
REFLECTIVE LISTENING PRACTICE

Reflective listening is the practice of being fully present with another person. It invites us into softening our heart, listening without judgment and with curiosity, being available for what the other person wants or needs to share without seeking explanation or clarification for our own purposes.

Benefits of reflective listening:

1. The communication level may be deepened
2. The listener may become more empathetic/compassionate towards the speaker
3. The speaker may be able to gain greater self-understanding, clarity and vulnerability through effective mirroring
4. A shift in perspective/worldview may occur through sharing reflections

The Exercise

In groups of four, each person will have the experience of each of four roles:

1. Storyteller
2. Listener for Facts
3. Listener for Feelings
4. Listener for Values

(If there are 5 people in your group, the 5th person will watch for body language.)

You will have 1 hour. For the groups of four, this is 15 minutes per person. One person shares a story where they have experienced personal challenge or conflict. Use 7-8 minutes to tell the story. The listeners will reflect back to the storyteller what they heard, without providing advice or asking questions.

Rotate roles until everyone has experienced each role.

First level: facts

The listener repeats the facts of the story as they heard them.

Second level: feelings

The listener shares back the feelings or emotions they heard as the storyteller told their story.

Third level: values

The listener reflects the values held by the storyteller that they heard as they listened.

Feelings Inventory¹

absorbed	amused	grateful	intrigued	proud	tender
adventurous	animated	inquisitive	keyed-up	quiet	touched
alert	astonished	inspired	moved	sensitive	wide-awake
alive	concerned	intense	optimistic	stimulated	zany
amazed	curious	interested	overwhelmed	surprised	

☺ Likely to be experienced when our needs ARE being fulfilled

affectionate	dazzled	excited	glowing	mellow	splendid
appreciative	delighted	exhilarated	good-humored	merry	thankful
aroused	eager	expansive	gratified	mirthful	thrilled
blissful	ecstatic	expectant	groovy	overjoyed	tranquil
carefree	effervescent	exultant	happy	peaceful	warm
cheerful	elated	fascinated	helpful	radiant	wonderful
comfortable	electrified	free	hopeful	rapturous	zestful
complacent	encouraged	friendly	invigorated	refreshed	
composed	energetic	fulfilled	involved	relieved	
confident	engrossed	glad	joyous	satisfied	
contented	enlivened	gleeful	jubilant	secure	
cool	enthusiastic	glorious	loving	spellbound	

☹ Likely to be experienced when our needs are NOT being fulfilled

afraid	cool	embarrassed	hurt	overwhelmed	suspicious
aggravated	cross	embittered	impatient	passive	tepid
agitated	dejected	exasperated	indifferent	perplexed	terrified
alarmed	depressed	exhausted	inert	pessimistic	tired
aloof	despairing	fatigued	intense	puzzled	troubled
angry	despondent	fearful	irate	rancorous	uncomfortable
anguished	detached	fidgety	irked	reluctant	unconcerned
animosity	disappointed	forlorn	irritated	repelled	uneasy
annoyed	discouraged	frightened	jealous	resentful	unglued
anxious	disgruntled	frustrated	jittery	restless	unhappy
apathetic	disgusted	furious	keyed-up	sad	unnerved
apprehensive	disheartened	gloomy	lassitude	scared	unsteady
averse	dislike	grief	lazy	sensitive	upset
beat	dismayed	guilty	lethargic	shaky	uptight
bitter	displeased	hate	listless	shocked	vexed
blah	disquieted	heavy	lonely	skeptical	weary
blue	distressed	helpless	mad	sleepy	withdrawn
bored	disturbed	hesitant	mean	sorrowful	woeful
brokenhearted	downcast	horrible	melancholy	sorry	worried
chagrined	downhearted	horrified	miserable	sour	wretched
cold	dread	hostile	mopey	spiritless	
concerned	dull	hot	nervous	startled	
confused	edgy	humdrum	nettled	surprised	

¹ Adapted in part from Marshall B Rosenberg, Center for Nonviolent Communication

Values

In listening deeply to one another, our hearts assist us to hear the values underneath the words, rhetoric, or strongly held positions. When we listen deeply and can reflect the values that we hear, we connect to the wholeness in the other.

BEAUTY
COMPASSION
COMMUNITY
CONNECTION
COOPERATION
COURAGE
CREATIVITY
EQUALITY
FAITH
FAMILY
FRIENDSHIP
FREEDOM
GENEROSITY
Justice
GOODWILL
GRATITUDE
HARMONY
HUMOR
INCLUSIVENESS
LOVE
ORDER
PATIENCE
PEACE
RESPECT
SERVICE
SIMPLICITY
TRUST
UNDERSTANDING
WHOLENESS
WISDOM

