



LISTEN FOR SUCCESS

**8 PROVEN
TECHNIQUES TO
NEGOTIATE
OUTCOMES YOU
NEVER THOUGHT
POSSIBLE**

LEON BAMFORTH

Potential is a funny thing. Is it possible to turn a star employee into a problem employee? Definitely! Is it possible to turn a problem employee into a star employee? Not every time, it may be time to part ways. However, when I started to change my mindset and upgrade my toolbox for difficult conversations, I began to see less of the first and more of the second type of transformations occur in businesses I work in.

But first, why is it, as Steven Fry said, that we prefer to be right rather than effective? Do you want to know the key to a successful conversation? The answer is: listening! We allow the other side to feel understood by actually taking the time to listen and they become malleable to change. The great thing is so do we because we are really listening. The problem is everyone has an innate need to feel understood. Since we were babies we were praised for talking. The hard won ability to talk comes easy now and feel good, the seldom leant ability to listen comes hard and takes effort. Simply put, our default programming is to hate listening!

Think about it, do you ever say “She has really annoyed me, I’m going to give her a really good listening to!”? Why does it sound so wrong? It feels good to scold people and label them as the problem but it is not best as an influencing strategy, or even a strategy to find the best solutions. Can you get by through bullying people to do what you want? Sure, but there is a more effective way. I have used these techniques to earn a client £200K in a one hour conversation and I also have helped my child calm down and be more self aware. The exciting question is what options didn’t you know were possible that will become possible through listening?

So are you willing to change your approach to be effective? Most people are not but the fact you are reading this suggests you are! So let’s have a little fun, I have created two Bingo cards to start to use with your every day conversations: key mistakes and key skills! The temptation is to grade other people, resist that and grade yourself. I suggest you review the cards before a conversation and then complete them afterwards (rather than scream “HOUSE!” mid tense conversation...that might not go down too well). I have intentionally suggested using these in everyday conversations, not just difficult ones, or key negotiations. When those conversations come around you want these skills to be instinctive. So, go and play Bingo!



BINGO CARD: KEY LISTENING MISTAKES

By making these mistakes you will feel good but your “opponent” will not. There is a more effective way!

<p>Cut people off</p> <p>Phrases such as: “As I was saying...”</p> <p>Protect your world view at all costs and ensure you are understood by cutting off anyone that is speaking instead of you or, worse, disagrees with your opinion.</p>	<p>Ask closed, leading questions</p> <p>Phrases such as: “Do you agree that anyone would be stupid to disagree?”</p> <p>It’s nice to talk, but you should not be forced to listen so don’t ask questions, unless they are to validate you being right. Forcing “Yes” means agreement.</p>	<p>Repetition</p> <p>Phrases such as: “I just told you!”</p> <p>Who is responsible for understanding, the speaker or the listener? The listener of course! Repeat what you have said over and over again but louder each time.</p>	<p>Label people</p> <p>Phrases such as: “You are a terrible person”</p> <p>Help people understand who they are by labelling their entire self based on your emotional impulse. Bonus points if you label them when they are not around!</p>
<p>Paraphrase</p> <p>Phrases such as: “So you are saying you hate your job?”</p> <p>Tell them what they are thinking without wasting the time hearing what they are thinking. You understand how they are wrong already!</p>	<p>Use “You” messages</p> <p>Phrases such as “YOU REALLY SCREWED UP!”</p> <p>The person is the problem and you are helping by telling them that. No need to stop and consider that you may have not understood something.</p>	<p>Never leave a pause</p> <p>Phrases such as: anything, just don’t stop talking!</p> <p>Silence is wasteful and you have so much to say. Influence stupid people by benevolently sharing your your knowledge. Talk all the time.</p>	<p>Assume they understand</p> <p>Phrases such as: “Good chat!” as you walk away</p> <p>If you have said it, they understand it. Don’t slow down to find out what it means to them. As you walk off realise you did a good job there!</p>

BINGO CARD: KEY LISTENING SKILLS WITH MORE PIES!

The FBI use the MORE PIES key skills to help difficult conversations go the right way. Use each skill but not in order.

<p>Use Minimal encouragers Words such as: “ok, yeah, uh huh, really”</p> <p>Show that you are present and really listening by using brief responses. Allow people to think through what they are saying and encouraging them to talk. They feel understood and you learn more!</p>	<p>Ask Open-ended questions Phrases such as: “how did that impact you?”</p> <p>Ask questions that need more than yes or no answers. Be curious to really understand their perspective and to find out what they know that you do not. Ask a great question and then shut up.</p>	<p>Reflect/mirror If they say “well that was terrifying” say “Terrifying?”</p> <p>Repeat back the important 1 to 3 words of their sentence. This gives them permission to tell you more information. You will be surprised what they tell you!</p>	<p>Label emotions Phrases such as “That sounds really frustrating”</p> <p>Calling out emotions as you hear them. If you are wrong they will correct you, if you are right they will feel understood. You will also help them recognise what they are feeling.</p>
<p>Paraphrase</p> <p>Restate what they said in your own words to ensure you understand and so they know you are listening. them to not only feel listened to but for you to actually listen.</p>	<p>Use “I” messages Phrases such as: “I feel frustrated...”</p> <p>Turn the message from an accusatory “you” into an “I feel...”. This stops the person feel like the problem but allows your frustrations to be discussed</p>	<p>Effective pauses</p> <p>Don’t be scared of silence. Silence enables people to think things through and if awkward they will often fill it with what they really think. Don’t kill the silences.</p>	<p>Summarise Phrases such as: “Let me see if I understand...”</p> <p>Periodically stop and summarise the entire perspective of who you are listening to. Your purpose is to get them to feel you totally understood.</p>

POST CONVERSATION BINGO DEBRIEF

Did you find out anything surprising about your default mode? If you were honest did you notice you made any of the key mistakes? When I am on stage I ask my audiences “who here has met a toxic person”? All hands go up. I then ask “Who here is a toxic person?” The hands go down...so where are these toxic people hiding? We all are! Our default mode is me! me! me! That does not make you “toxic” though, that implies you can’t improve.

By using the key skills you do notice anything different? Did you find any new options? By focusing on understanding before being understood we switch to a genuine curiosity about what is driving the other side and allowing them to feel heard and understood. They want to work with us. We also get more information so we are more informed about the best options. As a result we consistently get far better outcomes and make people around us happier.

SO WHAT DO I DO NOW?

You may hear the phrase “she is a real people person” or “people just love him” and think that people skills are something you are born with or not. The truth is, although some people enjoy crowds and others do not (i.e. we can be extroverted or introverted), no one is born an expert negotiator, skilled at turning difficult conversations into meaningful conversations or turning hidden friction into opportunities you others would have thought impossible. But you are now on your way to being an expert negotiator!

Let me know when you strike gold and you have had a small or big win!

BONUS: EIGHT WAYS TO LISTEN TO HAVE BETTER CONVERSATIONS

You might have often heard that you need to listen more (usually accompanied with “You were born with two ears and one mouth for a reason”) , but no one tells us what you are meant to be listening for. Here are 8 useful ways to listen:

Listen for

what is important to them

Listen to

magnify positive emotion
(positive achieved and
future event, goals)

Listen to

what is annoying them

Listen to

what scares them

Listen to

give them space to think a
problem through

Listen to

enable them to identify and
work through negative
emotions

Listen to

find where you are creating
negative emotions

Listen to

what feels unfair to them

THINGS I CAN DO FOR YOU

I work with companies and individuals to uncover hidden potential by improving the health of their companies. I also help people have greater impact by improving their negotiation and public speaking skills. Would you like me to create a fun, engaging and valuable experience at your next event to supercharge your delegates?

Company Health = Shared Vision x Talent x (Engagement + Listening)

- How to ensure your vision is clear and is shared by staff
- What do you do to make sure your people have the right talent?
- Strategies for engaging staff
- How to find hidden opportunities through listening

Some of the ways I can help achieve this are:

1. Keynote speaker
2. Lunch and learn
3. Virtual events
4. CEO & Leadership 1/2 day workshop
5. Company health audits – measuring company health and creating a customised “health” plan
6. Healthy organisation consultant & coach – working with business leaders to implement the company health plan to ensure you are not just surviving but thriving
7. Conflict and negotiation coach
8. Business negotiator – working on your behalf to get you the best outcomes

LEON BAMFORTH

For over a decade Leon led and facilitated multi million pound (GBP) large scale transformation programmes for large and multinational corporations. Working in, as well as with, business is a big part of what he does. He is an in-demand business consultant because he helps leaders make their organisations healthier.

As a former business tools software developer, Leon realised that despite the default answer to many business problems being more technology, often that misses the deeper need of more humanity. Whereas the wrong technology always increases costs, improving the vision, engagement and effective communication can have massive productivity and profit gains without any costly investment in new technology and as by product can help your company be a greater force for good in the world!



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