

ASSESSMENT GUIDE - DEEP LISTENING

[Click Here to take the Assessment](#)

Take the assessment to view your report and understand how you listen.

BACKGROUND & PURPOSE

This questionnaire is designed as a self and peer assessment to deepen one's awareness of one's listening and to build an understanding of various dimensions of listening.

In order to practice right speech, we need to first deeply listen to ourselves, and then to whoever is in front of us. As Thich Nhat Hanh, the Buddhist monk and spiritual leader teaches, **compassionate and deep listening** relieves the speaker of his or her suffering.

To practise deep listening, Hanh teaches, one needs to be prepared and ready. In addition, a practice of mindful compassion is essential. This enables the listener to see the suffering in the speaker even if s/he is bitter, resentful or even incorrect in her/his perception of things. It is the "energy of mindful compassion" that protects the listener from reacting to the speaker, in Hanh's teaching.

Deep listening starts with creating space and quiet within you, to enable others to be drawn to your spaciousness and open up to you.



This deep listening occurs at the highest **levels of awareness and attention**. Otto Scharmer, the systems thinker at MIT Sloan School of Management MIT classifies the various levels of attention - or the "**field structures of attention**" - in his book Theory U:

1. The first field is the "me" world, where listening happens as a matter of habit and is a process of reconfirming one's own beliefs or biases. Here, listening is "downloading."
2. The second field is the "it" world, where listening is a process of noting facts and the listener's attention is oriented at the object or novel data being presented. Here, listening is "factual."
3. The third field is the "you" world, where listening is a process of opening one's heart and paying careful attention to the person speaking to the point of viewing the world from her/his eyes. Here, listening is "empathic."
4. The final field is an "emerging field of future possibilities", where listening is a process of opening one's heart as well as opening one's will to tap into an emerging future possibility for the listener and the speaker. Here, listening is "generative."

This assessment is a tool to explore three dimensions of listening: one's preparedness, one's activeness, and one's empathy. The results of the assessment can be used as a tool to explore how one may work on each dimension of listening, in order to move away from listening from the "me" and the "it" worlds, and towards listening from the "you" world or the final field.

As Thich Nhat Hanh and Scharmer teach, generative listening needs us to channel a higher level of awareness or attention. A practice of silence can expand one's awareness and attention, by quieting the mind, connecting with oneself, and creating distance from one's thoughts, feelings, emotions, and ego. At the same time, self-awareness is a combination of both internal self-awareness (an attunement to our inner worlds) and external self-awareness (awareness of how others see us) as [Tasha Euric teaches in Insight](#). With this in mind, this assessment is designed to help us explore the gap between how one views one's own listening and how others view our listening.

DIMENSIONS

Prepared Listener

You remove anything that may distract you before an important conversation, to give full attention to the other person. You are not already full of your own agenda and your mind is free of thoughts. If you are occupied, you schedule a better time to speak. To put people at ease, you always use open body language and a friendly tone.

Active Listener

You make a conscious effort to hear and more importantly understand their whole message by also identifying non-verbal messages. You don't interrupt people, or allow yourself to become distracted by your own thoughts or opinions. You hear completely, acknowledge occasionally, and ask clarifying questions later, avoiding any judgment or criticism.

Empathic Listener

You recognize other people's emotions, and you do what you can to understand their perspectives, putting yourself in their shoes while listening. You ask open questions and avoid leading questions to help them articulate themselves fully. You embrace silence between conversations as a way to give the other time to finish and reflect on what they said.

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS FOR FACILITATORS

1. What is your experience of these dimensions? Which dimension would you want to build/strengthen in yourself?
2. Why is having these attributes important?
3. When do you listen? When do you not listen?
4. What are your own practices to listen better?

REFLECTIVE QUESTIONS FOR PARTICIPANTS

Thank you for taking the exploring listening assessment by Creatnet Learning. Please reflect on the following questions, to deepen your understanding of this further.

1. What dimension of listening - prepared, active, or empathic - do you most relate to? Why?
2. What practices do you have which enable you to be a good listener?
3. What dimension of listening would you like to improve? What is your experience of this dimension?
4. Why is it important for you to work on this dimension of your listening? What can you do to grow?

After you reflect on your self and peer scores on each dimension of listening, consider exploring your assessment results with your peer, using the following questions.

1. What is a common pattern emerging between self scores and peer scores?
2. Do your peer's assessment results reveal a blindspot you may have of your own listening? What is the point of difference or departure between you and your peer?
3. Does any score or difference in scores (between your self and peer assessment) concern you? Does it disturb you as a peer? How?
4. What can you do to grow as a person? What can you do to help your relationship with your peer grow?

Hope you have discovered something new for yourself today and we hope you are able to actualize your learnings and bring about change to the world around you. By continuous engagement with the results, we can make this discovery more valuable for ourselves and our peers.

LEARNING RESOURCES

[Loving speech and Deep Listening - Thich Nhat Hanh](#)

[The 4 levels of Listening - Otto Scharmer](#)

[Levels of listening - Video- Otto Scharmer](#)

[Practice Staying Present While Listening - Eckhart Tolle](#)



REFLECTIVE SHARING FROM FACILITATORS

When do I listen?

Having peace and silence inside, in each step of my way and in each breath helps me feel interconnected with others. This helps keep me from being drawn into the narrative of the person who is speaking and helps me listen with an open heart and mind.

When do I not listen?

I do not listen when my listening is not conscious. When I am not present in the moment and aware, I start relating to what is being shared by comparing and contrasting with my own thoughts. Also, when I am unable to extricate myself from my own thoughts, I succumb to the confirmation bias.

How can I listen better?

First and foremost, I need to deeply and compassionately listen to myself. Only when I am able to open space within myself and clean out my own agenda and mental models, am I able to listen to another deeply. A day without the sensory bombardment from email, social media, and social engagements is a chance for me to clear my mind and release the fear, anxiety, and suffering that has entered into and accumulated in my consciousness. When I am without ideas and sensory inputs coming in from outside is when I have a chance to truly listen to myself and others.

How is empathic listening different from relating to the words of the other person?

Listening in a detached manner allows me to understand the words of the person who is sharing, cognitively. However, listening empathically with an open heart allows me to see the world from the speaker's eyes. As an empathic listener, I aspire to create a space where the person sharing her/his story feels completely heard and seen. The aim is not to provide solutions, but to listen with inner spaciousness, free of my own agenda, and with complete presence in the moment. This helps to put even a stranger at ease in my company - and can have the power to open up the speaker to share vulnerably.

