

# SERVANT-LEADER DECISION MAKING

A REFLECTION ON LISTENING AND DISCERNMENT

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# REFLECTION AND THE DAILY EXAMEN

This presentation will utilize **the steps in The Daily Examen**, "... a Jesuit model for daily reflection to promote mindfulness" (Spears, n.d.) as the framework for exploring a personal reflection on listening, discernment, and decision-making as a Servant-leader-in-training.

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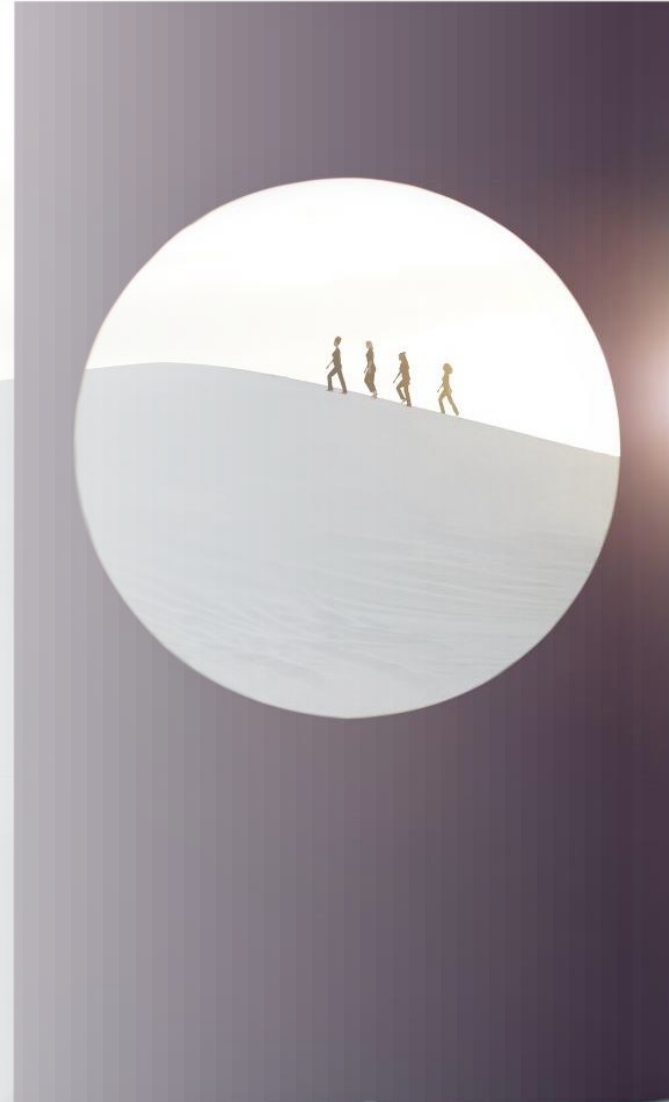


# STEP 1: AWARENESS OF THE BIG PICTURE

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*"Listening involves humble sharing, interacting, and providing feedback" (Horsman, n.d.).*

**Prior to this class, I have taken pride in being a good listener.  
But am I, really?**



# AWARENESS OF THE BIG PICTURE

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After completing the Listening Response System Analysis (Burley-Allen, 1995), I realized that I was indeed not the listener I thought I was. Listening is a skill I need to put time into developing.

I am developing awareness in Level 1, Empathetic Listening (p. 14) instead of jumping in to give advice or solve problems, which I have realized (as indicated in my assessment) is my "go-to" listening mode.

# STEP 2: REVIEW DAILY TAKEAWAYS

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*"Ignatian decision making seeks to bring the emotions and the intellect together whenever possible" (Sparough et al., 2010, p. 110)*

**I make my best decisions when I use both logic and emotion – when I think from the heart.**



# STEP 3: IDENTIFY UNDERLYING EMOTION OR BIAS

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**During daily meditation, I identified extreme discomfort with stillness and silence.**






## IDENTIFY UNDERLYING EMOTION OR BIAS

Sardello (2009) observes that "We are attracted to Silence but then quickly become bored with it and find ourselves equally attracted to the glamour of the world" (p. 21).

Through daily meditation, I have identified my own negative emotional response towards stillness, and instantly longing for movement, forward motion, needing to seek the "what's next".

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a circular lens. The lens is held in a way that it focuses on a specific scene, which is a coastal landscape with a beach, water, and buildings in the distance. The background of the entire image is a blurred view of the same coastal scene, but the lens provides a sharp, circular view of it. The lighting is warm, suggesting a sunset or sunrise.

# STEP 4: CHOOSE YOUR FOCUS

*"One of the ways we enter the delusion of silence is to do it all ourselves: **to put all the effort of our will into trying to make the experience happen**" (Sardello, 2009, p. 27).*

I have chosen to focus on letting go of trying to control the narrative – either in my own personal meditation (inner listening), or in listening to others where I often want to jump in and help, give advice, or solve the problem for someone.

**I've learned to find comfort in the discomfort of letting go.** I will continue to build my focus on allowing experiences to happen instead of trying to force them.

# STEP 5: IMAGINE NEXT STEPS

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*"Everyone who aspires to strength should consciously practice listening, regularly... Every response should be calculated to reflect interest, understanding, seeking for more knowledge..." (Greenleaf, 1996, p. 70).*

I aim to develop strength as a leader. I visualize next steps in learning and growth that involve seeking clarity, knowledge and understanding instead of listening to respond, advice-giving, or being the "rescuer" (Burley-Allen, 1995, p. 35).

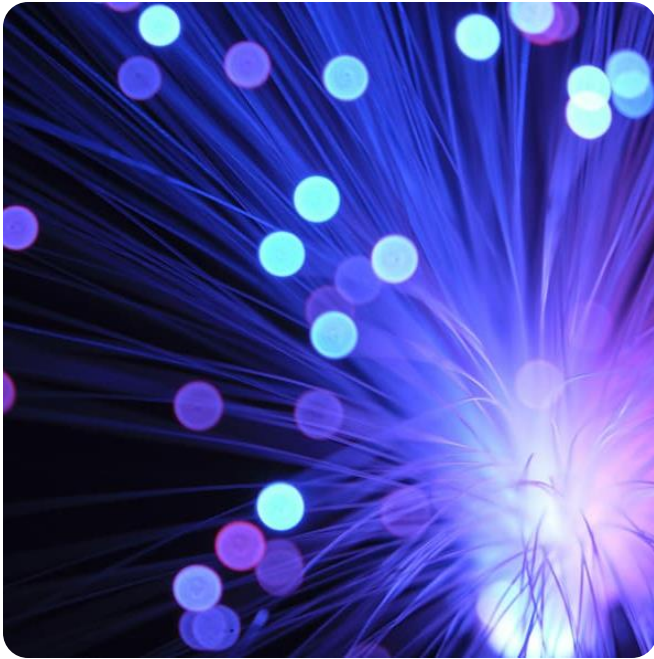




# IMAGINE NEXT STEPS

I have confidence that I will continue finding comfort in the discomfort of Silence. This has been a cathartic experience for me as I discover a deeper relationship with God and, quite surprisingly, with myself. Instead of dreading ten minutes of silence and stillness each morning, I wake up craving this time for reflection, calmness and possibility. I am grateful for this experience.

*"From within Silence, however, repetition is not circular. We step into depth only to find there is more depth, and more depth, and more depth, with each prayerful speaking, creating the next level of depth" (Sardello, 2009, p. 115).*



# STEP 6: SEEK GUIDANCE AND CONNECTION

Servant-leaders embody a Listening-first disposition. Utilizing empathetic & generative listening they listen to understand by seeking information, knowledge & wisdom. Servant-leaders encourage healthy and productive dialog as a result. (Servant-leader Dispositions Capacities and Skills, Spears, n.d.)



As I reflect on our course learnings, I will strive to develop the capacity to "seek clarity before influence" and not jump into the end-result and attempt to problem-solve or provide advice.



# LOOKING TO THE FUTURE

*"The future is an open field of possibilities, and Silence is the Mother of possibility" (Sardello, 2009, p. 66).*

As I look to the future, I will build strength by developing confidence to lead with authenticity and transparency. To do so, I will continue to practice listening to understand and develop clarity, instead of listening to respond or give advice.

The most critical takeaway I have experienced from this class is learning to find comfort in stillness. To embrace silence, even when doing so is challenging or uncomfortable. I have learned to let go of controlling the narrative and embrace the open field of possibilities that is Silence and stillness.



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