

# LISTENING

## Participant Workbook

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**LISTENING  
PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK**

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Ken Blanchard first developed Situational Leadership® with Paul Hersey in the late 1960s. In 1985, Blanchard and the Founding Associates of The Ken Blanchard Companies—Marjorie Blanchard, Don Carew, Eunice Parisi-Carew, Fred Finch, Laurence Hawkins, Drea Zigarmi, and Patricia Zigarmi—created a new generation of the theory called Situational Leadership® II. The leadership model used in this product is based on the Founding Associates' second generation thinking and research, and is used with their permission.

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## Preface

This program focuses on the skill of listening. Listening is a critical skill in coaching and developing others. As you think about developing your skills as a leader and helping your people develop their competence, motivation, and confidence, you must listen to be able to determine what type of help they want. Do they want you to listen as a coach? Do they want a sounding board? Do they want you to listen to and help them sort through the feelings they have? Do they want you to listen to give advice and make recommendations about the challenges they face? If you listen effectively, you can provide the right leadership style at the right time. Although listening is a Supportive Behavior, when you listen carefully you know which of the other Supportive Behaviors to use and which Directive Behaviors to use.

Effective listening involves focusing on what the other person is saying and then making responses that make the person feel heard, valued, and better able to solve his or her own problems. Use of the skill helps you create a receptive environment so that you and the person you are listening to can explore what really matters to him or her.

After teaching listening to others for many years, we are convinced that the investment of time required to acquire and apply these skills will be worthwhile to you and your organization. We are confident that if you develop your ability to listen, you will find it easier and easier to build trusting relationships with the people you lead and live with.

*Susan Fowler  
Drea Zigarmi  
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Ken Blanchard*



# Listening

## Overview

Listening is a skill set that leaders say they use frequently and well. In fact, when managers are surveyed about their listening behaviors, they almost always score themselves higher on listening than their staff members do. Yet, their staff members and colleagues, who seek to be heard, often feel unheard. That's because all too frequently leaders miss the opportunity to reflect on the speaker's emotions, intentions, energy, or needs. They miss the content and the meaning of what is being said.

The skill of listening is not a passive behavior for either the listener or the speaker. It is an effective and interactive process that requires attention and focus. It entails the use of specific verbal and nonverbal behaviors, which leaves both participants in the conversation with a clear sense that the words spoken were accurately communicated.

In this module, you will learn the difference between effective and ineffective listening skills, and how each affects the outcome of any conversation between two people. You will also learn the five fundamentals of effective listening and how to listen "situationally." To be an effective listener, you need the ability to use the listening fundamentals that are most appropriate for the development level of the person you are listening to and for the leadership style you are using.

### Lis·ten·ing

1. To make an effort to hear something
2. To pay attention, to heed

Effective listening means using specific verbal and nonverbal behaviors that leave the speaker and listener with a firm belief that the words spoken were accurately communicated and heard.



## Am I a Good Listener?

*I believe my greatest strengths as a listener are* \_\_\_\_\_

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*I believe my greatest weaknesses as a listener are* \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Moment of Truth ... Do I Tend To ...**

**Listen to Me?**

- To gather information to build my own case, confirm my own beliefs, or defend my point of view
- To solve problems, give advice, or fix things

**Listen to Others?**

- To learn and understand the other person's point of view
- To help the other person move forward and encourage self-reliant problem solving



# Do Others Think I Am a Good Listener?

▶▶▶  
 If there is an opportunity, ask two to three people in this workshop or back on the job for their opinions and/or feedback about what they believe are your greatest strengths and weaknesses as a listener.

	Strengths	Weaknesses
<b>Person 1</b>	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
<b>Person 2</b>	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____
<b>Person 3</b>	_____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____

What did you learn?

\_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

## Moment of Truth ... Do Others See Me ...

- Listening to Myself?
  - To gather information to build my own case, confirm my own beliefs, or defend my point of view
  - To solve problems, give advice, or fix things
- Listening to Them?
  - To learn and understand their point of view
  - To help them solve their own problems



## The Benefits of Listening

Think of someone who is a great listener. How does he or she make you feel?

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As a leader, why might you want to develop your listening skills? What are the benefits from three perspectives—yours, your staff members', and the organization's?

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# Obstacles to Listening

1. Now think of some people who do not listen well. What gets in their way? What keeps people from listening?

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2. What is the real impact of *not* listening?

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## Learning Objectives

### Purpose

To teach people how to listen effectively in order to promote open communication, build trust, and encourage self-reliant problem solving

### Outcomes

Check the outcomes that are important to you ...

- Understand and demonstrate the five fundamentals of effective listening
- Use nonverbal behaviors to show your interest in what others are saying
- Ask questions to encourage others to communicate and to demonstrate that you are listening
- Acknowledge the emotion behind what you are hearing
- Display your understanding of what has been said by restating what you heard
- Confirm what has been said over a period of time by recapping the discussion
- Describe and appreciate how the five fundamentals of effective listening are used to develop others in the four SLII® Leadership Styles
- Understand that you can choose to listen for different things in a conversation
- Experience what it feels like to be effectively listened to



## Hear Them Out—A\*

**Roleplay #1:** You are the manager. Let your staff member start to tell you about something. Interrupt to tell the staff member about how that reminds you of what happened to you.

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**Roleplay #2:** You are the staff member. Tell your manager about something that really upsets you.

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**Roleplay #3:** You are the manager. Let your staff member start to give you a suggestion. Then, shoot down the suggestion. Tell why it will not work. Give advice about what to do.

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**Roleplay #4:** You are the staff member. Tell your manager about something that really concerns you.

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### Key Learnings

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\*This activity was adapted from Situational Frontline Leadership by Fred Finch, Patricia Stewart, and Ken Blanchard.



## Hear Them Out—B

**Roleplay #1:** You are the staff member. Tell your manager about something you are really happy about.

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**Roleplay #2:** You are the manager. When your staff member talks to you, grill or interrogate him or her.

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**Roleplay #3:** You are the staff member. Tell your manager about a suggestion you have and why you think it will work.

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**Roleplay #4:** You are the manager. When your staff member tries to tell you about a concern, say nothing. Ignore him or her. Act busy and do 10 other things while you are “listening.”

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### Key Learnings

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## What Does Ineffective Listening Look Like?\*

- **Off-on-a-Tangent Listening**—Prompted by something said by the speaker, the listener goes off on a **tangent** relating to his or her experience. The speaker gets **cut off**; the listener changes the focus of the conversation. How do you think the speaker feels?

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- **Barbecue Listening**—The listener continually “grills” or interrogates the speaker, asking questions of interest to the listener but **not necessarily** to the speaker. How do you think the speaker feels?

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- **Giving-Advice Listening**—The listener gives advice or ideas to the speaker, even when he or she is not being asked for them. The listener uses “**yeah, but**” or “**that won’t work**” statements. How do you think the speaker feels?

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- **Multitasking Listening**—The listener allows distractions and interruptions. He or she does other things while the speaker is talking. How do you think the speaker feels?

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\*This activity was adapted from *Legendary Service*® by Kathy Cuff, Vicki Halsey, and Ken Blanchard.