

**Mary Sample**  
**Listening effectiveness**  
**self feedback report**  
**Saturday, January 26, 2002**

# Introduction

The following information is provided to help you to navigate the extensive information that is included in this Listening effectiveness output report.

## 1. Overall summary chart

The summary results chart provides a quick visual representation of your scores in seven categories that make up the Listening effectiveness profile. Scores upon which to most concentrate are above 3.5, which are considered to be strong and scores below 2.75, which may be in need of further development. Please note that these category scores are averages. Individual question scores can be viewed by clicking on the category label hyperlink.

## 2. Category description pages

This report contains three output pages for each of the seven categories. The first of these three pages explains the category, list average scores and then provides high and low score interpretation notes. The second page provides a graphical representation of individual question scores. The third page in the set provides broadly based improvement actions for those individuals wanting to develop their competencies in the overall category.

## 3. 10/10 Report

The 10/10 Report page provides the raw scores for the top 10 highest scoring questions and the bottom 10 lowest scoring questions out of the 84. It also identifies the categories to which these questions belong.

## 4. Course and Reading suggestions

This output report includes development suggestions for the two lowest scoring categories out of the seven. These suggestions include training courses that may prove helpful, as well as specific books that may provide some useful additional information.

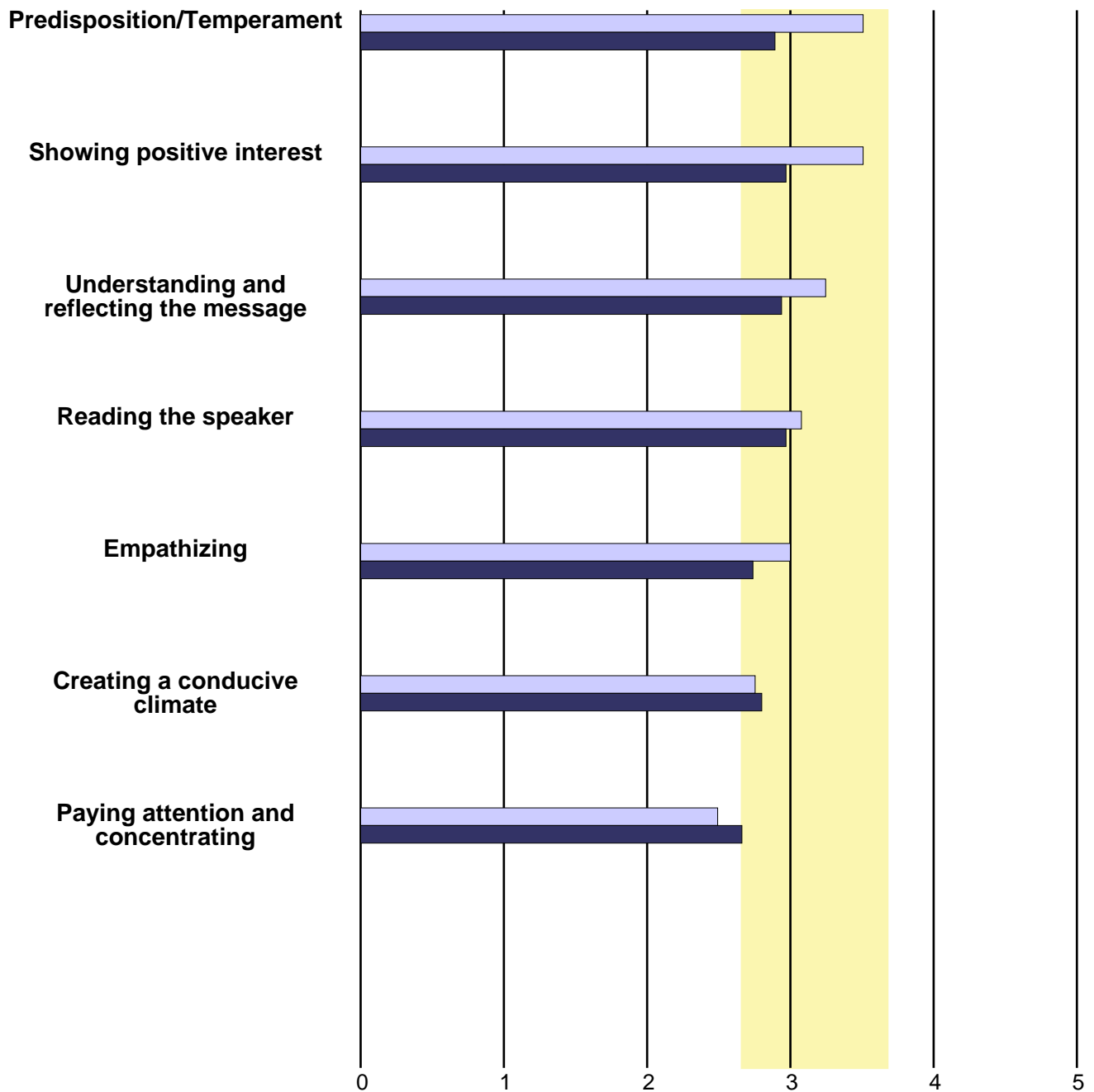
## 5. Development Plan

The development plan takes the five lowest scoring questions on aggregate and puts them into a single page template for individuals to record the specific actions that they plan to take as a result of their feedback during the forthcoming twelve month period. Individuals may draw upon any of the general guidance offered in their feedback report, or perhaps more usefully, draw upon the coaching tips ideas that are also included (see next section)

## 6. Coaching tips

The overall output report includes detailed coaching tips for the five lowest scoring questions on aggregate (consistent with the one page development plan). These coaching tips provide not only elaborative information about the particular questions but provide some specific advice on what individuals might do to improve their skills or learn new behaviors in the future.

## OVERALL SUMMARY



Self
  Norm

The above chart is sorted in descending order of summary scores.

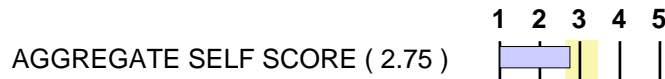
Norm bars shown on this chart are the progressive average aggregate scores of all individuals rating themselves on this questionnaire.

## Listening effectiveness Profile

### CREATING A CONDUCTIVE CLIMATE

Creating a conducive climate looks at the effort that the listener expends in ensuring that the communication atmosphere or environment is as appropriate as possible. This category asks the question "Has the listener done everything they can to minimize distractions and create a climate for open conversation?"

1 = almost never, 5 = almost always.



#### Interpretation

##### LOW (less than 2.75)

"Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ('occasionally' and 'almost never') are likely to mean that this individual may find themselves talking or trying to listen in an environment that will quickly interfere with their capacity to concentrate, or give their full focus and attention.

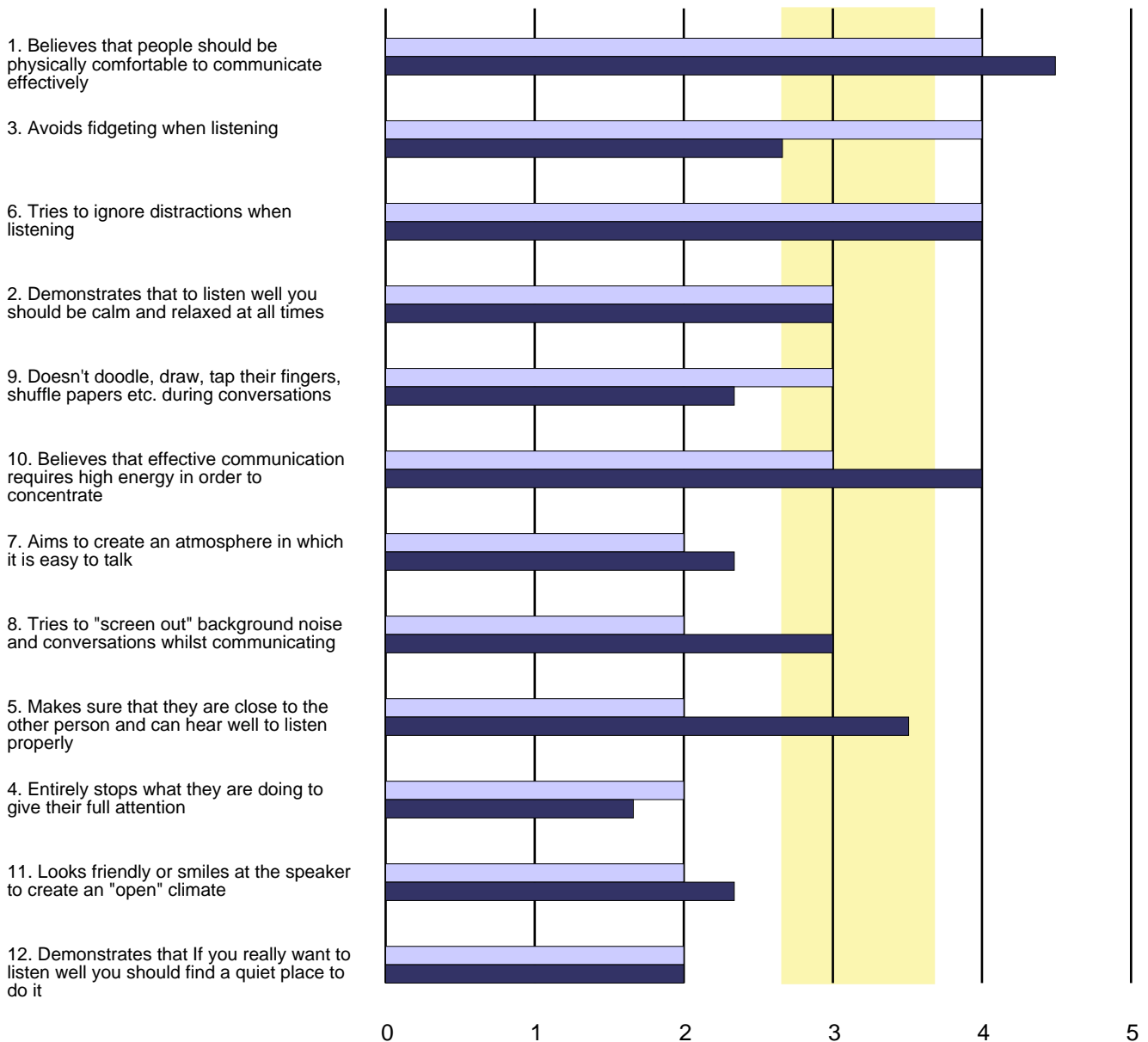
A low score person will be likely to let the communication environment readily interfere with their attempts to listen. Some communications may therefore occur 'on-the-run', or be kept to messages, which are either short or shallow."

##### HIGH (greater than 3.5)

"Scales predominantly in the fours and fives ('almost always' and 'very frequently') are likely to mean that this individual is highly conscious of the need to find a quiet and calm communication environment, or one in which noise and distractions can be eliminated or at least managed so as not to be too intrusive.

A high score person will be likely to avoid trying to communicate anything more than idle 'chit-chat' in an un-conducive environment, preferring to find a place that is quiet and where the parties are comfortable. Even if some distractions continue to occur, the high scorer will seek to filter these out or manage them so as not to interfere too much at all."

## Listening effectiveness Profile CREATING A CONDUCTIVE CLIMATE



Self Norm

The above chart is sorted in descending order of summary scores.

Norm bars shown on this chart are the progressive average aggregate scores of all individuals rating themselves on this questionnaire.

## Listening effectiveness Profile

### CREATING A CONDUCTIVE CLIMATE

Creating a conducive climate looks at the effort that the listener expends in ensuring that the communication atmosphere or environment is as appropriate as possible. This category asks the question "Has the listener done everything they can to minimize distractions and create a climate for open conversation?"

#### Improvement actions

Low scorers need to formally ask themselves whether the listening climate is appropriate, if the communication subject or time needed requires that it is. Once this assessment has occurred, the low scorer needs to look for a calm place to talk, room comfort, where possible, and try to minimize any physical distractions, including personal fidgeting. Low scorers should look to work on their '1' scores first, then the '2' scores and so on. This approach of concentrating on low scores first, should be used in every category.

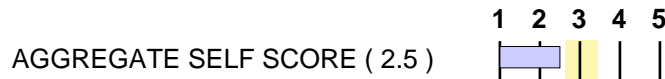
<b>Creating a conducive climate</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Before the communication starts, mentally ask yourself the following base questions:</li><li>- -Is this communication environment comfortable for me and the other person to talk;</li><li>- -Can we hear properly without unnecessary straining?</li><li>- -Are external distractions going to interfere or intrude into the conversation?</li><li>- -Can I work hard to personally avoid interrupting the other party's in delivering their message in their own words?</li></ul>
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## Listening effectiveness Profile

### PAYING ATTENTION AND CONCENTRATING

Paying attention and concentrating looks at how effective a listener may be at maintaining their focus on what is being communicated; both verbally and non-verbally. This category asks the question "How well does the listener look for the core message and reflect their understanding accurately to the speaker?"

1 = almost never, 5 = almost always.



#### Interpretation

##### LOW (less than 2.75)

"Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ('occasionally' and 'almost never') are likely to mean that this individual takes what is said at 'face value' and finds that they can easily 'drift away' or let their mind wander and thereby miss important points in the discussion.

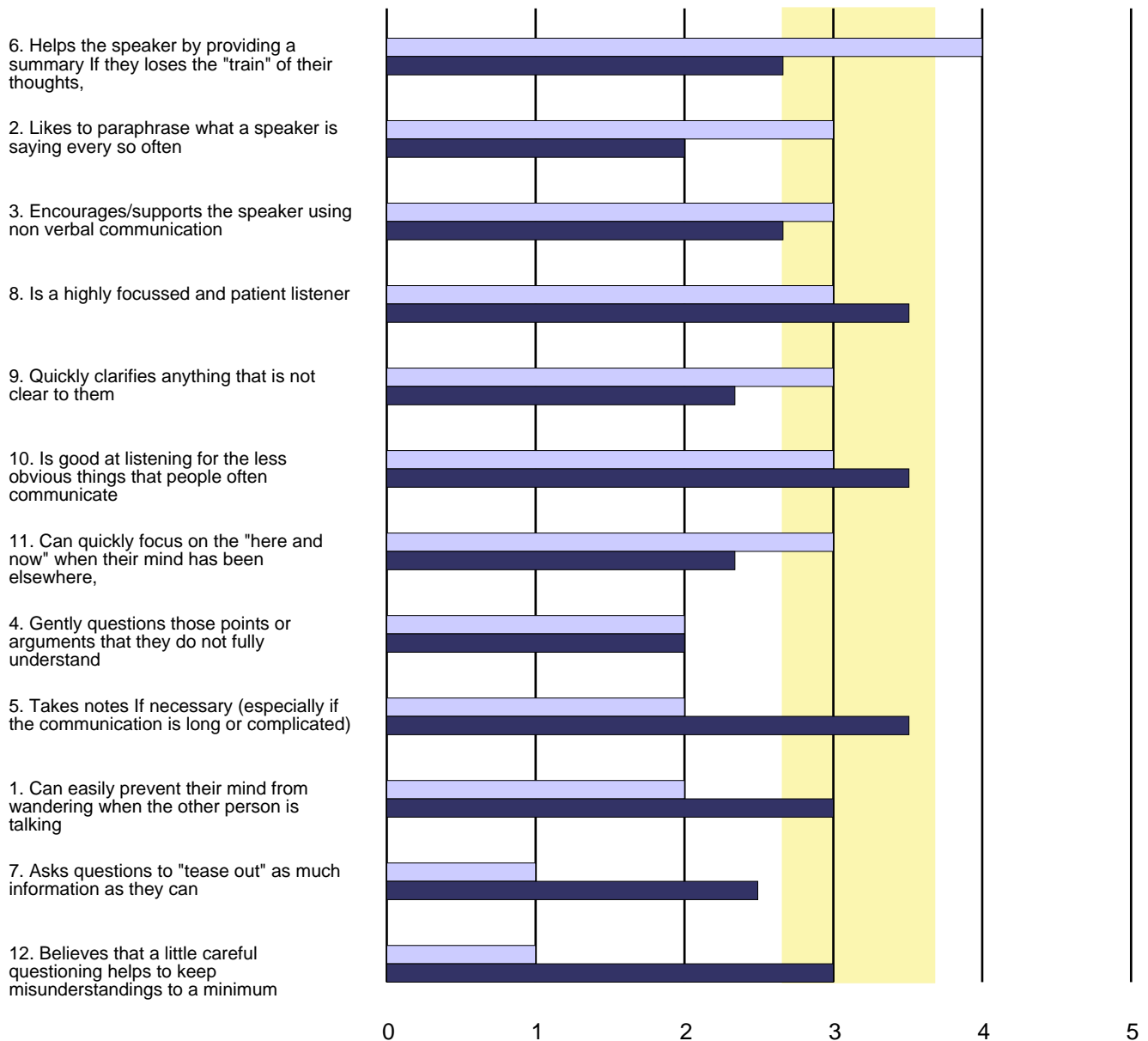
A low score person will be likely to pay as much attention to their own thoughts and reflections as they do to the person with whom they are communicating. They may also make little use of questions of clarification (having neither the time nor the inclination) and can therefore become confused or misunderstand the message."

##### HIGH (greater than 3.5)

"Scales predominantly in the fours and fives ('almost always' and 'very frequently') are likely to mean that this individual understands the need to both ask questions, where it helps to create clarity, as well as paraphrasing what is being said to ensure that the discussion remains focussed and on track.

A high score person will be likely to expend significant energy and effort in concentrating constantly on what the other person is saying. This will usually entail asking as many questions as necessary to avoid lack of clarity, confusion and misunderstanding."

## Listening effectiveness Profile PAYING ATTENTION AND CONCENTRATING



Self Norm

The above chart is sorted in descending order of summary scores.

Norm bars shown on this chart are the progressive average aggregate scores of all individuals rating themselves on this questionnaire.

## Listening effectiveness Profile

# PAYING ATTENTION AND CONCENTRATING

Paying attention and concentrating looks at how effective a listener may be at maintaining their focus on what is being communicated; both verbally and non-verbally. This category asks the question "How well does the listener look for the core message and reflect their understanding accurately to the speaker?"

### Improvement actions

Low scorers need to carefully think about how they can ask a range of questions in various conversations that can help them to concentrate and pay close attention to what is being said. These questions need to be asked in practice as often as possible, taking care to listen for the answers they elicit before responding.

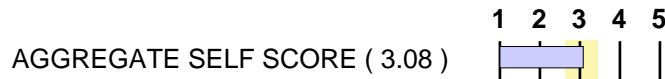
<b>Paying attention and concentrating</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Concentrate as much as possible on not thinking about your next response whilst the other person is talking.</li><li>-If necessary, take notes on what you hear and use "affirming" body language to show the speaker that you are focussed on what they are saying.</li><li>-Be as patient as you can when people are speaking (and especially if they need time to explain something that is not easy to convey).</li><li>-Avoid mentally 'drifting off' into your own mental world and thereby run the risk of missing important points.</li></ul>
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## Listening effectiveness Profile

### READING THE SPEAKER

Reading the speaker looks at the extent to which the listener accurately evaluates and understands the full or even real communication message being sent by the other party. This category asks the question "What is the speaker trying to say beyond their basic words alone?"

1 = almost never, 5 = almost always.



### Interpretation

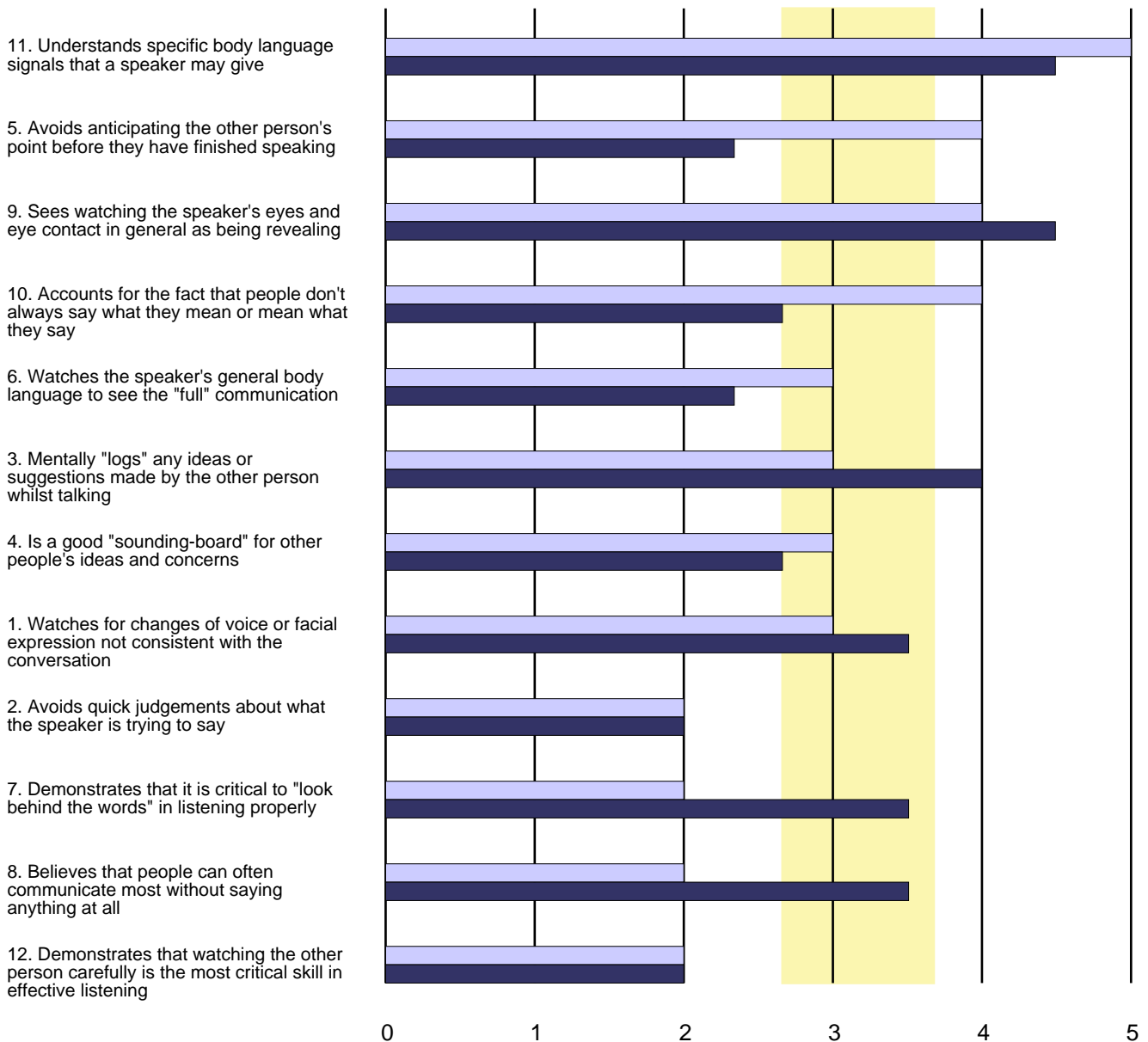
#### LOW (less than 2.75)

"Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ('occasionally' and 'almost never') are likely to mean that this individual will spend little or no time looking 'beyond the words' in order to determine what the other party might be saying. Their mind is often actively 'cluttered' with other thoughts and they may privately believe that all this 'between the lines' and 'body language stuff' is over-rated anyway. A low score person will be likely to miss many of the indirect communications given by another party, and therefore fail to understand people's statements, actions or feelings on occasions. This may lead to less effort being expended in trying to listen, making the capacity to read the overall message even less effective."

#### HIGH (greater than 3.5)

"Scales predominantly in the fours and fives ('almost always' and 'very frequently') are likely to mean that this individual stops themselves anticipating what the other person means until they have 'read between the lines' and behind the message. They are also likely to believe that watching is the key to effective listening and therefore makes sure that this is a well-practiced skill. A high score person will be likely to be able to almost 'sense' the deeper meanings or more hidden messages in all but the most simple or shallow communications. This often gives them useful insight into people's statements and motives for future action."

## Listening effectiveness Profile READING THE SPEAKER



Self Norm

The above chart is sorted in descending order of summary scores.

Norm bars shown on this chart are the progressive average aggregate scores of all individuals rating themselves on this questionnaire.

## Listening effectiveness Profile

### READING THE SPEAKER

Reading the speaker looks at the extent to which the listener accurately evaluates and understands the full or even real communication message being sent by the other party. This category asks the question "What is the speaker trying to say beyond their basic words alone?"

### Improvement actions

Low scorers need to recognize that words are only a small part of the overall communication mix and that they hinder their understanding if they don't work harder at the more underlying elements. Reading books on body language and communication theory may help a little but quiet watching of the other person and their emotions is the most beneficial approach; with practice, even the lowest scorers can learn to read others in time.

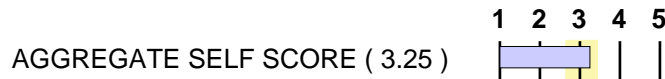
<b>Reading the speaker</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Watch for small or subtle changes in the mood of the speaker or the way in which things are said (in words or actions).</li><li>-Watch the other person's eyes carefully and any other body language which may convey meaning.</li><li>-Listen for longer than may be comfortable for you to get the full or complete picture.</li><li>-Read between the lines of what people are saying in their words directly.</li><li>-Try to avoid guessing what the other person may be going to say next but focus on the general direction and flow of the conversation</li></ul>
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## Listening effectiveness Profile

### UNDERSTANDING AND REFLECTING THE MESSAGE

Understanding and reflecting the message looks at the listener's effectiveness at interpreting what the speaker is saying and letting them know that they have understood the message. This category asks the question "How well does the listener summarize the key points and accurately paraphrase what is being communicated?"

1 = almost never, 5 = almost always.



#### Interpretation

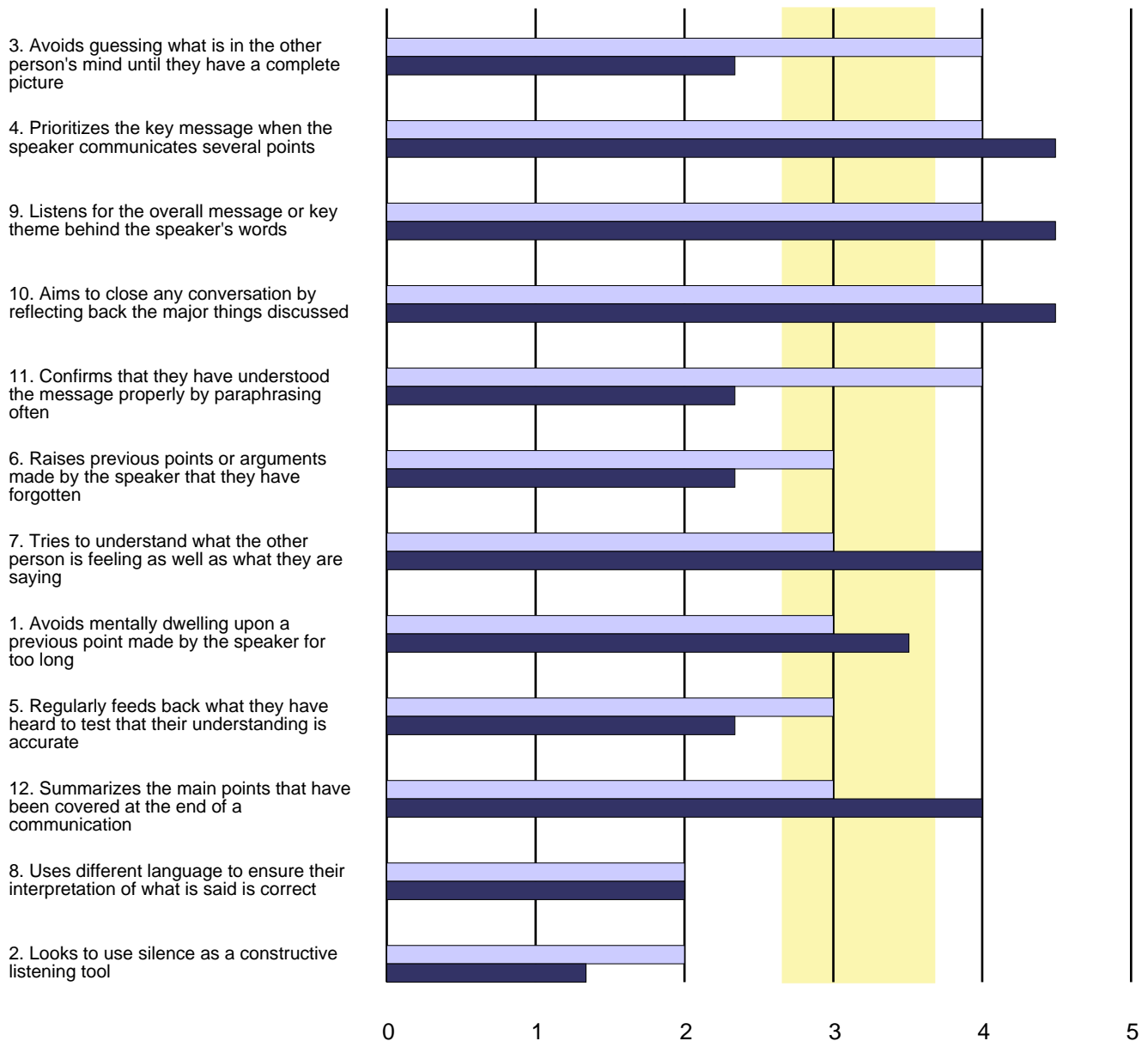
##### LOW (less than 2.75)

"Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ('occasionally' and 'almost never') are likely to mean that this individual probably rushes conversations and uses the opportunity to summarize or sum up infrequently (if at all). A low score person will be likely to selectively listen or only pay attention to parts of the conversation and therefore have insufficient information to summarize well. The 'quality' of conversations may consequently suffer and both parties may not be entirely clear whether they have reached a common understanding at the end. "

##### HIGH (greater than 3.5)

"Scales predominantly in the fours and fives ('almost always' and 'very frequently') are likely to mean that this individual works hard at interpreting and evaluating what a speaker is really trying to say and repeat it back to them in summary form so that a mutual understanding can be reached. A high score person will be likely to avoid lengthy passages of conversation without providing a quick summary, or reflecting back the message before moving on. Communications are often therefore more effective and focussed."

## Listening effectiveness Profile UNDERSTANDING AND REFLECTING THE MESSAGE



Self Norm

The above chart is sorted in descending order of summary scores.

Norm bars shown on this chart are the progressive average aggregate scores of all individuals rating themselves on this questionnaire.

## Listening effectiveness Profile

# UNDERSTANDING AND REFLECTING THE MESSAGE

Understanding and reflecting the message looks at the listener's effectiveness at interpreting what the speaker is saying and letting them know that they have understood the message. This category asks the question "How well does the listener summarize the key points and accurately paraphrase what is being communicated?"

### Improvement actions

Low scorers need to 'tune-in' as much as they are able, and be in a position to provide a short mental summary of what is being said (without guessing or making assumptions). Think of the speaker as always having at least one key message. The challenge is to discover it and to confirm directly that this interpretation is accurate.

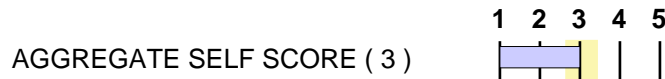
<b>Understanding and reflecting the message</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Try to slow down your thinking during conversations and concentrate on the whole message from the speaker,</li><li>-Include both the words and the emotions that are transmitted.</li><li>-As a direct test of your ability, look to paraphrase what you hear from time to time and directly check your understanding.</li><li>-Avoid assuming that you can 'pick up the threads' of a conversation later-gently ask questions of clarification at the time.</li><li>-Use different phrases to the speaker to the speaker to paraphrase what has been communicated to you to sum up your understanding.</li></ul>
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## Listening effectiveness Profile

### EMPATHIZING

Empathizing looks at how well the listener demonstrates open interest and commitment to the other person's feelings and overall message. This category asks the question "Does the speaker feel that the listener truly values them and their message, and can appreciate the context in which it is given?"

1 = almost never, 5 = almost always.



### Interpretation

#### LOW (less than 2.75)

"Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ('occasionally' and 'almost never') are likely to mean that this individual spends little or no time in trying to put themselves in the other person's shoes or takes much account of any feelings that may be present (if they can spot them at all!).

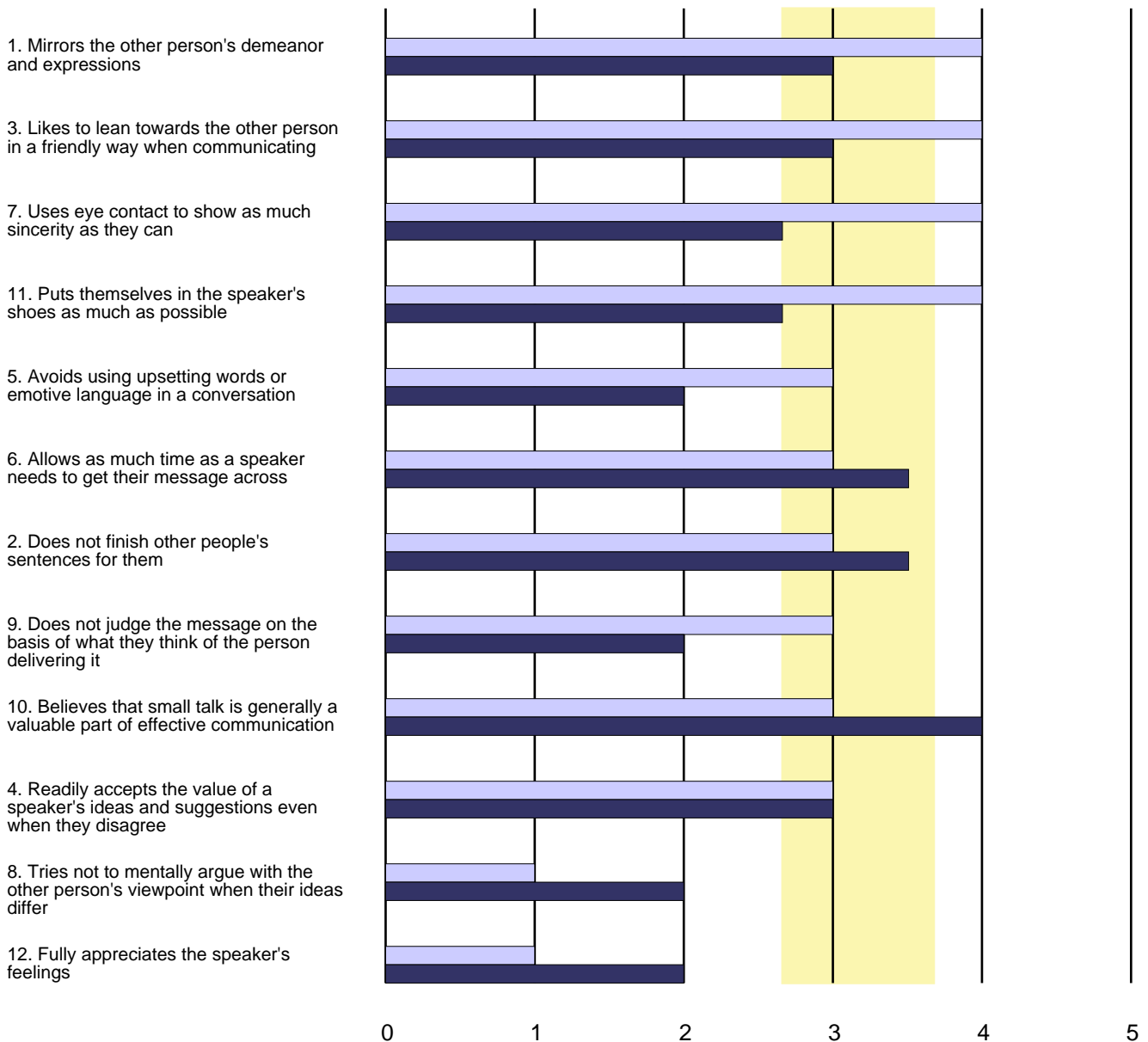
A low score person will be likely to be a 'transactional' communicator. An exchange will therefore be a simple task to be completed before moving on to the next one. low scorers are likely to listen from their own perspective and may have little concern to know much about the other person at all."

#### HIGH (greater than 3.5)

"Scales predominantly in the fours and fives ('almost always' and 'very frequently') are likely to mean that this individual quickly finds common ground with the other party with which they are communicating and demonstrates that they fully appreciate their feelings and their message.

A high score person will be likely to spend a considerable amount of time and effort in seeking to understand the other party's feelings and look to respond in the most positive and empathetic way possible by sharing some of their own. They are therefore likely to be extremely effective at getting the speaker to 'open-up'."

## Listening effectiveness Profile EMPATHIZING



Self Norm

The above chart is sorted in descending order of summary scores.

Norm bars shown on this chart are the progressive average aggregate scores of all individuals rating themselves on this questionnaire.

## Listening effectiveness Profile

### EMPATHIZING

Empathizing looks at how well the listener demonstrates open interest and commitment to the other person's feelings and overall message. This category asks the question "Does the speaker feel that the listener truly values them and their message, and can appreciate the context in which it is given?"

### Improvement actions

Low scorers should aim to be less direct or 'aloof' in their communication, and less 'in-charge' of the conversation than they might be used to. Time should also be taken to look for areas of commonality, rather than areas of difference; ask the question; what might I think if I was in their position?

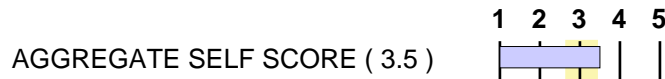
<b>Empathizing</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Try to imagine yourself being in the speaker's position or appreciating the way the speaker is feeling as you listen to them.</li><li>-With a little practice, start to share a few experiences and feelings of your own and help open up the conversation.</li><li>-Avoid jumping in or finishing a speaker's sentences for them at all costs.</li><li>-Always keep all your conversations sincere and on a calm and friendly footing.</li></ul>
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## Listening effectiveness Profile

### PREDISPOSITION/TEMPERAMENT

Predisposition looks at your base character predisposition, temperament or your internal capacity to want to listen or have the patience to do so. This category asks the question "how much am I prepared to invest my time and energy into the careful listening process?"

1 = almost never, 5 = almost always.



### Interpretation

#### LOW (less than 2.75)

"Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ('occasionally' and 'almost never') are likely to mean that this individual is often too rushed or distracted to listen properly a lot of the time, and will even see some individuals as being not worth listening to at all!

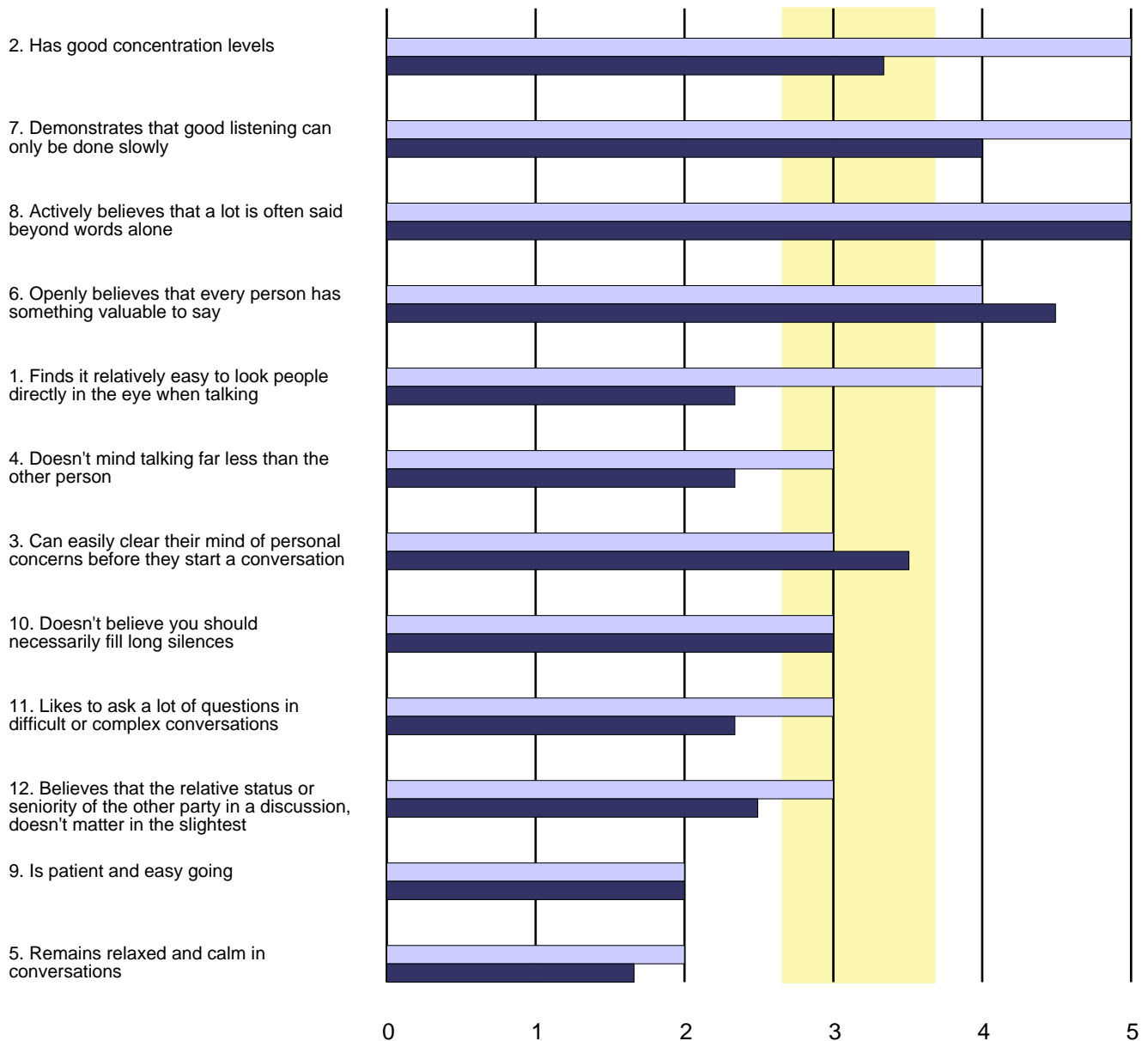
A low score person will be likely to find listening attentively extremely difficult in many circumstances, particularly when they have other things on their mind. Low scorers tend to interrupt more often, guess where the conversation is going, jump to conclusions and become distracted more easily. This means that they are likely to miss parts of the communication message and fail to receive some of the more 'subtle' points altogether."

#### HIGH (greater than 3.5)

"Scales predominantly in the fours and fives ('almost always' and 'very frequently') are likely to mean that this individual is naturally prepared to give everyone that talks to them the time and focus to make themselves heard and understood. This person's open, relaxed and patient manner probably means that people will enjoy sharing their views and feelings with them.

A high score person will be likely to put a speaker quickly at ease and to create a permissive environment in which they will feel safe to share their ideas and their feelings. In addition, the high score person is probably able to tease out and read the 'deeper' meanings often lying behind the words of the communicator."

## Listening effectiveness Profile PREDISPOSITION/TEMPERAMENT



Self Norm

The above chart is sorted in descending order of summary scores.

Norm bars shown on this chart are the progressive average aggregate scores of all individuals rating themselves on this questionnaire.

## Listening effectiveness Profile PREDISPOSITION/TEMPERAMENT

Predisposition looks at your base character predisposition, temperament or your internal capacity to want to listen or have the patience to do so. This category asks the question "how much am I prepared to invest my time and energy into the careful listening process?"

### Improvement actions

Low scorers need to make a conscious commitment to spending more time listening and force themselves not to jump to conclusions, form hasty opinions, interrupt and finish other people's sentences for them. Instead, they should practice being more patient, using pauses and silence more often in conversation, and successfully putting to one side distractions and the habit of letting the mind drift. Low scorers would potentially benefit greatly by trying to find a quiet environment in which they can try to give their full attention.

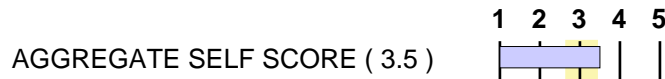
<b>Disposition/Temperament</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Deliberately look to concentrate more in your discussion with other people.</li><li>-Make a conscious decision to talk substantially less and listen more.</li><li>-Use positive body language (stand more square in front of people, avoid fidgeting, maintain strong eye contact etc)</li><li>-Demonstrate your interest in what every speaker is saying, regardless of what you think of the message, or the person.</li><li>-Listen to every individual on the merits and relevance of what they communicate not you may think of them.</li></ul>
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## Listening effectiveness Profile

### SHOWING POSITIVE INTEREST

Showing positive interest looks at the amount of effort made by the listener to demonstrate how much they value the other party's message. This category asks the question "How much does the listener focus and act to make the speaker feel that their message will be effectively received?"

1 = almost never, 5 = almost always.



### Interpretation

#### LOW (less than 2.75)

"Scales predominantly in the ones and twos ('occasionally' and 'almost never') are likely to mean that this individual may give an impression of being aloof, disinterested and even unconcerned about the speaker and their topic (which may be very important to them, if not to you!).

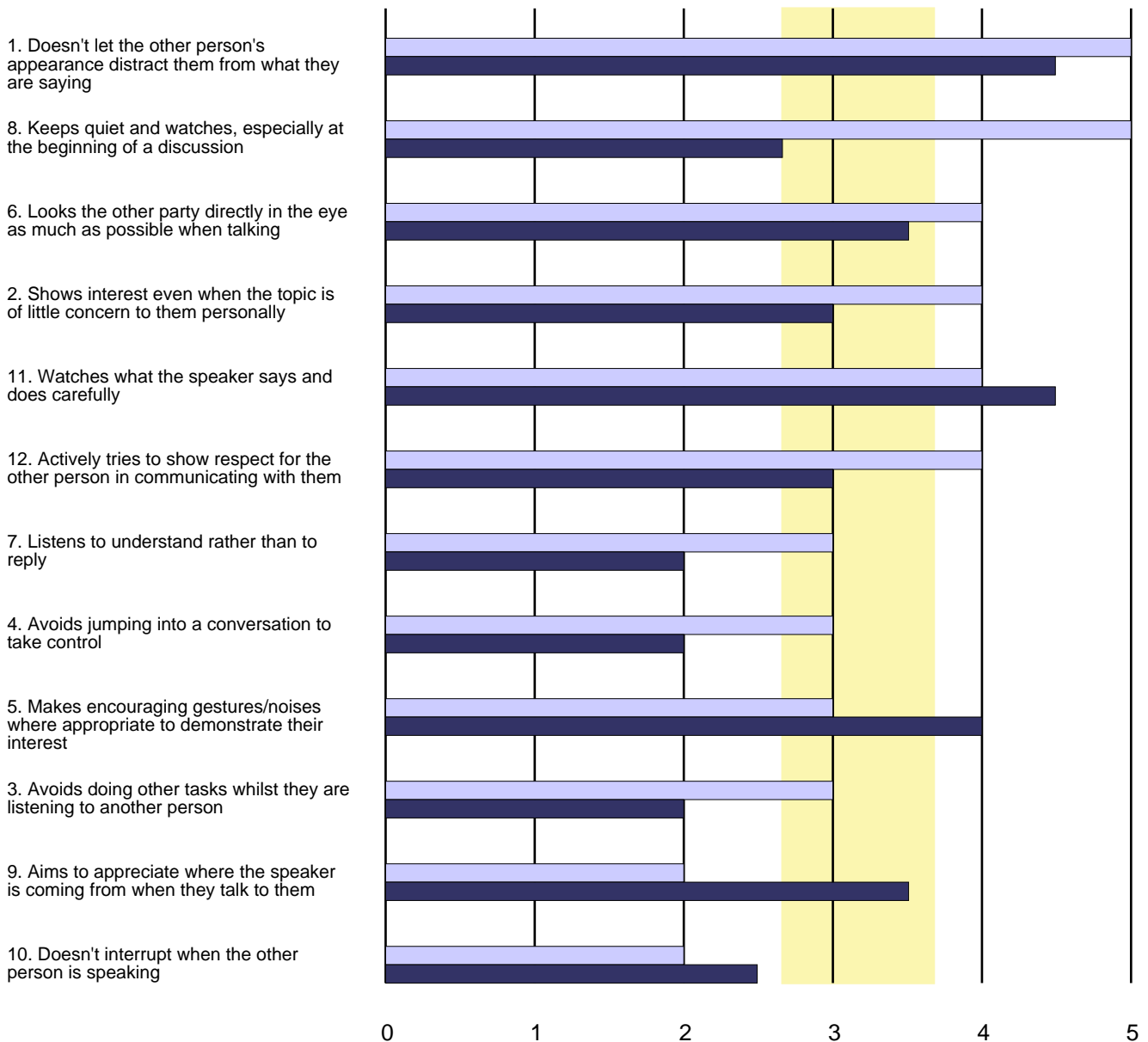
A low score person will be likely to distract or even irritate the speaker by mainly paying attention to almost everything else but listening to the direct communication. Other parties are likely to learn to keep their communications with you short and terse, or look to others who will listen more openly, or where they can feel more valued."

#### HIGH (greater than 3.5)

"Scales predominantly in the fours and fives ('almost always' and 'very frequently') are likely to mean that this individual openly shows their respect for both the person and what they are trying to say to them. In addition, in conversation, they are likely to use a range of positive gestures and body language and keep the discussion positive and open.

A high score person will be likely to immediately signal that they welcome the other person's communication and sustain their focus and interest in full for the duration of the conversation. They are also likely to intelligently use positive nodding and sounds to help the flow of the conversation, and make the speaker feel good about themselves and their ability to get their message across."

## Listening effectiveness Profile SHOWING POSITIVE INTEREST



Self
  Norm

The above chart is sorted in descending order of summary scores.

Norm bars shown on this chart are the progressive average aggregate scores of all individuals rating themselves on this questionnaire.

## Listening effectiveness Profile SHOWING POSITIVE INTEREST

Showing positive interest looks at the amount of effort made by the listener to demonstrate how much they value the other party's message. This category asks the question "How much does the listener focus and act to make the speaker feel that their message will be effectively received?"

### Improvement actions

Low scorers need to become much less judgmental or opinionated about who and what is worth listening to and adopt a more 'neutral mode' whilst listening in general. They can therefore try to make more eye contact, avoid interrupting, try feeding back what they have heard from time to time, and show as much respect for everyone that communicates with them as they can.

<b>Showing positive interest</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>-Even if this is hard to do in a completely sincere way at the outset, practice nodding, encouraging the speaker, recognizing good points that are made and even smiling where appropriate.</li><li>-The more you do this, the more naturally that positive interest will be shown.</li><li>-Make sure that your body language is always positive or at least 'neutral' in all your conversations with people.</li><li>-Ask questions regularly to show positive interest in the subject being communicated</li><li>-Actively demonstrate that you respect the speaker's opinion even when you completely disagree with it.</li></ul>
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# THE '10/10' REPORT

## Top 10 development needs

		scores
Paying attention and concentrating	7. Asks questions to "tease out" as much information as they can	1.0
Paying attention and concentrating	12. Believes that a little careful questioning helps to keep misunderstandings to a minimum	1.0
Empathizing	8. Tries not to mentally argue with the other person's viewpoint when their ideas differ	1.0
Empathizing	12. Fully appreciates the speaker's feelings	1.0
Creating a conducive climate	4. Entirely stops what they are doing to give their full attention	2.0
Creating a conducive climate	5. Makes sure that they are close to the other person and can hear well to listen properly	2.0
Creating a conducive climate	7. Aims to create an atmosphere in which it is easy to talk	2.0
Creating a conducive climate	8. Tries to "screen out" background noise and conversations whilst communicating	2.0
Creating a conducive climate	11. Looks friendly or smiles at the speaker to create an "open" climate	2.0
Creating a conducive climate	12. Demonstrates that If you really want to listen well you should find a quiet place to do it	2.0

## Top 10 strengths

Reading the speaker	11. Understands specific body language signals that a speaker may give	5.0
Predisposition/Temperament	2. Has good concentration levels	5.0
Predisposition/Temperament	7. Demonstrates that good listening can only be done slowly	5.0
Predisposition/Temperament	8. Actively believes that a lot is often said beyond words alone	5.0
Showing positive interest	1. Doesn't let the other person's appearance distract them from what they are saying	5.0
Showing positive interest	8. Keeps quiet and watches, especially at the beginning of a discussion	5.0
Creating a conducive climate	1. Believes that people should be physically comfortable to communicate effectively	4.0
Creating a conducive climate	3. Avoids fidgeting when listening	4.0
Creating a conducive climate	6. Tries to ignore distractions when listening	4.0
Paying attention and concentrating	6. Helps the speaker by providing a summary If they loses the "train" of their thoughts,	4.0

## **COURSE AND READING SUGGESTIONS**

The following are general reading and course suggestions that may help you to better understand the two categories in which your scores were the lowest and to assist you in writing your development plan.

### **Paying attention and concentrating**

**Paying attention and concentrating looks at how effective a listener may be at maintaining their focus on what is being communicated; both verbally and non-verbally. This category asks the question "How well does the listener look for the core message and reflect their understanding accurately to the speaker?"**

#### **Course Suggestions**

- Concentration skills
- Interviewing skills
- Influencing others

#### **Reading Suggestions**

- Asking the Right Questions: A Guide to Critical Thinking, M. Neil Browne, Stuart M. Keeley, 1997
- Positive listening-Learning what people are really saying, Bill Reed, 1985
- Asking the Right Questions : Tools and Techniques for Teamwork (1-Off), Edie L. Holcomb. 1996
- Ask the Right Question : How to Get What You Want Every Time and in Any Situation, Rupert Eales-White. 1998

#### **Other Suggestions**

- If you feel comfortable to do so, talk to your direct supervisor/manager or a training and development specialist about personal training, coaching, and specific projects to improve your skills and other possible support they may be able to offer.

## **COURSE AND READING SUGGESTIONS**

### **Creating a conducive climate**

Creating a conducive climate looks at the effort that the listener expends in ensuring that the communication atmosphere or environment is as appropriate as possible. This category asks the question "Has the listener done everything they can to minimize distractions and create a climate for open conversation?"

#### **Course Suggestions**

- Conversational skills
- Developing 'small talk' ability
- Concentration skills

#### **Reading Suggestions**

- The Art of Listening, Erich Fromm. 1998
- Listen for Success : A Guide to Effective Listening (Briefcase Books), Arthur K. Robertson. 1993
- Tuning in : A Guide to Effective Listening, Robert Maidment. 1984
- The Art of Conversation, Peter Burke. 1993

#### **Other Suggestions**

- If you feel comfortable to do so, talk to your direct supervisor/manager or a training and development specialist about personal training, coaching, and specific projects to improve your skills and other possible support they may be able to offer.

## DEVELOPMENT PLAN

Use the space below to write out your personal development plan for the next 12 months based on your results. Draw upon the general improvement actions in relevant areas of the report and ideas that are suggested in the attached coaching tips.

<b>Development Area: Asks questions to "tease out" as much information as they can</b>		1.0	N/A	N/A
Action to Take:	Target Date:			
<b>Development Area: Believes that a little careful questioning helps to keep misunderstandings to a minimum</b>		1.0	N/A	N/A
Action to Take:	Target Date:			
<b>Development Area: Tries not to mentally argue with the other person's viewpoint when their ideas differ</b>		1.0	N/A	N/A
Action to Take:	Target Date:			
<b>Development Area: Fully appreciates the speaker's feelings</b>		1.0	N/A	N/A
Action to Take:	Target Date:			
<b>Development Area: Entirely stops what they are doing to give their full attention</b>		2.0	N/A	N/A
Action to Take:	Target Date:			

# 6 Paying Attention and Concentrating

## I like to ask questions to “tease out” as much information as I can

Questions need to be put forward for a variety of reasons: you may need to clarify and confirm a complicated point or one that may be open to misunderstanding, to clear up contradictions and conflicting messages. They may also be used to assist in diplomatically reminding the speaker of ground they have covered and of which, they have apparently lost sight. In effect, any question is a request for information, be it extra or illuminating data. Here you have the opportunity to learn more about a subject or to gain the particular perspective of the other person.

Teasing-out information is a skill that above all employs subtlety. You don't need stealth and deception to learn more from the other person than they may have intended, but you must be careful not to appear critical of their willingness to disclose all that you want to discover. The other person will be pleased to accept your keen demonstration of interest and hunger for knowledge but will tell you far more if you adopt a considered and rational manner. Thus, you can occasionally drop in a brief question which starts with the “is it true that...?” or “I've heard that...” kind of preamble which draws them into sharing and confidential language, rather than bluntly and openly demanding to know. Any questions which do begin with “where”, “when”, “how” etc. should ideally be followed by a fair amount of detail to show that you have been listening and keeping up with the conversation.

Consider the following to improve your general effectiveness in this area:

- Confidently use questions for obtaining clarification of a complicated or confusing point, in any circumstance – listening attentively means understanding the message, not guessing because you are confused
- Employ nonverbal as well as spoken forms of communication, particularly facial expressions, to encourage speakers to fill in points of information with greater detail
- Look to phrase questions in your mind before putting them to the other person, so that they can be as clear, well constructed and gently probing as possible
- Deliver questions coherently and unhurriedly, waiting patiently for a response and thanking them for the answer when satisfied with it
- Limit the number of questions and do not repeat or rephrase any if the speaker believes they have said enough on the issue
- When you want the speaker to explore a point further try to include in the question some of the specific words or phrases couched within their main argument
- Try not to use a challenging or ironic tone of voice when asking a question, preferring a friendly, engaging manner, an agreeable tone and dispassionate phraseology



# 6 Paying Attention and Concentrating

## A little careful questioning helps to keep misunderstandings to a minimum

Think of the times when you have been misunderstood and how often, in retrospect, realize that the problem could have been resolved even as it occurred if you had been aware of your listener's confusion (or better still, had the listener sought clarification of more difficult points as they arose how quickly any potential misunderstandings would have been avoided).

We are mostly reluctant to raise questions in any conversation because we do not want to be embarrassed or to expose our potential ignorance (though we would all readily agree that we can't be expected to know something we are hearing for the first time). However, more often than not, careful questioning will not only help the listener but also helps the speaker to know that they have conveyed their meaning in the way that it was intended.

When you have learned to truly appreciate that when you listen you strive to understand you will see that there is no harm and every advantage in putting the occasional question. If you progress right through to the end of any conversation of reasonable length without seeking clarification or explanation a single point it may be that one or both parties may leave the conversation without having reached a full and clear understanding.

Attentive listening helps to overcome this problems by using effective questioning to create a clear appreciation of all the issues under discussion. Never therefore hesitate to ask what something means if you are unsure.

Consider the following to improve your general effectiveness in this area:

- Exercise as much tact and sensitivity as you can on issues in which conflicting views are apparent, phrasing questions particularly carefully as they may be due to misinterpretation on your part
- If seeking to straighten out statements which you suspect are not entirely accurate try to preface your queries with phrases such as "I thought that..." or "If I recall correctly..."
- Utilize the most appropriate style of questioning (verification, seeking further information, determining emotion etc.) Given the type of message being transmitted. This may require you to do some more research on the style and type of questions you can ask.
- Don't allow misunderstandings to pass unremarked upon as they can only disrupt the remainder of the conversation – bring them up as soon as the speaker has finished making that particular point
- In group situations inquire into confusing or contradictory messages even if you do seem to be the only person present experiencing problems. This shows respect to the speaker and indicates that you want to understand what they are saying.
- Avoid pursuing your questioning for too long, even when dissatisfied with answers, saving your inquiries until a later time when this is possible.



# 5 Empathizing

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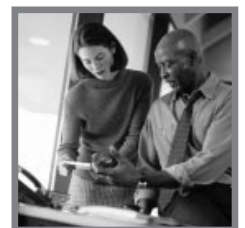
## **I try not to mentally argue with the other person's viewpoint when my ideas differ**

Although you certainly do not have to agree with everything that another person is saying, effective listening does involve accepting that what people have to say is legitimate. In other words, even though you see their points to be wrong, illogical, error prone, questionable, distorted, incomplete or misleading, your job as a listener is to allow people to fully express themselves before responding (without cutting them off or interrupting before they have finished).

This discipline extends to listening in a careful, open and non-judgmental way mentally. This involves making sure that you are not arguing with the speaker's points in your mind and eventually let this spill over into either your body language or your words.

Consider the following to improve your general effectiveness in this area:

- Keep a steady, consistent rein on your feelings when the speaker's views clash with your own in order to hear everything they have to say without jumping in to disagree
- Work hard to listen with the primary objective of understanding the listener's message and the emotions it has stimulated in them, rather than to judge their message and stop listening
- Avoid projecting your personal principles, perceptions and experiences onto the other person as much as you can – they may have entirely different perspectives and experiences that need to be discovered
- Avoid the practice of selective listening: hear the speaker out by attending to every word, thought and expression, subsequently weighing them up rationally
- View people's comments from several angles to try to appreciate what they mean. In other words, look for areas of possible agreement rather than disagreement as much as you can.
- Get into the habit of internally stressing the points you do agree with, relaxing the temptation to get sidetracked.



# 5 Empathizing

## It is important to fully appreciate the speaker's feelings

The crucial need to appreciate how the other person feels about their expressed ideas and opinions cannot be overstated. Without identifying and following the emotive element in speech you are in danger of losing the very essence of the message. Indeed, you may have heard no message at all if the speaker's feelings themselves make up a large part of the message and you only pick up the negative issues.

You shouldn't have to rely on having them spelling their emotions out to you, but must learn to know what signs to look for: in tone, pace, gestures, facial expressions, orientation and movements. To the uneducated it sounds like an impossible task; to the experienced eye it is second nature, brought about by the intelligent use of good listening principles, the determination to understand and the readiness to view issues under discussion from the speaker's angle.

We sometimes hear only with our head and not our heart. We sometimes look only at the surface of things, and not what is beneath the surface. In understanding the process of empathy, it's important to shift our attention from what people say to the way that they say it. We need to pay attention to the deeper feelings or emotions behind the words used by others.

Consider the following to improve your general effectiveness in this area:

- Watch the speaker carefully and focus particularly on their eyes and tone of voice to pick up any strong feeling or emotions that may be behind the words they are using
- Identify specific emotions, both positive and negative, and their relation to the words spoken, using the information to understand fully the speaker's primary purpose or aims
- Always carefully gauge the level or intensity of emotion in any significant conversation – overt, understated or even hidden – in the speaker's demeanor, eye movements, facial expressions and tone of voice
- Try not to exhibit obvious signs of sympathy, which may steer the other person towards exaggerating or embellishing the message and their concerns. Keep the conversation empathetic but also calm and balanced.
- Once identified, don't use the other person's feelings to manipulate or criticize them, but to empathetically respond in the light of what you have understood



## 2 Creating a Conducive Climate

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### I entirely stop what I'm doing to give my full attention

There is no room for compromise when engaging in full attentive listening; you have to give your time, yourself and all your mental faculties wholly over to the conversation as much as you can. Lapse for more than a few seconds and the thread of the argument can easily be lost. You should therefore harness your power of attention and let the other person know that you are sufficiently interested in hearing what is being said and be ready to delay till later all other matters which may need attending to. It is not just a question of politeness – even a brief glance at your PC screen, making or taking a phone call, partially listening to a nearby conversation will only signal that you have other things of interest on your mind (even if this is not the case in reality).

Full attention is best giving strong contact and by facing the speaker as squarely as possible. In addition, active summarizing or paraphrasing will indicate that you are listening to most of what is being said.

Consider the following to improve your general effectiveness in this area:

- Don't try to attend to more than one issue at any one time as none will be satisfactorily considered, however dynamic you consider your powers of thought and concentration
- Give your undivided attention as much as possible before a conversation or meeting by, for instance, switching phones off and stacking paperwork away or out of reach and removing other obvious distractions
- If you do have something so pressing to attend to that it can't wait or will be on your mind until resolved, let the other person know and talk to them later
- Tell people around you that you would prefer not to be interrupted when you try to have significant conversations so that you can give your full attention and not have to deal with side issues.
- Make a sustained effort to commit yourself mentally and physically to the speaker's communication alone

