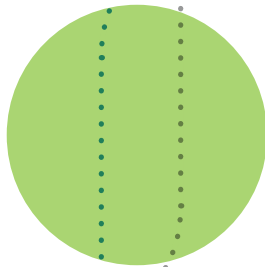




Interaction Institute
for Social Change

Excerpt from the workshop



Facilitative Leadership for Social Change

Heartset and Mindset for Adversarial versus Deep Listening

Listening to the ideas and opinions of others—and having one’s own ideas understood—is a foundation for collaboration. Without deep listening, it’s impossible to build solid agreements and commitment to taking concerted action. However, people often fail to listen to one another and, as a consequence, they create antagonism instead of alignment. There is an alternative: even when one feels defensive or aggressive, it is possible to make a conscious choice to listen deeply.

	ADVERSARIAL LISTENING	DEEP LISTENING
INTENTION	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To defend, resist, oppose 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To understand, support, learn
KEY ATTITUDES	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“I know better”</i> • <i>“This is a waste of time”</i> • <i>“I’ve got to convince you”</i> • <i>“You don’t know what you are talking about”</i> • <i>“Let me show you why”</i> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“I really want to understand your perspective”</i> • <i>“I am really curious about your ideas and opinions”</i> • <i>“I want to put aside my own thoughts so I can be open to your perspective”</i>
BEHAVIORS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Argue • Interrupt • Closed body language 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bracket • Reflect • Paraphrase • Check perceptions • Ask open-ended questions • Body language
IMPACT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Few possibilities identified • No alignment • Distrust • Resentment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New opportunities/ possibilities • Creative/generative ideas • Trust • Appreciation

Norms for Listening as an Ally

Listening as an ally is easier when everyone is working from the same set of intentions. We offer these norms as proposals to open up an opportunity for deep listening.

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|---------------------------------------|--|
| Listen deeply | Listen for understanding, not to prepare your rebuttal. Don't interrupt people as they speak. Try to acknowledge what you've heard before going on to make another point. When you hear something that is different from your own thinking or analysis, accept the speaker's description of their experiences as real for them, even if you haven't experienced it or don't understand it. |
| Make I statements | Speak from your own experience rather than speaking for others or about others, or generalizing your experience assuming it applies to others. Avoid statements like "Everyone knows that..." "We all feel that ..." or "We've all experienced ..." |
| Step up-step back | If you tend to talk early and often, challenge yourself to step back and make space for others. If you tend not to talk much, challenge yourself to jump in. |
| Keep it here | Exercise good judgment and respect if people share personal stories. Carry away what you learned without sharing who said what. |
| We don't have to agree | When we disagree, challenge the statement or the behavior instead of the person. Avoid using blame, shame, and guilt on ourselves or others. Try saying "...yes AND..." rather than "...yes BUT..." to make space for different views to be heard. |
| Use "ouch" and "oops" | We may say something without intending to harm or offend, but harm or offense might result anyway. If we notice ourselves saying it, we can say "oops" and try again. If we notice others saying it, we can say "ouch" and share in a sentence or two what was off-putting. Use these moments as teachable moments to highlight the difference between intent and impact. Again, no shaming or blaming, just a straightforward way to flag things that hurt or offend. |
| Be willing to be uncomfortable | Don't mistake discomfort for a lack of safety. It's possible to be safe and uncomfortable at the same time. Lean into the discomfort to see what you can learn. |