

Deep Listening

Deep listening occurs when you feel zoned into another person's thoughts and feelings as well as your own. It can only happen when you have created uncluttered mental space that is free from distractions, judgements, hasty interpretations, assumptions and pre-emptive conclusions. When you are deep listening, you are feeling highly receptive to the essence of meaning from your conversations with others. You are feeling interested, quietly engaged, focused, and open to being influenced.



When you are zoned in, it should feel effortless and not forced. As Bailey (2007) indicated, “we aren't analyzing or figuring out- we are simply letting the feelings and sounds affect us. Deep listening is not defensive, argumentative, or intrusive. It is not about struggling to analyze or interpret. It is a purely receptive state of mind. When you listen deeply, you let go of any beliefs or acute judgements you have about the other person. You let go of your own prejudices and past memories of him or her.

Here are some tips on how to listen deeply from Senge et al. (1994):

- Stop talking, learn to still the voice within
- Visualize the other person's viewpoint
- Look, act, and be interested
- Don't interrupt. Be quiet – go past your tolerance level.
- Speak only affirmatively when listening
- Avoid evaluative or critical comments
- Periodically and when appropriate, rephrase key points in the conversation