

Personal Reflection on Unproductive Patterns of Listening

The intent of this tool is to be of service to you throughout your work as a Coach Leader, with the goal of keeping your listening attunement in the Productive Listening column. It offers an opportunity to reflect on your listening habits in a recent conversation. In each row, first notice the unproductive pattern, followed by a more productive pattern. As you become mindful of your listening patterns, which of these most represent how you would respond?

Unproductive Listening	Productive Listening
I thought of a way for the speaker to solve their dilemma.	I stopped trying to solve the challenge for the speaker and listened to support the speaker in solving their own dilemma.
I made a judgment about the speaker or their handling of the situation.	I did not make a judgment about the speaker's handling of the situation.
I wanted to ask questions before the speaker had finished speaking to satisfy my own desire to know.	I maintained a mindset of curiosity about what the speaker was saying.
I thought that the speaker was not making the best choice in the situation.	I listened, without judgment, as the speaker talked through the possible choices.
I thought that the speaker did not respond in the best way.	I withheld judgment about the speaker's responses and continued listening.
I drifted away from listening to the speaker as I thought about my own experience that connected to the situation.	When my attention to the speaker dwindled, I became aware that I was drifting away and again gave them my full attention.
I found myself becoming drowsy and wanting to nod off while the speaker was talking.	I remained alert and interested in what the speaker was saying.
I was feeling hungry and began to anticipate my next meal, losing connection with what the speaker was saying.	I kept water in my office in case I felt a sense of hunger and could not leave for a meal.
I experienced a flash of an image that caused an emotional response in me.	I noticed a flash of an image in my thoughts and let it go so I could listen fully to the speaker.
My own experience overrode my desire to hear the speaker's experience.	I was able to put my experience in the background and return my attention to the speaker.
I placed my attention on external noise, which took my attention from the speaker.	I intentionally softened external noise in my awareness and focused my attention on the speaker.
My own self-talk or emotions prevented me from fully listening to the speaker.	I managed my self-talk and emotions to be fully present with the speaker.