

## *Coaches Training Institute*

### *Listening and Intuition*

In life, it is rare to experience having another truly listen to us. Instead, we talk to each other and listen to the words, or to our opinions about what is being said, or to how things impact or affect us. We speak and exchange ideas and thoughts. We share, sometimes quite intimately, our own experiences and our own feelings. We have been taught that a “good listener” is someone who is with us, attentive to what we are saying. We know that listening is about being present, about being “with.”

Coaching, however, takes listening to a deeper place, a deeper “level” of listening than in day-to-day life. In coaching, it is not whether we listen or not, it is where we point our attention and it is the impact of our listening. The quality and focus of our listening has the client feel that she or he is heard and that we are with him/her, but it also assists us in forwarding the action, deepening the learning and accessing our intuition. The three levels of listening give us a larger range, an increased listening capacity, if you will.

In Level 1 listening our attention is on us. We listen to the words that are being spoken and pay attention to our thoughts, judgments and opinions about ourselves and others. Level 1 listening informs us about ourselves. It is the level where we figure it out and understand. In coaching, clients are usually at Level 1, looking at themselves and their lives; processing, thinking about, and understanding themselves and their relationships to the world around them more fully. The impact of this kind of listening narrows the focus down to a looking at self, and all of the feelings, thoughts, judgments, and evaluations therein. So while it is fabulous for the CLIENT to be at Level 1 (all the focus is on the client in coaching) it is not appropriate for the COACH.

With Level 2 listening there is a very hard focus “over there” on the other person - lots of attention to the other person, but still not much awareness of the world around you. Remember that last time you were around two people who were newly, deeply in love and felt like you were invisible? Lots of Level 2 listening going on there; not much in the way of Level 3. The impact of Level 2 listening is on the client or person being listened to. You are listening for what will forward the action or deepen the learning for the client. So Level 2 informs you about your client.

Level 3 listening opens up the hard focus of Level 2 to 360 degrees. It is all about a soft, wide-angle focus on everything: What is going on with you, the client, and the world. At Level 3 we are wide open for our intuition to speak to us in a variety of ways. Level 3 informs us about everything; about what is going on with self, client and world. The impact of Level 3 is like the impact of a pebble in a pond. The ripples spread out and touch different surfaces at different times, each surface in a slightly different way. Mastery of Level 3 is to be aware and attentive to all those impacts at the same time. Do you believe or trust your intuition? Intuition is one of the most challenging coaching skills to develop. First of all, it is hard to really see, explain, or understand.

Secondly, we do not live in a culture that offers much support or training in intuition. From an early age we are taught to “know” rather than to “intuit.” We are taught to HAVE sense rather than TO sense. The catch-22 is that the only way to really develop our intuition is to begin using it, to bypass our brain, open our mouths and begin talking BEFORE we know what we are going to say. Intuition is never wrong. However, our interpretation of it can be incorrect. Was that intuition or indigestion? Intuition or nerves? Intuition or the Saboteur? It can be difficult to distinguish the difference. The good news is that it is not critical that our intuition be correct. We need to be willing to just throw our intuition out there without attachment. Often a client will benefit greatly from an intuitive hit that is dead wrong. “No!” they will say. “That’s not it at all. It’s this!” They will become clearer on what “it” is for them. What is Intuition? We believe that there is a place, a “well” of knowing. This well of knowing holds an inherent intelligence. Not smarts or education, but knowing.

Intuition is the ability to access or tap that well of knowing. Intuition is not the information itself, but the ability to ACCESS that information. That access-ability is what we are developing when we develop our intuition. Just like our triceps muscle, our intuition is there within us, usually atrophied from lack of use. We all have intuition, just like we all have a triceps muscle. It is just that some of us have had more opportunity to exercise that muscle and therefore our ability to use our intuition, our access-ability, is more fully developed.

Fortunately, coaching is a real “intuition gym.” How do we establish trusting or believing intuition? How do we develop our accessability? Unlike our triceps muscle, which is found in about the same place in all of us, the intuition access point lies in different places for different people. When you first begin working out with a physical trainer, s/he will often put his/her hand on the muscle that you are working so that you can “find” it. The same thing is true for intuition. First, you need to discover where to look for your intuition. Then you need to remember to look for intuition (because our intuition development is usually so poor, we don’t even think to look). Lastly, we develop our intuition muscle by using it, by blurting or speaking it, by letting go of our attachment to being right and not caring where “the truth” comes from. As we work with these three steps over time, we develop our access-ability. It is not particularly easy because it is unfamiliar and goes against most of our education. It may not be easy, but it is simple.

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[The Coaches Training Institute \(CTI\)](#)