

# The Three Levels of Listening

Scenario #1: Your client is unhappy. Every time the phone call comes in you look at the phone and groan. As your client goes over all of the complaints starting with someone sat on her bed during a showing, you hear her but you don't really listen to her.

Scenario :2: You are showing Bob and Jane a house and Jane reports that she doesn't like the house because of the cliff in the back. You HEAR this because her description has caused you to have that "event" jump out at you.

Active listening is defined as "**the ability to focus completely on what the client is saying (and not saying) to understand the meaning of what is said in the context of the client's desires and so support the clients's self expression.**"

**When we listen, we create the space to pick up on our client's:**

**Concerns**

**Goals**

**Values and beliefs**

**Non Verbal cues**

**There are at least three levels of listening.**

**The first level** is where everything is referenced to the listener ( that would be you)

If the client says, " I have trouble paying full price for anything", the listener says, So do I! The listener never goes beyond their own preoccupations.

This is where you are stating your viewpoint without noticing the other person. At this level you are basically dumping data. (Can you remember a time when a salesperson did this to you?)

Some agents focus enthusiastically on their presentation and on the tools that they can offer instead of listening, supporting, and facilitating a decision. It would be good to understand that what makes an agent most effective is listening vs telling.

**The second level** is focused listening. It is focused on the client. In response to the same statement, " I have trouble paying full price for anything," the listener (agent) might say, Tell me more about that. At this level you begin to recognize another person is in the interaction, and listen openly. You allow time for the other person to talk and wait your turn, listening with your rational mind.

**The third level** is deep systemic listening. The agent is aware of themselves, the client, and context of the conversation. there is little or no internal dialogue and NO judgement. The agent can look at things from all points of view and listen fully to all elements of the system in which the client operates. At this level, creative solutions develop. When we are at third level, we dance with communication.

What do good agents listen for? They listen for what is missing. The listen for what the client **does not or cannot say.**

### **Third level phrases/questions for mutual understanding. These are content free questions.**

Did you have a question about this?

Would you like to give me some sense of what is happening for you?

And is there anything more about this?

I can tell this is important to you

Ah, interesting or That's interesting

Ok, I can feel that too, or I can see that too, or I can hear that too (VAK)

And what is possible for you out of all this?

Is something in the way?

What do you need most of all right now?

What will happen when this is resolved?

Is there anything else?

### **Get information by listening to the clients voice and words.**

#### **Have you ever got caught in a long winded tale?**

Most agents have had the experience of getting caught in a listening session with a long winded client. When we are good listeners, we can often collude with a client who loves to tell us their stories which don't move the client forward or result in an action. Listening to distracting stories is not what the client is hiring us for.

How can we be good listeners and still honor the long winded client?

When we look again at the definition of active listening, it sounds like we would also want to give them some space to express themselves and honor the way they communicate: "the ability to focus completely on what the client is saying (and not saying) to understand the meaning of what is said in the context of the client's desires and so support the clients's self expression."

#### **Having the courage to move the client forward**

Trust and rapport are critical to our personal and professional relationship. Develop the courage to say what your intuition tells you after careful listening. Two methods are 1. Asking permission and 2. Intruding

Asking permission- when you have listened and sense that you have hit a difficult or sensitive topic, or a topic the client is avoiding, go to the third level of listening. Ask the client questions such as, "Is it okay to talk about this?"

Intruding- when you have listened and the client is veering off course in their conversations, you can cut to the chase by saying things that you spot. If you are wrong the client will let you know in short order. This is like sending up a test balloon to see if you are on the same page. Use phrases that can soften the impact and speak with your heart. Know that when you do this, you must be in high rapport. This can shed light on an area they may not have looked at. This is also a type of pattern interrupt. What are some pattern interrupts you use to get a client to refocus?

#### **Final tip**

People know we are listening when we move our eyes. Practice using an NLP technique called an eye flood. Make eye contact with the client. Don't look at the bridge of their nose, or look over their shoulder. If your

want a person to know you are listening, your eyes must move. Practice flicking your eyes back and forth with the clients eyes. Practice with you family and loved ones first. This shows exquisite listening.