



LISTENING POST

April 2013

A Newsletter of the *International Listening Association*

Issue 110



For more convention information, see page 2.

UNDERGRADUATE LISTENING RESEARCH



New ILA member Teri Lynn Varner’s research and teaching interests range from hair/body politics to active listening. This past semester she taught a course called Active Listening at St. Edward’s University in Austin, Texas. During the semester, she worked with ILA members to bring the most current research in the field to her students. To see abstracts of her student’s work, turn to page 14.

LISTENING LEGEND



The “Listening Lady” – Kathy Thompson

Interview by Sheila Bentley

When Kathy Thompson was teaching at Gateway Technical College, she was asked to do a workshop on the art of listening. She started doing her research and came across Manny Steil’s book. She got the book, read it, and noticed that his phone number was on the back of the book. She called him and they talked for a long time. Eventually, he suggested that she join ILA and learn much more. She has been a part of ILA ever since.

“I couldn’t believe how much I learned and how everyone shared,” she said. “I was such a neophyte. They gave me the information and ideas for sharing and teaching a subject I truly believed in.” She thoroughly enjoyed meeting the authors of the studies she was reading. She was inspired by all of the members, how friendly they were, what they shared, and that they were so “freaking smart!” (see page 5)

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2013 ILA Convention Update

International Listening Association

34th Annual Convention
Montréal • June 20 - 23, 2013



Listening: The Art, The Science, The Joie de Vivre

Plans for our 34th annual convention are well underway. Reviews of paper, panel, and workshop submissions are complete!

Make travel plans early! Please reserve your room as soon as possible! Staying at the Delta Hotel helps ILA keep convention costs down!

Tentative Schedule of Events:

- 6/19 Wednesday Evening:** New Member Meet and Greet Dinner
(Current members are invited too!)
- 6/20 Thursday Morning:** Meet & Greet Breakfast
- Thursday Afternoon:** Spaces Speak! Seminar and Listening Walking Tour
Learn about the intersection of architecture & listening.
Meet new members. Reconnect with friends. See Montreal!
- Thursday Evening:** ILA Opening Reception
- 6/21 Friday Lunch:** ILA Keynote Address: Sharyn Sepinwall of McGill University
- 6/22: Saturday evening:** Celebrating ILA!
Award Ceremony, Passing the Gavel, Strengthening Fellowships

Questions? Contact ILA 2013 convention planner, Debra Worthington, worthdl@auburn.edu

CONVENTION 2013



NOMINEES FOR BOARD POSITIONS

First Vice-President Elect – Phil Tirpak

Secretary – Kae van Engen

Member-at-Large (Global) – Michele Pence

Member-at-Large (PR) – Michael Murphy



Michele Pence



Michael Murphy



Kae van Engen



Phil Tirpak

President's Message



Alan R. Ehrlich

Each day we move one day closer to our convention in Montréal and I don't know about you, but I'm psyched. Having visited Montréal two years ago I'm ready to go back. The city is incredibly vibrant with much to do and see.

I suggest you bring good walking shoes and plenty of film to take advantage of the beauty and culture of the area. Make time to visit the Old Montréal at the waterfront, Chinatown, the Underground City, and my personal favorite the Montreal Museum of Archaeology and History at Pointe-À-Callière – a museum built on top of an ongoing archaeological dig.

The convention begins Thursday, June 20, with a Kick-Off Breakfast in the morning, a walking tour in the afternoon, and our Welcome Reception – sponsored by Taylor and Francis – in the evening. Debra Worthington has planned a great walking tour. She's given it the title of *Spaces Speak: Are You Listening?* and it will give us all a chance to connect and reconnect before the actual convention begins. This will be a great opportunity for our newer members to meet and talk with some of the more seasoned members of the ILA in an informal and friendly setting.

**See you all
in Montréal!**

**For more information see candidate statements
on the next page.**

2013 BOARD NOMINEES

MAL (PR) – Michael Z. Murphy

Michael Z. Murphy first attended a NY/NJ Regional Conference at Montclair State College (in those days) where he reunited with one of his former professors, Wayne Bond, and fell in love with the keynote presenter, Carol Grau. He became an ILA member and attended his first ILA International Convention in Scottsdale. It then occurred to him the ILA would play a huge part in his life. Shortly thereafter he became a life member. From the mid-80s to the mid-90s he presented at each international convention, often with writing partner Daniel R. Corey.

First Vice-President Elect – Phil Tirpak

I have been a member of the ILA since 2010. I joined as a lifetime member even before I attended my first convention in Albuquerque. I believed, and still do, that I wanted to be part of an organization that focused on the study and practice of effective listening.

I am currently Second Vice-President of the ILA. I was asked to fill a vacancy in the summer of 2011 and was elected to the position in 2012. I also served on the site-selection committee for the 2013 Convention and serve as a reviewer for *Listening Education*.

In his address to the first ILA convention, Dr. Nichols said that, “The most basic human need is to understand and to be understood; the best way to understand people is to listen to them.” The speech was entitled “The Struggle to Be Human.” It encapsulates the mission, vision, and promise of the ILA but also has a much broader reach. As an organization, there have been things that we have struggled with and there will be more challenges to deal with in the years ahead. Dr. Nichols knew the power of listening to build and sustain relationships, it is that vision that I pledge to uphold and carry beyond the confines of our organization.

I have extensive experience in leadership positions in community, government, civic, and educational organizations and 15 years of service in the United States Army, that included being Executive Assistant to The Assistant Judge Advocate General for Military Law and Operations. I will act as a bridge and catalyst to empower others and further the mission of the ILA. As an organization we must return to our roots and mission, and embrace the future as the recognized authority in the field of listening.

To suggest a nominee for a position, contact Margaret Fitch-Hauser (fitchme@auburn.edu), chair of the nominating Committee.

MAL (Global) – Michelle E. Pence

I have been appointed to an assistant professor position starting in the fall and have been a member of ILA since 2010. Recently, I guest-edited an issue of the *International Journal of Listening*. My commitment to the ILA is further exemplified by my years of service as an executive board member; first, as student member, followed by the Secretary position.

Since a key duty of any Member-at-Large is to connect with the members of the organization and be a voice for the membership, my experience with the issues that have plagued the board (as a board member myself) gives me an advantage. I know the issues facing current and future members. Given this knowledge, I am motivated to interact with the membership, gain their insight, listen to their concerns, and take their suggestions back to the board.

My educational experience also makes me ideal for the Global Member-at-Large position. My research expertise is intercultural communication, conflict, and listening. Not only am I aware of how to be sensitive when communicating with individuals from diverse backgrounds and cultures, I am knowledgeable of cross-cultural considerations for effective conflict resolution. Combined with my expertise in listening (specifically, trait-like, individual differences in listening skill), it's clear that I possess a unique set of skills which allow me to connect with a diverse group of people.

Secretary – Kae van Engen

I have been a dues paying member since 1998. I have previously served the ILA as a member of the Education Committee (2009-2010), Membership Committee (2011-2012), and the Nominating Committee (2009-2010, 2011-2012). I was also in the first cohort of the CLP program. My vision for the position of secretary is to do all I can to advance the mission of the ILA.

My vision for ILA is to continue to be a vibrant organization globally. This organization has much to offer to the world in regards to listening. As a member of the Executive Committee, I will work to assist the ILA to be seen as a resource for providing listening education to all entities—educational institutions, health care organizations, businesses, etc. It is my goal that the ILA will also be seen as a model for demonstrating effective listening in all cultures and contexts. We have a wealth of knowledge within our organization, and we need to share this knowledge of the power of listening with others. The ILA should be known as the organization that practices, researches and teaches listening.

LISTENING LEGEND

CONTINUED FROM FRONT PAGE

During her tenure with ILA, Kathy served on the ILA board for several years, including as Executive Director and Member at Large – Special Projects. She also hosted ILA’s 1996 Midwest Regional Conference and the 2009 convention. At that event, Kathy incorporated a full day conference for K-12 teachers into the convention, with 65 teachers attending. She was recently inducted into ILA’s Hall of Fame.

In addition to her contributions to ILA, Kathy is most proud of how hard she has worked for 20 years in increasing awareness of and developing teaching tools for listening. While she was at Alverno College, she recruited colleagues to work with her to combine their unique subject areas with listening and train all faculty members to teach listening skills. They wrote a booklet and developed a model of how to teach listening. The school’s commitment to listening is still strong, even though Kathy has retired from Alverno. One of her fellow listening teachers, Jean Groshek, said that people at the school still call Kathy “the Listening Lady.”

Outside of academia and ILA, Kathy has taken her time and talents to her community. She does pastoral care work at her church and has developed a training manual on empathic and deep listening for her church. Kathy has also focused on listening in the healthcare context. She does listening workshops for employees in hospitals, nursing homes, and other health care facilities. She currently trains third year residents in OB-GYN who are going through their oncology rotation. Her presentation is titled: “Survivors Teaching Students.” Kathy can lead such a session because she herself has been battling ovarian cancer for eighteen months. She says of ovarian cancer “It whispers, so listen.” It is very difficult to detect early and the symptoms often imitate other diseases, so women have to pay careful attention to their bodies, and doctors have to truly listen to their patients so that this disease can be identified and treated in its early stages.

Although she can’t be active in ILA right now because of her health, Kathy says that organization has important work to do and its members need to start listening to each other, but even “the Listening Lady” does not claim to have any special knowledge on how to do that. Kathy explains that she wears a big button that says “Licensed Practicing Listener” (emphasis on practicing) because she believes no one ever completely learns to respectfully and caringly listen well. She is still working on it.

AN APPRECIATION OF ECCENTRIC WRITER AND LISTENER BRENDA UELAND



By Susan Elliot

“I want to write about the great and powerful thing that listening is. And how we forget it. And how we don’t listen to our children, or those we love. And least of all—which is so important too—to those we do not love.”

– Brenda Ueland

Brenda Ueland wrote the highlighted quote in her essay, “Tell Me More: On the Fine Art of Listening.” Ueland (1891 – 1985) was a writer, journalist, editor and staunch feminist. This essay may have been the only writing Ueland did on listening but it was popularly released after her death as a chapbook (a small booklet) designed to be sent as a greeting card. An eccentric with many interests and a lot to say, she is said to have published six million words in her prolific career. She is also said to have lived life by two simple rules: tell the truth; don’t do anything I don’t want to do. Additional quotes from this essay are on page 8; the whole essay is included in a collection of her writings published after her death called *Strength to Your Sword Arm*.

READ MORE ABOUT BRENDA UELAND ON PAGE 8

MEMBER NEWS & VIEWS

WELCOME

NEW MEMBERS!

Amber Alsop
Pennsylvania

Alan Fleischauer
Minnesota

Elena Gregerson
Oregon

Deborah Haffey
Ohio

Avraham N. Kluger
Jerusalem

Randy Levinson
Canada

Terrilynn Quillen
Missouri

Valerie Repasky
Illinois

Virginia Sheridan
Washington, DC

Jeanne Sprott
South Carolina

Frank Thomas
Canada

Teri Varner
Texas

Kristi Whitehill
Indiana

Peter Wiltshire
Australia



WHY I JOINED ILA

By Amber Alsop

Amber is a Marketing/Business Development Specialist for a local credit union and graduate student at Edinboro University.

Dr. Myrna Kuehn, an ILA member and professor at Clarion University, approached me a couple months ago in regards to presenting at the International Listening Association conference that will be held this June. I had never heard of the ILA until she had mentioned this organization. After doing some research, I found the ILA to be an important organization that stresses the importance of listening and how it affects individuals on every level. I will be presenting with her on the panel at the ILA convention in June. Listening is a key ingredient to success; whether it is in the financial industry, political, teaching, public relations, or medical field. I feel that having keen listening skills is the reason why I was able to land a great job before I had graduated with my undergraduate degree. After learning about the ILA, I ask myself the following question: why did I not join sooner? See you in June!

By Phil Tirpak

Phil has been a member of ILA since 2010 and is currently running for First Vice-President Elect; learn more about him on page 4.

When I stepped out of the door at Albuquerque International Sunport Airport that cold winter day in March 2010, I really didn't know what to expect. As I boarded the shuttle to the hotel the thoughts were racing through my mind. Here I was attending the Annual Convention of the International Listening Association, an organization that I had only heard about through it being mentioned in the textbook that I used to teach Introduction to Communication at Northern Virginia Community College. One of the authors of the text was Melissa Beall and one of the top reasons I was here was to meet her, I had a request for her. I had hoped to meet Melissa the previous November and the National Communication Association Annual Convention where she was scheduled on a panel, but I didn't get that opportunity because she, unfortunately, could not be there. Here I was, with another opportunity and my fingers crossed.

Now you might be thinking, "What does this have to do with the ILA?" Patience please, or, as in the first step of the Integrated Listening Model, Prepare to Listen. I had just joined the ILA, even though I didn't know much about it other than what I read in the text or found on the website. As I have always taught my students, out of all the skills that can be learned to become an effective communicator there is none that was more important as listening. I didn't know that there was a professional organization devoted to the study and promotion of listening. So I joined, as a Lifetime Member, without having attended one convention or conference until now; that's faith. (CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

MEMBER NEWS & VIEWS

How Can I Become A Better Listener?

By Alan R. Ehrlich

It was a simple question. One that we all (ILA members) get asked on a pretty regular basis. A friend of mine from the West Coast asked “How can I become a better listener?”

My first reaction was to answer it as I normally would: focus your full attention on the speaker, keep an open mind and put aside any personal biases that you may have, ask clarifying questions to make sure you understand the meaning that the speaker is trying to impart, don’t interrupt, summarize and paraphrase where appropriate, watch the speaker’s body language, show interest through your body language and when possible, take notes because paper and pen are far more enduringly accurate than one’s memory. We went into light detail on some of the points – it was, after all an ad hoc conversation – said goodbye and agreed to talk more.

After hanging up I felt troubled. The responses I provided seemed to be too pat, too generalized, too rehearsed and didn’t take into account what I’ve learned in my years studying listening disorders and the very real problems that some people have with listening.

It brought me back to a talk I presented at the Mid-Jersey Collaborative Law Alliance in January. In the talk I discussed listening as an important part of the collaborative process and some of the problematic areas that need to be watched. Excerpts from the talk are available at the end of this issue. The full script is available at www.academia.edu or at www.listeningdisorders.org. CONTINUED ON PAGE 17

TIRPAK CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Back to my request; I had applied for and received a grant from the Virginia Community College System to put together a workshop addressing the assessment of the Oral Communication Competencies in the Commonwealth of Virginia, (there are 23 Community Colleges in the VCCS with a combined enrollment of 289,000 students.) The assessment instrument that was being used in the VCCS, the Test of Oral Communication Skills, (TOCS,) was a horrible instrument in my estimation and that of many of my Communication Studies colleagues. Oral communication skills were being measured through a multiple-choice test. How can we say that a student’s oral communication skills meet a standard of competency through multiple-choice questions? The workshop was going to be the beginning of an attempt to develop a viable alternative to TOCS to present to the VCCS for the next system-wide assessment scheduled in 2013.

This was a classic David and Goliath story. On one side was James Madison University, developer of TOCS (Goliath), and on the other side were myself and two colleagues at other Community Colleges in Virginia (yes, we were David). It was a formidable task and we had no illusions about the challenge. After all, we were just three faculty members. Although we had the support of our Communication Studies colleagues, we needed to enhance our credibility and what better way than to bring in a well-known scholar and author? I was here to ask Melissa Beall if she would come to speak at and help to facilitate our workshop.

When I introduced myself Melissa greeted me warmly and enthusiastically. She even introduced me to others and made me feel at ease. Then I asked Melissa if she would speak at our workshop. Without hesitation she said “Yes!” (Okay, it was a little bit longer than that but you get the idea.) Success! Well, at least for this part of the task. Melissa came to speak and helped to facilitate the workshop in September 2010. Flash forward; this past September we were informed by the VCCS that our assessment would be implemented system-wide in the Spring 2013 Semester. David won the battle and Goliath is upset; that never stopped us.

So what does this have to do with listening? Everything, but you knew that, didn’t you? We will be in Montreal and want to speak with and listen to as many of you as we can, because our next task is to design a listening assessment for our colleges. Nobody listens better than the people at ILA!

MEMBERS NEWS & VIEWS



Musings of Brenda Ueland on Listening: It Will Work a Small Miracle

“We should all know this: that listening is not talking; [it] is the gifted and great role and the imaginative role. And the true listener is much more beloved, magnetic than the talker, and he is more effective, and learns more and does more good. And so try listening. Listen to your wife, your husband, your father, your mother, your children, your friends; to those who love you and those who don’t, to those who bore you, to your enemies. It will work a small miracle. And perhaps a great one.”

Those Who Want You to Be Recklessly Yourself –

“Now, how to listen? It’s harder than you think. I don’t believe in critical listening, for that only puts a person in a straightjacket of hesitancy. He begins to choose his words solemnly or primly. His little inner fountain cannot spring. Critical listeners dry you up. But creative listeners are those who want you to be recklessly yourself, even at your very worst, even vituperative [and] bad tempered.”

The Secret of Having a Good Time – “You know how if a person laughs at your jokes you become funnier and funnier, and if he does not, every tiny little joke in you weakens up and dies. Well, that is the principle of it. It makes people happy and free when they are listened to. And if you are a listener, it is the secret of having a good time in society (because everybody around you becomes lively and interesting), of comforting people, of doing them good.”

Have a Problem? Find a Listener – “Who are the people to whom you go for advice? Not to the hard, practical ones who can tell you exactly what to do, but to the listeners; that is, the kindest, least censorious, least bossy people that you know. It is because by pouring out your problem to them, you then know what to do about it yourself.”

Ultraviolet Rays - “Listening is a magnetic and strange thing, a creative force. Think how the friends that really listen to us are the ones we move toward, and we want to sit in their radius as though it did us good, like ultraviolet rays.

How to Handle Parties – “Before, when I went to a party I would think anxiously: ‘Now, try hard. Be lively. Say bright things. Talk. Don’t let down.’ And when tired I would have to drink a lot of coffee to keep this up. Now, before going to a party, I just tell myself to listen with affection to anyone who talks to me, *to be in their shoes when they talk*; to try to know them without my mind pressing against theirs, or arguing, or changing the subject. No. My attitude is: ‘Tell me more.’ This person is showing me his soul. It is a little dry and meager and full of grinding talk just now, but presently he will begin to think, not just automatically to talk. He will show his true self. Then he will be wonderfully alive.”

Calling Out What is True and Alive – “You are taught in school to put down on paper only the bright things. Wrong. Pour out the dull things on paper too—you can tear them up afterward—for only then do the bright ones come. If you hold back the dull things, you are certain to hold back what is clear and beautiful and true and lively. So it is with people who have not been listened to in the right way—with affection and a kind of jolly excitement. Their creative fountain had been blocked. Only superficial talk comes out—what is prissy or gushing or merely nervous. No one has called out of them, by wonderful listening, what is true and alive.”

Try Not to Drink Too Many Cocktails – “In order to learn to listen, here are some suggestions:

- **Try to learn tranquility**, to live in the present a part of the time every day. Sometimes say to yourself: ‘Now. What is happening? This friend is talking. I am quiet. There is endless time. I hear it, every word.’ Then suddenly you begin to hear not only what people are saying, but *what* they are trying to say, and you sense the whole truth about them.
- **Watch your self-assertiveness**. And give it up. Try not to drink too many cocktails to give up that nervous pressure that feels like energy and wit but may be neither.
- **Remember it is not enough just to will to listen to people**. One must *really* listen. Only then does the magic begin.

NAER NEWS

How to Start a Regional ILA Conference

By Carole Grau

At first you may think this is an article about the history and the accomplishments of the North American East Regional ILA, but if you “listen between the lines” you will see this article is really a roadmap to follow if you are thinking about starting or reconvening an ILA regional chapter.

When we began we were about seven or eight people who shared an interest in the subject of listening. Our first meetings were very informal. Some of us were ILA members, some not. Most became members after a while, but that wasn't important. What was important was that we believed listening was a fascinating topic, we wanted to expand our understanding of the topic and we wanted opportunities to test ideas/materials. In the beginning we met in a variety of locations; all that mattered was that the locale was both convenient and free. Since we had people from Jersey, Connecticut, Brooklyn, and Manhattan, the locations alternated depending on availability.

We met twice a year. Our spring gathering consisted of content from sessions we brought back from the annual ILA convention. Our fall sessions involved sharing materials we had developed or worked with on other occasions, including course curriculum, interactive exercises and new books or articles in the field. We had a small steering committee, rather than formally elected officers, to keep things organized and moving forward. After several years of these kinds of meetings, our fall session evolved into a one day conference. Our most recent conference was in October 2012. We looked at listening in a variety of contexts: special education, ESL, parenting, doctor/patient relationships and both emotional and oppositional settings. The doctor/patient session deeply resonated with our conference participants. They recommended bringing this session to a broader audience and so the program was expanded and will be offered in Montreal at this year's ILA Conference under the title of “Transforming Healthcare through the Power of Listening and Discovering the Joie de Vivre”

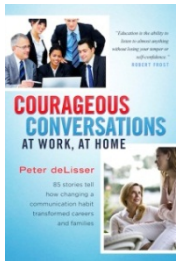
Why organize or attend a regional ILA conference?

- **Enrich your professional life and learning**
- **Present opportunity to expand ILA membership**
- **Generate proposals for ILA convention**
- **Offer connection and networking for those unable to attend ILA convention.**



Carole Grau (far left) and other attendees including Laura Janusik and Alan Ehrlich, listen to ILA member and professional consultant Shelia Bentley speak at the recent ILA NAER conference

LISTENING PUBLICATIONS



A Review of

Courageous Conversations: At Work, At Home, by Peter deLisser. Chandler House Press, 2012.

By Michael Purdy

Peter deLisser is a long time member of the ILA. He has attended meetings and given many presentations to ILA members over the years. In 2006 he was selected ILA Business Listener of the year. He also has a previous book, *Be Your Own Executive Coach* (1999).

One of my favorite articles is by Peter and appeared in the Listening Post in the summer of 1996, "The Gift of Listening." It was a savvy article on how we help others through listening. One thought from that article: "recognize listening as a demonstration of character. It is a moral struggle to become one who listens for the truth." This is a practice he carries forward to his new work. *Courageous Conversations* follows up on that article but buttressed by another 16 years of experience as a communication coach and trainer.

In this new book he goes to the absolute core of communication/listening, challenging readers, for instance, to push themselves to discover their core communication principle: what is most fundamental and life giving in their communication practices? For deLisser, it seems to be a view that what is most important in communication is to listen with courage and then to respond as honestly as possible while acknowledging and respecting the other person. One listens to oneself and to the other and then makes the needed adjustments to build relationships at home (and at work), and to manage one's work efficiently and compassionately.

The book is full of strategies and tactics for evaluating how we communicate, but also has a great many examples of real people with real communication/listening issues and follow-through to show how they improved their performance and relationships. The book has a number of short chapters, each easy to think about and digest and then apply. I have been reading the book a few sections at a time, giving myself time to work

through the essence of each section and think about how it applies to my own listening and speaking.

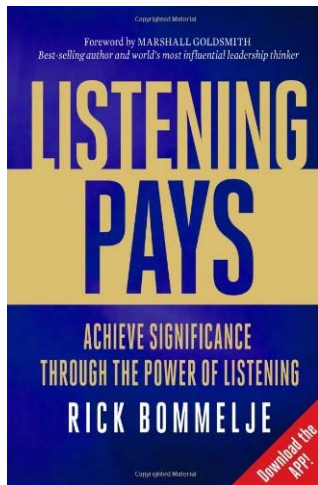
Some of the core chapters deal with: the problematic nature of conversation, finding communication strengths, essential elements of leadership, accepting 100% responsibility for our listening and speaking, focusing on results, speaking as a listener to prove we understand, listening to help and support, communication for team building, planning and effectively executing quality meetings, evaluating the legacy of our communication, and looking at how courageous conversations provide leadership at work and at home. The comprehensive scope of the book is testament to Peter deLisser's years of experience with listening effectiveness at work and home.

The book also has a great many concrete examples, many dozens. Some highlights include: A leader who grew up in an alcoholic family and responds to conflict defensively, says she "tackles it and clears it up." Upon questioning from her coach she acknowledges that she grew up with an alcoholic father and a critical mother. Having listened to her discuss her reaction to conflict, the coach asks if a new definition of conflict might include seeing conflict as a chance to listen for new and useful information to do her job?

In another example, an executive wanted help with his communication. The coach watched and listened as he talked and gave him the feedback that he should ask two questions before making a statement. The coach said this because he had the impression the executive "responded like a retail merchant, selling clothes off a rack on the east side of New York City." The first question he said would help the executive focus and aid in listening. The second question was to make sure he understood the first answer. The executive proceeded to ask two questions of the coach.

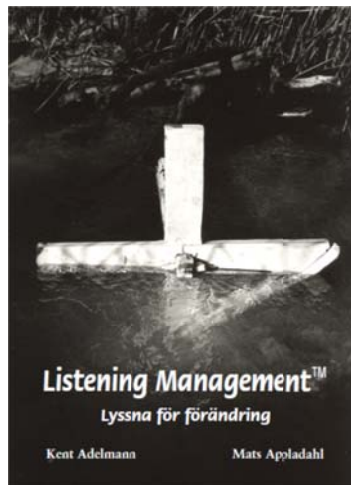
Peter provides tools for becoming aware of one's own communication habits and offers principles for changing them, although he recognizes this is not easy. One of his basic messages for listeners is to get feedback from co-workers and family and to plan methodically to act in new and creative way.

LISTENING PUBLICATIONS



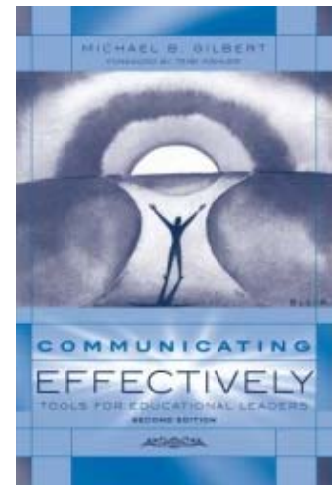
Listening Pays
by Rick Bommelje

In *Listening Pays: Achieve Significance through the Power of Listening*, Rick Bommelje introduces readers to fictional sales director Stu Preston, who has just six months to improve his performance or find another job. This story offers a practical approach to becoming a great listener. It also teaches readers the SIER process of Listening Effectiveness and offers tools such as the Listening Scorecard and Listening Habits Profile.



Listening Management
by Kent Adelmänn

Kent Adelmänn from Malmö University in Malmö Sweden, has published a management book (in Swedish) that talks about effective and strategic listening for a modern leadership in Sweden. The book, *Listening Management*, is based on Adelmänn's 2001 dissertation, *Listening to Voice*, and his textbook *The Art of Listening*. Adelmänn plans on presenting information from the book at the ILA convention in Montreal this coming June.



Communicating Effectively
By Michael Gilbert

Starting with an exploration of listening problems and solutions, this book evolves into a deep examination of how people perceive reality, what motivates them, and what happens when their needs are not met. *It* utilizes the concepts of Process Communication, developed Taibi Kahler, as the basis for the techniques educational leaders can use to solve the communication problems they face on a regular basis.



LISTENING RESEARCH



New ILA member Kristi Whitefield grew up near Lake Michigan. She has a master's degree in communication and will complete her work for an Ed.D. in Educational Leadership from Spalding University, Louisville, Kentucky in May. The abstract of her dissertation appears on the next page. She is married with two children. She is also a published poet and novelist. Her books include *The Debtors: A Scene of Prisons or Castles* and *Choices: An Epic Journey into the Abyss*. She has a book in press titled *Don't Shoot the Medic*. Find more information about Kristi and her work at her website (www.drcharity.org).



ILA student member Jasmine Towers lives in Regina, Saskatchewan with her husband and their six children. Jasmine has a Bachelor of Arts in General Studies from Thompson Rivers University – Open Learning: a degree that allowed her to take courses from multiple Canadian universities. She hopes to pursue graduate studies and research in the field of listening. Some of her research, very timely for the Montreal convention, explores Canadian multiculturalism. Some of her conclusions appear on the next page. The paper is available at <http://selfpublishedcanadians.ca/essays.html>

Promoting Undergraduate Listening Research



Laura Janusik

Recently Laura Janusik used Skype to discuss research with new ILA member Teri Varner's undergraduate Active Listening class at St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas. The abstracts of the student research are in the following pages. Here is what Laura had to say about this unique experience: "The Skype session was fun and challenging for both me and the students! I was able to ask them questions about their research and what they found, and I invited questions from each student. Because their topics were varied and fascinating, ranging from listening within the contexts of religion, ethnic groups, sexual orientation, trigger words, and technology, I was able to get my brain thinking in different ways, too. Teri not only created an assignment where students could learn about listening through research, but she also created an assignment where students could research through listening. I thank Teri for this great idea, and it's one I plan on replicating in the future.

LISTENING RESEARCH

Canadian Multiculturalism: What It Is, Its Social Premise, and Its Contribution to Listening

Conclusion of undergraduate paper by Jasmine Towers

Arat-Koc (2002) makes an observation of ‘global feminism’ when she suggests that cross-cultural understandings that don’t take into account historic and social contexts leave others (such as Third World women) vulnerable for their voices to be *appropriated* and *used* rather than *listened to*. I agree and I think the same danger ever lurks in Canadian multiculturalism. Indeed, I can’t even express the benefits of Canadian multiculturalism without considering context – my own. Born in Canada in 1977, I was nearly 20 before I realized that there was a such thing as racism. I guess I thought people were sort of joking before – how could anything as absurd as racism *actually exist* in Canada? Surely people and groups who claimed racialized experiences must be using it as a front for some other beef. The turning point for me came in daring to listen – not as I had done before but *as if* others were already worthy of being believed. Wow... I began to see and hear and understand that indeed, people *were* already worthy of being believed. When we listen solely for ‘evidence’ or (more insidiously) to categorize, we miss the obvious – that we are not really listening at all. We are wishing to confirm our theories with another’s voice. This harkens back to the quote that began this paper. We are dangerous when we don’t hear ourselves. We are dangerous when we don’t hear others. And we are dangerous when we don’t hear that we aren’t hearing. Because multicultural policy defines what things are acceptable, and subsequently what things are not, in this public sphere of Canada, it benefits Canadian society by guaranteeing that every Canadian is *already worthy*. It increases both our capacity and opportunity to listen better.

Does Powerless Language impact Supreme Court opinions? A Content Analysis of Arguments 2009-2011

Abstract of dissertation by Kristi Whitehill

This research has only accomplished a beginning place for what it set out do originally. This research did not achieve the purpose of determining if the use of powerless language by the attorneys in arguments before the United States Supreme Court makes a difference in the Opinion. The Opinions still need further study to evaluate if the usage of powerless language makes a difference. This study does provide an interesting insight into not only the study of law but also an interesting insight into gender and language. The study of language and gender needs to continue because the study of language provides a medium for understanding social structures and the direction of society (Litosseliti, 2006).

This study conducted an a priori content analysis of the oral arguments in front of the United States Supreme Court. The content analysis used prebuilt coding schemes of powerless language from Social Sciences Automation’s (2012) Profiler Plus. Profiler Plus coded dialogues of each attorney separated out from the transcripts provided by the United States Supreme Court (2012). The total powerless word count was divided into three constructs of powerless language defined by Hosman and Siltanen (2011).

The results of the content analysis were broken down into evasive, insecure and socially distant language constructs. The totals were analyzed with a t-test for significance of powerless language usage. The results of the t-test were not as expected: In the research, it was expected that women would speak more powerless language than men. Instead, the results showed the following: The usage of evasive language was not significant for females and males. The usage of insecure language of males was significantly higher for men than for females. The usage of socially distant language was not significant for females and males.

The analysis of the powerless language and Opinions of the Justices used a t-test. The test used the total frequency of each construct of powerless language and the justice’s majority votes as kept in S peath’s data (2012). The votes were matched with the Opinions in the United States Supreme Court’s (2012) website. The results of the t-test were not significant across all constructs of language and gender.

All of my results will be discussed in terms of how we listen and our expectancies

LISTENING RESEARCH



Below are the abstracts from research projects of the undergraduate students in ILA member Teri Varner's Active Listening Class



Left to Right: Syndey Savage (SR/Communication), Lupita Maria Hinjosa (SR/Communication), Marilyn L. Lor (SR/Communication), Shawn Hallman (SR/Communication), Pete Hudson (JR/Psychology), Walker Patterson (JR/Communication), Rhiannon Adams (JR/Communication), Katharine Lopez (JR/Communication), Rubi Arana (Kinesiology w/Pre-Phys), Emily Blasdel (SR/Communication), Samuel Bissett (SR/Communication)

Rhiannon Adams radams6@stedwards.edu

Listening Conceptualization of Cultural Students: St. Edward's University, Austin Texas

Understanding how members of different types of cultures listen and perceive themselves as listeners is important to on-going research of cross-cultural communication. Using Imhof/Janusik Listening Concepts Inventory (2006), this study examines and interprets how students at St. Edward's University score. The hypothesis is that various types of cultures and ethnicities will score differently in the various dimensions of the listening profile but that there will also be some similarities between various participants. Implications for research and practice of collectivist and individualistic cultural communication are discussed.

Rubi Esmeralda Arana rarana@stedwards.edu

Interrelated Listening and Speaking Abilities

Early communication scholarship was primarily concerned with identifying specific skills necessary to attain competency in various areas (e.g., public speaking, listening) and designing interventions to make students more proficient (Bostrom, 2011). Through research, it has been proven that effective listening and effective speech have a direct influence on one another (Burlison & Rack, 2008). My research will investigate how much truth this holds, and which orientation of listening (people-oriented, action-oriented, content-oriented, time-oriented) is crucial to effective speaking. Using the Listener Preference Profile (LPP), along with a speech evaluation from a speech professor, a group of students in a speech class will be tested on each communication skill. Results and conclusions are to be determined in the upcoming semester through formal analysis.

Joseph Walker Patterson jpatter2@stedwards.edu

Listening & Religion: 21st Century Responses

Can there be religion without listening? This paper presents exploratory research examining 21st century responses to this question

LISTENING RESEARCH

Samuel Bissett

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Trigger Words & Comments: Listening Barriers in the Classroom

My research centers around a theory I have developed about teaching in the college classroom. In my time as an undergraduate I have found that I will listen and follow instruction much more effectively to professors that are extroverted than my classes taught by introverted professors. I would like to identify trigger words, phrases, or speaking styles are most beneficial for students to hear within the classroom environment. This study will identify phrases or words that effect a way a student listens to their instructor. This research could be beneficial for professors in the field of Communication because the results may show patterns that can highlight why students listen and respond more effectively to some professors than others.

Emily Claire Blasdell

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Displacement Theory, Listening & iPhone Technology: An Auto-Ethnographic Analysis

This research paper examines the effects of the usage and presence of an iPhone on the process of listening in academic and social settings. Using an auto-ethnographic method, the researcher, a 22 year old white female, will recall and record her interactions and listening experiences with her iPhone always in sight. She will then do the same another day, but her iPhone will be out of sight the entire day. The purpose is to see if technology hinders her ability to listen well using Displacement Theory as a theoretical framework.

Shawn Hallman

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The Effects of Binaural Audio Beats on Listening Comprehension

Binaural audio beats are created by two stereo audio signals emitting waves of slightly different frequencies that are believed to influence brainwaves through entrainment (Lane, et. Al 1997). This study will see if these effects can improve the listening skills of a person.

Lupita Maria Hinjosa

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Nonverbal Communication, Latino Culture & Listening: An Exploratory Study

An individual's culture can define the way they act, their values, attitude as well as their communication style. An individual's culture plays an important role in their listening style. Thus, this study explores the listening process in the Latino culture, focusing mainly on the nonverbal gestures used during conversation. Using an observatory method, as well as Brownell's HURIER listening Profile (1996), people of Latino origins resorted to more nonverbal gestures while listening in comparison to individuals of African American, Asian and European decent. Although Latinos responded using more verbal gestures than the other cultures, that did not limit them verbally. While listening, people from other cultures were more attentive and their facial expressions were non-expressive, while Latinos showed an array of emotions by smiling, nodding, eye contact and hand gestures. Latinos were more physical while listening as well, as they touched the other persons shoulder or held their hand, which may be perceived as rude or awkward for people of different origins.

Pete Hudson

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The Effect of Mediums on Individual Listening Styles

Communication theorist, Marshall McLuhan, is known for coining the phrase "the medium is the message." In relation to today's modern societies, McLuhan would argue that there are some mediums that are more dominant than others. For this research, the primary mediums under study will be the television, computer, radio, and a live speaker. The purpose of this research is to determine whether individuals' listening styles differ depending upon the medium. To test this hypothesis, the Listening Preference Profile (LPP), which provides feedback on listening preferences or schemas and based on four orientations: people-, action-, content-, and time-oriented, will be used to compare the differences/similarities between the four mediums.

LISTENING RESEARCH

Chris Killeen ckillee@stedwards.edu

Dichotic Listening, Age and Gender

How do age and gender impact dichotic listening? This paper presents exploratory research examining dichotic listening (Broadbent, 1954) with a specific emphasis in attention and memory span. The subjects during this study involved: two younger cousins/3 year old male; 5 year old female; and grandparents/80 year old male & 72 year old female.

Katherine Lopez klopez6@stedwards.edu

Sexual Orientation and Listening Styles: Romantic Relationships

The goal of this study is to examine whether listening styles and sexual orientation affect romantic relationships. Gay, straight, and lesbian couples will be given the Listening Preference Profile (LPP) to assess predominate listening style(s). Each individual will then be interviewed about how they perceived their results and their partner's results. Overall, the results may help increase communication competence and also reveal how an individual's listening style affects their romantic relationship and whether sexual orientation is a deciding factor of how they score. Results and conclusions are to be determined through formal analysis.

Marilyn Lor mlor2@stedwards.edu

Listening Styles & Different Ethnic Groups

My research topic will focus on ten different ethnic groups and how listening skills are taught throughout their lives. I will briefly survey ten cultures--- Honduras, Guatemala, El Salvador, Mexico, Cambodia, Russian, Chinese, Indian, African-American, and Mexican-American. While conducting my research I will not only gather scholarly journals to guide me in the process of my findings, but also create a questionnaire that will enhance and educate my audiences perspective on the numerous ways listening is taught in a universal manner. I will also use the *How Well Do You Listen* activity we did in class Wednesday February 6, 2013 to help me understand, compare, and analyze how listening varies from these cultures.

Sydney Savage ssavage2@stedwards.edu

Listening Styles of Gay, Heterosexual, and Lesbian Couples

Understanding the styles of listening in homosexual relationships is a key part of the field of communication. This study will be looking at the different types of listening styles; people, action, content, and time, to see which style most people in romantic relationships gravitate towards. This study will also examine whether the couples are more likely to only use one style of listening, no matter what the situation is, or if they use a variety of styles to better suit the conversation. The Listener Preference Profile (LPP), will be the model used to identify the styles of listening, as well as interviews with the couples giving them different conversation scenarios to see whether or not the use one type of listening styles or a variety of styles.

LaRahia Smith lsmithb@stedwards.edu

The Impact of Self-Talk & Active Listening: A Self-Reflexive, Auto-Ethnographic Analysis

This paper examines listening to the voices of the Inner Self, specifically "self-talk." I define self-talk as mental, self-directed statements that may fulfill an instructional or motivational function. I sought to become aware of my self-talk to use as a practical tool for introspective active listening. For one week, I logged self-directed statements and their environment in order to create a snapshot report of my self-talk. My goal was to better understand the *valencey* (Moran, 1996) of my self-talk and the environments in which it occurs. I hypothesized that the majority of my self-talk would occur at school, and that it would be negative. While I did find the majority (61%) of these statements were negative, most of it occurred at work. Because a key component of adjusting self-talk is awareness, this research offers insight on how an individual can come about this awareness – the first step for adjusting her self-talk in a practical manner.

HOW TO BECOME A BETTER LISTENER

REMARKS BY ALAN R. EHRLICH, ILA PRESIDENT (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

“I am so pleased that I was invited here to share with you some thoughts about listening and the collaborative process. Talking about listening might sound a bit odd to many of you because we generally accept, and don’t question our ability to listen. And unfortunately, we don’t spend much time teaching or discussing this inborn and native skill in our schools or universities.

The good news is that we are all born listeners. Really.

Each and every one of us has been using and refining this incredible skill for our entire lifetime plus three months. We actually begin to focus on the sounds that make up our language in the third trimester of our mother’s pregnancy. In fact, researchers have recently suggested that newborns have already learned parts of their native language and can actually distinguish between their native tongue and a foreign one from the moment of birth.

Nobody has to teach us to listen. It is the most basic and fundamental skill that we possess.

Listening is so natural to us that we rarely pay it any attention - but with the central importance of listening to the collaborative process, I’d like to take a few minutes to look at some of the processes and problems involved in understanding what someone is saying.

First, we need to understand the difference between hearing and listening – two words that we tend to use interchangeably. Hearing is about sounds, while listening is about understanding. Hearing is one of our five senses. We hear 24/7 and have no ability to turn it off. Our ears pick up and process every sound around us - at least those within the 10Hz to 20,000Hz range - the frequency range of human hearing. Our ears have no filtering ability, they take in everything. Listening, on the other hand is a choice. We choose whether to listen or not. When we choose to listen, we enlist a complex series of cognitive processes that allow us to focus on and pay attention to a singular sound stream contained within the cacophony of sounds that surround us and turn that stream of vibrations into information that can be analyzed and understood.

Our language is constructed of individual words that when strung together allows us to build phrases and sentences that are used to communicate facts and concepts. But we don’t speak in discrete words; we speak in word streams with only the smallest pauses between words. There are differing theories about how the brain divides the speech stream and recognizes words. Some claim that our brains can divide what we hear immediately into recognizable words, while others suggest that individual sounds - phonemes - are the recognizable factor. In either case, for us to extract meaning from sound, we must very carefully deconstruct the stream into either words or phonemes and then reconstruct them into words, phrases sentences and then thoughts. We do this without thinking... it’s intuitive even to the youngest infant.

As we reconstruct the word we test it against our listening-vocabulary database to see if the sound matches an object or a concept that we know. If it does, it is stored in our short-term working memory awaiting other words so that, using grammatical rules, a sentence structure is developed and meaning can be derived. If it isn’t, our minds pause to try and grasp a meaning of the word. If that can be done it is stored in our listening vocabulary for later use. If we can’t grab a meaning, we tend to discard that part of the conversation because our minds do not like to dwell on the confusion when additional information is being imparted.

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Small children need to listen very carefully because their listening-vocabularies are small and they are driven to build them up. They listen intently to every word, how it is pronounced and what context it is used in. This is how they build up both their listening and speaking vocabularies. This intensity of listening uses an extremely high level of cognitive energy - which is replenished by the youngster taking a nap - or multiple naps - during the day.

At around the ages of 3 or 4, some changes happens. The youngster no longer listens quite as intently and this is accompanied by a marked reduction in his or her use of cognitive energy. I believe that this occurs at the same time that the child no longer requires daytime naps. At this juncture, the child has developed a workable contextual vocabulary. They not only know the meaning of most of the words used in the conversations with and around them, they have a good idea as to what words will follow and where the speaker going without having to listen and analyze each and every word.

At the same time, the child has developed a cognitive process that I call the 'prediction engine,' – a means by which the child bypasses the intense process of focused listening and replaces it by a far less intense process of prediction - or structured guessing - sort of like "Name that Tune" where you hear the first sound or two and guess at the song title – but here the child is guessing at the word, the words that are to follow and the meaning of what's being said. Although our language learning is far from over, we've developed it enough where we can reduce the energy level that we dedicated to listening so it can be used in other areas of learning and play.

Another process block that we develop and nurture as we move out of our infancy is a defined set of beliefs and assumptions. These integrate with our emotions to provide us with one of our main listening filters – albeit a filter that often is counterproductive for real understanding as just about everything we hear is measured against our belief structure and we must then make another decision as to whether or not we should analyze this information any further.

Because people aren't always aware of the depths of their beliefs – or the assumptions they have made and held onto, they have little opportunity to understand them or reshape them. When people aren't aware of how their beliefs influence their understanding, they find it difficult to listen to other people's points of view or accept their behavior. Sometimes they just silently reject them, but at other times there can be a more volatile reaction. If you have any doubts, look at today's politics and the voices and belief structures that make it so very interesting.

As adults we have fine-tuned the use of prediction to an extreme and in some cases we are prone to predict the speaker's conclusion even before the speaker completes his or her first paragraph - and then, rather than listen, we use the time to construct our argument and response. There's no reason to expend the energy necessary to listen when I know what the speaker is going to say....

And if you doubt the extraordinary amount of cognitive energy used in intense, focused listening, try sitting in on a graduate class in computational physics, or some other out-of-field subject, when you know that you will be tested at the end of the lecture. A nap anyone???

It is the prediction engine that leads me to the conceptual basis of a two-level, or dual process model of listening: effortless listening - highly dependent on our prediction engine and the level that is most used in our day-to-day conversations; and effortful listening – bypassing the prediction engine and used when we need to engage higher level cognitive skills such as analysis, reasoning, activating memory pathways, empathy or engaging our emotions in a controlled manner.

We also need to understand that we communicate under two basic assumptions:

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First, is that when we speak, and the listener responds in any way, we are both heard and understood. Second, is that when we listen, we understand what the speaker is telling us in the exact context that the speaker intended. Neither of these assumptions is true. We often mis-understand and we are often mis-understood – and most of the times we don't realize it.

While we have an intrinsic belief that the person we are talking to can listen, there are many instances when even this isn't true. There are people who, as much and as hard as they try, can't listen. And we need to be able to recognize and work around the issues - if our desire is for a fully participatory collaborative experience.

Hearing Loss

I know that we don't hear much about it, but hearing loss is at epidemic proportions in this country. According to last year's study by Johns Hopkins, one out of five Americans - age 12 and above - have a hearing loss so severe that it may make communications difficult.

That's one out of five - 20% of Americans. Ages 12 and above!

That shoots the widespread belief that hearing loss is an old person's disease.

For most people, hearing loss occurs very, very gradually. So gradually that the individuals don't even know they are losing their hearing even though it might be very apparent to family and friends. They complain that their TV sets are not working as they should and continually turn up the volume. They feel that the people around them are constantly mumbling and cannot be understood. When asked if they can hear okay, they answer in the affirmative. The facts are that they can hear you talking, but they can't understand the words you're saying.

Hearing loss is not about volume per se, rather it is about the disappearance or blending together of the various consonant sounds, the very sounds that define the words in our language. With even a mild hearing loss, the /th/ sound can easily blend and be confused with the /f/ or even the /s/ sounds making words difficult to understand.

People with hearing loss (treated or untreated) rely heavily on their predictive abilities as their ability to discriminate and recognize words decline. As mentioned earlier, prediction is based on the contextual vocabularies that each individual develops. Prediction only works within the boundaries of effortless listening since a more precise articulation and recognition of the words are needed for higher level analysis. Additionally, people who rely on prediction spend a lot of additional time attempting to process those words that are outside of their contextual vocabularies trying different combinations of consonant sounds in an attempt to recognize the word. The time differential is felt on both sides of the conversation.

And a big mistake - albeit an instinctive reaction - is to try talking louder. As you raise your voice, the vowel sounds become accentuated and make the softer consonant sounds even more difficult to discriminate. Try as you will, you cannot make a very loud /f/ or /th/ sound while your /a/ or /e/ sounds will be very powerful. Talking loud only makes things worse.

With over 20% of the American population suffering from a hearing loss severe enough to impede communication, it is reasonably certain that you will encounter and work with people with this problem. Being able to recognize the problem and work around it is important.

HOW TO BECOME A BETTER LISTENER

Pre-Occupation / Self-Absorption

While hearing loss might be an obvious physical disorder making listening or understanding difficult, there are some cognitive problems that can limit one's ability to effectively listen.

The dictionary defines self-absorption as a "preoccupation with oneself or one's own affairs." And while we generally might look towards narcissists as being the primary demonstration group, it is not the case. People who are depressed, overly anxious or stressed are pre-occupied with their thoughts and fears. So are people with OCD or PTSD. Self-absorption or preoccupation robs an individual of his or her ability to effectively listen to outside voices.

When people think, they are essentially talking to themselves (self-talk) but not in a schizophrenic sense. We might be thinking about what we're going to purchase at the market, or how to handle the subtle anger demonstrated by a client. It might be about which movie I should take my partner to or an idea for a new product that will revolutionize an industry.

We think a lot and this thinking is done in a self-talk manner. In each of these cases the self-talk stream can be interrupted by an outside voice. Stop and listen and then return - hopefully - to your own thoughts.

The self-talk could also be a never ending stream of thought about the situation surrounding them – personal, family or work-related problems. This is more the fact in clinical or chronic self-absorption where the outside voice cannot completely break through. Even if a conversation ensues, the inner voice is still dominant, blocking the external conversation. Often, a person who is depressed or severely anxious will have a conversation and a short time later have little recollection of it ever occurring.

Cognitive Depletion

[Participants] have to listen with a great deal of empathy - a process that opens them to emotional barbs and hurts which then requires a great deal of self-control and cognitive focus to quickly let go of. Empathic listening requires a very high level of cognitive energy and emotional self-control – definitely an effortful listening experience.

Research by Roy Baumeister and his colleagues has shown that self-control is a finite resource that diminishes after use. Experiments show that people who perform a task that required self-control were less able to exert self-control in subsequent tasks - even in entirely different areas. This leaves them in a state called ego, or cognitive depletion having little energy left to make good decisions. In this state they may make more errors and with their diminished ability for self-control and reduced impulse control may be prone to emotional outbursts. As self-control wanes, emotions intensify and the individual may become more excited, anxious and/or disruptive.

When a person is cognitively depleted, greater attention is paid to the short-term situation with willful ignorance of the long-term factors. Impulsiveness focuses on the short-term, and impulsiveness is greatly increased in a depleted state. This can lead to disastrous decisions being made by the individual. What might sound like a great agreement at the time might be re-analyzed as totally unacceptable only a short time later.

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Two specific issues linked to cognitive depletion that you should be aware of is that ego depletion both alters our perceptions of the past and enhances our susceptibility to suggestion. Research in the Netherlands [Otgaar et al] has shown that people with depleted executive function skills experience difficulties in their memory accuracy and are at risk of developing memories for details or events that were not experienced - false memories. Even more important are the indications that suggestibility increases, leaving one or more party vulnerable to the words and actions of the other.

Exerting self-control depletes the glucose level in the brain. Research has found that reduced glucose and poor glucose tolerance are tied to lower performance in tests of self-control, particularly in difficult new situations. Self-control can also be compared to stress. The brain is supplied with glucose during periods of stress to be used for energy. This conversion of glucose to energy is a coping mechanism for stress. The brain's need for glucose rises during the mental process for self-control.

Right now might it be a good time for a nice dessert?

It is bad enough that we tend to mix up details and forget things on good days. A study published recently in the Journal of Neuroscience looked at how we retrieve memories and revealed some interesting data.

It was always thought that retrieval was good for memory - the more you remember something, the longer you'll remember it. Researchers at Northwestern's Feinberg School of Medicine, discovered that each time you retrieve a memory you forget or add a small thing to it, and the next time you recall the information, you'll remember what you remembered - with the small deletion or addition - not the original memory.

In other words, the more you recall an event, the more distorted your memory of that event might be. The combination of cognitive depletion and changeable memory makes the collaborative process that much more interesting.

There is little that we can do to alleviate the changeable memory, although it might be a good idea to ask your clients to thoroughly document their recollections right at the beginning of the process. That would provide you with a good starting point. But there are some things we can do to minimize the risks of cognitive depletion. First would be to limit your sessions to 90 minutes or two hours on the outside. I realize that this is a standard that you generally try to keep, but I also realize that, when the end is near, it is not impossible for one or both sides to decide to keep going. However, the risks can be great.

This brings me back to the initial question of "How can I be a better listener?" It is not fair to provide one-size fits all answers because listening is very individual. The basic concepts are broad but the implementation has to be based on one's physical, cognitive and psychological condition. Perhaps before we provide quick, pat answers, we should be asking questions such as: "Are you having trouble listening in social or work situations? Can you control the environment? Can you hear people speaking but have difficulty understanding what's being said? Have you had your hearing acuity checked? Were you listening in a high stress situation such as an interview, interrogatory, or emergency situation? Were you very tired when you were having difficulty listening?"

With answers to these and other questions, we can put together an answer that better fits the individual and can surely produce a better listener.