

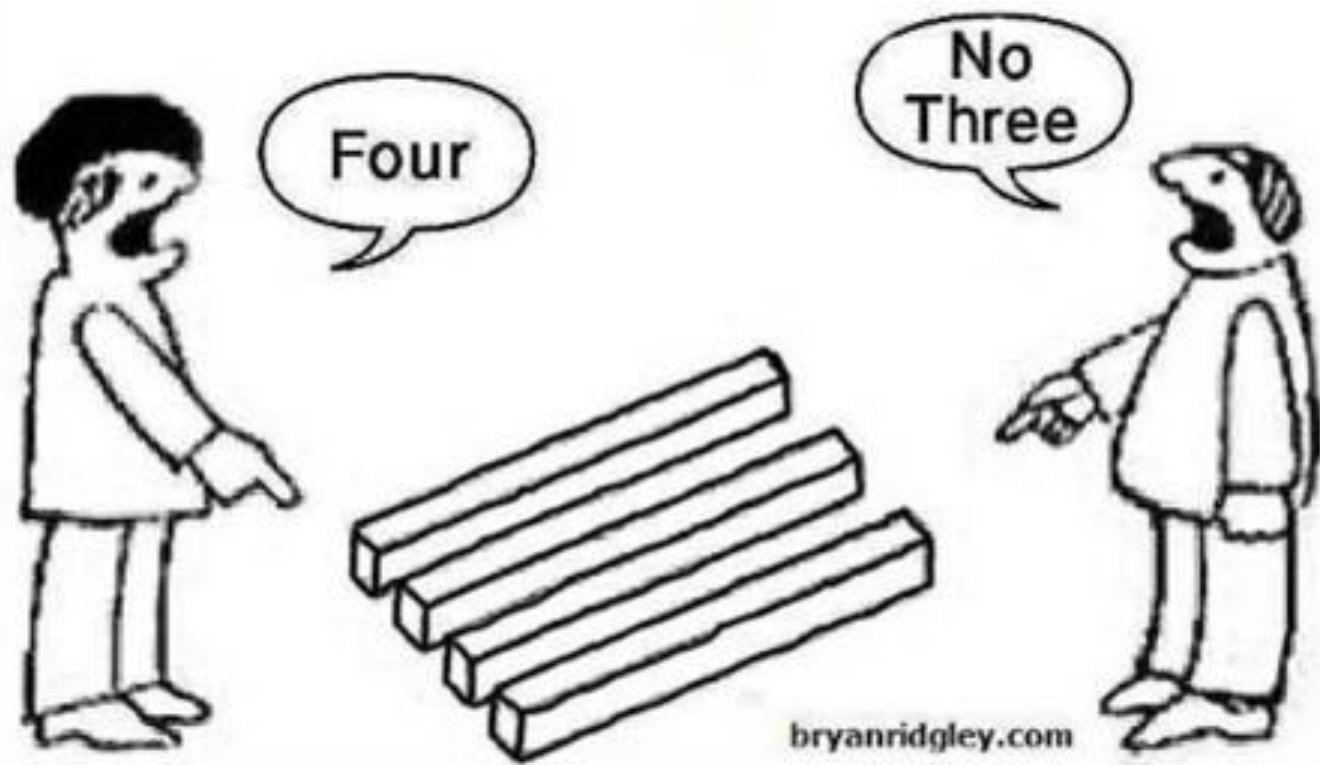
Listening to Understand (or how to disagree without being disagreeable...)

.....some tools for your toolkit

Jennifer H. Allen, Ph.D.


Nevola Symposium

June 19, 2018



There are 5 core concerns people have in relationships.*

* Roger Fisher and Daniel Shapiro (2005) Beyond Reason: Using Emotions as you Negotiate.




4 of the 5 Core Concerns

#2 **Autonomy:** Is our freedom to make decisions impinged upon, or is it respected?


#3 **Affiliation:** Are we treated as an adversary and kept at a distance, or are we treated as a colleague?

#4 **Status:** Is our standing treated as inferior to others, or is it given full recognition where deserved?

#5 **Role:** Are the many roles we play meaningless, or are they personally fulfilling?



**What is the #1 concern
people have in their
relationships?**




Being *appreciated & valued*

Do we feel heard and understood and valued by that other person? Are our thoughts, feelings, and actions devalued, or are they acknowledged as having merit?



**What is the single most powerful skill for
helping people feel valued and
understood?**



Listening.



“Being listened to is so close to being loved that most people cannot tell the difference.”

—David Augsburger, Mennonite theologian, Fuller Theological Seminary


Quote in Wolf, Aaron T.. The Spirit of Dialogue: Lessons from Faith Traditions in Transforming Conflict (p. 117). Island Press. Kindle Edition.

**“A good listener is not only popular everywhere,
but after a while he [or she] knows something.”**


- Wilson Mizner



WHAT CAN YOU LEARN ABOUT SOMEONE FROM LISTENING TO THEM?

- **How things look from their point of view**
 - **Underlying interests behind their position**
 - **Opportunities for linkage**
 - **Mutual affiliations**
- 

WHAT CAN YOU COMMUNICATE BY LISTENING?


- **Their perspective is important to you**
 - **You are willing to be vulnerable**
 - **You are confident and you are trusting**
- 

Why is this important for being able to disagree without being disagreeable?



Studies have shown that “**tending and befriending**” behavior can lead to a **reduction in** the secretion of **stress** hormones and shifts in the neuro-endocrine system –

....remember that emotional response to disagreement that we talked about earlier?



Why tend-and-befriend might be a particularly advantageous response to stress today:

“I think now we need it more than ever, because the alternatives are to demonize people and build walls and arm everybody to the teeth, or to find ways to create a stable social network that accommodates differences.”

Dr. David Spiegel, professor of psychiatry and director the Center on Stress and Health at Stanford University School of Medicine

Quoted in Schroeder, M. Should We ‘Tend and Befriend’ in This Stressful Time?

US News and World Report, March 21, 2017. <https://health.usnews.com/wellness/mind/articles/2017-03-21/should-we-tend-and-befriend-in-this-stressful-time>

**Truly listening is not an easy
thing to do. For one thing....**



**It's not just about
your ears....
It's about your
heart**



Compassionate listening

- a practice that integrates cognitive awareness with the wisdom of the heart *

King Solomon asked for “lev shome’ah”:
“A heart that listens”

* Cohen, Green, and Partnow, Practicing the Art of Compassionate Listening, p. 10



“TO LISTEN”

Ear

聽

You

Eyes

Undivided
Attention

Heart

So, how to we learn to do this?

Some guidance...



State Department: 4 Rules of Active Listening

- 1. Seek to understand before you seek to be understood.**
- 2. Be non judgmental**
- 3. Give your undivided attention to the speaker**
- 4. Use silence effectively**

Other pointers

- **Be mindful of your tone. ...**
- **Don't use "you" statements. ...**
- **Don't get personal. ...**
- **Be mindful of your body language. ...**
- **Assume best intent....**

How to Disagree Without Being Disagreeable: 7 Tips
for Having More Productive Discussions
<https://blog.hubspot.com/marketing/disagree-without-being-disagreeable>

**“Listen with curiosity. Speak with honesty,
Act with integrity.**

The greatest problem with communication is we don't listen to understand. We listen to reply. When we listen with curiosity, we don't listen with the intent to reply. We listen for what's behind the words.”

Roy T. Bennett, The Light in the Heart

WHAT DO WE WANT?!

RESPECTFUL DISCOURSE.

WHEN DO WE WANT IT?!

NOW WOULD BE
AGREEABLE TO ME,
BUT I AM INTERESTED
IN YOUR OPINION.



“Only when our clever brain and our human heart work together in harmony can we achieve our true potential.”

— Jane Goodall



**See handouts for more
ideas, and now...
let's try that exercise again!**

