

The Listening Test

By Brian Klemmer

We all know how important listening is in the sponsoring process, but few people even know what it really means to listen. Here is a simple, fun exercise you can try with your group to drive home the point that just because we are hearing does not mean we are listening.

Tell your group you are going to give them a test. Do not tell them what it is about. There are four questions. In order to make it interesting, there is going to be a little wager on the test. You will buy lunch for anyone who gets all four questions correct. Anyone who gets all four wrong must buy you lunch. In order to be fair, you will be giving two very easy questions and two hard questions. Who wants to play?

Keep enticing them to play by making it fun and letting them know that only rarely does anyone get all four wrong. If someone still won't play, you can make the point that perhaps they are approaching life and their business with a not-to-lose strategy versus a maximum gain strategy. That is a common reason why people are unsuccessful in relationships and finances, as well as in a Network Marketing business. It is your subconscious thinking that creates your results in life. While keeping it light, you can be thought provoking. It is a great way to create change.

For those who are in the game, have them divide a piece of paper into four quadrants, one for each of their answers to the four questions. Do the same on a big sheet of paper or board at the front of the room.

Now you're ready to begin -- relate the instructions/questions to the participants as follows (why not try it as a participant yourself as you read this now for first time?):

1) "Write the small letter 'i' and dot it."

2) "In a pasture (and point to the whole page) there is a papa bull, mama bull, and baby bull (have each of those three names written in the second quadrant). Where does a baby bull go for food?"

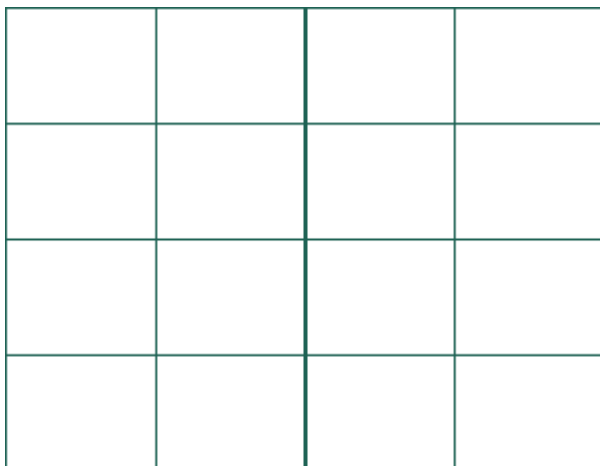
3) Now tell them you are going to start giving them the harder questions. Again, play it up and have fun. Say:

"You are a bus driver. The bus goes six miles north and stops at McDonald's (draw a vertical line in the third quadrant and put the number 6 by it). The bus driver gets off and buys a chicken sandwich, small fries, and a Coke and gets back on the bus with a small boy. The bus goes two miles east (draw a line horizontally and put a 2 above it) and stops at a Wendy's. The bus driver gets off and gets a cheeseburger, large fries, and a 7-Up and gets back on the bus with a small girl. The bus goes one mile south (draw a line vertically down and write the number 1 by it) and stops at a Jack in the Box.

All three -- the bus driver, the small boy, and the girl -- get off. What is the age of the bus driver? Go ahead, write the age down."

People will be looking at you like you are crazy. Again, reiterate how you said there would be a couple easy ones and a couple hard ones.

4) Sketch what you see below on the board in the last quadrant and ask the question that follows:



"How many squares do you see?"

Grading Time

Now it is grading time to find out who gets a free lunch. Ask, "How many of you answered the first question with 'i' and wrote that in the first quadrant?"

Most of the hands will go up signifying that was their answer. With a big smile, let them know that unfortunately they answered incorrectly; The instructions were to write the small letter "i" and dot it -- so it would have to have a second dot! Put a big X through that quadrant. Keep it playful and ask how many are already ineligible for a free lunch.

Next, ask, "Where does a baby bull go for food?" and put your pen by the "mama bull" words as you wait for an answer. Many people will respond "Mama bull." Look at them quizzically and say, "Mama bull???? As far as I know, there is no such thing -- a bull cannot be a mama!" and say the correct answer is that you would have to circle the whole pasture which was outlined as the quadrant.

Now start needling them playfully about how many are in danger of buying you a lunch. With a fair number of people with two of two wrong, you will eat for a month.

Next ask, "What age is the bus driver?" Most people will not have an answer. A few people will give various ages.

Respond with, "Let's see how well you were listening."

Repeat the instructions responsively: "You are a bus driver and the bus goes how far north? Correct -- six miles. Where did the bus driver stop? Correct -- McDonald's. What did they buy? Who got back on the bus with the bus driver?" Go through all the steps until you get to the end.

"So what is the age of the bus driver?" Most people will look at you like you are still crazy and it's impossible to know the exact age.

"Let's try it again. You are a bus driver and the bus goes six miles north and stops at McDonald's. How many have it now? You are a bus driver. You -- whatever is your age is the age of the bus driver! Now, you can't change your answer, so who has three of three wrong? Wow! I am going to eat like a king or queen this month. Someone who is zero for three, how many squares did you see?" Do that with three or four people making no comment on their answer.

"I tell you what, I will be really generous. Any of you who want to change your answer for the last question, I will give you another 30 seconds to do so." Build the tension.

"Okay," pick on someone who is 0 for 3 and ask, "how many squares do you see?"

Whatever their answer, yell out, "You're right!" and get everyone to give them a hand. At this point there will be some arguing from people with different answers. Ask, "Well, how many did you see?" Whatever their answer, yell out, "You're right! How could two people with different answers both be right? Because the question was, 'how many squares do you see?' As long as you wrote a number, you are correct! If you said the lines weren't straight so there were no squares, you are correct. If you want to play with it, you can

count the individual 16 small squares. There are nine 2x2 squares. There are four 3x3 squares. There is one big square. . . ."

What Did You Learn?

Follow the exercise with a discussion about the difference between listening and hearing and what it means to really listen.

Where have you heard your prospects' words but not listened to what they were really asking? Did you hear their words and miss the tone of voice? For example, a prospect can say yes to the business and be in compliance, not in commitment. This is someone unlikely to last long in the business. In our eagerness to hear a yes, we miss listening to what they are really saying and where they are coming from.

Offer some personal examples if you can. Tell of a time you were hearing your upline, but you were really listening to an internal dialogue such as "I am going to do it my own way." Name an instance involving a family member during which you were hearing words, but if asked, you couldn't really remember the conversation.

Where to Go from Here

Most people are listening one of two ways: they are agreeing or disagreeing. Neither of these is really listening. What we are doing is hearing through a filter of "I already know, and what you are saying either fits or doesn't fit what I already know." In both cases, we are left with what we started with - what we already know!

If there is any validity to the idea that how we think on the subconscious level creates our reality, then with that version of "listening," our results will not change because our thinking in that conversation did not change. Try a third way of listening which I call being with. In being with, there is no filter or separation. I break it down into three steps:

- 1) Be here now. Being in the moment increases effectiveness and intimacy. Most Networkers are not "being with" their prospects. They are being with their script or what they think they need to say to get them in the business. Your prospects feel the disconnection of not being in the moment and don't get into the business. This is no different than coming home from work and still "being with" something at work and losing the opportunity for intimacy with your family. Most golfers are mediocre because they are "being with" their last shot rather than with the current shot -- the result is poor

performance. This step alone will produce a dramatic increase in your positive results. It requires practice and discipline.

2) Observe. Notice what you and the other person are experiencing in the moment without any judgment.

3) "Why am I feeling this?" Ask yourself this question from an internal viewpoint. This is not to discern what they did to create your feeling, but what internal dialogue on your part is creating that feeling. Playing detective like this is a technique for discovering your paradigms or as we say in our Personal Mastery seminars, the "sunglasses," the subconscious beliefs you didn't realize have informed all your views, choices, and attitudes -- until now.