



LISTENING LIKE A LEADER: HOW TO MAKE A POSITIVE IMPACT

A discussion with Cyndi Slizza Donahue for

WOMEN'S
LEADERSHIP
NETWORK 

DISCUSSION QUESTION

Chat!

What is your
purpose, business
or organization?



“We have but two ears and one mouth so that we may listen twice as much as we speak .”

Thomas Edison

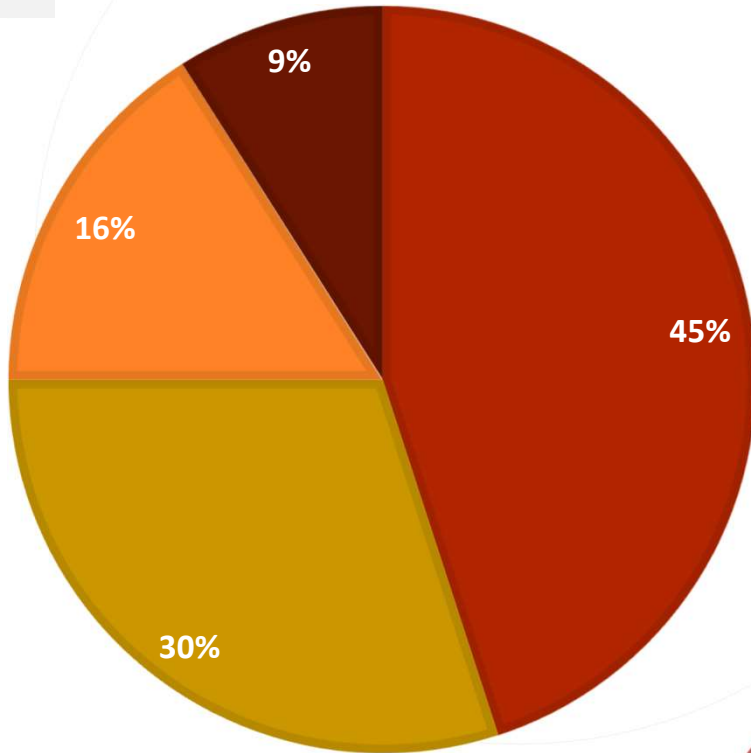
When Listening is NOT happening

- #1 You're waiting for the speaker to finish so you can say something.
- #2 You already have an opinion about what you think.
- #3 You jump in at a pause with your own thought.
- #4 You speak over someone / "cross-talk".



TIME SPENT IN A TYPICAL BUSINESS DAY

■ Listening ■ Talking ■ Reading ■ Writing



Levels of Listening

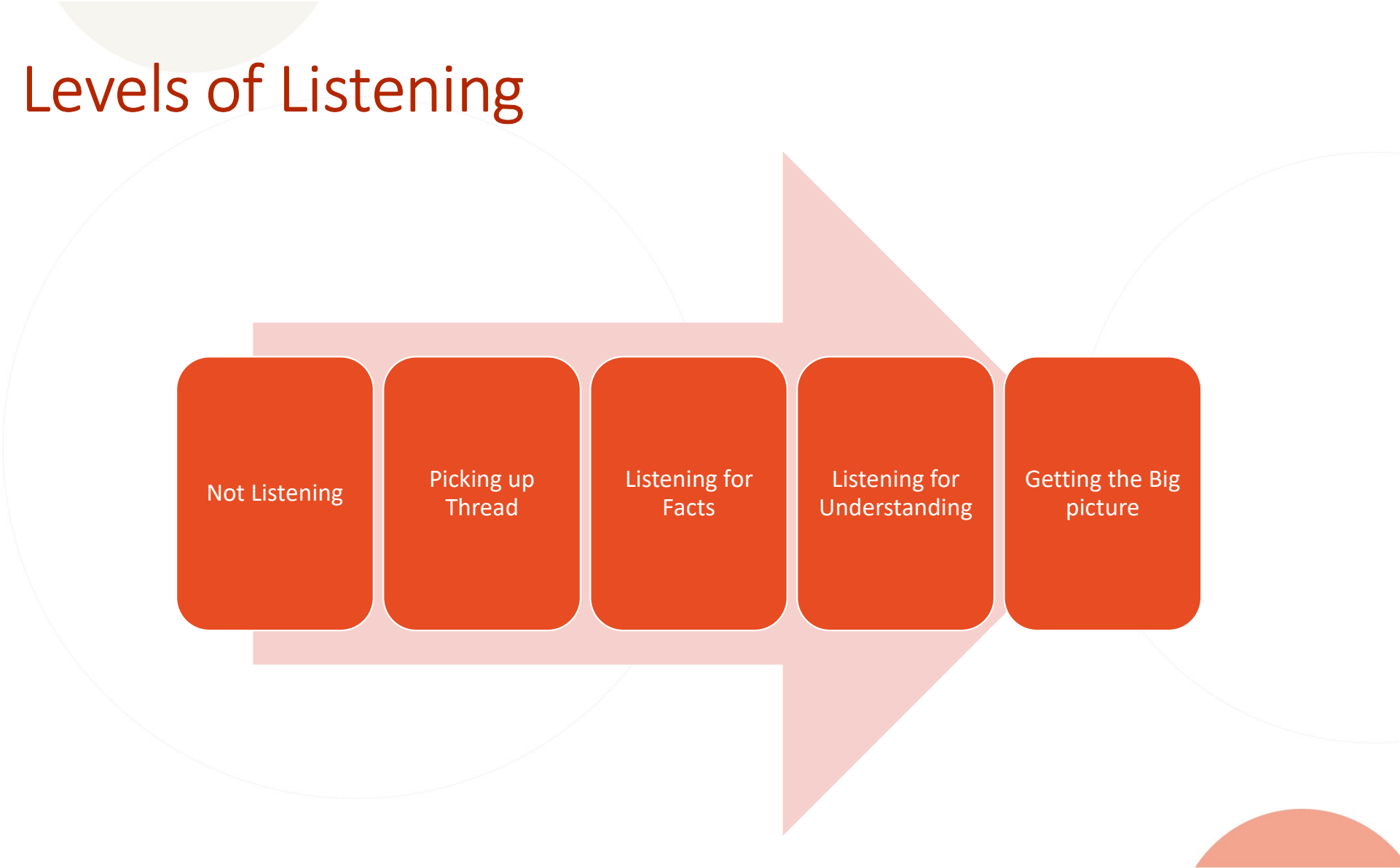
Not Listening

Picking up
Thread

Listening for
Facts

Listening for
Understanding

Getting the Big
picture



Listening is a verb

- Have a listening mode mindset
- Be genuinely curious
- Eliminate distractions
- Non-verbal engagement
- Take notes if it helps you pay attention
- Restate and ask validating questions



DISCUSSION QUESTION

What listening skill do you want to improve?



“Listening is an art that requires
attention over talent,
spirit over ego,
others over self.”

Dean Jackson

Paraphrasing + Listening Questions

- Restate your understanding
- Start questions with What or How
- Ask “in the moment” questions

How are you approaching this?	What are you trying to accomplish?
What are contributing factors?	What assumptions are you making?
What advice have you gotten on this?	How did you feel when you heard that?
What are some alternatives?	What options do you have?
If you say yes, what are you saying no to?	Tell me more about _____
What resources do you have/need/want?	What's the specific issue with _____
What will happen if you don't succeed?	What do you think you want to do?





Good listeners are like trampolines. They clarify and amplify our thinking.



DISCUSSION QUESTION

What are some questions you use when listening?



“Do not listen with the intent to reply, but with the intent to understand.”

Stephen Covey

Listening like a Leader

Leaders are curious – truly understand before trying to solve the problem

Leaders are facilitators – true power is in unleashing the skills and ideas of others

Leaders are discerning – take in what is important and let other stuff go

Leaders have EMPATHY



Why should leaders care about listening?

Builds Trust

Creates
Engagement

Increases
Productivity

Improves
Business
Outcomes

What Great Listeners Actually Do

by Jack Zenger and Joseph Folkman

Create a safe environment

Make eye contact and focus attention

Seek understanding by restating and asking questions

Listen with their eyes

Validate feelings and have empathy

Help others consider in a new light

DISCUSSION QUESTION

Let's chat!



“Listening is not understanding the words of the question asked. It is understanding why the question was asked in the first place.”

Simon Sinek

Resources: Information borrowed from:

NextStepPartners.com, "[Improved Leadership Through Listening and Inquiry](#)"

Success.com, "[The Importance of Listening in Leadership](#)"

Forbes magazine, "[6 Ways Effective Listening Can Make You a Better Leader](#)"

Business.com, "[Active Listening Skills of Influential Leaders](#)"

Association for Talent Development, "[Listening is the Secret Weapon of Good Leaders](#)"

Harvard Business Review, "[Mindful Listening](#)"

Podcast: [A Thousand Things To Talk About](#) with Andrea Parrish



THANK YOU

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