### Score Interpretation

#### 14–29: Gold Medalist

You've got terrific listening skills already. You've got the ability to make people feel heard and want to talk to you. You're emotionally present and give people your full attention. Strive to continue to grow and evolve. Keep reading this book to learn how to become an even more effective listener.

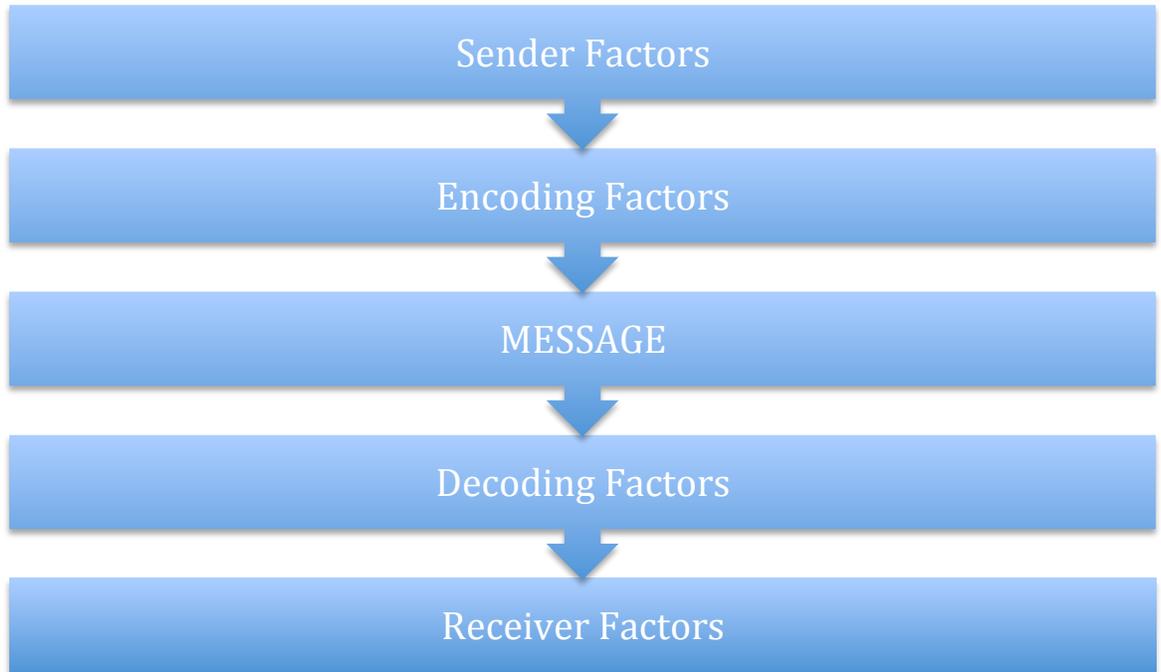
#### 30–49: Silver Medalist

People enjoy talking to you, but sometimes if subjects get too emotional or uncomfortable, you tend to change the subject or make a joke. The tools and ideas in this book will help you continue to grow and become a more effective listener.

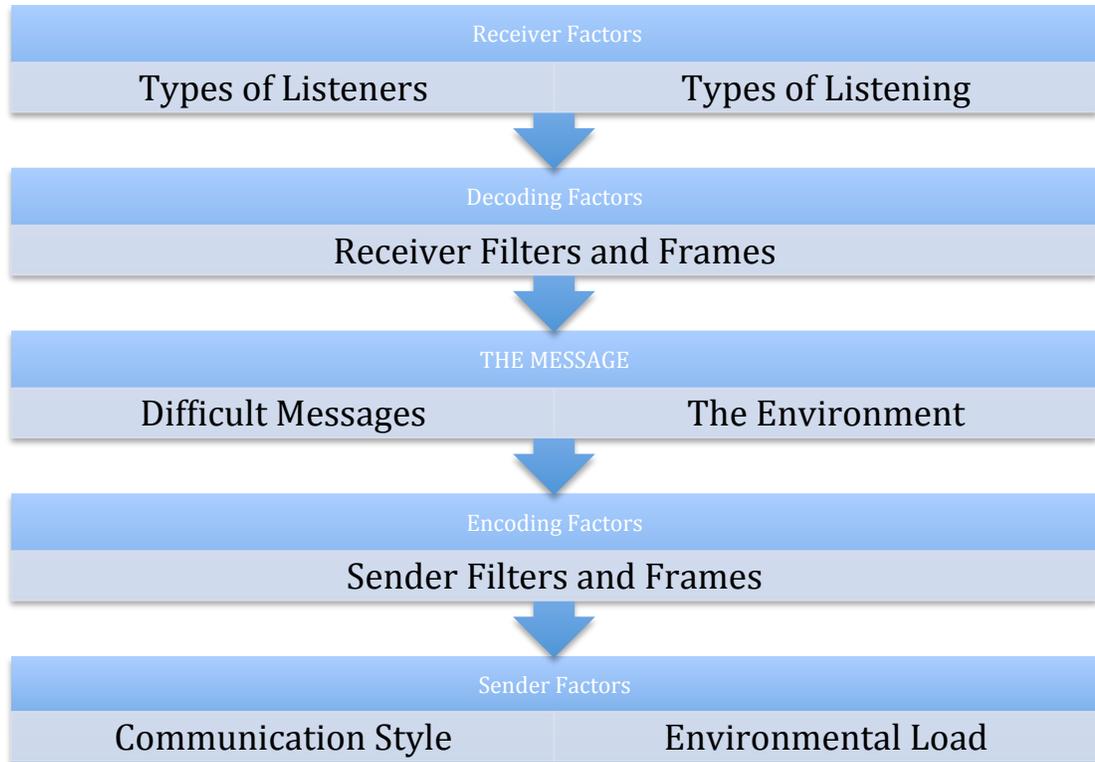
#### 50–70: Bronze Medalist

If you scored in this category, you might think you're a better listener than others do. You might be giving people the feeling that you don't care about what they're saying, or you might have frequent misunderstandings. Not to worry, though. The things you'll learn in this book can certainly help you become a better listener.

## The Elements of Communication



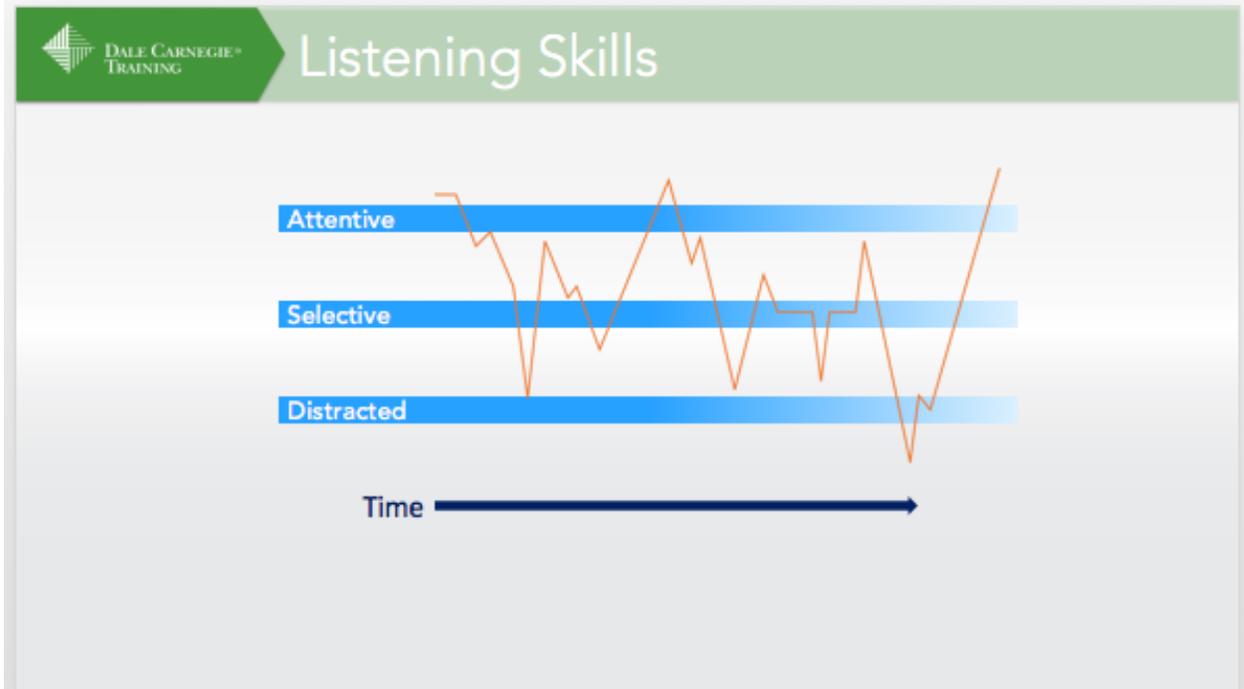
Listening is just this process in reverse. And that's how this book is arranged.



## The “Engagers”

If you are an “Engager,” keep it up. People truly appreciate this about you.

As we’ve mentioned, no one can be an engaged listener all of the time. In fact, we all vary from being attentive to what is being said, being selective in our focus, and being distracted over time. Here’s a visual illustration.



My Listening Log,  
Part One

**Frames**

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*Your frame is your broad understanding of a situation or topic.*

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1. On another piece of paper or a journal, answer this question: "What are some of the frames I learned about the topic of listening?" Here are some examples.

*Children should be seen and not heard.*

*You're given two ears and one mouth for a reason.*

*In our family, you had to shout in order to be heard.*

*No one listens to me anyway, so I might as well not try.*

*I say the stupidest things.*

2. What biases do your frames lead to? Do you, or does someone you know, have an unconscious frame that gets in the way of effective communication? Write down these biases in your journal.

3. What role do you think gender, education, religion, race, and similar factors have in how a person listens?

## Filters

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*A filter is a conscious choice to focus more on one thing than another.*

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What are some filters you use when listening to the following people? In other words, what information do you focus on the most when communicating with the person, and what do you leave out?

1. Your parents
2. Your significant other
3. Your children
4. Your boss
5. Clients or customers
6. Your best friend

Now shift the filter a little. What is something unusual or different you could listen for when communicating with those people? Example: looking at your parents as a husband and wife to each other.

1. Your parents
2. Your significant other
3. Your children
4. Your boss
5. Clients or customers
6. Your best friend

## **Emotional Control**

In your journal, describe an instance where you could have done a better job controlling your emotions during a conflict.

Then apply the six steps to identify what you could have done differently.

1. Step back and focus on the other person's emotions.
2. Look to find the source of the emotions. Is it the result of different frames or filters?
3. Talk about feelings openly.
4. Express feelings in a nonconfrontational way.
5. Validate the other person's feelings.
6. Step out of the room if need be.

## **Seven Types of Listeners**

Identify people in your life who represent the seven types of listeners.

The "Preoccupieds"

The "Out-to-Lunchers"

The "Interrupters"

The "Whatevers"

The "Combatives"

The "Analysts"

The "Engagers"

Identify times when *you* were each of these seven types.

## **Two Types of Distractions**

Describe a time when you were listening and your mind wandered off. Was it a sensory distraction or an emotional distraction? Try to come up with examples of each.

## **Four Types of Listening**

For each of the four types, identify someone in your life who engages in that type of listening frequently.

Pretending to Listen

Listening to Prepare Your Response

Listening to Learn

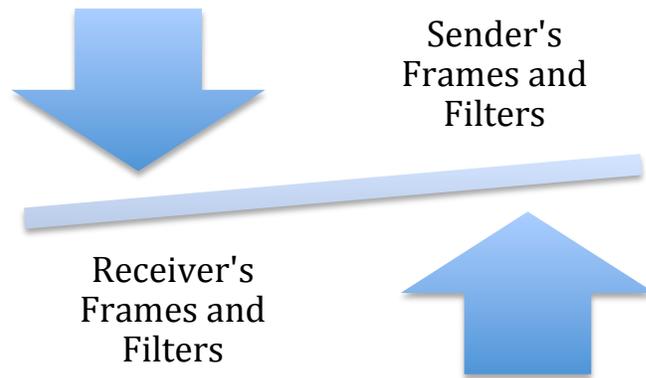
Listening for Empathy

Now for each of the four types, identify an instance in which *you* engaged in that type of listening.

*The art of conversation lies in listening.*

—Malcom Forbes

Here is a graphic illustration of how the sender and receiver's filters and frames need to be aligned in order for effective communication to take place.



### Encoding Factors

Power Differences	Cultural Differences	Interpersonal Differences
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Parent/Child</li><li>• Boss/ Subordinate</li><li>• Authority figure/Follower</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Race</li><li>• Nationality</li><li>• Language barriers</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Gender</li><li>• Age</li><li>• Communication style</li></ul>

## My Listening Log, Part Two

### Sender Frames

On another piece of paper or in a journal, answer the following questions.

1. Describe an experience you had where someone was communicating to you with a frame that biased their view. Were you able to see it clearly at the time?
2. Who in your life tends to communicate using the same frame as you most often? How are your frames similar?
3. Whom do you have the most difficulty communicating with in your life?
4. Describe an instance in which someone said something that made you angry.
5. What is the reason you believe they acted that way?
6. Now challenge that reason. If you said, "Because he was being selfish," then reverse it. "He was NOT being selfish." Write the reverse assumption down.
7. Ask yourself, "Under what conditions could the reverse assumption be true?"

### Encoding the Message

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*When encoding a message, the sender decides what information he or she wants to transmit.*

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1. You need to convey the following message to certain people: "I am moving to another state next month." How would you encode the message differently for each person?
  - a. Your parents or extended family

- b. Your boss
- c. Your best friend
- d. Your children
- e. Facebook and other social media

2. Describe a time when the following factors influenced how someone encoded a message to you.

- a. Power differences
- b. Cultural differences
- c. Interpersonal differences

### **Environmental Factors in Encoding**

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*Environmental load is a term that refers to the stress load a person is under.*

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1. Recall a time when you walked into a room and could instantly sense a “vibe” or mood in the room. What was going on?
2. Encode the following messages based on different environmental loads.
  - a. Tell someone to turn left on an empty street.
  - b. Tell someone to turn left in heavy traffic from the right lane.
  - c. Respond to someone interrupting what you’re doing at work, under a deadline.
  - d. Respond to someone interrupting what you’re doing at work at 4:45 on a Friday.

## Decision Styles

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*“Satisficing” means to use a few pieces of information to come up with a decision that is “good enough.”*

*Maximizers are the people who consider a LOT of information before making a decision.*

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On another piece of paper or a journal, answer the following questions.

1. Whom do you know who is a Satisficer?
2. Who is a Maximizer?
3. Which are you?
4. Give an example of a time when you demonstrated each type of information use.

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*“Uni-focus” people are focused on generating one best solution.*

*“Multi-focus” people tend to see different solutions or options as equally appealing.*

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5. Do you tend to be a uni-focus person or a multi-focus person?
6. Describe a time when you had a conflict with a person who has the other style of focus. Would knowing this information have helped deescalate the conflict? How?

## Four Styles

**Hierarchical:** People who make careful and slow decisions based on a lot of information and analysis.

**Integrative:** People who use a lot of information and are happy to consider a lot of options.

**Decisive:** People who use a minimum amount of information to quickly come to a clear decision about a course of action.

**Flexible:** People who have very fluid thinking styles, using a small amount of information in a lot of different ways.

1. Describe a typical career choice for each of the four styles. (Sample answers are at the bottom of this page, although these aren't the only correct ones.)<sup>2</sup>

Hierarchic  
Integrative  
Decisive  
Flexible

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*Role Style: Behaving the way you think you should behave in a given situation.*

*Operating Style: Your natural decision style*

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2. Describe whether you would be in Role Style or Operating Style in the following situations.

a. A parent/teacher conference.

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<sup>2</sup> a. accountant, engineer; b. writer, scientist; c. surgeon, fighter pilot; d. therapist, teacher

- b. Watching a movie on the couch with your best friend.
- c. In a computer training class at work.
- d. After the computer training class, at happy hour with your co-workers.

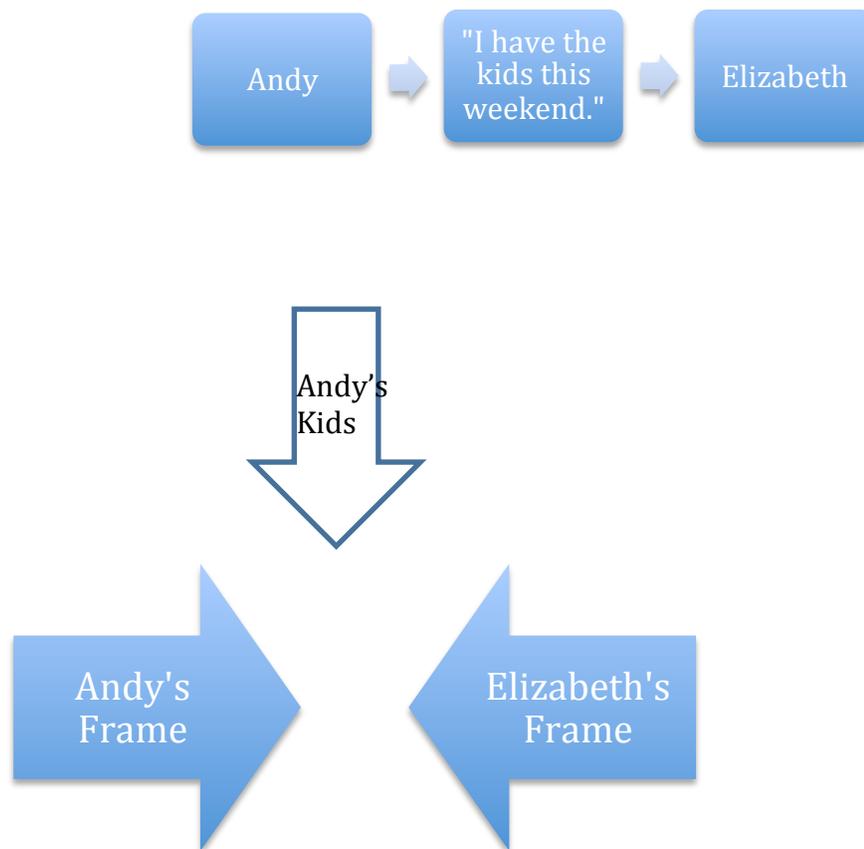
<sup>1</sup> a. accountant, engineer; b. writer, scientist; c. surgeon, fighter pilot; d. therapist, teacher

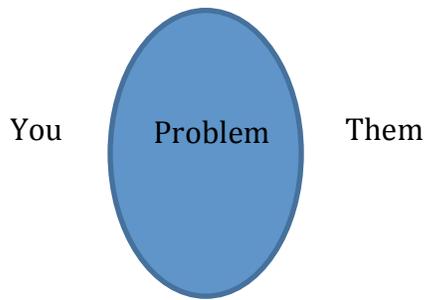
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*Interpersonal conflict results from a breakdown in communication between two people.*

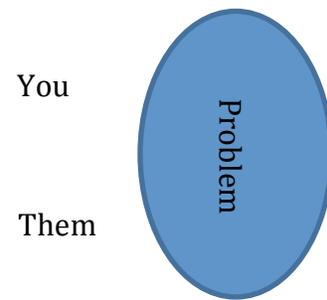
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In the scenario above, Andy has to deliver some news to Elizabeth. Here's an illustration of that communication at its basics.





**Typical Conflict Resolution**



**Our Conflict Resolution**

### **What's Your Conflict Style?**

Following is a questionnaire that will help you discover your own conflict style. When answering the questions, remember that there is no right or better answer. Each style is good in its own way.

Score your answer by rating how much you agree with the statement.

- 6 = definitely true
- 5 = true
- 4 = tends to be true
- 3 = tends to not be true
- 2 = not true
- 1 = definitely not true

1. I'm focused on getting excellent results, but other people tend to stand in my way.
  
2. I am always willing to listen to other's opinions, and I also want to give them mine

3. I often change my goals in order for other people to get theirs.
4. If people don't respect my opinion, I keep it to myself.
5. When someone else has an idea that they think is good, I try to help them.
6. When there's a conflict, I won't vary from my principles, no matter what.
7. I am always willing to consider other people's opinions, but I make my own decisions.
8. In times of conflict, it's more important that a solution be reached than it is to get my priorities met.
9. When a conflict occurs, I tend to back out of the situation and do something else.
10. I don't like causing conflict, so I cooperate with others and do what they want.
11. When pursuing my priorities, I hold firm to what I want.
12. During a conflict, I immediately work to get everyone's concerns out in the open.
13. During a conflict, I try to find some compromise.

14. Differences of opinion are not always worth worrying about, so I usually avoid them.

15. I like to ask others for their opinions and try to find ways to cooperate.

16. Once I have taken a position, I don't like to have others try to talk me out of it.

17. When there is a conflict, I want to hear everyone's point of view, and to express my own.

18. When people have different viewpoints, I generally propose a middle ground.

19. I tend to avoid people who are very opinionated.

20. I think it is more important to get along than to win an argument.

21. After I have made a decision, I'll defend it passionately.

22. I am a decisive person, yet I make a point of listening to others to find the best solution possible.

24. When I see others arguing about something, I keep to myself, because it doesn't do any good to argue.

25. If someone feels more strongly about something than I do, I'll adjust my priorities.

### **How to Figure Out Your Score**

For each of the following categories, write down the number you wrote for the question, and then add them together.

Lion

1: \_\_\_\_\_

6: \_\_\_\_\_

11: \_\_\_\_\_

16: \_\_\_\_\_

21: \_\_\_\_\_

Total \_\_\_\_\_

Ostrich

4: \_\_\_\_\_

9: \_\_\_\_\_

14: \_\_\_\_\_

19: \_\_\_\_\_

24: \_\_\_\_\_

Total \_\_\_\_\_

Dog

3: \_\_\_\_\_

8: \_\_\_\_\_

13: \_\_\_\_\_

18: \_\_\_\_\_

23: \_\_\_\_\_

Total \_\_\_\_\_

Fish  
4: \_\_\_\_  
9: \_\_\_\_  
14: \_\_\_\_  
19: \_\_\_\_  
24: \_\_\_\_  
Total \_\_\_\_

Chameleon

5: \_\_\_\_  
10: \_\_\_\_  
15: \_\_\_\_  
20: \_\_\_\_  
25: \_\_\_\_  
Total \_\_\_\_

What does this mean?

## Results

My dominant style is \_\_\_\_\_(Your HIGHEST score)  
and my backup style is \_\_\_\_\_ (Your second highest score)

In our opening scenario, then, here is the conflict style of the various people.

Mike: Lion

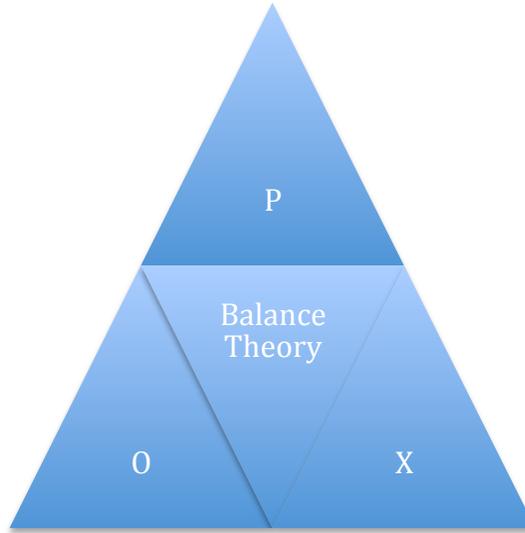
Tom: Ostrich

Karen: Dog

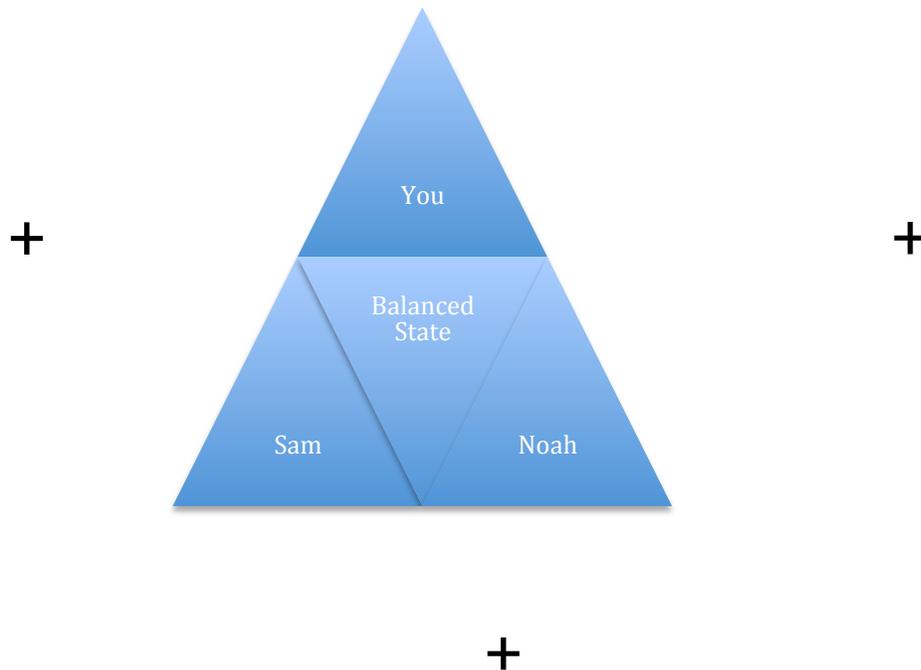
Lin: Fish

Bill: Chameleon

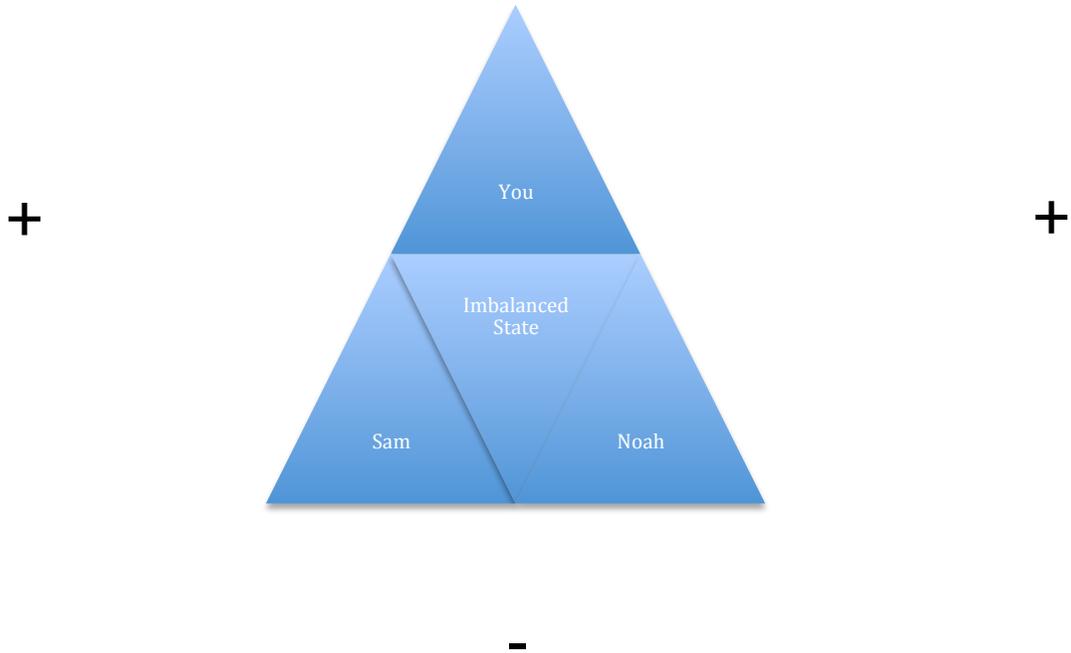
In 1946, theorist Fritz Heider developed something called Balance Theory to examine relationships between people and things. It can be best visualized as a triangle, with the points labeled P (person), O (other), and X (a third element).



In our example, you are P; Sam is O, the other person, and X is the other element, Noah. When the state is balanced, all three elements have a positive association with each other.



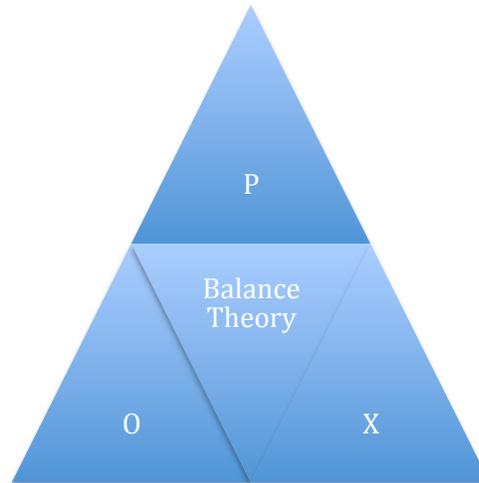
But when one of the positives becomes a negative (Sam and Noah are arguing, for example), the system becomes imbalanced.



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*My friend's friend is my friend.  
My friend's enemy is my enemy.  
My enemy's friend is my enemy.  
My enemy's enemy is my friend.*

---



There are four sets of relationships that are usually balanced:

- $P + O, P + X, O + X$
- $P - O, P - X, O + X$
- $P - O, P + X, O - X$
- $P + O, P - X, O - X$

There are also four typically unbalanced relationships that are likely to be turned into the above balanced relationships:

- ☒  $P + O, P - X, O + X$
- ☒  $P + O, P + X, O - X$
- ☒  $P - O, P + X, O + X$
- ☒  $P - O, P - X, O - X$

Examples

**Balanced:** P + O, P + X, O + X: You agree with Sam. You agree with Noah.

Sam agrees with Noah.

**Unbalanced:** P + O, P + X, O – X: You agree with Sam. You agree with Noah.

Sam doesn't agree with Noah.

When the system is unbalanced, something called *dissonance* occurs. Dissonance is the psychological tension that occurs whenever there is an unbalance. Our minds want to restore balance. One way to do this is through understanding the conflict style of the other people in the triad.

### My Listening Log Part Three

#### Stages of Conflict

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Conflict comes from the different frames each person has about the message.

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Let's review the five stages of conflict:

1. **Latent conflict:** the potential for conflict
2. **Perceived conflict:** this is the cognitive aspect where one or both parties may recognize that there is a conflict
3. **Felt conflict:** this is the "feeling" aspect of conflict—parties begin to feel upset.
4. **Manifest conflict:** this is the behavioral aspect of conflict. Hostility, arguing, or physical altercation.
5. **Conflict aftermath:** The effects of conflict.

In a notebook or a journal, answer the following questions.

1. Describe a relationship you have that often has latent conflict.
2. When was the last time you cognitively perceived conflict developing in a conversation? Did the other person recognize it too?
3. How do you react to “felt” conflict? What feelings do you have?
4. What is the worst thing you ever did during manifest conflict?
5. What was the aftermath of your answer to question 4?

### **Three Phases of Conflict Resolution**

It might help for you to role-play these exercises with another person to get the most out of the practice. Just be sure not to choose the person you had the original conflict with, as it might start the fight all over again. Choose someone with whom you have a low-conflict relationship.

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*Phase One: Explore the other person’s viewpoint.*

*Phase Two: Explain your viewpoint.*

*Phase Three: Create resolutions.*

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## **Phase One: Explore the Other Person's Viewpoint**

1. Establish that your immediate goal is mutual understanding, not problem-solving.
2. Elicit the other person's thoughts, feelings, and desires about the subject at hand.
3. Ask for the other person's help in understanding him or her. Try not to defend or disagree.
4. Repeat the other person's position in your own words to show you understand.
5. Ask the other person to correct your understanding and keep restating his or her position.
6. Refer back to your position only to keep things going.
7. Repeat steps 1 through 6 until the other person unreservedly agrees that you understand his or her position.

In your notebook or journal, describe a scenario where you engaged in conflict with someone else, and apply the seven steps in Phase One. In other words, write out specifically what you could have asked them to find out what their viewpoint was. For example, "You feel that after you've had a long week at work, you want to relax at the pub for a bit before coming home. Is that correct?" Be careful to leave any tone or negative emotion out of your questioning.

## **Phase Two: Explain Your Viewpoint**

1. Ask for a fair hearing in return.
2. Begin with an explanation of how the other person's thoughts and feelings affect you. Avoid blaming and self-defense as much as possible.
3. Carefully explain your thoughts, desires, and feelings as *your* truth, not *the* truth.

4. Ask for restatements of your position—and corrections of any factual inaccuracies—as necessary.
5. Review your respective positions.

Next, in your notebook or journal, write out how you would explain your position in the scenario you described in Phase One. Be sure to use language that reflects that the frame is yours, and refrain from defending your position as the truth. For example, “For me, after I’ve had a long week at work, the one person I want to spend time with is you. It’s a nice way to kick off the weekend. Can you see my position?”

### **Phase Three: Create Resolutions**

1. Affirm your mutual understanding and confirm that you are both ready to consider options for resolution.
2. Brainstorm multiple options.
3. If a mutually agreeable solution is not yet obvious, try one or more of the following options:
  - Take time out to reconsider, consult, exchange proposals, and reconvene.
  - Agree to neutral arbitration, mediation, or counseling.
  - Compromise between alternate solutions.
  - “Take turns” between alternate solutions.
  - Yield (for now) once your position is thoroughly and respectfully considered.
  - Assert your positional power after thoroughly and respectfully considering their position.
  - Agree to disagree and still respect each other; then, if you can, go your separate ways on the particular issue.

In your notebook or journal, brainstorm several alternative solutions to the scenario you've been using in this section. If you're role-playing with another person, see what innovative ideas they come up with.

## **Conflict Styles**

**The Lion.** This style is competitive. They value "winning the point" more than the relationship. They see conflict as a competition. "I know they'll come around once they see my point." It's an "I win/you lose" position.

**The Ostrich.** This style avoids conflict at all costs. To them, having conflict IS the problem, and it's not worth the trouble to argue, because it won't affect the outcome anyway. "I'd rather just forget it." This is a "I lose/you lose" position.

**The Dog.** This style values the relationship above all else and will accommodate to the other person's desires for the sake of maintaining the relationship. It's the exact opposite of the Lion. "Fine, we'll just do it your way." It's an "I lose/you win" approach.

**The Fish.** Like a school of fish, this style focuses on collaboration and working together. They want to explore the different options in order to come up with one where everyone benefits. It's an "I win/you win" approach.

**The Chameleon.** This is the person who adopts the other styles momentarily, in order to communicate with someone with another style.

In your notebook or journal, answer the following questions.

1. Whom do you know that has a Lion style of conflict?
2. Whom do you know that has an Ostrich style of conflict?
3. Whom do you know that has a Dog style of conflict?

4. Whom do you know that has a Fish style of conflict?
5. Give an example of a time when you, or someone else, adopted the Chameleon style.
6. What is your primary style?
7. What is your backup style?

### **POX Balance Theory**

There are four sets of relationships that are usually *balanced*:

- $P + O, P + X, O + X$
- $P - O, P - X, O + X$
- $P - O, P + X, O - X$
- $P + O, P - X, O - X$

There are also four typically *unbalanced* relationships that are likely to be turned into the above balanced relationships:

- ☒  $P + O, P - X, O + X$
- ☒  $P + O, P + X, O - X$
- ☒  $P - O, P + X, O + X$
- ☒  $P - O, P - X, O - X$

You're watching a television commercial when an actor comes on and offers a testimonial for a politician. In your notebook or journal, write out the POX formula for each of the following situations. You are P. The actor is O. The politician is X.

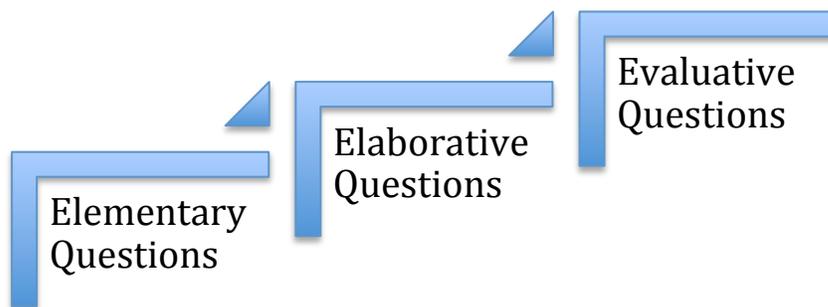
1. You like both the actor and the politician.
2. You don't like the actor, but you do like the politician.
3. You don't like either the actor or the politician.
4. You like the actor, but not the politician.

How would you tend to react under each of those circumstances?

*Peace is not the absence of conflict but the presence of creative alternatives for responding to conflict— alternatives to passive or aggressive responses, alternatives to violence.*

—Dorothy Thompson

The Question Staircase is comprised of three different types of questions. Here is an illustration.



## Questions and Answers

Now it's time to practice what we've learned. Using the following guide, determine what kind of questions follow. The answers are at the bottom of the page.<sup>3</sup>

Elementary

Evaluative

Elaborative

Factual

Causative

Values-Based

- a. "What time is the meeting?"
- b. "How did you get a flat tire?"
- c. "Do you prefer the blue or the red?"
- d. "Why did you become a vegetarian?"
- e. What's the process for ordering replacement parts?"
- f. Which car gave you a smoother ride?"

This has been an information-packed chapter, and for good reason. The questions we ask come from determine the frame by which we see the world. In order to effectively listen, and get inside another person's frame, we've got to be able to ask meaningful and appropriate questions.

In the next chapter, we'll get into an equally informative subject: listening through body language.

*Asking questions is what brains were born to do, at least when we were young children. For young children, quite literally, seeking explanations is as deeply rooted a drive as seeking food or water.*

—Alison Gopnik

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<sup>3</sup> a. Factual. b. Causative. c. Evaluative. d. Values-Based. e. Elementary. f. Elaborative.

## 11. Listening in the New Millennium

*Social media is just a platform. Twitter is a very simple and immediate broadcast platform. Facebook is a very personal, when it comes to friends and when it comes to fan pages, a little bit less but still somewhat personal way to communicate.*

—Mark Cuban

Hey Rob. So, I wanted to let you know that Chris and I have started dating, and it's getting pretty serious.

You mean Chris, my college roommate? The one I introduced you to on New Year's, when you were my

Yeah, that Chris. But, listen, you broke up with me, so I didn't think you'd care if he and I started seeing each other. We didn't intend to get serious. It was just hanging out at first.

Rachel, do you remember WHY I broke up with you? I caught you texting my brother!

That was different, and you know it.

Well, congratulations. I'm happy for you both. I hope it works out for you.

Thanks Rob! I knew you'd understand.  
😊

## Part Four

### The Listening Staircase

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*Elementary Questions determine basic information.*

*Elaborative Questions elaborate on the basic information we've already obtained.*

*Evaluative Questions allow the other person to share their thoughts and opinions.*

---

In your notebook or journal, answer the following questions.

1. Give a recent example of an Elementary Question you asked.
2. Give a recent example of an Elaborative Question you asked.
3. Give a recent example of an Evaluative Question you asked.

### Communication Shutdowns

Describe a time when you shut down communication by using one of the communication shutdowns.

Then describe a time when that happened to you.

### The Innerview

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*An Innerview is a series of questions designed to allow a listener to ask effective questions.*

---

Choose a person to practice conducting an Innerview with. Write down your experiences and reflections in your notebook or journal.

## **Cultural Differences in Body Language**

Go out into public and become an observer of cultural and other differences in body language. In your notebook or journal, describe your observations of the following categories of people.

Ethnic/racial norms (e.g., Asians and Australians).

Gender differences (men and women, as well as transsexuals or gender-neutral individuals).

Corporate culture (e.g., Whole Foods versus Safeway).

Political groups (e.g., Democrats and Republicans).

Geography (e.g., East Coast versus West Coast).

Income (e.g., millionaires and blue-collar workers)

Religious groups (e.g., Muslims and evangelical Christians).

## **The SOFTEN Method of Nonverbal Listening**

S = Smile

O = Open posture

F = Forward lean

T = Touch

E = Eye contact

N = Nod

Practice this technique at work and in your personal life: choose one person in each situation that you've had challenges with, and then note your observations in your notebook or journal.

## **Written Communication**

In your notebook or journal, answer the following questions.

1. Describe a time when you had an argument over a text message or e-mail.
2. Is there a way that you could have reframed the intent of the other person?  
(Look up the conversation, if possible.)
3. Could you have used emojis, abbreviations, or softeners to defuse the situation?

### **Can You Hear Me NOW?**

To discover how much you've learned in this book, retest your listening skills by retaking the following self-assessment quiz.

For the following questions, answer on the following scale. Try to be as honest with yourself as possible.

Not at all      Rarely      Sometimes      Often      Very often

1. When I'm on the phone with someone, it's fine to respond to e-mails and text messages at the same time as long as I'm listening.
2. When listening to another person, I start to get upset and react emotionally.
3. I feel uncomfortable with silence during conversations.
4. If I have a relevant story to share, I'll interrupt the other person to tell it and then get back to letting them talk.

5. People seem to get upset during some conversations with me, and it seems to come out of nowhere.
6. To keep the conversation flowing, I ask questions that can be answered with a simple “yes” or “no” response.
7. I play “devil’s advocate” to help the other person see a different side of what they are saying.
8. If someone wants to talk about something over and over again, I’ll just tell them what they want to hear to get them to stop.
9. As I listen, I am figuring out what I am going to say back to the other person.
10. I’m uncomfortable when people talk to me about sensitive subjects.
11. If another person has a different view on something I feel strongly about, I don’t want to talk about it.
12. I don’t really pay much attention to things like the environment or body language. What matters is what the other person is actually saying.
13. If the other person is struggling to say something, I’ll fill in with my own suggestions.
14. If I’m interrupted from doing something when someone wants to talk, I feel impatient for them to finish so I can get back to what I was doing.

To determine your score, give yourself the following points for each answer:

Not at all = 1 point

Rarely = 2 points

Sometimes = 3 points

Often = 4 points

Very often = 5 points

### **Score Interpretation**

#### **14-29: Gold Medalist**

You've got terrific listening skills already. You've got the ability to make people feel heard and want to talk to you. You're emotionally present and give people your full attention. Strive to continue to grow and evolve.

#### **30-49: Silver Medalist**

People enjoy talking to you. Sometimes if subjects get too emotional or uncomfortable, you tend to change the subject or make a joke.

#### **50-70: Bronze Medalist**

If you scored in this category, you might think you're a better listener than others do. You might be giving people the feeling that you don't care about what they're saying, or you might have frequent misunderstandings.

Intuition:  
The Art of Listening to Yourself

*It is always with excitement that I wake up in the morning  
wondering what my intuition will toss up to me, like gifts from the  
sea. I work with it and rely on it. It's my partner.*

—Jonas Salk

On September 11, 2001, Greer Epstein did something she rarely did: she took a cigarette break at 8:40 a.m. An executive director at Morgan Stanley, with an office on the sixty-seventh floor of the South Tower of the World Trade Center in New York, she rarely had the time for a smoking break before lunch.

But on this fateful day, a colleague called and wanted to talk about an upcoming work meeting and asked, “How about getting a cigarette?” Greer looked out her window and saw a beautiful morning—perhaps the clearest day she had ever seen from her office. She thought, “Why not?”

While riding down the elevator, she felt a jolt, but dismissed it because the elevators always tended to act up. When she and the colleague stepped outside the building, they saw dozens of people standing and looking toward the sky at a gaping hole in the North Tower.

Still not fully aware of what had happened, she wondered, “How are they ever going to fix that?” It was at that moment that a plane flew directly into her office in the South Tower.

That simple thought “Why not?” saved Greer Epstein’s life.

Almost everyone has experienced intuition at one point or another. You’re thinking of someone, and they call. You have the urge to take a different route to work, only to find out there was an accident on your normal path. You meet someone and instantly get a gut feeling that they aren’t to be trusted. These gut feelings we get are a form of knowing that isn’t based on a conscious assessment, but instead arises seemingly out of the blue.

## Naval Knowing

A lot of folks consider intuition to be something weird or “woo woo.” But the idea that we all have a sixth sense is gaining acceptance in the most unlikely of places—including the U.S. Navy.

The Navy has started a program to investigate how members of the military can be trained to improve their sixth sense, or intuitive ability, during combat and other missions.<sup>4</sup>

The program developed because so many of the troops in Iraq and Afghanistan were coming back reporting that they had experienced an unexplained feeling of danger right before an enemy attack.

In an article in *The New York Times*, the Office of Naval Research was quoted as saying, “Research in human pattern recognition and decision-making suggest that there is a ‘sixth sense’ through which humans can detect and act on unique patterns without consciously and intentionally analyzing them. . . .

“Evidence is accumulating that this capability, known as intuition or intuitive decision making, enables the rapid detection of patterns in ambiguous, uncertain and time restricted information contexts.”

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*Intuition is the product of unconscious information processing*

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John Kounios, a professor of psychology at Drexel University, is quoted as saying that when an idea appears as an “aha” moment or as a product of that sixth sense, “people often think that this is a psychic phenomenon because they don’t know where the idea came from. But it’s the product of unconscious information processing.”

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<sup>4</sup> Channing Joseph, “U.S. Navy Program to Study How Troops Use Intuition”; *The New York Times*, March 27, 2012; [http://atwar.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/03/27/navy-program-to-study-how-troops-use-intuition/?\\_r=0](http://atwar.blogs.nytimes.com/2012/03/27/navy-program-to-study-how-troops-use-intuition/?_r=0); accessed Aug. 15, 2016.

## Intuition Defined

What exactly *is* intuition, then? Here are a few select definitions from the academic literature.<sup>5</sup>

Jung: The psychological function that transmits perceptions in an unconscious way.

Shirley and Langan-Fox: A feeling of knowing with certitude on the basis of inadequate information and without conscious awareness of rational thinking.

Burke and Miller: A cognitive conclusion based on a decisionmaker's previous experiences and emotional inputs.

Lieberman: The subjective experience of a mostly nonconscious process—fast, alogical, and inaccessible to consciousness—that, depending on exposure to the domain or problem space, is capable of accurately extracting probabilistic contingencies.

While there are dozens, if not hundreds, of definitions of intuition, the vast majority of them mention a few defining characteristics.

One characteristic of intuition is that it is *nonconscious*—it occurs outside of conscious thought. It's not so much that you "think" something, you just "sense" or "know" it.

A second characteristic is that intuition involves a process in which environmental stimuli are matched with some deeply held (nonconscious) category,

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<sup>5</sup> Erik Dane and Michael G. Pratt, "Exploring Intuition and Its Role in Managerial Decision Making." *Academy of Management Review* 32:1 (2007): 33–54.

pattern, or feature. This sounds very reminiscent of the frames and filters we have been mentioning throughout this book.

A third characteristic of the intuition process is its *speed*. It's this characteristic that differentiates intuition from other ways of knowing.

### **What Intuition Is NOT**

There are many terms that are almost synonymous with intuition, but aren't the same. If we consider that intuition is nonconscious, then it's not the same thing as *insight*. An insight is understanding that we gain through deliberate and analytical thinking that we then set aside to "incubate." An example of this is an entrepreneur who wants to start a business, so she explores different business opportunities and then later gets a flash of insight that leads her to a choice.

Similarly, intuition is not the same thing as *instinct*. Instinct is a hard-wired mechanism in the brain that causes our bodies and minds to respond automatically to a stimulus. An example is feeling fear when looking over a ledge or a cliff. One doesn't need to have fallen off a ledge to have an instinctive knowing to stay away from it.

### **The Power of Intuition**

If intuition is a matter of unconsciously processing information from the environment around us, then how can we harness its power? What can learning to listen to your intuition do for you?

Imagine being able to get a "feel" for when someone is lying to you. What if you could better know when to trust someone or not? How about being able to trust your choices and decisions, even in the face of rational opposition? Learning to listen to your intuition can do just that.

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*Intuition comes from the ability to see microexpressions in people's faces and bodies, or slight things in the environment that seem different. Stay in touch with the world, and you start to see patterns. These sensitivities come more naturally to some; some are just more sensitive.*

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## **What Blocks Intuition?**

Even people with natural abilities can find themselves unable to access their intuition. One thing that contributes to this is being overly busy. If we are rushing from one thing to the next, constantly checking our phones and our social media, texting while walking and driving, we can miss those subtle clues that lead to intuition.

Sometimes, too, we don't WANT to listen. We meet someone who is charming and attractive, and there is this small voice that says something isn't right. But they are just SO attractive, and we choose to ignore the feeling. Then when our hearts have been broken, we look back and say, "I really did know it all along." It's the job you shouldn't have taken, the friend you shouldn't have lent money to, the decision you let someone talk you into.

Another big block to intuition is *negative emotion*. When we are experiencing strong emotions, our brains turn on the sympathetic nervous system, which is a way of minimizing the number of things we can focus on during a crisis. If you're being chased down the street by a bad guy, you're not likely to notice the smell of garlic bread emanating from your favorite Italian restaurant. So when we are angry, depressed, or in a bad mood, our intuition can escape us.

In fact, a 2013 study published in the journal *Psychological Science* showed that being in a positive mood boosted the ability to make intuitive judgments in a word game.<sup>6</sup>

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<sup>6</sup> Annette Bolte, Thomas Goschke, and Julius Kuhl, "Emotion and Intuition

That's not to say that intuitive people never get upset—but your intuition will fare better if you're able to mindfully accept and let go of negative emotions for the most part, rather than suppressing or dwelling on them.

## **Eight Ways to Develop Your Intuition**

What are some ways in which you can learn to develop and trust your intuition? Here are eight ways.

1. *Meditate.* Many people think that meditation is sitting cross-legged on a pillow, chanting. While that is what happens in some forms of meditation, other forms are more like quiet reflection. It's about being still and allowing the thoughts you have to float by like clouds in the sky. Messages from your intuition tend to be quiet, so spending time in silence will help you hear and interpret these messages.

2. *Use your senses.* Since intuition comes from subtle clues in the environment, one way to develop the sixth sense is to develop the other five. What do you hear? How does something taste? Look very closely at things. Smell them. Touch things. Become an observer of life.

3. *Pay attention to your dreams.* When the cognitive mind is busy, it can override the quiet voice of intuition. But when you're sleeping, your cognitive mind rests and your nonconscious mind can send you symbols and messages.

4. *Get creative.* Engaging in creative activities, such as drawing, scrapbooking, or free-flow journaling, quiets the cognitive mind and allows your intuition to speak up.

5. *Take a shower.* Have you ever heard someone say, "I get my best ideas in the shower?" There's something about the feeling of warm running water and the repetitive motion of bathing that quiets the conscious mind and allows creativity to flow. If you're trying to access your intuition, take a shower or do the dishes.

6. *Observe people.* See what kind of information you can glean from observing people before you talk to them or learn anything about them from other people. The more you pay attention, the more you'll realize you already know things you couldn't possibly know with the cognitive mind.

7. *Align with your values.* Your mind may steer you away from your integrity, but your intuition never will. If something "feels" wrong, it probably is.

8. *Practice the listening techniques in this book.* Just as you can use the ideas and techniques in this book to become a better listener to others, you can use them to learn to listen to your intuition. As an old joke says, "I talk to myself because I'm the only one who always thinks I'm right!"

*I believe in intuitions and inspirations. . . I sometimes FEEL that I am right. I do not KNOW that I am.*

—Albert Einstein

## **Fourteen Days to Better Listening**

OK, so you've read the book and looked or worked through the exercises. Now it's time to put the pedal to the metal and really start to apply what you've learned. It's not about becoming the perfect listener overnight. Research shows that people who make small changes are far more likely to keep those changes than those who try to overhaul their lives. This chapter will give you a solid plan with practical things you can start doing today to become a better listener in fourteen days. Sometimes when you make a lot of tiny changes, you look around and find that they added up to significant improvement!

Of course your work life and your home life are not mutually exclusive. They spill over onto each other. So when you become a better listener at work, you naturally become a better listener at home.

We're starting with your workplace first, because that is usually less emotionally charged than your home life. You'll have a week to practice your listening skills before moving on to the home arena.

Let's get started!

### **Week One: Better Listening at Work: Bosses, Peers, Subordinates, and Others**

#### **Day 1: The Detective**

Today you are going to become an undercover detective at work—observing other people. Knowing what you know now after reading this book, who are the effective listeners in your workplace? Write their names in the following space, along with an example of them engaging in effective listening. Try and come up with five.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Now write down the names of those you observe who are *not* engaging in effective listening. What are they doing that you now know is a sign of poor listening? Again, try to come up with five.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

Which of the behaviors, both positive and negative, do you want to work on? In other words, which effective listening behaviors do you want to increase, and which do you want to decrease or eliminate?

## **Day 2: Frames and Filters at Work**

As you go through your day, reflect on how your frames and filters affect your listening.

### **Your Boss**

Describe an interaction with your boss that happened today. You most likely heard him or her through the “boss/employee” filter. In other words, what information did you focus on the most when communicating with this person, and what do you leave out? Describe what you heard based on your filter.

Now shift the frame a little bit. Think of your boss as an employee, for example. Now how do you hear what he or she said? Does the frame shift affect your perception of the interaction? Write your observations here:

## **Day 3: Unconscious Biases**

### **Your Co-Workers**

As mentioned in the book, unconscious biases tend to influence communication. See if you can observe an interaction with a co-worker where one of you was somehow biased. This is not necessarily a racial bias—but is one where the person's view of things influences how they hear messages. For example, Sally hears that Mark got approved for overtime. She believes that he always gets approved for overtime because he doesn't work hard enough during the day. Write down any unconscious biases you see today:

How might the messages have been received with a different frame?

## **Day 4: Emotional Control**

### **Subordinates**

If you don't have anyone that reports to you, you can still do this exercise by practicing this on others at work.

If you *do* have subordinates, the next time you have to have a difficult conversation, practice the Six Steps of Emotional Control.

1. Step back and focus on the other person's emotions.
2. Then look to find the source of the emotions. Does it come from different frames or filters?
3. Talk about feelings openly.
4. Express feelings in a nonconfrontational way.
5. Validate the other person's feelings.
6. Step out of the room if need be.

Describe the experience.

## Day 5: Seven Types of Listeners at Work

For each of the following seven types of listeners, identify someone at work who has that predominant style.

The “Preoccupieds”

The “Out-to-Lunchers”

The “Interrupters”

The “Whatevers”

The “Combatives”

The “Analysts”

The “Engagers”

Now, for each person on the list, how will you listen to them more effectively?

## Day 6: Decision Styles

Identify people at work whose primary decision styles are the following:

**Hierarchic.** People who make careful and slow decisions based on a lot of information and analysis.

**Integrative.** People who use a lot of information and are happy to consider a lot of options.

**Decisive.** People who use a minimum amount of information to quickly come to clear decisions about a course of action.

**Flexible.** People who have very fluid thinking styles, using a small amount of information in a lot of different ways.

### **Day 7: Conflict in the Workplace**

The next time you experience conflict at work, practice using the three phases of conflict resolution. Write down your experiences in each phase.

Whom was the conflict with?

What was it about?

Phase One: Explore the other person's viewpoint.

Their view:

Phase Two: Explain your viewpoint.

Your view:

Phase Three: Create resolutions.

Resolutions:

## **Week Two: Better Listening at Home: Partners, Parents, Siblings, Children, Friends<sup>7</sup>**

### **Day 8: Response Generators**

We'll start our week at home by practicing the response generators. Today, with the people in your personal life, ask them the following questions and see if it elicits a different response than you usually get.

- ☐ Oh?
- ☐ In what way?
- ☐ How so?
- ☐ Tell me more . . .
- ☐ Give me an example . . .

Describe your results in the following space.

### **Day 9: Conflict Styles at Home**

For each of the following conflict styles, identify the people in your life who demonstrate each style.

**The Lion.** This style is competitive. They value “winning the point” more than the relationship. They see conflict as a competition. “I know they’ll come around once they see my point.” It’s an “I win/you lose” position.

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<sup>7</sup> Some of the exercises are adapted from Hearing Resources Center of San Mateo, “Listening Exercises to Help You Be a Better Communicator”; <http://www.hearingresourcecentersm.com/ListeningExercisesToHelpYouBecomeaBetterCommunicator.htm>; accessed Aug. 19, 2016.

**The Ostrich.** This style avoids conflict at all costs. To them, having conflict IS the problem, and it's not worth the trouble to argue because it won't affect the outcome anyway. "I'd rather just forget it." This is a "I lose/you lose" position.

**The Dog.** This style values the relationship above all else and will accommodate to the other person's desires for the sake of maintaining the relationship. It's the exact opposite of The Lion. "Fine, we'll just do it your way." It's an "I lose/you win" approach.

**The Fish.** Like a school of fish, this style focuses on collaboration and working together. They want to explore the different options to come up with one where everyone benefits. It's an "I win/you win" approach.

By identifying the styles that the other people are expressing, we are better able to step outside our own frames and into the frame of the other person.

The next few days are going to have you engaging in some fun exercises to help you become a better listener.

### **Day 10: The Sounds Exercise**

Today is all about nonverbal listening. Listen to all sounds around you: a refrigerator humming, a keyboard clicking, an air conditioning system rumbling. Listen to the distant (and not so distant) traffic noise; any airplanes flying by? Listen to people working, people hammering, people mowing the lawn. Listen to people talking, laughing, or crying. Listen to your own noises, your own breathing. What is the "vibe" around you?

### **Day 11: The Colors Exercise**

This is a fun one to do with children. Sit face to face with your child. Tell your child to say a color, such as “red.” You respond: “red.” Your child says another color: “blue.” You respond: “blue.” Each time you respond back with the color your child said.

Increase the speed at which you respond to your child. As soon as she starts to say a color, you respond until you are almost saying the colors at the same time.

By the end of the exercise, you and your child will probably be saying colors at the same time! Are you mind reading? No, you are becoming more subtly tuned to listening for their cues because you are focusing more.

### **Day 12: Charades**

This can be played with a group of friends or with your family. Before playing, on index cards, write down some situations and actions. For example, “ordering peanuts at a baseball game.”

Teams of two each choose one index card. One person must get his or her partner to guess what he or she is acting out without using words at all.

This helps with listening skills because it requires focus on nonverbal body language.

### **Day 13: Sympathetic Disagreement**

This exercise can be used with a partner or spouse. One person makes a statement. Then the second person repeats what their partner just said that that they agree with, and then politely objects to one specific part of it. For example:

Larry: I love chocolate donuts.

Michelle: I love chocolate donuts, but they are really fattening.

The purpose of this exercise is to practice listening during disagreement.

### **Day 14: It's a Wrap**

Congratulations! You made it to the end of the two weeks. Take some time today to debrief.

What was your favorite exercise?

Do you feel your listening skills have improved?

What things do you think you will continue doing?

Has anyone else made any comments or observations?

Were any of the exercises unsuccessful? What happened?

What was your greatest takeaway from the two weeks?