

Finessing Your Listening Skills

Listening TO your client:

- Active listening.
- Listen to the content and what is beyond the words.
- Basic skills include:
 - Body posture
 - Eye contact
 - Following - when and how to mirror back to the client what is heard (nuanced interpretation)

Listening FOR the large life:

- Listen for clients' vision, values, commitment, and purpose in their words and demeanour
- Listen in search of something, discovering
 - Possibilities, goals, dreams, aspirations
 - Not rooting out problems and tackling them
- Exploring how we can hear the client's agenda (not our own agenda)
- Basic skills include:
 - I-Thou – speaker is given the “thou” position, giving the message “While you are talking, you are the most important person to me.”
 - Listener puts aside his/her own needs
 - Put aside own biases and judgments – of self or others

Listening WITH the whole self:

- Listening with heart.
- Listening with intuition.
- Listening with the body.
- Listening with silence.
- Basic skills include:
 - Present moment awareness
 - Being relaxed.
 - Trust in Self.

Williams & Menendez (2007) Becoming a Professional Life Coach

Allen, Mehal, Palmateer, Sluser (1995) The New Dynamics of Life Skills Coaching

Workshop Flow:

1. Introduce concepts of Listening TO, FOR, WITH
 - a. Provide handout
 - b. Focus on being present – informs all of the ways of listening - critical element for deeper listening
 - c. How do we know if we are not present?
 - d. What takes us out of being present?

2. Three headed expert
 - a. 3 volunteers
 - b. Topic
 - c. Questions
 - d. What did present and not present look like there?
 - e. Where are you when you are not present? What are you not doing when you are not present?

3. One sentence at a time story
 - a. 3 groups, each group in a circle
 - b. See if you can notice what is coming up for you as the game unfolds
 - c. What takes you out?
 - d. What signs show you've been taken out? Or the client/patient has been taken out? (e.g. silence, looking away) Any judgements? What did you see in others about presence?

If time, mirroring voice exercise.

For next time, another presence/listening exercise and we'll watch some video clips are see what we come up with when we listen TO, FOR, and WITH