

Authentic Listening: The Foundation of Effective Communication



Join our Virtual Conference April 9-10



Mandy Kelly

Sr. Staff Program Manager - Product Operations, Warner Brothers Discovery

Hi, I'm Mandy!

- Yes, I was the very first Merivis Salesforce trainer!
- I live just outside of Seattle, Washington with my husband, daughter, and a gaggle of assorted animals including goats, bunnies, chickens, a dog and a cat!
- I earned my Master of Arts in Organizational Leadership with Servant Leadership Concentration from Gonzaga University (GO ZAGS!)



By participating in this workshop, you will be well on your way to developing a listening-first mindset!

This session will equip you with:

- Knowledge of what kind of listener you are
- Understanding of how to build your listening efficiency
- Awareness of tools to continue your listening practice
 - Self-awareness
 - Reflection
 - Curiosity
- Foundation for effective communication skills
 - Driving clarity and shared understanding
 - Effectively giving/receiving feedback
- Techniques to “model the way” by demonstrating authentic listening

Workshop Goals

WHY IS AUTHENTIC LISTENING SO IMPORTANT?



GREAT COMMUNICATION STARTS WITH AUTHENTIC LISTENING

“

The first step in good communication, anywhere, is *listening*.

ROBERT GREENLEAF

The Power of Servant Leadership

- A “listening-first” mindset contributes to a climate of trust, safety, and collaboration where:
 - Giving and receiving feedback is both welcome and helpful,
 - Individuals can seek to explore new ideas and experiment without fear of failure, and,
 - Members of an organization feel their voice is valued regardless of their role, job level, or tenure

WHAT KIND OF LISTENER ARE YOU?

How can we evaluate our current listening styles?

How can we learn to be more efficient, effective listeners?

What are some of the barriers to listening?



LISTENER TYPES



THE AUTHENTIC LISTENER

Authentic Listening = Empathetic Listening

Listens without judgement

Attempts to see things from the other's point of view

Gives attention to the speaker's total communication including their body language and is aware of their feelings



THE LOGICAL LISTENER

Logical listeners are more concerned with content than feeling

Hearing words, but not really listening to the full message (body language, non-verbal cues)

Surface communication



THE SPORADIC LISTENER

Listening in spurts

Faking attention

Distracted or multitasking

Following the discussion only to get a chance to respond

Sporadic listeners are often more interested in talking than listening



THE ADVICE-GIVER

Listening to react or jump in to immediately solve the problem

Focused on answers vs understanding or exploring alternatives

Not asking the speaker what they need, assuming they want a solution

Not leaving listener freedom to decide for themselves

Barriers to Listening

We have likely all experienced times when we aren't *really* listening. Barriers to listening include:

- Distractions
- Impatient
- Interrupting
- Being defensive
- Judgement
- Pretending to listen

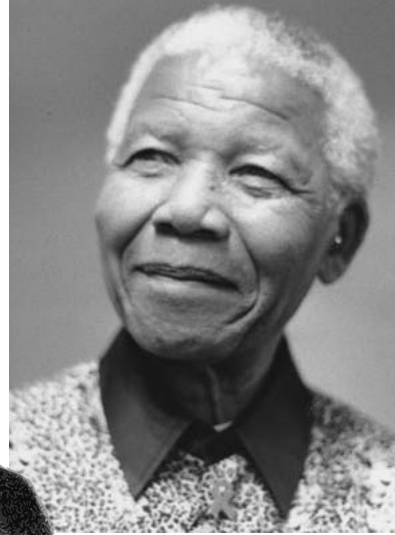


“MOST PEOPLE DO NOT LISTEN WITH THE INTENT TO UNDERSTAND; THEY LISTEN WITH THE INTENT TO REPLY.”

- STEPHEN COVEY

MODEL THE WAY: EXPERIENCES WITH GREAT LISTENERS

- Think of someone you have worked with (or in your personal life) who is an authentic, empathetic listener.
- How do you feel when you are talking to this person?
- How did they demonstrate authentic listening?
- What do they do to indicate they are deeply engaged in listening?
- What stands out the most about their communication style?



THE PILLARS OF AUTHENTIC LISTENING



Clarify

Ask open ended questions that encourage deeper conversation

“Help me understand...”

“Can you tell me more about ...”



Paraphrase

Listener repeats the essence of the message spoken by the communicator but in different words (paraphrasing)

Include the key themes or topics (not a restatement of minute details)



Reflect Feelings

The listener considers the feelings of the communicator in their message, and how they respond to the speaker

Establishes rapport between the listener and speaker

Promotes a feeling of validation and safety



Reflect the Message

Reflecting meaning allows the listener to confirm understanding with the speaker

“I’d like to make sure I understand what you’ve said... is that right?”

A LISTENING-FIRST MINDSET

Authentic listeners seek clarity *before* influence. Avoid jumping directly to the end-result and attempt to problem-solve or provide advice.

The listening-first mindset is:

- Supportive
- Collaborative
- Learning focused
- Open to different perspectives



Given the opportunity to solve their own problems, people tend to feel more confident in their abilities.

*M. Burley-Allen
Listening: The Forgotten Skill*

IDENTIFY UNDERLYING EMOTION OR BIAS

"Be curious, not judgmental" – Ted Lasso

- We can't listen authentically without letting go of bias or judgement.
- Bias creates a listening blocker - where the listener will hear only what they want to hear, which may be a distortion of what is being communicated by the speaker.
- **It is important to be aware of your own underlying emotion or bias when listening.**



FOCUS ON AWARENESS: Get comfortable with discomfort

Exploring our own inner voice, developing self-awareness and addressing the language we use with ourselves **can be uncomfortable.**

*To be an effective, authentic listener we need to **get comfortable with discomfort.***



8-WEEK CHALLENGE: LISTENING TO SILENCE



Silence can be uncomfortable, and we often feel the need to fill that space

How can we develop comfort with silence, allowing time and space for reflection or formulation of thought?



Daily Silence: Self-Reflection Practice

Commit to practicing ten minutes of daily silence each day for eight weeks. Journal on your silence experience for 2-5 minutes.

Don't judge, just observe. (Be curious, not judgemental!)

Be aware of the changes in your relationship with silence week over week.



SEEK GUIDANCE: CONTINUE LEARNING



- **Seek guidance** from experienced communicators as you develop the capacity to prioritize "clarity before influence".
- Think back to that person you identified as being a great listener and communicator earlier in the workshop. **Connect with them!**
- Take the opportunity to **embrace experimenting** - don't fear mistakes! Celebrate learning and developing understanding.
- **Share your experience** with others!

Thank You!

Session Replays Available
until April 30th