

Story Listening – In 3 Steps



This 3-step how-to guide is about building story listening skills – a critical element in building your influence, impact, and income.

Listening appreciatively is an important networking and social skill, as well as a critical management skill.



READ CAREFULLY & FOLLOW THESE INSTRUCTIONS EXACTLY

Whenever you are listening to someone telling a story, suspend your critical mind. Listen to the person telling a story with empathy and pleasure -- without interrupting or thinking about how to respond. Just relax, sit back, and listen delightedly. Your job is to listen the best story out of them as possible. Don't worry about any advice you may give, any comments you might make, or the story you want to share in return. Suspend all of that internal chatter and just listen with delight at what the person is saying.

Step 1 – Ask For A Story & Listen Delightedly

Start the storytelling session by using a story prompt to evoke a story. Story prompts usually start out with:

“Tell me about...” Or “Tell me about the time when...”

To practice the story listening technique, use something easy like:

“Tell me something about your name . . . “

Listen delightedly

Step 2 – Ask Reflective Questions Only

When the teller is finished, ask 1 or 2 of reflective questions (below) to help understand more about the person and their story. Stick to these questions without adding your own so you can experience the magic of what happens. These questions have been tested and verified for over 10 years. They work. Pick 1 or 2 depending on the context and person. You'll know how to make these fit into a conversation.

1. *What do you like about what you just shared?*
2. *What does this this experience mean to you?*
3. *What do you think you learned from this story?*
4. *Is there anything else you want to tell me about your experience?*



Step 3 – Appreciate All The Good Things

When the person is finished telling their story, tell them what you liked about their story. Give appreciations. Do not give advice, opinions, or critical feedback – it is too early to do so. Simply let them know what you appreciated about their story, how it struck you, what you received from the story, and the like. If you get stuck, see the list below for ideas.

1. *What I appreciate about this story is . . .*
2. *The affect this story had on me is . . .*
3. *What I like about how you TOLD this story is . . .*
4. *What this story did for me is . . .*

The End

Thank the person for their story. Ask any information questions last so the flow of the story is not interrupted. Information questions include: names of people, year or time, other missing pieces of information, etc. that you want to know.

From this experience you should have established a depth of relationship that most people don't enjoy, received valuable insights about the person, learned something new, and are well on your way to more engagement.

1. What specifically did this process allow you to do?
2. What did it allow you to experience?
3. What were your specific results?

Carry this simple yet powerful process with you wherever you go: networking events, business meetings, conferences, parties, and the like. You will learn amazing stuff and have a good time. Even better, so will the people you are listening to.

For most people it is a rare experience of truly being listened to. Give the gift to someone today.

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