

# Listen Up!

## Higher, Better, Deeper

### with Heart

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## Introduction

- Greeting from Larry Ousley
- Personal Experience illustrating the power of listening.
  - With "noticing"

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## Motivation for Listening Well

- Need: We live in a time of major polarization and societal challenges that are paralyzing us.
- Testimony of what can happen when deep listening occurs: Dawnmarie Daniels-Crosky
- It is a high calling for us children of God to listen to each other. "Listening is the highest form of hospitality...not to change people but offering them space where change can take place." --Henri Nouwen
- It is in our own self-interest for more meaningful dialogue and better relationships and communication to happen.

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## Motivation for Listening Well

- To what extent are you willing to fully engage and seek to improve your listening skills? Vote by raising your fingers--1 is low and 5 is high.
- **Breakout** in dyads or triads. (Click on Join and then the person with the shortest hair speaks first.)
  - What motivates you to want to listen better, higher, deeper?
- Covenant and prayer

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## Increasing our Awareness through Examining and Becoming Aware of Unconscious Bias

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## Unconscious Bias

- The Illusion Video
- Count the number of times the white team passes the ball.
- The "need" for biases.
  - "Angels or Demons"—article in the Roanoke Times
- Make a list of unconscious biases that influence you
- Notice which biases from the following list also effect you sometimes

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## Unconscious Bias—Partial List

- Affinity Bias or similarity bias (tendency to connect with people who are similar)
- Confirmation Bias (conclusions based on personal desires, beliefs, or prejudice)
- Attribution Bias (judging based on prior experiences with someone)
- Conformity Bias (swaying opinion to fit the opinion of the majority)
- The Halo Effect (letting some positive impressions cause other perceptions to be seen as positive)
- The Horns Effect (Tendency to view another person negatively after learning something negative about them)

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## Unconscious Bias List, continued

- Contrast Effect (Seeing someone in better or worse light based on recent experiences)
- Gender Bias (Tendency to prefer one gender over another or to stereotype someone based on their gender)
- Race Bias (skewing ones attitudes and behavior based on race or ethnicity)
- Ageism (Negative or positive feelings about another person based on their age)
- Name Bias (Tendency to judge and prefer people with certain names which link them to their ethnic or geographical origin)
- Beauty Bias (Favoring people based on them being attractive)
- Height Bias (Judging a person based on their height)

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## Unconscious Bias

- Enter into the Chat feature and/or express orally ones you commonly experience
- Avoid being prejudiced by unconscious bias. Unconscious biases, also known as implicit biases, are the underlying attitudes and stereotypes that people unconsciously attribute to another person or group of people that affect how they understand and engage with a person or group. \*\*

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## Sacred Listening is an important life skill

- Listen with curiosity and empathy suspending our preoccupation with ourselves"
  - Sounds like Jesus: "Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me." (Matthew 16:24 NIV)
  - And, "Whoever tries to keep their life will lose it, and whoever loses their life will preserve it." (Luke 17:33 NIV)
- The essence of good listening is empathy, which can be achieved only by suspending our preoccupation with ourselves and entering into the experience of the other person." \*
- "To listen is to pay attention, take an interest, care about, take to heart, validate, acknowledge, be moved ... appreciate." \*

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## Sacred Listening is an important life skill

- Jesus as model listener, expanding beyond his religious and cultural protocols
- So often he said, "You have heard it said of old, but I say to you..."
- Too often we are more like the Pharisees than Jesus in living from our biases.
  - Remember Jesus and the Woman at the Well.
  - Also, recall that the hero of the most well-known parable, the Good Samaritan was of mixed heritage and not in the "good people club."

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## Listen with Heart

- Listen from our heart filled with love, grace, empathy, and understanding rather than from our fight/flight/freeze stance or our ego-centered stance.
- The religious and poetic understanding of the heart as the source of love, compassion, understanding, and other higher character traits is correct.
- Heart to heart listening brings hearing to a deeper level.
- We listen to others, because our hearts are connected as we are part of the one Body, the Body of Christ whether everyone knows it or not. We are those who love our neighbor AS ourselves. That includes wanting to listen, to hear, to understand. As Covey said, seek first to understand, then to be understood.
- Listen to several Biblical passages related to listening.

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## The Heart joins the brain as a source of intelligence.

- The structures and functions of our brains evolved over millions of years.
- The brain is “dynamic interconnected sets of systems (subsystems, and neural nodes) that work together to carry out certain kinds of activity.” -- Amishi Jha
- Another simple metaphor used by Neuroscience considers different parts of the brain to be primary centers for some kinds of functions. Accordingly, we all still have the reptilian part of our brain (Brain Stage 1) which operates unconsciously even before we are conscious of what it may perceive as a threat.
- Brain Stage 2 is our emotional processing center working closely with Brain 1.

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## Listen with Heart, continued

- And, we all are using what is sometimes called Brain Stage 3 where our rational intellect works under direction of our ego.
- Brain Stage 4 (about 45,000 years ago), the prefrontal cortex carries the executive/integrating functions as well assesses appropriateness.
- There are at least forty thousand neurons (nerve cells) in the heart— as many as are found in various subcortical centers in the brain. (Doc Childre et al) Deep listening best includes Brain Stage 5—the heart—the source of our higher qualities of love, compassion, empathy, and understanding. \*\*\*, \*\*\*\*
- In order to help you remember to listen from the heart, place your hand over your heart as you start or just before.

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## Practice Listening

- Example of poor listening (Greta (Gayla) listening to her Mom (Melana))
- Example of good listening (Greta (Gayla) listening to her Mom (Melana))
- Breakout:
  - In breakouts of 2 or 3. If 3, one is an observer.
  - Tell the other person about something you did that didn't go as you planned or expected that ruffled some feathers.
  - Take 5 minutes each, listen to understand, be curious, ask questions to draw the other person out.
  - The person with the shortest hair shares first.
  - Debrief in the breakout.

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## Learnings

- General learnings shared in the whole group in the Chat and orally.
- Write a note to yourself as to how will you put your learnings into action?
- Enter your learnings in the Chat.

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## Closing

In Breakouts, share your “take aways” from our workshop today.

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## Remember:

- “Love your neighbor as yourself.” --Jesus

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### Prayer of St. Francis of Assisi

Lord, make me an instrument of your peace,  
Where there is hatred, let me sow love;  
 where there is injury, pardon;  
where there is doubt, faith;  
 where there is despair, hope;  
where there is darkness, light;  
 where there is sadness, joy;

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### O Divine Master, grant

that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console;  
to be understood as to understand;  
 to be loved as to love.

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For it is in giving that we receive;  
 it is in pardoning that we are pardoned;  
and it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.

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### Resources

- \* Nichols, Michael P. *The Lost Art of Listening*, Second Edition (p. 14). Guilford Publications. Kindle Edition.
- \*\* "12 Unconscious Bias Examples in the Workplace and How to Avoid Them" by Bailey Reiners (web post, do Google search or: <https://builtin.com/diversity-inclusion/unconscious-bias-examples> )
- Stone, Douglas. *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*. Penguin Books, 1999.
- \*\*\* Pearce, Joseph Chilton. *The Biology of Transcendence: A Blueprint of the Human Spirit*. Park Street Press, 2002.
- \*\*\*\* Pearce, Joseph Chilton. *The Heart-Mind Matrix: How the Heart Can Teach the Mind New Ways to Think*. Park Street Press, 2010.

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- Wayne Largent will close the meeting.

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