



O-CITY PROJECT

MODULE IV.1 INTERPERSONAL SKILLS



Erasmus+

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1. Lesson Document

Lesson 2 Topic 2 Active listening

Levels of conversation

Introduction

The levels of conversation are usually classified into 3 different categories that goes from a more passive attitude to proactive behaviour.

The level I would be the transactional, or informational, which is the most superficial level of conversation. Here people simply exchange data and information, tell and ask, with still a low level of trust.

The level II is positional, or personal. Here games of power and influence enter into the conversation. People start to advocate, inquire, and compromise. A conditional trust is instilled.

The level III, the highest level, is transformational. It is then about collaboration, and co-creation for mutual benefit. People share, discover together and become partners in this process, that relies on a high level of trust. We can also talk here about relational level, as people identify their own emotions and the ones of their interlocutors, as they share a common experience.

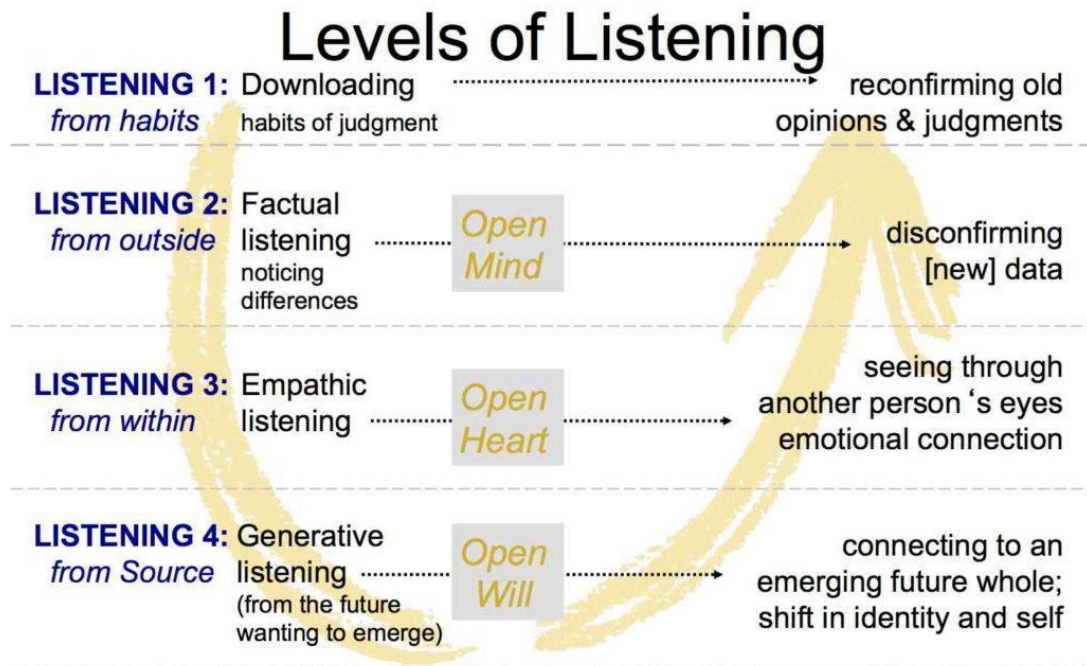
Once this lesson is completed and approved, learners will be able to:

1. Identify the different levels of conversation.
2. Raise awareness about their level of listening.
3. Improve the quality of their conversation levels with others.

In this lesson, we will understand what makes a powerful and constructive conversation based on active listening.

1. Theory-U and the levels of listening

A quality conversation relies on a high quality of listening. C.Otto Scharmer developed, in his “Theory U” a diagram about the different levels of listening, made of 4 main levels: listening from habits, listening from outside, listening from within and listening from source:



Source: Presencing institute - Otto Scharmer - www.presencing.com/permissions/

While the first level is rather passive, and is mostly used to comfort someone in his pre-established judgements, intentional effort might allow us to improve the quality of listening. A constructive dialogue might help us to generate new and creative ideas for a better future.

2. Increasing the level of conversation

We often fail in empathic and generative listening, which means that we remain stuck in a level I or II of conversation, getting trapped in a power dance in which we do not accept being wrong.

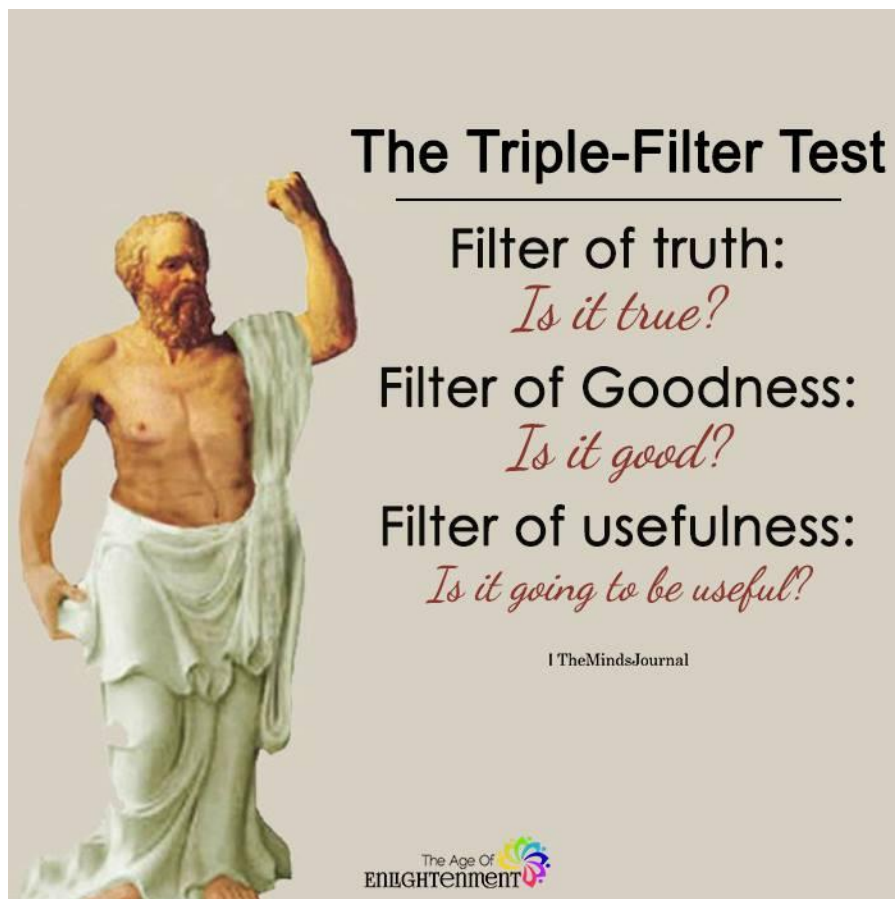
However, only by entering level III of conversation, we can transform ourselves and others, and build constructive solutions. To reach this level, some techniques are to be applied:

1. Open your mind, heart and will.

Conversation is not a lonely process; it is a social activity. Monologue is not conversation. It is not all about you, but about others as well, and about what you can achieve together. You need to be ready to listen, to take care about others' position, and to be ready for sharing and trust. Empathy skill (Topic 3 lesson 1) will help you in this journey. Curiosity and willing to move forward as well.

2. Think before you talk.

Here are 3 golden rules of Socrates to think of before you talk: is what I want to say true? Is it good? Is it useful? Applying those 3 filters avoids the dissemination of false rumors and contributes to constructive inputs.



Source: The age of enlightenment - taken from <https://themindsjournal.com/live-flow-life/>

3. Apply respect.

Being nice and polite belongs in common sense. But it is not always easy to apply, especially if you have opposite opinions. In any case, you should try not to interrupt

and remain focused on what is being said. Do not prepare your answer in advance, wait until you listen to the entire argument before you respond.

4. Stick to the topic.

This is a basic rule of brainstorming and is useful in any conversation. Be creative and express ideas, even if they seem crazy, but only if they are related to your topic.

5. Apply trust and create emotional connections.

Level III of conversation relies on a high degree of trust. Do not be afraid to share your true feelings and invite your interlocutor to do the same. Conversation is a way to know someone better and build a relationship. Be open about what interests you and share.

Conclusion

Conversation is a social activity. It can remain superficial and be as simple as saying hello in a lift journey. It can also lead to major world transformation when people start sharing their ideas and create synergies for a common future. The capacity to reach high levels of conversation will help you share your projects with others, explaining their sense and conviction, but also to improve them thanks to external inputs that will bring you value. It is up to you to work on this skill to open your mind and get prepared to take the best out of conversations.