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Menopause, Andropause And Other Hormone Imbalances
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Hearing vs. Listening

By Susan Dunn

Hearing vs. Listening by Susan Dunn, MA, the EQ Coach

DEFINITIONS

Hearing – To perceive or apprehend by the ear; to gain knowledge of by hearing; to listen to with attention.

Listening – To pay attention to sound; to hear something with thoughtful attention; to give consideration; to be alert to catch an unexpected sound.

COMPARISONS

To really key in to what the person is saying and not saying. To look for the meaning and the feelings behind what is being said. To go beyond the words. Giving your deepest level of attention. vs. Simply receiving the words which can become only "sounds". Not trying to understand, or get below the surface. Giving only peremptory attention. Not absorbing feelings or taking in any new information.

EXAMPLE

Mary sat and let Nancy explain the new project she wanted to initiate, but Mary's mind was already made up. She had made up her mind beforehand she didn't want to do and had closed her mind. She just sat and let Nancy explain as a matter of courtesy, but didn't take in any new information. She had already decided to say "no".

Jane on the other hand was vitally interested in what Paul had to say about the new project he was proposing. She repeated back what she thought she was hearing. She asked questions. She asked how Paul felt about this and that, and expressed her own feelings. She went below the surface to see what Paul intended to accomplish. She was actively involved in the conversation. She listened with her heart as well as her intellect.

KEY POINT

Hearing vs. Listening

Hearing requires very active participation. You can listen to sounds, but to hear what the person means, and what they're trying to explain to you takes being receptive at many levels and is hard work.

RELATED DISTINCTION

Feeling vs. Touching

Holding v. Carrying

BENEFITS

You can't connect with people unless you are willing to hear, and not just listen.

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The Magic of Hearing

By Angie Dixon

I'm working on a coach training certification, and one of the "proficiencies" I'm expected to have mastered is "engages in provocative conversations." Now, that really got me thinking. What's a provocative conversation?

Well, the word "provocative" means that the conversation provokes something—hopefully a reaction from the client which helps take them to another level. The ideal response to the provocation is for the client to realize something they didn't know or find a solution they didn't have before the call.

When I think about what is required to reach that provocation, I see that the first thing is not just that I'm listening—I'm always listening. The first thing is that I'm HEARING what the client has to say. Because if I'm listening with one ear but thinking about my response with the other ear, so to speak, I'm not hearing, and if I'm not hearing, I'm not responding to my client, I'm reacting.

You can greatly increase the value of your conversations with clients, friends, family and probably even your dog by truly hearing what they're saying—"I need your help with this. I'm not doing very well today. I'm hungry."—that last being the dog.

Your coaching assignment for this week is to think very deeply about how you can hear more and just listen less—and then implement those thoughts into your daily life starting tomorrow. Think tonight, hear in the morning.

Hearing vs. Listening

If you have any questions or comments about the magic of hearing, please feel free to drop me a line at

I always want to talk to people who've read my articles and discuss what you've gotten from my writing.

Angie Dixon helps small business owners get their acts together. She is a personal development coach specializing in helping people integrate their home and work lives so they feel less stretched and more balanced. Get her FREE EBOOK on balance at

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