



**THE ILA LISTENING POST
LISTENING: GOOD NEWS**



AND NOW A WORD FROM.....

PRESIDENT'S WELCOME LETTER

by Lori Joubert, MA, CLP

Thank you to the International Listening Association for allowing me to serve as your President for 2020-2021. I have been a member of the ILA since 2001 when I was a graduate student at the University of Washington in Seattle. It is an honor and a gift to have the trust of my fellow listening colleagues who choose to be members and help lead this unique association.

As in the past, we face the great challenges of identifying the needs of our members and prioritizing strategic goals in alignment with our mission. It is also an exciting time to find new ways of functioning and living in a world struck by crisis. For the health and well-being of our Association we also need to have a little fun - wholehearted enjoyment in doing what we love. I like to think that we are ILA members who “love to listen”, as Marva Shand McIntosh may say, or, as others have said: in the ILA we love “to promote the advancement of listening”. The key here is love.

In his book ‘Loving Each Other: The Challenge of Human Relationships’ (1984), Leo F. Buscaglia shares that “communication, the art of talking with each other, saying what we feel and mean, saying it clearly, listening to what the other says and making sure that we are hearing accurately, is by all indication the skill most essential for creating and maintaining loving relationships.”

As we work on the advancement of listening and building our relationships around this common purpose in the world, we are all aware that this is a pandemic year, one where Covid-19 is prevalent all over the world. So, I wish to invite you to consider this year at the ILA as a “Listening Pandemic” year where the advancement and love for listening is infectious, widespread, and accessible to all.

As your President this year, I would like to keep our focus on creating and maintaining our relationships as we move forward in the ILA mission to advance our listening work. We do this as well as meeting our other important responsibilities such as providing substantive benefits to members, increasing our international reach, maintaining fiscal responsibility, creating an attractive social media and web presence and sharing easily accessible tools and resources to sustain ILA programs and events such as the ILA International Day of Listening. We can do this is by:

1. Building on what we have already learned and accomplished
2. Developing what is in front of us in the present day
3. Staying connected along the way

In November 2018 John Backman and the Strategic Planning Task Force explored the questions “How agile is the ILA? Who are we right now? Who can we be in the future? (see LP issue 124). The task force proceeded by building on the good work already accomplished to answer these significant questions and used the following data:

- * 2016 Membership Survey
- *2017 Strategic Planning Report
- *2018 SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) Analysis

This is the year to bring the work together through membership input and leadership. Our ILA Board has been working to develop goals for the year.

We were aware that many communities were experiencing loneliness and isolation so the ILA Board agreed to meet regularly throughout April and May so we could build solid connection, confidence in our relationships and achieve greater clarity about the ILA work ahead. We held two Board meetings in April and three in May. Some of this meeting time was used to address concerns from the postponement of the 2020 ILA Convention and to re-launch our activities through new online ILA programs.

A BIG thank you to Sandra Bodin-Lerner, Phil Tirpak, Raquel Ark, Nan Johnson-Curiskis, and all the many other ILA members who participated to bring something fresh and new to our ILA activity during the “stay at home” orders in many communities. The next opportunity to experience ILA online activities is the Mini-Course “Listen with Empathy”. To learn more about ILA activities scheduled this year please visit our new online events calendar → <https://www.listen.org/ILA-Events-Calendar>

I am delighted to be working alongside our ILA Board members. You will hear more details from us in the coming weeks about goals and plans to strengthen the ILA and keep us moving forward in creative ways to benefit our membership and bring about furthering the advancement of listening worldwide.

ILA Board Members are in the process of submitting their goals for the year and we will share the entire goal summary with you in June. To start with I would like to share the goals I have proposed for this year. Please note that I will be focusing in on two or three with high hopes to take on more as time and resource allow.

2020-2021 ILA President Goals

“ **ILA Values:** Create an ILA values statement of 4-6 values with input from membership. Plan a strategic planning retreat to collect ideas from ILA membership and leadership

📋 **ILA Survey/Needs Assessment:** Membership, Past Presidents & Board

🌐 **ILA Leadership/Relationship Development:** Develop an integrated leaders forum with board members, committee chairs and past presidents using this year's convention theme “Embrace the world: Listen to build relationships”

📈 **ILA Sponsorship Plan:** Begin to create a 2020-2025 sponsorship plan

Assisting me in achieving these goals is a board and leadership team powered 100% by volunteer ILA members. Each one has a specific area of focus, and each brings a diversity of thought, talent, and passion to the ILA. Last month we also experienced a Board vacancy as Anita Dorczak stepped down as Immediate Past President and we plan to fill the vacancy by June 30.

We appreciate Anita for her last three years of service and continued listening work in the world. She is off to new adventures creating Vlogs. Look for her recent series on “Another Dimension of Law and Mediation”.

Thank you and congratulations Anita!



2020-2021 ILA Board and Leadership Team	
Lori Joubert, President	Nanette Johnson-Curiskis, Exec Dir
Melissa Beall, FVP	Margarete Imhof, IJL Editor
Chris Bond, FVP Elect	Nicole Bodin, Web Editor
Peter Forbes, Secretary	Erica Lamm, Listening Education
Gayle Pohl, MAL, PR and LP Editor	Business: Raquel Ark, Lead Facilitator
Kathy O'Brien, MAL, Global	Education: Charles Fischer, Chair
Sandra BodinLearner, VP Membership	Health Care: Corine Jansen, Chair
John Backman, MAL, Special Projects	Research: Jennie Grau, Project Lead Research Awards: Teresa Dello Monaco, Chair
Krishna Naineni, Student Member	Publications: Margarete Imhof, Chair
Vacant, Immediate Past President	Awards: Rosanne Vogel, Chair

Our first online ILA leadership gathering will be in June for the “ILA Open House” to meet with key leaders in Business, Education, Health Care, Research and Publications! More details to come and I hope you can join us! With great respect for the ILA membership and your tremendous efforts to stay connected during crisis and make listening a priority in your life! I look forward to a great year ahead!

CONVENTIONS 2020 AND 2021



Join Us in Bloomington, MN, Crowne Plaza Aire For the Joint 2020/2021 ILA Convention March 16-20, 2021

Melissa L. Beall, 1st Vice-President

It's been quite a year and the inability to meet with our ILA friends at the annual convention was a challenge. Lori Joubert and the ILA Board responded by setting up Zoom presentations, meet-ups and exchanges so we could still share listening information and excitement. Now we look forward to once again meeting face-to-face in a joint 2020-2021 in Bloomington, Minnesota next March.

The convention will begin on Tuesday, March 16 with registration and the opening reception with convention presentations beginning on Wednesday (St. Patrick's Day). 2020 sessions will primarily occur on the 17th, but 2020-2021 sessions may well be interwoven throughout our four days together. The themes: *Embrace the*



World: Listen to Build Relationships and *The Intersection of Teaching, Research, Service and Practical Applications in Listening* seem remarkably compatible. The 2020 Keynote Speech is on Wednesday while the 2021 Keynote occurs on either Friday or Saturday (TBA). The 2021 Keynote focuses on Appreciative Listening and includes musical entertainment. Friday will include a short service project where empathy joins an activity to encourage and assist needy students in the Metro area (this is a project you may be able to take back home to assist students in your area).

The Crown Plaza Aire Hotel is about 15 minutes from the Minneapolis-St. Paul airport and provides a free shuttle from and to airport and hotel. The hotel is about 2 blocks from the entrances to Mall of America and the shuttle will transport guests by reservation or throughout the evening hours. The Minneapolis Light Rail (where you can travel to downtown Minneapolis and elsewhere) has an boarding point 1/4 of a block from the hotel front entrance. Room rates are Midwestern reasonable at \$109.00 per night. More on the convention will follow in future *Listening Posts* and email blasts to members throughout the next 6 months. A Call for Papers/ Presentations will be sent out in the fall. Submissions are due to Melissa.Beall@listen.org on or before **November 30, 2020**. [Early submissions are welcomed!]

The ILA Board has worked hard to deal with the changing and challenging situation of the need to re-schedule the 2020 convention and to combine 2020 and 2021 presentations. We are interested in your views.

Please contact me (Melissa.Beall@listen.org), or any of the Board members with any questions, concerns, or suggestions. We appreciate your views and look forward to seeing everyone in person in March.



ILA AWARDS

Amy Anderson, from Helms Briscoe, is the International Listening Association **Listener of the Year**. The ILA has an agreement with Helms Briscoe (HB), who is our exclusive venue searching company. HB works with domestic and international hotels. The HB system maintains venue rate histories as well as comments from other clients and associates about each hotel. From these files, HB and Amy make the ILA aware of venue options for our national and international conventions.

Amy Anderson joined HelmsBriscoe in 2004. Coming from the hotel industry, Amy brings a wealth of knowledge to her clients. Throughout her career, she has polished her negotiation skills, sharpened her contract expertise, and gained experience working with domestic and international groups ranging from 10 to 2,000 rooms. Amy consistently listens to our convention needs and tailors a call for proposals based on our specific requests. She listens to both sides of the equation—the ILA and our needs, and the various venues and their offers. From the wide network of Helms Briscoe, Amy pulls everything together for the ILA regarding contract negotiations, site visits, changes, and ultimate acceptance of the final venue. Amy intercedes at all levels of the process. Amy is an incredible communicator and listener. She leaves few stones unturned as she helps the ILA choose the best venue. She helps secure sales kits, arranges site visits and tours as needed. Amy Anderson is an internationally prominent listener. Amy and HB epitomize the highest standards and principles of effective listening.

We are proud to announce that **Helen Ralston** has been inducted into the International Listening Association **Hall of Fame**.

Helen has served as Chair of the Business Group, First Vice-President Elect, First Vice-President, President, and Past President. In all of those roles, she listened, she cared, she gave people many chances to explain their positions, she worked hard to see if we could find ways through strongly differing opinions. Under her leadership we began many progressive ILA initiatives including the ILA Webinar Program, the ILA Strategic Planning Taskforce, the ILA Partners Program and the ILA Mentoring/Coaching Program. Helen also began the ILA Listening Times as a way of presenting current information on Listening and to celebrate the community and accomplishments of the ILA membership. She delights in having opportunities to interact with ILA members in more than 20 countries throughout the world.

Outside of the ILA, Helen continues the same approach. Her career has been focused on Listening in all its shapes and sizes. She has degrees in Psychology and in Organization Development and her doctoral thesis deals with the hermeneutics of Listening. In her professional life, she has held senior positions in major international organizations working in Europe, Africa and the USA involving listening in multicultural contexts. Congratulations, Helen.

Jean Francois Mathieu is presented with the International Listening Association **Special Recognition Award**. He has been actively involved with the International Day of Listening from the beginning, but he has really moved the event forward with his leadership as Chair of the International Day of Listening for the past two years. Specifically, he has greatly enhanced the use of social media to promote the International Day of Listening.

Jean François Mathieu is a music composer and arranger, for small ensembles or large orchestras, of music for shows, concerts, films, and jingles. He is also a live musician, song-writer, improviser, and teacher. In addition, he is Founding Partner and Listening Culture Designer of Leaders Today, Founder and CEO of La

Diamanterie Productions and Blueschool, a civil engineer and Vice-President of Coach for Peace.

Today he dedicates his time to researching and teaching Listening within organizations, with a passion to make a difference in people's lives by helping them improve the quality of communication in their personal and professional lives. In his own words: "My goal is to (re)awaken the Listener in everyone so that they can understand themselves and the world better." "Ears can go 63 where eyes can't see."

Dr. Laura Janusik is presented with the **ILA Outstanding Educator Award**. Dr. Janusik is a dynamic professor, trainer, researcher, speaker, and business consultant. She is Professor, and the McGee Chair of Communication at Rockhurst University. Dr. Janusik has won numerous research and teaching awards from different professional and academic associations. All of Dr. Janusik's work is supported by the most current research, which she shares and applies in training, coaching, and consulting. Laura is a Past President of the International Listening Association (2010-2011), and is published both nationally and internationally. She holds a PhD in Communication from the University of Maryland at College Park and an MBA from Rockhurst University in Kansas City, MO., USA.

Dana Dupuis is presented with the International Listening Association **Business Sector Award**. With over 15 years of experience in management consulting, leadership communication, business development and coaching, Dana Dupuis knows the importance of communication. After realizing early in her career that the very key component of listening was missing from the equation in most leadership communication training, Dana developed a passion for bringing better communication to the world of business management specifically through listening. Dana is the co-creator of a proprietary tool called the ECHO Listening Profile (ECHO = Effective Communication for Healthy Organizations), which has been key in positively evolving countless company cultures, teams and individuals. Her approach combines this listening assessment with strategic consulting to help identify an individual's personal listening habits in a work setting. By understanding that different people listen "to" and "for" different kinds of information, individuals can greatly enhance their ability to communicate and collaborate effectively. It is upon this concept that Dana's work

is based. Her work cultivating Listening Intelligence has been instrumental in reshaping communication with executive teams, within teams and across full company culture shifts and extends over a broad range of industries. She has worked with a wide variety of companies including Humana, Lockheed Martin and The Coca-Cola Company. Dana lives in Boulder, Colorado with her husband and two children.

International Journal of Listening: Good news from the editor's desk

by Margarete Imhof

It is a great pleasure to share good news about the International Journal of Listening. First let me take a look at the journal's health: Both the journal circulation and the number of downloads of individual articles shows a spike from 2017 to 2018 with the current numbers for 2019 promising more. The number of institutions which have paid for access to the journal has increased from 2444 in 2017 to 2906 in 2018. The cite score for the past year is above average, which means that researchers read the material and use it for their work.

The journal is now indexed in SCOPUS in the category of Language / Linguistics & Communication. This additional listing will help to spread the message. The readership of the journal is almost global. According to the statistics provided by the publisher, 32% of the journal's audience is located in Australasia, 27% in the United States and Canada, 24% in Europe, and 13% in Asia. The journal has fewer readers in Africa (3.5%) and Latin America (1%), so we can see clearly where we need to go to go truly global!

Also, we see a continuous and strong flow of manuscripts. This allows for a 25% higher page budget per issue, beginning with volume 35 in 2021. And last, but not least, royalties are up quite considerably. Thank you to all authors who submitted their papers, worked hard on the revisions, and thank you to all reviewers who contributed their time and expertise to ensure the quality standards.

Take a look at the most recent issue of the International Journal of Listening. Liora Lipetz, Avi Kluger

and Graham Bodie report their study on “Listening is Listening: Employees’ Perception of Listening as a Holistic Phenomenon”. An insightful piece of research that shows how individuals in different positions in an organization view listening. S.A Welch and W. Mickelson explore what listening means to individuals in different stages along the life span. Valerie Manusov, Daniel Stofleth, Jacquelyn Harvey and John Crowley present their research on conditions and consequence of listening well for interpersonal relationships and how active empathic listening, social-emotional skills, and mindfulness contribute to relational quality. Use your free access to the International Journal of Listening through www.listen.org to check out the full papers and the cutting-edge research and book reviews under “Latest Articles”. I am confident that you will agree with me that the field is very much alive and thriving.

ILA Mentoring Creates New Connections

by Kathy O’Brien

In its first year, ILA’s Coaching and Mentoring Program has connected members across continents, generations and professions, creating rich relationships that epitomize the value of this global organization.

We have received some encouraging feedback and heard wonderful anecdotes of dynamic relationships. At the 2019 convention, some mentees got to know their mentors in person and that made the continuing dialogue more natural. While the cancellation of convention 2020 prevented us from meeting in person, communications are continuing over telephone, video and email.

We’ve also experienced some mismatches. Some mentees have realized now might not be the right time, or perhaps they didn’t know what they were looking for in a mentor. That is also a valuable realization; and we’re glad ILA could make a small contribution to these individuals’ journeys.

Here are some comments from program participants:

Our mentorship is also fast becoming a good friendship. I highly value [my mentor]’s input, organisation skills, and her support: She is a wonderful mentor, through and through.

We had a very constructive session.

I’m grateful to [my mentor] for his excellent mentorship. I’m learning a lot from him. It’s very insightful and always a delight to read his work. He is always there when I need guidance and advice.

For me it was an opportunity to listen and think with another person who cares about the value of listening.

I’m also grateful to ILA for bringing in and supporting members like me with productive programmes like these.

I’ve enjoyed thinking and listening and talking with him.

This has been a very successful exchange with, from my view, both of us learning from the experience.

I am mentoring a new member through her Ph.D. research and dissertation... Through our skype meetings we have also grown into friends, both of us a part of the ILA family. I intend to mentor her through the completion of her work, but I know that we will remain friends after, all because of the ILA.

I received great feedback... It was really helpful.

One comment offered a wonderful reminder of why ILA has embarked on this mentorship program:

The value that keeps coming up for me is the fact that the members of the ILA consider themselves ‘family’. I highly value this aspect of the ILA. When new members join we tend to embrace them and want to support them and help them grow in their inquiry into listening. This happened to me when I joined.

Long may this continue!

If you would like to be mentored, or be a mentor, please email ILA Board Member Kathy O’Brien at Kathy.obrien@listen.org. Visit the Resources section of the ILA website for the application form and mentoring guidelines.

International Day of Listening: Invitation to a Mini-course on Listening with Empathy

By Sheila Bentley

The theme for the fifth annual International Day of Listening is “Listen with Empathy.” In a world with many changes, much uncertainty of what is yet to come, lots of disagreement, political divide, contentiousness, and fear, there is more need for empathy and more opportunity to provide empathy. While one person needs a listener who can listen with empathy, the potential listener finds that stress and conflict can lead to shutting down the ability to listen empathically—often at a time when empathy is truly needed.

The International Day of Listening is kicking off a four-month course on how to be a more empathic listener from May through August. The first session, Introduction to the Empathy Process, delivered by Sheila Bentley and Margarete Imhof, is Thursday, May 28, at 9:00 a.m. (EDT). You can register on the International Day of Listening website (www.internationaldayoflistening.com).

To help people prepare and be more skilled at listening with empathy, the IDL will feature an informative presentation by some of our own ILA experts on how to listen with empathy each month from May through August in preparation for the actual IDL in September. You will learn what empathy is and is NOT, how to identify the speaker’s emotion, and how to listen and respond with empathy effectively.

Here is the schedule of events:

International Day of Listening Schedule of Events:

May 28, 9:00 a.m. (EDT): Introduction to the Empathy Process: Sheila Bentley and Margarete Imhof

June 18, 9:00 a.m. (EDT): Recognize and Identify Emotions: Sheila Bentley and Margarete Imhof

July 9, 9:00 a.m. (EDT): Establish an Intent for Listening: Jennie Grau

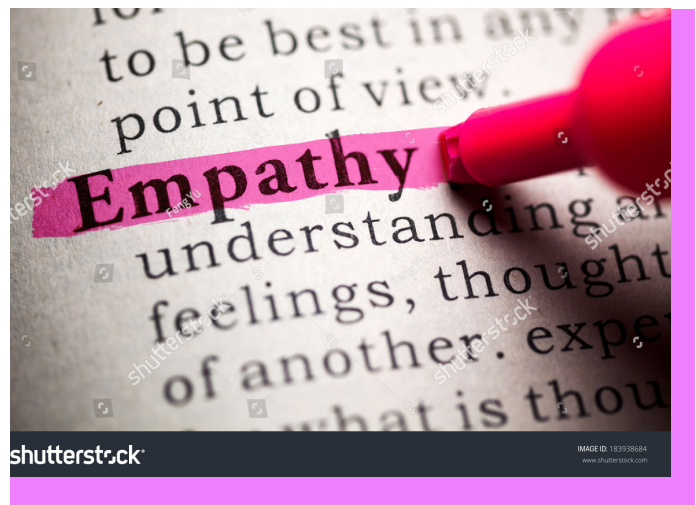
July 30, 9:00 a.m. (EDT): Listen with Empathy: Graham Bodie

August 20, 9:00 a.m. (EDT): Respond with Empathy: Lori Joubert and Krishna Naineni

September 3, 9:00 a.m. (EDT): Planning an Activity for International Day of Listening: Sheila Bentley and Margarete Imhof

September 17: International Day of Listening: Listen with Empathy Activities

Sponsored by the International Listening Association





IT IS OUR HONOR

ILA RESEARCH AWARDS

Teija Waaramaa, Speech and Voice Research Laboratory, Faculty of Social Sciences, Tampere University, Finland

In the category of “ILA Research Award,” Teija Waaramaa et. al. 1 from Tampere University’s Faculty of Social Sciences in Finland won for their paper “Impressions of Personality from Intentional Voice Quality in Arabic-Speaking and Native Finnish-Speaking Listeners.” Their work is a sign of the times for Finland and many parts of the world as it picks up on a changing aural landscape due to the mass emigration of Arabic-speaking people from war torn Syria into Europe and other parts of the world. The research team focused on differences between Arabic and Finnish listeners’ perceptions of the human voice according to eight different qualities. (For example, breathy, nasalized, tense, creaky etc.) Their conclusion was that “there seem to be similar stereotypical tendencies to relate certain voice qualities with certain personality traits, which is explainable by how the voice types are produced and used to express emotions” (p.1).

ILA GRADUATE THESIS/DISSERTATION AWARD

Leslie R. Anglesey (dissertation submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in English University of Nevada, Reno USA)

Leslie Anglesey’s Philosophy of English dissertation (an extensive and thorough qualitative study): “Between Bodies and Engagement: A Reclamation of Listening in First-Year Composition” from the University of Nevada in Reno, won the ILA award for best thesis/dissertation. The work explores First-Year Composition (FYC) professors’ assessment of students’ listening. Using grounded theory and informed by feminist rhetoric theory, Anglesey interviewed seven FYC professors and observed several classrooms taking note of how gender and ableism factor into instructors’ assessment of their students’ listening especially in the context of marks for participation. Her “emergent theory favors an inclusive approach to understanding when students are ‘signaling’ that they are listening, a theory that can account for diverse bodily performances of listening (Anglesey, 2019, 69). At times a delight to read, Anglesey’s work “map[s] the ways in which instructors’ notions of listening engage perceptions of students’ bodies and student engagement, to reveal how perceptions of listening rely upon notions of able-bodiedness and gender that may marginalize students’ ability to demonstrate listening in the writing classroom” (quoted from the dissertation’s Abstract).

1. T. Waaramaa, P. Lukkarila, K. Järvinen, A. Geneid, and A-M. Laukkanen co-authors.

TOP ILA CONVENTION PAPER AWARD

Laura Janusik (Rockhurst University, Kansas City, MO)
Teri Varner, St. Edward's University, Austin, Texas)

The “Top ILA Convention Paper Award” went to Laura Janusik (Rockhurst University, Kansas City) and Teri Varner (St. Edward's University, Austin, Texas). Janusik and Varner shifted from quantitative to qualitative methods to examine the “tools and strategies an individual chooses to use, consciously or unconsciously, to create . . . meaning” (p. 17). Using diary entries from volunteer undergraduate students from eight classes in two private institutions, Janusik and Varner used the probes from the Metacognitive Awareness Listening Questionnaire (MALQ) to compare the experience of their L1 participants (students whose mother tongue is English) to the MALQ probes derived from studying L2 participants (or English as a second language students). Results were quite favorable (correlations in students using 13 of 21 probes) with a noted surprise in the various ways students “direct their attention” while listening. The researchers’ descriptive study is the first of more qualitative studies to come to monitor and describe students’ awareness of how they listen before, during, and after class. This first study focused on the meaning of participants’ listening strategies and tools during class.

Listening: What I've been Reading

by Mike Purdy

For a few months the focus of my reading was Yuval Noah Harari's major works: *Sapiens* and *Homo Deus*. He follows the vast scope of human history, and for those of us who study listening, shows how “evolutionary” listening and cooperation shaped modern human life. *Sapiens* evolved from various human lineages to become conscious listeners who collaborate to build functioning communities and states. Of course, Harari doesn't mention listening, but it follows from the advance of civilization that we had to have listened to create the modern world.

Earlier this year in my preparation for my presentation, *Listening Nudges*, for the ILA conference in Seattle, I happened upon a book about Michel de Montaigne, *How to Live: A Life of Montaigne* (Bakewell, 2010). Montaigne (16th c. France), as a communicator, was firm but open to a wide range of human conversations. Even when facing the most powerful princes in the land, he looked them straight in the face: “I frankly tell them my limits.” His openness made other people open up as well (Bakewell, p. 251). Beginning a situation with a statement of ground rules and/or a statement of limits, or guardrails for dialogue was strategic. Montaigne generally followed the Pyrrhonian principle that he lends his ears to everyone and his mind to no one, while maintaining his own integrity through it all (Bakewell, p. 247). This implies an attitude of openness from all parties, while still allowing for each party to be respected for their opinions and their humanity.

However, we should also guard against what Kate Murphy labels the “closeness—communication bias;” that is, the loss we experience when we think we know a person (or persons). We think we have already heard what they will say—so we don't really listen. (This article was reviewed in the last LP). However, there was a new article by Kate, also in the *New York Times*, on listening, and its stressors, during the time of the stay-at-home pandemic:

Relationships, romantic and otherwise, are rewarding and resilient when both parties feel heard and understood. The trouble is that listening is a skill few diligently practice even in the best of times, and it can really fall by the wayside during periods of uncertainty, hardship and stress
(<https://www.nytimes.com/2020/05/05/well/family/listening-coronavirus.html>).

And then this week, while reading a short article on listening in the year of the virus, by Andy Wolvin (Centering Risk Communication on Active Listening, coming in the newsletter of the Global Listening Centre), in which he shares his hope for the world:

Clearly, as the coronavirus pandemic rages on, we need to create a world of active listeners, global listeners who are willing to engage with compassion and understanding so that we have the opportunity to share our perspectives, our questions, our fears with others.

Then I found an article by Zenger and Folkman (cited by Wolvin) from the Harvard Business Review (2016). Zenger and Folkman after a lot of study of listening deduce from their research on effective listeners: “Good listening was characterized by the creation of a safe environment in which issues and differences could be discussed openly” (<http://hbr.org/2016/07/what-great-listeners-actually-do>). They suggest as a first and primary level for effective communication that: “The listener creates a safe environment in which difficult, complex, or emotional issues can be discussed”.

As if that weren't enough, I watched #ListenTheMovie (@ListenTheMovie) a movie about the problems we create when we refuse to listen, and the joy and positive outcomes when we do. Graham Bodie has been very instrumental in supporting and promoting this movie, which is well done and a great lead-in to discussion about the importance of listening.

There were other books with chapters on listening and dialogue, like Ian Mills 2019 publication: The Climate of the Heart: Only relatedness can save us, but that is for another time.

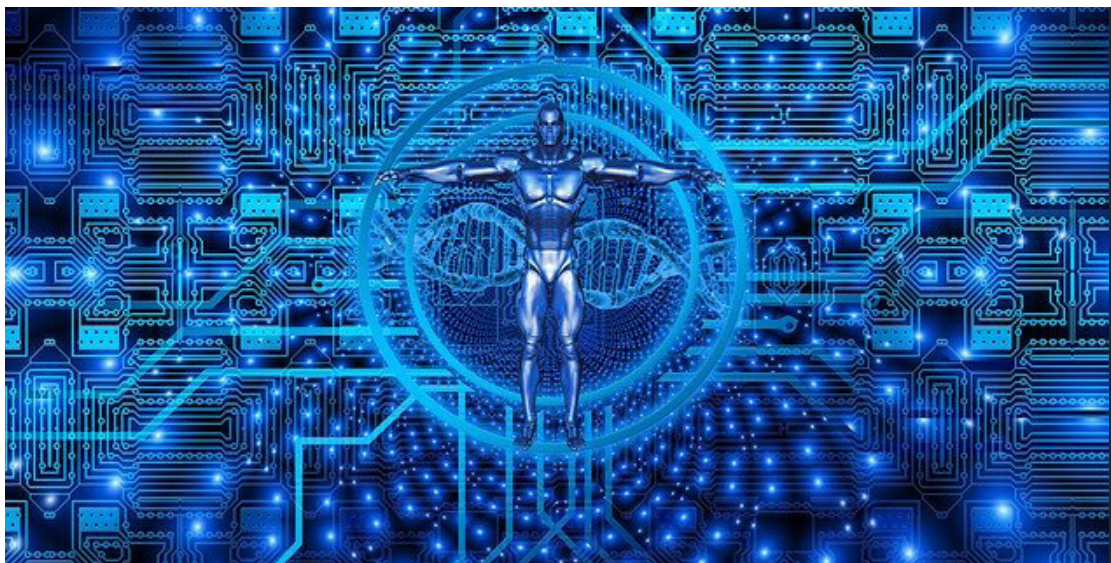
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Harari, Yuval Noah. (2015). Sapiens: A brief History of Humankind. Harper Collins, New York, NY.

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Zenger J. & Folkman J. (July 14, 2016). Harvard Business Review. <http://hbr.org/2016/07/what-great-listeners-actually-do>.



evolution



JUST BE

Listening to People I've Never Met

By John Backman

What does it mean to “listen” to strangers who have no idea we exist, who live in war zones and drought-stricken regions half a world away?

In my spiritual tradition we have a practice called, for short, *lectio* (LEX-ee-o). It involves the reading of sacred texts, but in a slow, contemplative way, pausing over words that strike us and turning them over in our minds to see what insight might be there. In other words, we listen, deeply though non-aurally, to the text.

The COVID-19 pandemic has driven me into using this practice with a “text” I never dreamed of.

Somewhere in mid-April I started chafing at the pandemic, especially the spike in my chronic anxiety and the tight limits on my freedom of movement. I know that, as an American, I have access to privileges unthinkable to people in other parts of the world, especially areas torn by war, drought, disease, and a lack of every basic necessity. What I was suffering, they were suffering far more, and I felt drawn to find and listen to their stories.

The area that came to mind was the Idlib region of Syria—the last holdout against a repressive government in Syria’s nine-year civil war, a state bombed relentlessly by government and Russian forces. My search quickly turned up first-person accounts: the photojournalist who reported from Idlib’s refugee camps; the family who returned to their bombed-out home because it was still better than those camps; the teen girl who lived in constant terror of the bombers flying overhead; the doctor who kissed his wife good-bye every day, knowing it might be the last time.

Before I knew it, I was reading these stories as *lectio*.

When I read that the photojournalist hadn’t been home in nine years, my mind reviewed the last nine years of *my* life, how much it had improved, and how all that time *his* life had been at least partially on hold. The photos of the family, eating *iftar*—the evening meal during Ramadan—amid the rubble of their home reminded me of the power of tradition and family to sustain us in disorienting times. I tried (and failed) to imagine living with a mind continuously on red alert. These stories are not new, of course. We hear them all the time on the news, and they spark common reactions: heartbreak, powerlessness, guilt. But my *lectio* was about none of these. I was drawn into these stories not to bemoan my privilege, but simply to listen, carefully, deeply—and in listening, connect.

It’s still early days for me and this “spiritual practice,” but some of the fruit has been extraordinary. One morning I sat in silence with my coffee, gazing through a window onto the stout maples in my neighbor’s yard and dreaming of God. Unbidden, the people from Idlib came to mind, one after the other, and without my knowing how, they were family. People who will never know me, people whom I barely know, now have a place in the deepest part of my heart. And from that place, they show me the depths of human suffering, the things that sustain them (and me) through it all, and the importance of not taking myself too seriously. Any good family member would do the same.



SIMPLE STORIES

Listening: A Journey of Reflection

by Peter Forbes

At a time of great trauma in my life, I benefited from working with a counselor who didn't tell me what to do, didn't pass judgement, who created the mental space for me to reflect, to be listened to, to restore over time a sense of balance. It wasn't "just" applying deep listening to my situation. I was given practical advice and tools to help me make the most of my understanding of how listening interventions can make a real difference.

It worked!

Listening: An Outcome

by Gayle Pohl

In the these last few months, I have let my mind wonder through the memories of my life. As a child there were many bad memories, but they were spiced with good ones too. As I grew into adolescence the bad memories faded somewhat and new, better ones took their place. Childhood was a time of listening for me, so it is no surprise that adulthood has been dotted with periods of solitude, listening and reflection. I truly believe it is better to listen first and speak last. Even though I am an academic, I do not like the sound of my own voice. I like being succinct, concise and to-the-point. Listening allows me the time to mull ideas and policies over in my head. The best ideas may come to me in the most unlikely places – the shower and other unmentionable places—but only if I have truly listened and absorbed the information someone has transmitted to me. Listening allows me to assist other people. It helps me to guide them or to do something for them. When I have only partially listened, I find I do not properly help others.

Every semester I give my students a syllabus that looks more like a short story than a guideline for a class. It contains everything and more than they ever wanted to know for the semester about the class they are taking. They are informed that at the end of the semester that there is a big project due, which required a group to purchase or fundraise for the printing of a 45-60 page document they had prepared. One day in

class, a student who did her work and was vocal in discussions, yelled at me that this purchase (\$4.00 by the way) was a surprise. This was unfair and I could not force them to do this. Initially, I started to become defensive and say the purchase had been in the syllabus since day one. However, my listening ears heard this woman shouting.... SHOUTING. My listening ears said there is something more to this story than this assignment. I asked my class to discuss on their own and asked the student in question to meet me in the hallway. I found the young woman was sitting on top of a set of stairs. I sat next to her and simply asked her what was really wrong. She was crying by this time. She replied that she lost her job and had no money for food or diapers for her baby. The breath left me and my arms went around her as she cried. Quickly, I told her how I was going to help her immediately. She smiled as if the world had lifted from her shoulders. I only asked one thing of her and that was if she ever needed help again that she tell someone so help could be arranged for her and her family.

Listening to people's needs means the world to them and it helps ground the individual doing the listening.



THE POETRY CORNER

TIME, AFTER HOURS

By Linda Eve Diamond

*Time and Eternity, forever at play,
walk into a bar on the other side...*

*No one here knows the end
of this quirky cosmic joke*

*but imagine them walking in
larger and messier than life*

*trailing in bits of everything
—from stars to sand—*

*Eternity droning on... about
everything and nothingness...*

*Time smiling and laughing with
a hardy, hearty chime chime chime*

*Bartender pouring glasses of light
and darkness, as spirits come and go*

*talking about life and those silly lines
they used to draw in the sand*

*while love songs loop
on the jukebox...*

The Problem with Interrupting A Cautionary Tale ;)

By Linda Eve Diamond

*She said I couldn't love you
He snapped a quick reply:
You said you did, you lied to me, but then—all
women lie.*

*With that, he gathered up his things and
spewed a harsh goodbye.
She would have loved him always, but he had
one awful flaw.*

*He interrupted her every sentence, her every
little thought.*

*But oh, how she cried when he walked out the
door:
The rest of her sentence would have
been more!*

Unfrozen

By Lori Joubert

*And as for love... sometimes it's frozen,
Stuck back there unchosen.*

*Sometimes it's heard in the song I sing,
Within reach and not yet held closely.*

*It grows from person to person,
With each connection,*

Is uncertain in dimension.

*My natural human expression relaxes
With a certain type of knowing.*

*Love is naturally part of me,
Stored openly in my heart.*

*Always there for me to see,
The beauty between you and me.*



We Are Listening

submitted by Katy Wiss

I. As our metal eyes wake
to absolute night,
where whispers fly
from the beginning of time,
we cup our ears to the heavens.
Avid, we are listening
on the volcanic lips of Flagstaff
and in the fields beyond Boston
in a great array that blooms
like coral from the desert floor,
on highwire webs patrolled
by computer spiders in Puerto Rico.
We are listening for a sound
beyond us, beyond sound,
searching for a lighthouse
in the breakwaters of our uncertainty,
an electronic murmur
a bright, fragile I am.
Small as tree frogs
staking out one end
of an endless swamp,
we are listening
through the longest night
we imagine, which dawns
between the life and time of stars.

II. Our voice trembles
with its own electric,
we who mood like iguanas
we who breathe sleep
for a third of our lives,
we who heat food
to the steaminess of fresh prey,
then feast with such baroque
good manners it grows cold.
In mind gardens
and on real verandas
we are listening,
rapt among the persian lilacs
and the crickets,
while radio telescopes
roll their heads, as if in anguish.
With our scurrying minds
and our lidless will
and our lank, floppy bodies
and our galloping yens
and our deep, cosmic loneliness

and our starboard hearts
where love careens,
we are listening,
the small bipeds
with the giant dreams.

~ Diane Ackerman ~

From the collection, *Jaguar of Sweet
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