



Learn, Teach, Inspire, and Collaborate

Letter from Out Going ILA President

Christopher Bond, PhD, CLP

Hello fellow listeners! I have been reflecting on the many things for which I am thankful. As for the ILA, I am thankful you had faith in my leadership and elected me to serve a second time as president for our great organization (2011-12 & 2022-23). While there are some similarities between my two terms, there are many more differences and challenges as we have begun a new era after the Covid-19 pandemic. Even though we had to tackle many challenges, there were also opportunities and we adapted very well running successful virtual conventions and developing incredible membership-driven on-line programs. Please check-out our various publications and programs upcoming this year including the ILA “Meet-Ups” that cover many interesting listening topics. You can find these towards the bottom of the ILA homepage. Personally, I am excited that the ILA convention is headed back to Germany for our 44th annual convention in Mainz on July 27 and hope to see you there

For personal reasons, I have decided to take a sabbatical from ILA presidency. I look forward to returning as Immediate Past President at the convention after my brief hiatus. Know that I am always eager to talk to our current and potential new members about listening or the organization. I would also love to hear from those of you who would like to discuss how listening has changed during and after the recent pandemic. This could lay the groundwork for a great research project!

I enjoyed speaking with some members who have been with the ILA for 5 years, asking them what they see ILA doing. These are some of their inspirational answers:

- „We create wonderful opportunities to examine and experience listening with each other.“
- „ILA is a long-standing organization that has helped many organizations, like Sperry, become better listeners. It’s the bottom line. We help people really listen.“
- „My fellow listeners and myself create different groups and events to listen to one another differently and passionately to current members and guests.“
- „We have various listening groups to help people connect and understand listening with their own listening opportunities.“

Keep listening!

Feel free to contact me via email at chris.bond@listen.org. My phone number and other information can be found in the ILA



Off We Go: Letter from the Acting President

Raquel Ark

I am honored to fulfill the role as acting President of the International Listening Association. It is a great privilege to serve such an important organization alongside an amazing leadership team of listening advocates. I am excited to work with our community to find ways to advance listening and enable listening cultures around the world.

Our association has a rich history of promoting research, education, and practice related to listening across diverse contexts and cultures. As we continue to navigate a rapidly changing world, the importance of listening has become even more critical. Listening helps us to connect with one another, build trust, and foster understanding, even in the face of diverse opinions and perspectives. We have the potential to fill very important and current needs.

At the same time our association also aims to create a safe and inclusive space for individuals of all backgrounds to come together, develop their own listening skills while advancing listening in the world. We love the ripple effect listening has, and we know it starts first within our organization listening to each other. One place to experience the power of listening is in our ILA Listening Circle Training group, a great place to grow and get to know our peers.

Besides the diverse teams, variety of programs and resources you can find on our [ILA website](#), we would love to see you at the 44th Annual Convention In Mainz Germany! It will be the first in person convention in 3 years and there is much excitement. In fact, we have over 20 volunteers bringing the magic to the event. If you cannot make it in person, the convention is hybrid and we are taking care to consider how to make this event inclusive for all of us. Register today [here!](#)

Thanks to the DIT team, our theme is “Discovering The Impact of Listening To Every Voice” and we have a rich program ready to go with presenters from all over the world collaborating together. The program will be online soon on a special Convention Information Page. We will send a message to membership when this is ready. In the mean time, if you have any questions, please contact me at raquel.ark@listen.org.

Our ILA Leadership Team is working hard to work with our members to prioritize and build upon our strengths, expand our reach, and deepen our impact. We can only do this together. We are committed to fostering a culture of collaboration and connection within our association and beyond.

I am deeply grateful to my predecessors for their leadership and service to the International Listening Association, and I am committed to building upon their legacy. Together, we will continue to advance the science and practice of listening worldwide.

Thank you for your ongoing support and engagement, and I look forward to connecting with you all in the coming months.





44th International Listening
Association Convention

The 2023 ILA Convention

Location: Mainz, Germany

Dates: July 26-29, 2023

Theme: Discovering the Impact of Listening to Every
Voice

Contact for more details: Raquel Ark:

Raquel.ark@listen.org

Hotel: Intercityhotel Mainz

Hotel booking link: [https://hrewards.com/
en/d?d=9007321&in=2023-07-25&out=2023-07-
31&r=1&ar=1&p=GRG01](https://hrewards.com/en/d?d=9007321&in=2023-07-25&out=2023-07-31&r=1&ar=1&p=GRG01)

Booking Code: GRG01

Airport: Frankfurt International Airport to train or
Inter-City express to Mainz



**Join us and experience beautiful Mainz
and everything this region has to offer!**

**Learn and network with your fellow ILA
members! Let's discover the impact of
listening to every voice together!**

We will have LOADS OF FUN!

It's Award Time!

Michael Purdy and Kathy O'Brien

It's time to award those advancing listening as an essential key competence to be acquired and applied to every field of education, work and life. The Listening Research Awards are an excellent opportunity to amplify that voice!

Please, submit your research and top convention award nomination and specific supporting documentation to the ILA Research Awards to Team: mpurdy54@gmail.com. The specific Research Awards open for submission are: Listening Research Award, Graduate Dissertation or Thesis Award, Undergraduate Research Award, Top Convention Award, Top Student Paper Award, and the Synergist Award. (All except the Diss./Thesis Award require on author be an ILA member).

Other awards include Listening Hall of Fame, Special Recognition, Listener of the Year, Business Sector, Outstanding Educator, Carolyn Coakley-Hickerson, Lifetime-Achievement, and President's. Detailed descriptions of these awards can be found on the ILA website. Please submit these awards to Kathy O'Brien at kathy.brien@listen.org

Deadline for Research Awards: 31 May 2023.

You will find a list of the awards and their criteria as well as past winners at www.listen.org/awards

All ILA Awards will be announced during the ILA Awards ceremony for the 44th Annual International Listening Association Convention.

From the editor's desk: The International Journal of Listening

Margarete Imhof, Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz, Germany

Some of you might have noticed a change in the International Journal of Listening: The final issue of volume 36 (2022) was much heavier than usual, well certainly in terms of content, and terms of physical weight. This was due to a clean-up of the manuscripts which had been sitting in the backlog for quite a while. The publisher has suggested changes in the publication policy: From now on, that is: from volume 37 (2023), there is no limit on the number of articles that can be published each year. In addition, an annual article minimum of 13 has been planned. As the flow of manuscripts has been steady and substantial, this seems to be a good number. This new arrangement allows for more flexibility of article length and an even distribution of issues per year.

Another piece of good news: The International Journal of Listening is gaining attention. The number of downloads from the journal has doubled since 2019 and has now reached almost 100.000 per year. The journal is ranked in the top quartile for Linguistics and Language and in Q2 for Communication. For more journal metrics visit the journal website at Taylor and Francis.

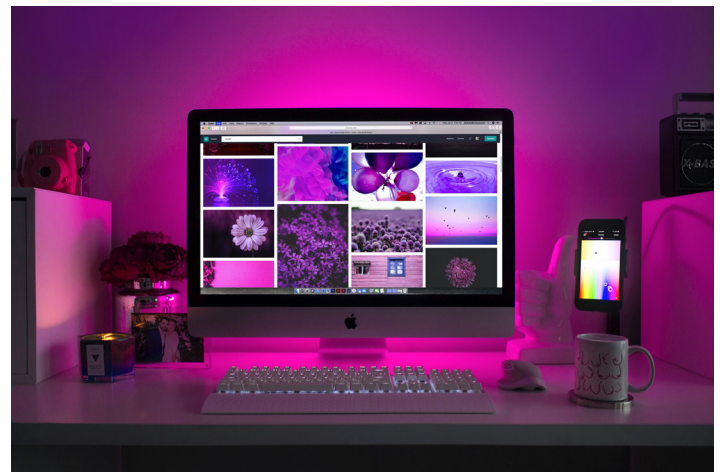
This is a call to all members of the International Listening Association: To keep up the standard of the International Journal of Listening, you are invited to submit your academic work as authors and help maintain quality standards as reviewers. The field is growing, field of listening is about to become more and more visible. Thanks to all who have contributed in the past and welcome to all who will submit in the future.

A Living Website for Listening

Graham Bodie, Ph.D.

Graham Bodie, long-time ILA member and Chief Listening Officer of the non-profit Listen First Project, welcomes all ILA members to consider how they will celebrate National Week of Conversation (April 17-23). More information is available at conversation.us - a "living website" that continues to be updated as events and resources are added. Presently, we are seeking organizations and individuals to provide resources and host events that capture people's attention in the following social sectors: K-12, Higher Education, Workplaces, Faith Communities, Elected Officials, Libraries, Museums & Historic Sites, Media, and Community Leaders & Organizations. Email lizzy@listenfirstproject.org for more details or fill out the JOIN US form on conversation.us.

Students: To schedule an advising appointment, go to <https://calendly.com/grahambodie/15-minute-zoom-meeting>



ILA Believes Diversity Initiatives are Important

Teri Varner

The Diversity Initiatives Team (DIT) formerly known as the Diversity Initiatives Planning Committee was added to the ILA Constitution on the morning of October 28, 2021. The motion passed unanimously. Our Mission: The International Listening Association, Diversity Initiatives Team (DIT) is an international group of ILA members working to implement initiatives that place emphasis on diversity, equity, and cultural insight within the ILA and other listening communities around the world. We stand against all acts in violation of basic human rights and social justice, systemic racism, as well as the unfair treatment and oppression of people of the global majority. At the last DIT meeting, we used the listening circle as a way to workshop what belonging means to each of us. DIT meets every second Thursday of the month. Future DIT meetings are posted on the ILA calendar.

Upcoming 2022-23 Diversity Team MEETINGS are every second Thursday of the month from 2-3 pm.



Changing your perspective, Changes your experience.

Niyati Rajpopat, Pramukhswami Medical College, India

I, Niyati Rajpopat, joined medicine because learning and exploring human system fascinates me. I vividly remember the customary Dean's lecture in the first week of the medical school. He was very humble and talked about several things: how we should consult with patients, importance of inter-personal skills and the avoidable mistakes made by some of the practicing clinicians. Honestly, I didn't comprehend what he was saying at that time as for me being a successful doctor meant achieving excellence in clinical subjects.

There was no patient-contact in my first year of medical training in our college and the curriculum mostly involved rote learning of non-clinical subjects. The patient contact started in the second year. Having no prior-knowledge and training in clinical communication skills, I found taking histories from patients challenging. Then, I realised what our Dean wanted to convey on his very first interaction with us. Although I realised the importance, there were no dedicated training sessions in the curriculum or courses available to learn and hone clinical communication skills (CCS). My quest to learn CCS landed me at the Glocal Academy. As there wasn't much happening academically due to the lockdown, I took the virtual clinical communication skills sessions organised and delivered by Glocal Academy. Those sessions changed my perspective towards patients and helped me gain deeper insights into the skills needed to consult and connect with patients. For example, I'm always introducing to the patients, encouraging them to share their stories and asking more open questions.

The pictorial presentation is my perspective.

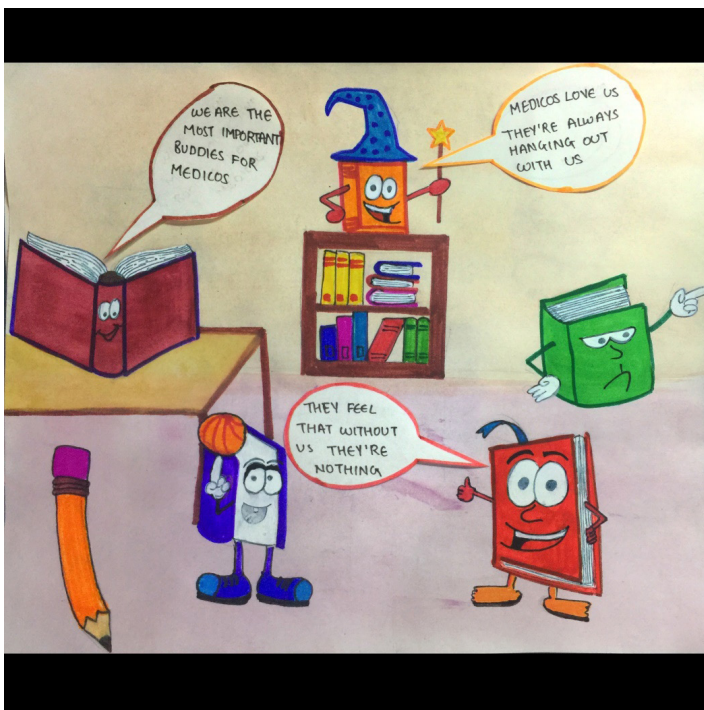


Figure 1: The medical curriculum is geared towards producing scientists. The assessments and exit exams focus on clinical knowledge. Ergo, it is not surprising students prioritize clinical subjects marginalizing the CCS.

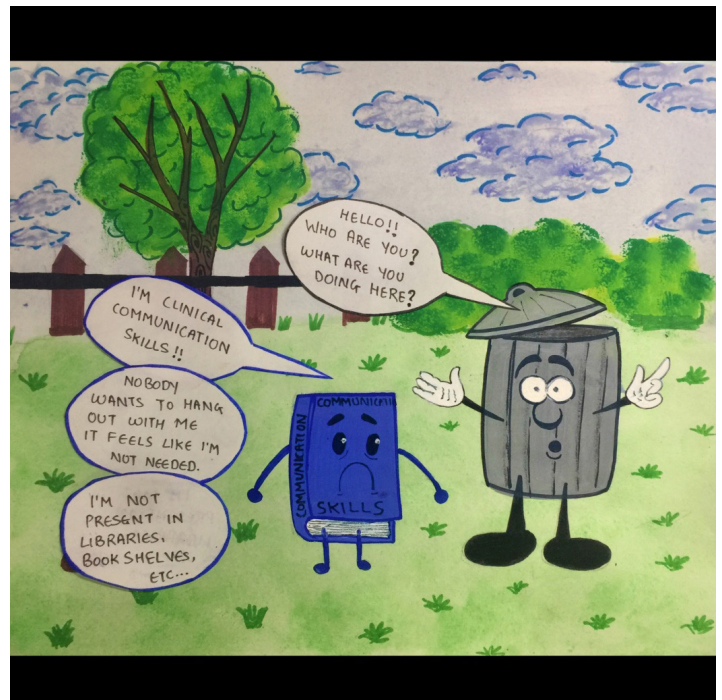


Figure 2: Clinical skills are marginalized but integrated into the medical curriculum. As shown in the image, they feel lonely. There is a lack of CCS skills



Figure 3. I, along with thousands of students up and down and across the country, benefited from the Glocal Academy's fun and interactive sessions on clinical communication skills.

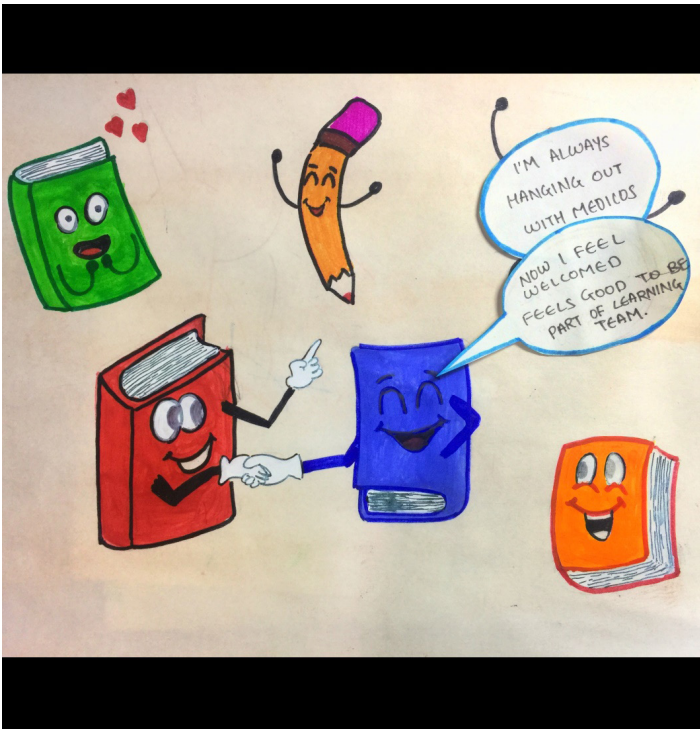


Figure 4: In my study room CCS skills hang out together.

In sum, we have become aware of the significance of listening-centered clinical communication in clinical practice.



Hope



The portrait here depicts of a girl who was melancholic due to sufferings of covid-19, recovers one fine morning and unmask her face.

After many challenging days, finally a day she desperately hoped for arrived. The day brought joy to her heart, freshness to her soul and a smile on her face.

The bird depicts the freedom. It unmask the girl and fill her life with joy

Art work by: Khushboo Agarwal
Medical student, India



Listen to connect. Listening is a very powerful act. Healthy listening environment is essential for development of effective communication between two individuals or community. The art is my attempt to depict significance of listening in health care.

The branches and deep roots of the tree signifies the strength of the relationship between doctor and patient. Doctor-Patient relationship is not a snapshot relationship but a long-term healthy relation. The deep roots draw up water and makes it available to shallow rooted seedlings and help neighbouring trees. Likewise, listening establishes roots for healthy long-term relationship.

Stethoscope signifies the act of auscultation. Listening is fundamental or effective auscultation. Every practicing clinician knows how important auscultation is.

Artwork and narration by:
Vipra Kohli
Medical Student (2nd year)
M.M Medical College and Hospital
Solun, Himachal Pradesh



I have put my thoughts into an image, to display the theme “Listen to connect”. I chose five metaphors to express my thoughts

1. Birds
2. Yellow and green neon flowers
3. Deep roots of tree
4. Branches
5. Stethoscope

The birds are the symbol of spirit messengers. Like birds, health care workers are the messengers or the guides for the patient. So, it is our responsibility to explain diagnosis and treatment thoroughly to the patient in a clear and simple language. Birds sing, call notes and dance to communicate with each other. Similarly, our gestures, tone and behaviour are fundamental to a lively and engaging communication with the patient. Floriography is an act of communicating your feelings, messages, and sentiments through flowers. The colour Neon symbolises attention. When doctors pay utmost attention, their patients open up and share their real story. This in turn establishes trust, which is an essential ingredient for building humane connections.



“What would you do if this were your family?”

Dr. Clare Biedenharn

This question is often posed to the nurse. The natural inclination is to “fix” the problem is one way to respond but is limited by the nurse’s experience and personal biases. Active listening indicates engagement in conversation, but another model of listening goes a step further and guides the patient to their own answers based on experience and knowledge of resources.

A study was created to determine if the use of this listening model would impact patient care and affect the nurse’s self-reported spirituality. The study participants were ICU and stepdown nurses at East Jefferson General Hospital, New Orleans, Louisiana. The critical care chaplain led the study to fulfill requirements for the Doctor of Ministry (DMin) in Spiritual Direction degree and was approved by the hospital’s Institutional Review Board.

A very common problem anchored the study’s question. A wife was faced with difficult care questions as her husband continued to decline from advanced Parkinson’s disease. When faced with the question of insertion a feeding tube into her husband she proceeded with placement after seeking advice from family and friends.

The day after the procedure the physician said, “I usually don’t agree with this decision in this situation.”

This was my family. For the next seven years, her husband, my uncle Clarence, lingered at home stuck in a rigid body unable to respond. More than once my Aunt Frances asked an anguished question. “Why didn’t that doctor say something before the feeding tube operation?” In all fairness, maybe the doctor did speak up and she didn’t want to hear it. Equally possible was that he acquiesced without fully voicing an opinion.

Aunt Frances’ tormented question came to mind when as critical care chaplain I heard again those words from the family: do everything. Those two words can have a wide range impact on the patient, family and the nurse who is often faced with the difficult task of providing futile care. Wasn’t there another way to find a path through this difficult scenario?

The philosopher and educator Parker Palmer’s description of the Quaker Clearness Committee as a model of discernment came to me. The basic components are belief of an inner teacher, or Wisdom and that we need other people, our community, to help us discern and amplify that Wisdom from within. Was it possible that in those moments of intimate care that the relationship between the nurse and the patient could create a small community? Was it possible that given the right tools the nurse could support the patient accessing solutions based on experience and knowledge of personal resources?

A small mixed method study resulted. Components included education, interviews and pre and post surveys based on the Daily Spiritual Experience Scale (DSES), a measurement formulated to gauge mundane spirituality in the healthcare setting.

Over the course of the study, the nurse participant responses to the interviews showed that intentional used of the model:

Improved communication in both personal and professional settings.

“It’s easy to anticipate what you think the person is going to say. But when that happens, you’re too busy thinking than

trying to listen. Now, I don’t assume. I don’t make assumptions during the conversation. I try to really focus on what the person is trying to say.”

Affected patient care through improved empathy for the patient.

“...I gave him the opportunity to explain rather than just saying ‘no’...I made me think and put myself in his position to see why he was doing something so crazy.”

Affected the self-reported spirituality of nurses.

“...this model promotes a universal way of experience God. By that I am opening up and it is easier to see God in others.”

Listening is essential to communication and good listening is considered to be a core competency. This Quaker Listening model has shown itself to be a consistent, effective model that can be used by the nurse both personally and professionally as it positively impacts patient care.

New ILA University Student Practicum Program taking place from March 7-August 7, 2023!

Annie Rappaport

The International Listening Association, in its 44th year, is delighted to share a new program for university students taking place from March 7th-August 7th 2023! This practicum, designed and facilitated by ILA Student Board member, Annie Rappaport, will be cohort-based model with students from around the world. Thus far, students from the USA, India, Cambodia, Iran, Germany, Sweden, Norway, China, Hong Kong, Malawi, and Turkey are nominated to join the cohort. The students also represent a diverse set of fields including education, peace studies, medicine, communications, business, international relations and leadership studies. As an inclusive and interdisciplinary organization, we know that all of these fields intersect in their practical application of listening. Students will work together to learn essential skill sets in active listening and to immerse themselves in listening research. The cohort will be guided using design thinking methodologies to create positive listening change project proposals. These proposals will be presented at the 2023 ILA Convention “Discovering the Impact of Listening to Every Voice” taking place from July 26-29th in Mainz, Germany and online.

ila LISTENING SKILLS PRACTICUM
FOR UNIVERSITY STUDENTS
www.listen.org

March 7th - August 7th 2023

CONVENTION IN MAINZ, GERMANY (OR REMOTE)
JULY 23-26, 2023



Questions? Just ask! Email annie.rappaport@listen.org

PRACTICUM HIGHLIGHTS

- EXPERT MENTORSHIP
- INTERNATIONAL NETWORK
- CONFERENCE EXPERIENCE
- GAIN PRACTICAL SKILLS
- DESIGN CHANGE PROJECT



Reflections From Lori Joubert

It was an honor to serve the ILA as Past President and as President. I continue to find myself asking “what did we hear and learn that will carry us forward?” My hope is that the ILA continues to build relationships, increase our international growth, and embrace the world through the advancement of listening?

Since we did not meet in either 2020 or 2021 in person, I am looking forward to seeing you in Mainz, Germany where we can connect and focus on the 2023 ILA Convention Theme “Discovering the Impact of Listening to Every Voice.”

Reflecting on 2020-2022, I continue to be very thankful to many ILA members who helped turn the conventions into a virtual format. We learned our way through the technology together. The broad use of Zoom has made it possible for us to do Listening work in a virtual international community and continue to make a difference through Listening.

The pandemic invited us to consider new ways of connecting, to continue to strengthen the ILA and gain greater clarity of a vision to “strive to learn, teach, inspire and collaborate.

The following highlights the good efforts of the ILA’s volunteer members and board leadership during a year of chaos. I cannot say thank you enough times to all the volunteers that were committed to keeping listening in the center of our ILA community.

Covid19 Report: “How are you doing?” Gave members a chance to connect and share their stories during this challenging year. I am thankful for Dick Halley who continued to reach out and gather updates on the health and wellbeing of our members during this past year.

The expansion of ILA Exchange, Meet Ups and Mini-Course programs provided members more opportunities to connect, learn and inspire each other. First ILA Mini-Course offering starting with ILA International Day of Listening series on “Listening with Empathy” and expanded to “ILA Healthcare Team Education Sessions.”

The “ILA Open House” created a listening space to hear from key leaders in Business, Education, Health Care, Research and Publications! Members discussed ways to volunteer and collaborate on listening activities. I am thankful for Raquel Ark, Corine Jansen, Margarete Imhof, Charles Fischer, Cynthia Hazel, Teresa Monaco, Theresa Hanlon, Rosanne Vogel for your leadership and transition of these teams.

Building relationships for a sustainable future: We continued to mend the frayed connections within the ILA by improving board communication, connecting with different personalities, listening with each other and getting to the heart of the matter to move forward together.

In response to the death of George Floyd and BLM initiatives, the ILA demonstrated adaptability with an emphasis on diversity and inclusion initiatives:

1. Board members acted: [International Listening Association - Statement Denouncing Racism](#)
2. Formed the first ILA Diversity Initiatives Planning Committee. I am thankful for Marva Shand McIntosh, Teri Varner and Theresa Caldwell who led the development of this work on diversity, equity, and inclusion for the ILA!

August 2020 Leadership Strategy Workshop: The ILA’s first virtual strategy workshop including board members and team leaders to create a united, cohesive leadership team.

The workshop agenda included: a.) milestones achieved 2018 – 2020, b.) development of ILA values and c.) ILA website refresh discussion resulting in actions to clarify content, communication channels and audiences.

ILA leadership teams reached out to discover more deeply the needs of our members. We reached out to individuals, groups, and the association at large. Membership survey completed with actionable next steps to carry us toward the future: [International Listening Association - 2020 Membership Survey](#) I am thankful for Debra Worthington and the survey team!

ILA Values Explored: We revisited our values with ILA members through the membership survey which resulted in three tiers of preferences:

Tier One, overwhelming choice: Enacting Listening Practice
Tier Two, in order of support: collaboration, relationships, partnering science and practice, and inclusiveness/diversity.
Tier Three, in order of support: problem-solving, mindfulness, responsiveness, and passion.

The creation and launch of five working teams to align with ILA’s statement of direction and outline of initiatives:

1. **Vision:** Responsible for continuing evolution of mission/vision/values
2. **Values Survey:** Responsible for membership survey on values, member involvement, input on ILA
3. **Communications:** Responsible for website refresh, social media, and public relations.
4. **Student:** Responsible for increasing student engagement
5. **Steering:** Oversees/facilitates activities of other working teams

Successful completion of student pilot projects giving students more opportunities to have their voices heard. I am thankful for students, mentors, and the difference you make in our learning, teaching and practice.

ILA Past Presidents Gathering: We had about 18 ILA Past Presidents attend the gathering on December 11th to build leadership connections and discuss the future of the ILA. Dr. Manny Steil shared his vision for the ILA Foundation Project which will carry forward in the coming years.

We welcomed 2021 in celebration of our global community with the first video of ILA members connecting and dancing together from across the globe: <https://youtu.be/3JqyOMWYETw>

It has been a great experience to serve the ILA! I appreciate all our member volunteers who help create this remarkable global listening space!

THOUGHTS FROM
THE PAST
FOR THE PRESENT

Listening and Positive Communication

Phillip Glenn

I'd like to invite ILA members to the inaugural 2023 Positive Communication Network Conference on March 17th 2023 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. CT. The conference is free and will be held completely virtually via Zoom.

From start to finish, the conference will:

- (1) showcase positive communication research,
- (2) share tools and practices to create transformative moments in the classroom,
- (3) offer meaningful advice for applying positive communication at home and at work, and
- (4) celebrate communication at its best.

To learn more and register, visit <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/the-2023-positive-communication-network-conference-tickets-514433383097>

As a member of both groups (ILA and the Pos Com Network), I've gained greater appreciation for the deep interconnections. Listening plays a prominent role in several Pos Com anthologies (Socha and Pitts, 2012; Pitts and Socha, 2013; Muñoz-Velázquez and Pulido, 2019) and the first Pos Com textbook (Mirivel, 2014). With roots in Positive Psychology [<https://positivepsychology.com/>], the positive movement resonates across including leadership and organizational studies (Cameron and Spreitzer, 2012) and education (Kern and Wehmeyer, 2021).

For the past five years, I have taught a Positive Communication course at Emerson College, Boston. Among the topics we cover are listening, nonviolent communication (NVC), disclosure, dialogue, laughter, humor, play, support, and resilience. Some of my recent research (including a 2022 article in the ILA Journal) concerns affiliative paraphrasing in challenging conversations.

It's clear to me that any comprehensive treatment of positive communication needs to acknowledge the centrality of listening (especially active-empathic listening). Likewise, much of the work I've seen on listening presumes--or emphasizes--its role in enriching meaningful relationships, health, and flourishing.

I look forward to more opportunities for us to cross paths, whether "here" (ILA), "there" (Pos Com Conference), or elsewhere.

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ILA Mentorship Experience

By Anisha Agarwal

Being instigated into clinical communication skills, I wanted to develop my listening and learn from the experts in the field. That's when I joined the ILA Mentoring Program.

The first meeting with Lori Joubert made me feel very satisfied. She was available to listen to me, paid attention and appreciated my motives. We decided to move ahead and explore topics together.

It was a unique bond as I was from the field of medical science while she was a listening professor. Coming together we decided to work on listening in medical education.

After being introduced to the concept of listening, I felt that there is definitely a need to introduce this topic to doctors because a major part of doctors' work is to care for the patients, reassure them and relieve their worries. No skill can come as handy as listening. But in my medical education, I never even heard about listening. I was excited to explore the importance of listening in medical education.

When I searched the literature, I found that in the medical literature on clinical communication, listening was given very less importance. When I read the literature from ILA, I found that listening scholars focused on its importance in consultations and medical education. That's where I believe we need to perpetuate this concept among medical professionals.

When I went to the USA for an elective rotation in the bone marrow transplant unit, I observed the interactions of doctors and patients and realised that patients feel happy, motivated and satisfied with a doctor who was interested to know more about their interests, hobbies and beliefs rather than talking only about the interval change in their disease. Rather than talking to them as patients, one should talk to them as people and listen to their difficulties.

As I started working as a doctor and observed doctors in India, I could re-iterate its importance. Patients come into the consultation room with a lot of anxiety and if the doctors listen to their worries, they feel relieved and satisfied. Importantly, they also comply better with the treatment.

Lori guided me to introspect myself on a communication model to improve my listening. I have been working with that advice ever since.

Developing my listening also helped me in becoming a leader who understands the team well, resolves conflicts and acts promptly.

Currently, I'm developing my listening to become a better doctor and team leader. Being with my mentor in ILA helped me understand the value of silence, differentiate between empathy and compassion and introspect the importance of listening for medical students.

I choose to become a doctor who listens well.



Are You Listened to at Work?

Jennie Grau and Kathy O'Brien

Can you remember a time when you were not listened to in the workplace? How did that feel?

That was the question posed in a recent ILA Members Meet Up. It became the jump-off point for a rich discussion of how it feels to be listened to and the organizational realities that affect how we listen. Participants examined the omnipresent influences of power, hierarchy, task and relationship that constrain and shape our listening.

The magic of ILA Meet Ups is the focus on the people in the room, which encourages ideas to bubble up naturally. Facilitators Jennie Grau and Kathy O'Brien used a simple format based on Liberating Structures to foster lively participation, and equal sharing. Several members found great value in this structure and shared their plans to apply a similar approach in their own work.

As this was the first Meet Up scheduled to match the working day in Europe and Asia, we were delighted to welcome members from seven countries.

Concepts that emerged, and all agreed warrant more discussions, included:

What does 'good listening' mean inside a company?
How important is emotional connection in workplace relationships? Where does listening fit into this?
If the focus of an organization is 'to get things done', is good listening in conflict, or a complement?
How do we start a listening culture in an organization?
How do we attract more people to care about workplace listening?
What is the role – and importance – of listening in facilitating change?
Are people better listeners now, as a result of Covid? If so, why?
What role is played by power structures? Where power is a factor, are there rules about who does the listening? Or how it's done? Is this only a consideration inside organizations?
What about families, friendships, society at large?

Only one hour, and three rich takeaways: a deeper connection with ILA members, a new workplace listening technique, and a provocative discussion on listening.

More Meet Ups are clearly desired; and we are keen to hear members' input on any part of this. Contact the Business Committee: alexandra.perl@stullengold.com.



WHAT ARE WE AFRAID OF?

E. James Beasler

Why do we hoard our published listening knowledge? Locking it up in the "Member's Only" tab of the ILA website?

WHAT IF...?

We shared our professional listening knowledge...

with the whole world,
free of charge,
open access for anyone with an internet connection.

BUT...

Someone might...

steal it,
make money off it,
not give us proper recognition.

SEEMS LIKE...

A small price to pay
for the gift of listening.



Give the gift of listening--no matter the form!

“I Didn’t Know I Thought That!”:

Three ways listening sessions support our thriving

Melina Ponak

It turns out that we *can* tickle ourselves. Not with our fingers, but with our own unplanned thoughts. Feeling ‘ticked,’ or pleasantly surprised, during a listening session is common. Why is that?

Because novel thoughts arise in novel circumstances, and it is decidedly novel to be listened to for 20 minutes straight! We aren’t used to knowing for sure that we will not be interrupted (no matter how long we pause to think) and we definitely aren’t used to being able to choose *how* we want to be listened to or *what kind* of response we want after we speak. Furthermore, both of the two roles in a listening session can tickle us. Being listened to sets the stage for new insights and listening to others does too. The bottomless well and the eternal spring are not just metaphors. They are real-life experiences that we invite ourselves, and our listening partners, into when we dedicate time to attentive listening.

I will more fully describe what listening sessions are and why to do them later in this article. For now, I want to share three phrases that capture a few of the many ways that listening sessions support a person’s individual thriving as well as humanity’s collective thriving.

#1 “I didn’t know I thought that!”

Listening sessions are an outer infrastructure for exploring inner space - the true final frontier.

Thinking new thoughts is a predictable result of being listened to according to the work of eminent listening researchers Guy Itzchakov and Avi Kluger. In their Harvard Business Review article entitled [The Power of Listening in Helping People Change](#) they summarize this idea by saying: “...we found that speakers who conversed with a good listener reported attitudes that were more complex and less extreme – in other words, not one-sided.”

Do we want more people to have space to be heard so their attitudes can become more complex and less extreme? I suspect you, and the vast majority of people, would say “Yes, please.”

#2 “It is difficult to feel small while being seen...”

Listening sessions feel good.

“It is difficult to feel small while being seen; it is difficult not to feel clarity of purpose when our potential is held up and mirrored back at us. This is the gift we can offer one another: our attention and openness, listening and mirroring, seeing one another and seeing the potential lying just outside our perception. By gifting our attention, we can spread presence.”

- Eva Pomeroy, Professor specializing in social innovation and Research Lead at the Presencing Institute

Listening sessions feel good because they meet so many of our basic human needs. When you peruse a list of our basic human needs, either casually in your mind or more formally by reading the ‘[Needs Inventory](#)’ created by the Center for Nonviolent Communication, you will notice that listening sessions speak to a hefty percentage of them. A few examples are: respect/self-respect, choice, discovery, authenticity, and equality.

The bottom line is that doing listening sessions indicates to us on a primal level that we are well. Well in a sustainable way. Listening sessions don’t give us only erratic, fleeting, or short-sighted pleasure. Listening sessions have long-term benefits, can be reliably replicated, and consistently contribute to someone else’s well-being alongside your own.

#3 “It’s an honor to listen to you - on your terms.”

Listening sessions give us the rare satisfaction of listening to someone how they ask to be listened to.

“To ‘listen’ another’s soul into a condition of disclosure and discovery may be almost the greatest service that any human being ever performs for another.”

- Douglas V. Steere, ecumenical Quaker and professor of philosophy

What kind of listening will be of service to you today? Sometimes you may want to be listened to very actively or conversationally and other times you prefer to be listened to silently. Sometimes you might ask your listening partner to jot down a few notes as you speak your thoughts out loud and sometimes you may want your listening partner’s opinion. Asking for advice during your turn to be heard is fair game. Of course, you must use your discernment, take what you like and leave the rest, but that’s the same wherever you go. (As an aside, unsolicited advice is not fair game.) In the context of listening sessions, you are the only expert on the best way for you to be heard today.

We all know the feeling of wanting to be helpful to someone and hoping that our best efforts have hit the mark for them. You can reach a new level of certainty that you have made the world a better place (even just a little bit) when you have been the kind of listener that someone asked you to be.

Now, what exactly are listening sessions?

Listening sessions are a dedicated space and time to connect with ourselves and another person, to be heard and to listen in equal turns.

During listening sessions, when it is your turn to be heard, you choose:

- 1) your topic
- 2) how you want to be listened to
- 3) the kind of response you want – if any!

Listening sessions can be used for a wide variety of purposes.

The structure of listening sessions is simple, clear, and flexible.

See the graphic showing the structure of a 60-minute listening session. You and your listening partner can easily adapt your sessions to fit your schedules and interests. For example, I have one listening partner that I write with on a weekly basis. We get together, say hello, write silently for around 15 minutes and then take turns sharing what we wrote. We both feel profound gratitude for our time together and regularly express it as we end our sessions.

The location of listening sessions is flexible too. I prefer to do one-on-one listening sessions via phone or video so that things like traffic and where my partner lives (or happens to be traveling on the day of our session) are never a problem.

More context for why to do listening sessions

In our modern world, it can be easy to lose sight of what we really want, need, and care about. Anyone who sincerely plans to thrive should include “continually deepen self-knowledge” on their permanent to-do list. It is essential to be on the lookout for new and relevant information within us. We must counterbalance the constant barrage of outside information and influences that can lead us to feel disconnected from ourselves and what makes life uniquely meaningful for us.

Counterbalancing the constant barrage requires setting time aside – and then guarding it like the treasure that it is. In his bestselling book, *Atomic Habits*, James Clear [cites a study](#) in which “The researchers discovered

that what pulls that desire out of you and turns it into real-world action isn't your level of motivation, but rather your plan for implementation." I am in good company when I assure you that all my best intentions to listen to myself and others are far less effective than making actual appointments with actual people.

Here is an example how of a listening session can go:

Sarah has a job interview tomorrow. She wants to practice answering one question and plans to tell a story about her previous work experience as part of her answer. She has a few stories in mind but hasn't chosen which one to use yet. Sarah wants her listening partner of two years, Liz, to listen silently and with very little facial response (because Sarah has been warned that's how the people on the hiring committee listen!) and then she wants Liz to tell her which of her stories best illustrated how she is well-suited for the job. By the end of her turn Sarah knows which story she will use and feels ready to speak to the poker-faced hiring committee the next day.

For her turn, Liz chooses to talk through her priorities for tomorrow. She can't do everything on her list and it's completely up to her which task she takes on first. Liz knows she is a verbal processor and that she will be able to feel which task is most important to her once she reads her whole list out loud. Liz doesn't need any feedback from Sarah, but she does appreciate that Sarah makes sounds like 'mmm' and 'uh-huh' and other non-verbal affirmations. They feel supportive to Liz. By the end of her turn, Liz has chosen her top priority for the next day and has put the rest of the list in order of importance below it.

Like her, Sarah's friends are busy professionals. When they get together, they just want to relax and have fun. They don't want to dive into the nitty gritty of professional decisions - not hers, not their own. Sarah is grateful that Liz is there for her on a weekly basis. Liz is retired and has many friends with plenty of time. However, she knows it is not appropriate to call one of them to say that she doesn't want to chat or catch up, but that instead she is hoping they will just listen (without interruptions please) while she talks through whatever she wants for 20 minutes. Liz really appreciates her weekly slice of verbal processor's paradise. Thank goodness for her regular time with Sarah. They both feel better after every session.

Liz and Sarah have been doing weekly listening sessions together for two years now. They live hundreds of miles away from each other, they have never met in person, and they don't have any plans to meet in person. Listening partnerships are a unique form of relationship.

The short version of why I personally started doing listening sessions

I have been doing listening sessions since Spring 2020. That's right since the early pandemic. I began doing them as part of my multi-faceted attempt to be as holistically well as humanly possible - given the circumstances. At this point, almost three years later, my listening sessions are an enjoyable and essential way to check in with myself, find clarity, make decisions, get things done, workshop ideas, connect with wonderful people and be part of their thriving. It is hard to overstate the importance of listening sessions in my life.

Listening sessions don't just happen on their own.

Listening sessions must be planned by two people who both understand what they are and how to do them.

A conversation with a friend is not the same as a listening session. Your friends are not your listening partners, although you can certainly invite a friend to do listening sessions with you. Of course, listening partners cannot replace friends, family, colleagues, therapists, coaches, community members etc. However, none of those relationships do the same things for you that a listening partner does.

Furthermore, listening sessions cannot replace sleep, exercise, good nutrition, time in nature, solitude, work-life balance, or acting on issues you care about. But they can play a significant role in supporting many of those things; and none of those things can fill the same niche as listening sessions.

Listening sessions provide a space to be seen and heard, to explore new ideas and perspectives, and to connect with our own inner wisdom. I encourage you to explore the power of listening sessions. Who knows – you just might tickle yourself!

Melina Ponak is the founder of Women's Listening Space. She is a member of the ILA Spirituality Team and lives in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada. Eventually, Melina hopes to collaborate with other listening-inspired people to make listening spaces available to a wide variety of groups. English-speaking women are just the beginning! A month-long pilot of Women's Listening Space will be running from June 1st to June 30th, 2023. Melina invites you to reach out to her at Melina@WomensListeningSpace.com



ILA Member Moving DEI Forward

Teri Varner

On February 22, 2023, Dr. Teri Varner debuted, “Black Hairstyles & Cultural Appropriation,” in celebration of Black History Month. Professor Varner gave an insightful presentation on Black Hairstyles & Cultural Appropriation. She lead this important panel conversation with other panelists who shared their stories: Gwendolyn Schuler, Andrew Kelly, [Aneasha Lawrence](#), [Brianna Bowman](#), Calen Kelly, and Wayne Tate.

Varner said, “People, often unintentionally, make superficial judgments about someone based on their hairstyle. Attitudes about how hair should look and who is sanctioned to wear certain hairstyles, however, evoke a wide range of responses. Identity politics associated with hair may be of significant concern to some Americans, but hair is of special significance to many in the African American and African diaspora.”

According to Dove CROWN Research Study (2021), 1 in 2 Black girls experiences race-based hair discrimination by age five. Black women are also 80% more likely to change their natural hair to meet social norms or expectations at work. And Black women are 1.5 times more likely to be sent home or know of a Black woman sent home from the workplace because of her hair. In the US, many states do not offer protection from this type of prejudice. This is particularly troubling because our hairstyles are inherent to racial identity. Without this protection, Black women can be denied employment or professional advancement opportunities without consequence. Also, Black children can be denied entry to school or educational opportunities because of their natural hair (Source: <https://www.bet.com/article/wnlbv8/dove-helps-drive-historic-change-for-black-hair-as-a-champion-of-the-crown-act>).

“One of the best lectures/panel discussions I have witnessed in many years,” according to Dr. Stephen King, Chair and Professor of Communication from St. Edward’s University.



Teri Varner



Teri presenting

Black Hairstyles & Cultural Appropriations Panel Attendees

Our Main Event for 2023!

Dr Krishna Naineni

We are excited about this year's convention in Mainz, Germany on July 26-29, 2023.

We are excited because this is the first in person convention since the pandemic. We are excited because the convention is hybrid. This means that people who are unable to join in person for whatever reasons now have the opportunity to join virtually and be part of the convention. We, however, would love to see you in person and therefore would encourage you to attend in person. We are excited because the programme is packed with impactful topics and great speakers. If you have not yet registered, we encourage you to register: <https://www.listen.org/44th-Annual-ILA-2023-Convention>

The theme of the 44th ILA convention is "Discovering the impact of listening to every voice." The questions that underline this theme are:

1. How can listening engage, empower and energize all of us?
2. What do we need as listeners to be able to embrace every voice?
3. What are the conditions needed in listening to create a more equitable world?

We hope that you attend the convention and explore the theme of "Discovering the impact of listening to every voice" while advancing listening practice, teaching and research worldwide.

Date and Location of convention: July 26-29, 2023, in Mainz, Germany.

Venue: Johannes Gutenberg Universität Mainz, Germany (<https://homepage.uni-mainz.de/>)

Banquet venue: <https://www.evavollmer-wein.de/ueber-uns/weingut>

City information: <https://www.mainz.de/en/index.php>

Travel:

Airport: The nearest airport is Frankfurt International Airport, Germany. From the airport there are direct trains (27 minutes) to the Mainz main train station. You can walk to the Intercity hotel from the train station.

Accommodation: Intercity hotel, Mainz is located directly at the main train station. It is just one tram stop to ILA Convention centre. The city centre including all its shopping, sports and entertainment facilities is within the short distance from the hotel. Conveniently, all major transport links are on its doorstep.

How to book hotel accommodation: Go to the booking website <https://h Rewards.com/en> and select the arrival and departure date. Alternatively, you can visit our website and use the search function for Intercity Hotel Mainz. Please use the promotion code "GRG01" when booking.

Travel Safety: Germany is a very safe place to travel, with the most you may have to deal with are pickpockets in the big cities. And statistics show that Mainz itself is a very safe city!

COVID Risk: It is important to acknowledge that there is and will always be some risk of getting COVID. That said, it is reassuring that there have been no significant strains since the Omicron in 2021. By following the public health guidance (face masks, hand hygiene and vaccination), we can minimise the risk of getting COVID. If you are in high-risk category and decided not to attend the convention in-person, we respect your decision and request you consider taking advantage of attending virtually. With no travel restrictions and absence of signifi-

ant new COVID strains, we can argue that it is as safe as it can get for traveling. If you have queries, please connect with Dr Krishna Naineni (krishna.naineni@listen.org).

We would like to take this opportunity and thank all the volunteers for their collaboration and tireless work. They are working hard to create a memorable and magical convention experience for you.

Volunteers:

Convention Organizer: Raquel Ark

Convention Adviser: Nan Johnson-Curiskis

Local Organization: Margarete Imhof, Raquel Ark

Awards Team: Kathy O'Brien, Michael Purdy, Jay Bourne, Colin Smith, Sanna Ala-Koretessmaa, Lori Joubert

Agenda planning team: Raquel Ark, Anu Viljanmaa, Jennie Grau, Eva Göksel, Cindy Hempenius, Alex Perl

Hybrid Planning: Alex Perl, Annie Rappaport, Jennie Grau (advising Raquel Ark)

Promotion and Social Media: Krishna Naineni, Juliana Tafur, Graham Drew, Sanna Ala-Koretessmaa

Convention Pal Team: Lisa Athearn, Bach-Lien Ngo, Nicola Burke (mentoring from Kathy O'Brien and Evelyn Webster Ofong)

Sponsor Team: Teri Varner, Ingrid C. Nordii (Mentoring Jennie Grau)

Amazing Grunt Work and Travel Information: Scott Robinson

Shaping Presentations Coaches: Sandra Bodin-Lerner, Scott Robinson, Jay Bourne

Student involvement: Annie Rappaport

DIT Team: Convention name and Keynote speaker advisors

Finance Team: Nan Johnson-Curiskis, Raquel Ark (Advisor Jennie Grau)

Come Join us in Mainz!

Learn, Network, and Enjoy the Area and

Meet New and Current ILA

Members!

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1st VP Elect
2nd VP Membership
Secretary
Member at Large-PR
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Raquel Ark
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Sandra Bodin-Lerner
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Listen for work and love



Listen to interview and to teach for health



Listen for celebration