

President's Perspective

by Kent L. Zimmerman

Without fail, each week my wife visits an elderly lady in a local nursing care facility. Nellie* is 89 years old and is in frail condition. She is the mother of a dear church friend. When our friend and his family planned an out-of-town vacation, my wife offered to stop by and check on their mother. She thought they would be comforted to know that their mother would have some company. Little did my wife know she would be comforted by their mother.

Nellie has a Southern charm to her presence. She is impeccably dressed. She takes pride in her appearance. She speaks in a soft, measured and predictable cadence. She sits comfortably in her lounge chair a good portion of the day. Her room includes a single bed, several family photos, an etching of her departed husband and two Bibles.

When my wife enters the room on that first day, she introduces herself to Nellie as a friend of her son. Nellie grins and invites my wife to sit on the bed next to the lounge chair. Nellie is positive and encouraging. She gives facial expressions that reveal sincere interest. She nods approvingly and giggles gently when humor is invoked. She says, "Oh, dear," when she is surprised at the outcome of a story. She gives undivided eye contact during the conversation, but peacefully closes her eyes when my wife rubs lotion on her arthritic hand.

My wife was so impressed with Nellie that she invited me to join her after a month's worth of visits. I cannot help but think that Nellie embodies what listening is all about. She has time. Nellie has little on her schedule, except to join her friends in the cafeteria for breakfast, lunch and dinner. She relishes my wife's visits and perks up when my wife enters the room. Nellie is much more interested in listening than speaking. As the time to leave approaches, she holds my wife's hands a little longer and firmer.

It takes a special person to be a listener. One can have the head knowledge about listening. One can artfully explain the listening theories. One can competently teach the complex skills to others. One can skillfully write impressive articles. But, as President Teddy Roosevelt once said, "No one cares how much you know, until they know how much you care."

If we wish to put the former President's words into action, spend some time at a nursing care facility. Meet a patient. Turn off your cell phone. Turn off the television. Don't look at the clock. Be there for someone who has time for you. I hope I can be more like Nellie sooner, rather than later.

*Not her real name

Presidential Goals Update

by Kent L. Zimmerman

As an ardent baseball fan, I was excited to see the World Baseball Classic begin in March. The best baseball players from a particular country compete against the best players from other countries in a tournament format to promote the game around the globe.

Whenever a team is tied after the nine innings, the two teams play an undetermined number of extra innings until one team has scored more runs than its opponent. I like to term this as "free baseball." One gets to see more baseball at no cost!

When the 2016-2017 Executive Board of the International Listening Association was officially installed at the Convention in March 2016 in Tucson, we understood the 2017 Convention was scheduled for this June. As a result, we knew we had a fifteen month commitment, compared to the typical twelve month cycle. We are privileged to offer three extra months of "free service."

So what are we doing with the "free service" time as a Board?

- We are continuing to update and refine the ILA website.
- We have two students serving as Social Media Coordinators for the Association's Facebook, LinkedIn and Twitter accounts. We have a graduate student ready to assume that role this summer so the 2017 Convention gets ample social media coverage.
- We have assembled a blue-ribbon committee, chaired by Michael Gilbert, to review of the Certified Listening Professional program's history, examine the program's objectives, discuss the its strengths & weaknesses, and provide specific and practical changes needed to clarify and rejuvenate the CLP program. The committee report is expected by mid-May.
- We authorized Jennie Grau to finalize the 2018 ILA Convention details in Dublin, Ireland. She and her Dublin contact and ILA member, Elaine O'Mullane, have worked tirelessly to give Association members an enticing opportunity to experience an ILA Convention in the European Union.
- We have instituted the Affiliate Agreement. This program allows specific organizations to work with the ILA to encourage listening.
- We are carefully exploring the possibility of sponsoring another International Day of Listening this fall. Under the capable leadership of Sheila Bentley, thousands participated in this one-day celebration of listening last year.

Finally, First Vice-President Charles Veenstra and his wife, Marlene, have spent countless hours in planning the 2017 ILA Convention in Omaha. I trust you will seriously consider the opportunity for professional enrichment and personal engagement by joining us there this June. For more information, please visit the ILA website. Hope to see you in Omaha!

Remembering Warren Gore

by Dr. Manny Steil
ILA #1 Member

I enjoyed the honor and privilege of knowing and working with Warren Young Gore, dating back to the late 1960's. Warren was the ultimate friend of all.

Warren was born on April 2, 1923 and died January 17, 2017. He served in World War II in the Army Air Corps. As a life-long student, Warren graduated from the University of Missouri and proceeded to earn his Master's Degree from the University of Iowa. In constant search of knowledge, he completed all the course work for the Ph.D. from both Northwestern and the University of Minnesota.

Over the years, Warren Gore taught at the University of Nebraska-Omaha, the University of Cincinnati, and the University of Minnesota. There was little that Warren did not know. When I was Chairman of the Speech Communication Division in the Department of Rhetoric at the University of Minnesota, Warren served as my go-to wing man. Everybody loved Warren Gore, as a friend, colleague, teacher, and advisor.

Until his retirement, Warren was at the epicenter of listening education in the Department of Rhetoric at the University of Minnesota. He was a great teacher and promoter of listening.

Warren Gore was an ILA Founding member and inductee in the ILA Listening Hall of Fame. He was an invaluable supporter of both the field of listening and ILA as an organization. His enthusiasm for life and listening was ever present. In addition, Warren Gore was a loving husband to Kiki, and father to Paul and Lia, and grandfather of three.

When he was memorialized on March 4th, the St. Anthony Park United Church of Christ was packed. The accolades for his friendship and service to others were both extensive and moving. The closing hymn, "How Can I Keep from Singing" was most appropriate as a finale honor to a grand human, colleague, and friend, Professor Warren Young Gore. It has been said, "When mighty oak falls, it never dies, a thousand acorns are (simply) scattered to the earth." So, sing your praises to Warren Gore as we follow his path and lasting impact. R.I.P friend Warren!

These photos were taken in 2007 when Warren was awarded the ILA Hall of Fame Award. It was presented at his home as he was unable to attend the convention.



Warren Gore receiving the ILA Hall of Fame Award from Manny Steil



Above: Warren Gore and Jim Pratt- after Warren received the Hall of Fame award: Below: ILA Members and Warren



Join Your Friends in Omaha!

by Charles Veenstra, convention planner

The Omaha convention is almost within sight. The proposals are in. The program is being arranged. Registration is open. Please plan to join us.

Several of the programs will deal directly with our theme of "Listening and Healing." For example, here are a few titles: "Listening Across the Life Span: A Listening Environment Comparison," "The Role of Listening in Delivering or Receiving Bad News," "Life-giving or a Deathblow? Qualitative Research into the Phenomena of Being Listened to and Not Being Listened To," "Listening Makes Us Better Humans," "Creating a Listening Culture in the Workplace," "Strategies for Listening to the Heartbroken: When You Are Heartbroken." I would like to list all of the topics, but the program will be out soon.

A special event on Friday morning will be screening of the film, *The Listeners*, and will be followed by a panel discussion. The film-maker, Dr. Robert Hurst from the University of Kansas will be present and also part of the discussion afterwards.

Friday afternoon is reserved for your opportunity to explore Omaha. This is a family friendly area. We will be close to the Old Market, the bronze sculptures, and the Bob Kerrey Pedestrian Bridge across the Missouri River—all within walking distance of our hotel. Shuttles are also available at no cost within three miles of the hotel. Although it takes more than one afternoon to see all of the marvels of the Henry Doorly Zoo, consider putting that on your agenda.

Saturday will be a full program of meetings, along with Past Presidents' luncheon. We will end in the evening with the Awards Banquet.

Access to the Hilton hotel from the airport is fairly easy. Shuttle to and from the airport to the hotel is complimentary. If you are driving, you can park at the hotel for a modest cost.

We hope the central location of the convention this year will encourage many of you to attend. It is always fun to renew connections and make new friends. If this is your first ILA convention, we promise to be friendly and do all we can to make this a great experience for you.



Listening Tech: Living Connected

by Michael Purdy

We had a dream last night, we were hard-wired to the internet and this human body was in pain as a result of this technological limitation. Maybe it was Bluetooth, or maybe Wi-Fi. Connected nonetheless.

Bodies were not meant to be wired to the technological; we are intimately related to other human's flesh-to-flesh, body-to-body. We are fully present and connected in our co-creating and the remembrance of this reality we call life.

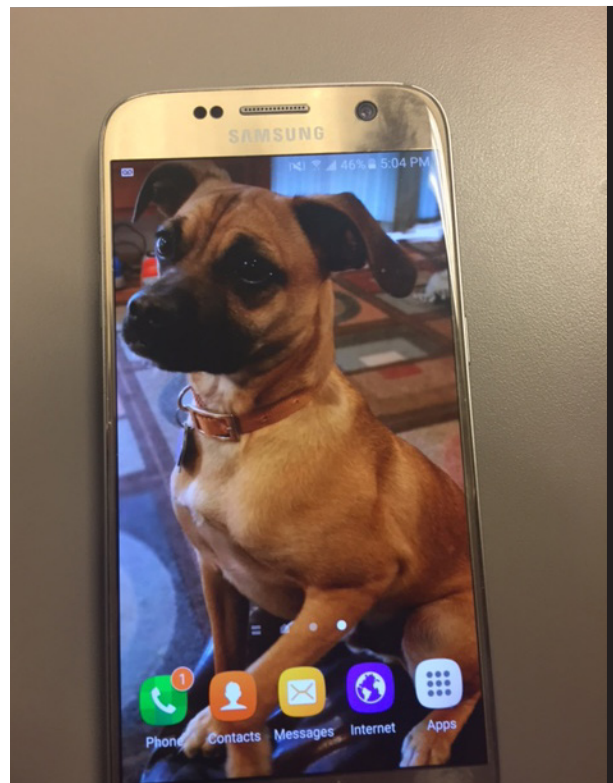
We are present to other human beings in their fullness; mindful, "super-mindful," as the sage Sri Aurobindo would say.

Mindfulness in the classic yoga sense is memory of the present. And there is a technological presence of the human inhabiting a body in touch with others through new media.

Yet, technological bodies are thin presence, thin humanity. This flatness, a thin screen, does not give much content for memory; and when we communicate through technology we miss the fullness of our friends, family and coworkers in this rich and marvelous life.

Technology has made our modern world livable for some 7.5 billion people and hundreds of thousands of species, but it has limitations in what it can offer to humanity; we need to be fully present to others in order to listen.

Being hard-wired is rigid structure, more pain than we deserve; but then, pain keeps us awake and brings awareness to listening.



International Listening Association

organizational affiliation program

Start learning more about how to Listen and be Listened to!

Would your organization like to have:

- ◆ A platform for marketing to international members?
- ◆ Participation in the ILA Speakers Bureau?
- ◆ Opportunities to present to international audiences in the ILA Webinar Series?
- ◆ Space at the ILA Annual International Convention?
- ◆ Papers and articles published in ILA journals?

Check out this opportunity for your business, healthcare center, university, church, hotel, choir or other organization to be part of a worldwide network spanning 21 countries.



International Listening Association

www.listen.org or email helen.ralston@listen.org

New ILA Affiliate Program

by Helen Ralston

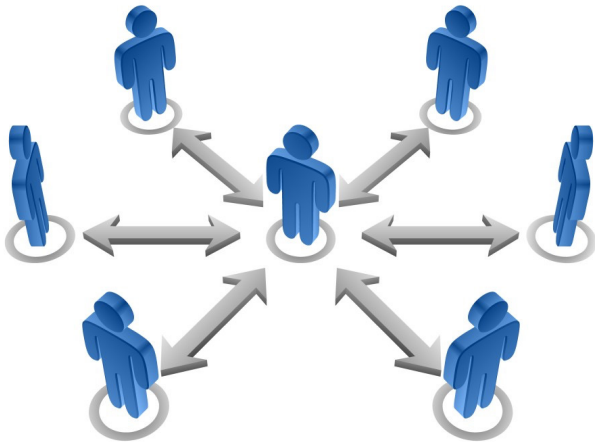
The ILA is often approached by organizations wishing to affiliate with us. These are usually companies, universities, non-profits and others who are interested in extending listening capability in their organizations. We have therefore drawn up a new Affiliate Agreement. Essentially, individual people can be ILA Members; organizations can be either Organizational Members, or Affiliates.

Affiliate organizations enjoy a wide variety of advantages including opportunities to:

- present to international audiences in the ILA Webinar Series
- publish papers and articles in ILA journals
- join the ILA Speakers Bureau
- participate at the ILA Annual International Convention

Please advise organizations you know (for example, your own business, employer, college, university, healthcare center, voluntary organization or music group) that, for an investment of only \$50, they can now become part of the ILA worldwide network spanning 21 countries. Carol Benton has kindly produced a flier in double-quick time. This is available on our website at <http://www.listen.org/www.listen.org/affiliate>. Please feel free to print copies and hand them out at conferences or wherever you find prospective affiliates. You will want to have these printed on high quality paper so that the color is rich and the fliers look great!

Please contact John Backman (johnb@backwrite.com), Helen Ralston (helen.ralston@listen.org), Sandra Bodin-Lerner (bodin-lerner@gmail.com) or Peter Forbes (peter.forbes@empworks.co.uk) to let us know who you have invited. This is another opportunity to introduce more people to the wonderful world of Listening.



YOUR PRESENT IS YOUR PRESENCE

By Michael Murphy

All of us in the International Listening Association (ILA) know that listening is indeed the gift that keeps on giving. It is with that in mind, the ILA requests one more gift from you – it is your presence on three of our social media platforms. Hits are counted! There is a system that counts how many times each social medium gets clicked by both members and non-members alike. With higher numbers, we raise our profile in the world and increase our chances of attracting more sponsorships, endorsements and members. We need as large a network as possible to spread the good word about the ILA.

Whether or not it is your habit to join social media, please consider joining any of the three now. In alphabetical order, the ILA can be found on:

Facebook
LinkedIn
Twitter

Please go to the ILA website at www.listen.org - at the top and bottom of each page you will find these four icons:



These icons represent the social media. Click on them one at a time and follow the directions to join each ILA group. We need to enhance our outreach technologically; and YOU are critical to that end.

After you have joined, here is specifically how you can “make your mark” for ILA:

Facebook*

- Every time you see an item on the ILA Facebook page, click the ‘Like’ underneath it. You can also “Comment, and/or Share” posts on the ILA page

LinkedIn

- “Join” the ILA LinkedIn group
- “Like or Comment” posts on the ILA group page – as frequently as you can

Twitter

- Click the “Follow” button on the ILA page
- These are the icons that enable you to Reply,



Retweet (i.e., send to your followers)



, or Like on Twitter.



*Please note the following [privacy settings](#).

Take the Long Way Home (To Be a Better Listener)

by Tom Kaden, M. Div.

Several years ago, when I was in graduate school, a close friend shared very openly and honestly about the relationship she had with her dad growing up,

“My dad is my hero. What he did for our family is remarkable.”

I wanted to know more, so I asked her just what made him such an awesome dad? She told me about his profession,

“He was incredibly hard working. He was the headmaster at a large prep school. His job was stressful, but he NEVER showed it. When he walked through the door each day, he modeled kindness and grace like I have never experienced since.”

With child-like curiosity, I wanted to learn more. So I kept probing, believing that I would one day have a family of my own,

“So how do you think he did that? How did he model such peace when his professional life was so hectic?”

She went on to tell me that her dad had a “man-cave” in their home - fully loaded with his favorite amenities, including a big screen TV, pool table and chess set.

“When he arrived home he immediately went into his man-cave for thirty minutes to play pool by himself. We didn’t hear a sound.”

“Every day?” I questioned.

“Yes, every day”, she responded.

If she didn’t have my attention until that moment, she genuinely had it after that. In the back of my mind, I started thinking,

“How was your dad such a kind, compassionate, and caring person if he immediately retreated to his man-cave every day after work (even though deep down inside I was kind of jealous ☺)? It didn’t seem like such a kind, compassionate, and caring thing to do, after all. Wouldn’t the kind and caring response be to greet his wife and children upon his arrival? “

My friend then shared that her dad would set a timer for thirty minutes. He wouldn’t come out of his man-cave until the timer went off. As soon as the timer sounded, he opened the basement door, embraced the family, and was “fully present” from that moment until they were sound asleep at night.

Many years have passed since that conversation and I hadn’t thought about it until about three weeks ago. Our workday had just ended and I was stuck in traffic. It had been an especially intense day. We met with a family who had lost a son unexpectedly. The family asked us if we would be willing to perform his funeral. Sitting with his parents that day was one of the most intense moments I have ever experienced in ministry.

As I was driving home, thinking about all that had happened during the day, I needed to make a snap decision - Should I take the standard way home, which is the quickest way by far or should I take the long way home, adding many minutes to an already long trip.

My drive, depending on traffic and how much jockeying for position I do on the highway, takes between 30-45 minutes. When I arrive home I am immediately enveloped by all four of our children. “Daddy’s home!” they all shout in choir-like unison. It’s a special moment and has become one of my favorite moments of the day. Nevertheless, because of the intense nature of so many of our workdays, there are moments when I’ve not always been as “fully present” with my wife and children as I want or need to be. To be completely honest, earlier in our marriage, I wasn’t always the best listener to my wife, either.

But several years ago, I finally admitted my shortcoming and have made the conscious decision to “work hard” at being a better listener, and have done so ever since. I started spending as much time as I could with other husbands and fathers who were good listeners to their families. I wanted to learn from them. I started intentionally asking better questions.

Each of those practices has been tremendously helpful. But another practice I learned to implement, especially on the really intense days, is to “take the long way home”. I intentionally drive the long-way-home to de-stress, debrief, and prepare my heart to listen well to those who often need my attention the most—my wife and children. That long way home for me means choosing to drive slowly along the winding back roads of the central Pennsylvania countryside instead of fast-paced highway driving. The back roads in central PA are an endless sea of nothingness (and by nothingness I mean nothing but rolling hills, corn stalks, and silos).

Everything on the outside is peaceful, serene, still. But everything on the inside is quite the opposite, restless, anxious, tense and tired. I’m often overwhelmed.

Author Adam McHugh, in his recently published book *The Listening Life*, has written a chapter entitled, “Listening To Creation,” in which he asserts that all of creation is preaching a sermon to us if we will only take the time to listen. He quotes the late naturalist, writer, preservationist and founder of the Sierra Club, John Muir, who once asserted,

“Everybody needs beauty as well as bread, places to play in and pray in where nature may heal and cheer and give strength to the body and soul.”

One of the spiritual disciplines Adam McHugh has implemented is the discipline of a long walk - so nature can heal and cheer and give strength to his body and soul. He writes:

For the first ten minutes, of my walk I am allowing the fog to drift out of my soul, silencing my mind and heart and giving my

self over to God’s gifts in my mind and heart and giving myself over to God’s gifts in my immediate surroundings. Then I begin to notice what I see and hear, no matter how big and loud or small and quiet. I’m not trying to insert meaning or concentrate on any one thing; I’m only noticing ... Then, after I have perused the book of creation, taking it in on a large scale, I start to pay attention to anything that flashes or sings out at me, something specific that draws me in. If the first stage is taking in the symphony as a whole, now I start to focus in on particular instruments. Is it a lizard lounging on the path? Is it a particular birdcall? Is it the wind shaking the leaves? Is it the shape of a branch in a tree? Is it the chorus of nighttime voices? Whatever it is, study it. Listen to it. What do you see? What do you hear? What seem interesting or significant about it?

I also enjoy a long walk. But on those days when I can’t seem to find the time and space to be able to go on a long walk, I “take the long way home” to heal my restless soul. The long way home for me is a time to let the cares and worries of the world trickle off my shoulders. I take deep breaths. I admire beauty. I rest. By intentionally listening to creation’s sermon, the feelings of restlessness and weariness subside because I am reminded that I am not the center of the world—and that the world continues to go on with or without me. The birds will be fed. The corn will grow. The sun will rise and fall.

As I drive, I litter the countryside (not physically, but mentally) with the cares of the world that weigh so heavily upon my shoulders: the critical comment, the relational tension, and the unexpected outcome. All of it is hypothetically thrown out the window. My mind and heart is becoming “free” again.

I then open the door and am greeted by my wife and children. I am then able to be fully engaged and fully present to those who need my attention the most. I am able to listen well.

What spiritual discipline could you implement in your own life so that you can be a better listener and be more fully present with others?

Too often we underestimate the power of a touch, a smile, a kind word, a listening ear, an honest compliment, or the smallest act of caring, all of which have the potential to turn a life around.

~ Leo Buscaglia

ILA Short Course: Best Practices in Teaching Listening

by Melissa Beall

The ILA education committee offers a short course on teaching listening the day prior to the annual convention on Wednesday, June 7, at the Hilton, Omaha, Nebraska. The short course is limited to 25 participants. One does not have to be an ILA member to attend. Cost is \$100 to cover room and refreshment-break costs.

Schedule

Session One	1:00 – 3:00 p.m.
3:00-3:15 p.m.	15 minute refreshment/washroom break
Session Two	3:15- 5:15 p.m.
Wrap-up	5:15-5:30 p.m.

Presenters

Melissa L. Beall, Chris Bond, Charles Fischer, Mary Lahman, Michael Z. Murphy, and Phil Tirpac.

Registration

You can register through the ILA convention registration page at www.listen.org

Anyone interested in either registering for and attending the short course, or serving as one of the presenters should contact Melissa.Beall@uni.edu.

Please feel free to contact me should you have questions or wish to be involved in the short course.

See you in Omaha!

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