

The Official Newsletter of the Global Listening Centre



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Listening in the Time of War and Peace



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Professor Michael W. Purdy, Ph.D., Past Vice Chair Global Listening Centre

Interview with Outstanding Listeners:

Learn to listen and listen to learn:
How the Harvard Business School case
method can promote diversity

Announcing in October 2022

The 25



Professor Snježana Prijić-Samaržija Ph.D.,
Rector. The University of Rijeka, Croatia



Carin-Isabel Knoop
Executive Director at Harvard Business
School, Harvard University



in the World 2022

25OWL2021 Thanks for your contribution.



Professor Wim de Villiers, Ph.D.
Rector and Vice-Chancellor
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Professor Patricia M. Davidson, Ph.D.,
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A Message from the Executive Editor

Dear Listeners (or in this case readers),

From its inception, the Global Listening Centre has advocated listening for peace. Our consistent vision has been “To build a future society that listens well before acting.” We continue to advocate for listening as an instrument of peace. GLC’s message should be highlighted at a global level in more than the circa 47 countries where it is presently heard.

The conflict events in eastern Europe over the past months highlight in powerful ways the importance of listening. Around the world, pandemic-imposed restrictions were lifted, and people were beginning to breathe a collective sigh of relief. Then, suddenly, our attention was once again turned to global unrest. We began to refocus on the ways in which violence and war are still deeply affecting the lives of people around the world. In 2022 more than ever, listening is needed for peace so that war can be avoided to begin with. In such a spirit, we present the article *Listening in the Time of War and Peace* by Professor Michael Prudy, Ph.D., in this issue.



Professor Carol
Bishop Mills, Ph.D.

Also in this issue, we have included a report honoring all the people, both members and non-members, who contributed to making our Project The 25 Outstanding Women Listeners in the World 2021 (25OWL2021) a great success. We are extremely grateful to them all. Through 25OWL2021, we proclaimed a strong message to the world about the power of listening.

We would like to extend a special thank you to Carin-Isabel Knoop, Executive Director of the Harvard Business School Case Writing and Research Group, who has written another article for us in this newsletter entitled **Learn to listen and listen to learn: How the Harvard Business School case method can promote diversity**. In it, she provides us ways to learn, practice, and engage others in learning how to listen. We also extend our gratitude to one of the most respected women in Croatia, Professor Snježana Prijić-Samaržija, Ph.D., Rector at the University of Rijeka, Croatia, for a very wonderful interview highlighting the importance of listening in groups and teams as we strive to find common ground and make substantive changes.

We are also excited to announce that *The Global Listener* will now be available for readers of Chinese. Eminent scholar Jicheng Sun, Ph.D., Associate Professor of English at Shandong University of Technology, Zibo, Shandong Province, China, will serve as the editor for the Chinese version. We furthermore welcome our talented new member Mrs. Sobia Afzal from the UAE Ministry of Education to our newsletter editorial team. Now we have an even greater team for this publication. We express our congratulations and gratitude to our new Vice Chair, Dr Jo Ann Rolle, for shouldering a great responsibility in this troubled time where listening is so needed. Dr Rolle is a wonderful support to all who believe that listening is critical for peace. She will take GLC’s grand mission to yet grander heights. We welcome internationally renowned scholar, Professor Stacey Connaughton, joining us as the president of Academia to add great value to academics at GLC. After the huge success of 25OWL2021, GLC is again developing a superb project in the next few days, namely the **Global Listening Festival**. We wish to have your full cooperation and support to make this event a resounding success. See a brief note on it in this newsletter.

Finally, we all extend our gratitude to Professor Rebecca Day Babcock Ph.D., the founding Executive Editor of *The Global Listener*. This newsletter has now become an important conduit of information about listening worldwide. Although she is transitioning away from this role, she will remain active in the Global Listening Centre, and I am honored to now assume the role of Executive Editor in her place. I will strive to continue the outstanding work that Professor Babcock began.

Thanks again to all distinguished guests and members for their contribution for this newsletter.
Listening Transforms Lives.

Yours in listening,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'CBMills', written in a cursive style.

Carol Bishop Mills, Ph.D.

Executive Editor *The Global Listener*

Director (Academia) Global Listening Centre

Director and Professor, School of Communication

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Listening in the Time of War and Peace



Professor Michael W Purdy, Ph.D.
Distinguished Listening Scholar,
Past Vice Chair, Global Listening Centre.
Professor Emeritus, Governors State University

In searching for some thoughts on listening and war, I note the wisdom in an October 2003 column written by three-time Pulitzer Prize winning columnist for *The New York Times*, Thomas Friedman, about how the Iraq war could have been avoided by listening. In an opinion piece in the *New York Times* Friedman wrote: "We cannot spend so much time talking about our enemies that we forget to listen to our friends, because without them, ultimately, we cannot win either a war of terrorism or a war of ideas." (<https://www.nytimes.com/2003/10/16/opinion/on-listening.html>)

In time of war, we need friends who listen. We also need to listen to our adversaries. War is *prima facie* evidence of a total breakdown of communication, or at least evidence of distorted communication. Such communication disfunction doesn't need to occur. As Friedman suggests, when messaging gets crazy we need all the friends we can get. In many ways, it is even more vital that we listen intently during a time of war, both to our friends as well as our enemies.

How shall we listen? We must listen critically, with an ear to the needs of the global order, and a strong sense of what is important. We must listen to sort fact from fiction. We must listen to evaluate the evidence and arguments advanced. We must listen to take the "dis" out of disinformation. We must listen to find common ground. We must also listen empathically and with compassion for the needs others are expressing, even when we strongly disagree with their proposals. War is rarely the best option to managing differences. War is hell because the value of human lives is subjugated to the values of force and domination. That is what makes peace possible—the life sustaining value of communication and understanding achieved through listening—is vital for human survival.

During those periods when war is not present, at least no major conflicts, our goal should be to establish a climate of listening and relationship building with both friend and foe. As Friedman notes: "Listening is also a sign of respect, and it is amazing how much people will allow you to say to them, by way of criticism, if you just bother to go listen to them first." Listening is the most advanced and demanding act of civilization; it is the

pinnacle of living in a civilized world. To listen, and through listening to others with whom we disagree, is to realize that the most important thing is to be present and understand others whether an individual or a country, listening is essential as a strategy of showing respect and building alliances that matter, especially when the world faces a multitude of existential challenges such as climate change, food insecurity, and social injustice.

To work together and solve these problems we must discover and then enact the lost art of listening, as difficult as listening is. *Listening is always a prerequisite to peace.* As Theologian Henri Nouwen eloquently expressed, "To listen is very hard, because it asks of us so much interior stability that we no longer need to prove ourselves by speeches, arguments, statements, or declarations." Listening is challenging work. But, when listening ceases and war begins, the alternative of examining the carnage of war is even more heartbreakingly challenging.

Reconciliation is a deep practice that we can do with our listening and our mindful speech. To reconcile means to bring peace and happiness to nations, people, and members of our family.... In order to reconcile, you have to possess the art of deep listening.

Thich Nhat Hanh



Photo Collected from AZ

"Effective listening is crucial for the best decision — making by military leaders and policy makers alike." - Andrew D. Wolvin

Learn to listen and listen to learn:

How the Harvard Business School case method can promote diversity



Carin-Isabel Knoop

Executive Director at Harvard Business School,
Harvard University

“Simply populating your team with diverse perspectives and experiences doesn’t always translate into better performance. In fact, the uncomfortable truth is that diverse teams can *underperform* homogeneous teams if they’re not managed actively for differences among team members.”

Professor Frances Frei and Anne Morriss

Unleashed: The Unapologetic Leader’s Guide to Empowering Everyone Around You

Learning to listen as kids

Most of us have implored others –hopefully primarily children – to please listen. Often, kids don’t have the time or desire to do so. So we train them and ourselves to do so. Listening requires practice to take notice of and act on what someone says – be it a comment, advice, request, command, or compliment.

Yet as we age, we stop thinking about and practicing a fundamental skill to survival. Sometimes we pretend to listen – while protecting our worldviews and scrutinizing anyone who and anything that may call them into question

Many of us are still ruled by what Phil Tetlock of the Good Judgement project called “the inner dictator.” This reflex activates confirmation bias (to prove that our idea was the correct one). It triggers the desirability bias (making it easier for us to see what we want to see). We confuse our beliefs (what we hold to be true) with our values (what we deem important).

Racism, biases, and prejudice often follow a similar pattern of responding to others emotionally rather than analytically. In doing so, we frequently categorize others into groups based on preconceptions and impute views or opinions based on them. Then, without knowing the person, we respond with fear, coalition-seeking, and visceral responses, leading to rejection and dehumanization.

“I hear you,” Americans say these days when they want to make you feel better. Note that they don’t say I understand you or listened to you. Hearing is passive. One does not have a choice. Listening is active. Listening takes effort and humility, and outside focus. All in very short supply in our modern stressed, reactive, narcissistic selves. We are short-circuited by social media to like, pass, react and judge. In turn, we

respond just as rapidly and sometimes emotionally to these judgments.

Listening requires suspending judgment long enough to free up the brain space to consider the words as they are said – not from whom they emanate nor for what they bring up in ourselves. When we learn more about brain science, we can understand how biases form, and how they might influence and regulate our thoughts and actions. Part of the issue is evolutionary – we pledge our allegiance to “tribes.”

Promoting this kind of behavior is what I do all day as a case writer at Harvard Business School – case writers are professional discord creators in a time in which it can be risky to disagree. Below I describe how the case method works, what it can teach us about promoting diversity – of all kinds, especially thought – in organizations, and how I use it in my personal life.

How orchestrating discord in the classroom...

The case method goads about 90 people reading the same material to form camps with totally divergent opinions. Over 80-minute classes, the group learns with and from each other. *It is a pedagogical approach to foster productive disagreement among participants. Rather than seeking consensus or guiding students to a “right” answer, it forces students — without ad hominem considerations — to humbly engage with the wisdom and skepticism of fellow learners to come away better informed and arrive at a more nuanced perspective. The process can help them develop empathy, too.* Some of the most compelling cases see students challenging one another to revise and rethink their initial analyses, embracing new and fresh solutions adapted to the context. *It challenges them to remain authentic to their values and principles while appreciating and welcoming other people’s opinions — whether or not they ultimately change their minds and embrace those differing perspectives.*

At its best, when engaged with a cohort of fellow avid learners and problem solvers, the case method allows students to become better decision-makers and, ultimately, better leaders. “Cases stimulate curiosity about the range of opportunities in the world and the many ways that students can make a difference as leaders, wrote Nitin Nohria, our former Dean at Harvard Business School, in a recent issue of HBR on [what the case study methods actually teaches us](#): “This curiosity serves them well throughout their lives. It makes them more agile, more adaptive, and more open to doing a wider range of things in their careers.”

Learn to listen and listen to learn:

How the Harvard Business School case method can promote diversity

... can help us build on organizational diversity.

Fostering an inclusive workplace and a sense of belonging among employees requires encouraging the expression of diversity and the various thoughts and perspectives it affords: race, gender, sexual orientation but also geographic (suburban/urban/rural), and educational (levels and type). This goes beyond some of the recent “diversity theater” we have seen and the backlash in its wake. For more on the case method and its connection to diversity and inclusion, see this interview on the Ben Fanning CEO podcast.

As our organizations become more diverse and more generations than ever are at work, we need to train for critical thinking and listening skills. It is about ensuring that everyone in the organization moves from understanding the diversity of persons and positions to truly embracing them and the value of their views, promoting an environment in which people accept the contribution of others. There can be no expression of diversity if we don’t listen to each other.

Organizations need to provide opportunities to **practice disagreeing** with the status quo and questioning assumptions, and in doing so, help your community understand how our brains work. Soliciting different opinions, getting people to challenge the status quo and authority productively in our emotionally charged environment is fraught with real and emotional danger, writes my colleague Mel Martin. So we go quiet. Non-conflict can feel like harmony.

However, with it, our mental muscles that deal with stress and conflict can atrophy. Ideas and people are not the same, and the very ideas that we need to realize the diversity of thought and the community we desire might include ideas that make us uncomfortable. More than likely, however, there is far more intellectual and political diversity in your team or workplace than you realize.

Ways to make it easier for minority views to be really heard and to introduce these ideas and discomfort while also maintaining some necessary psychological safety can include using polls in meetings, assigning a so-called **Devil’s advocate** or a “Red Team” to take a contrary position; **make it mandatory for people who defend an idea to attack it** respectfully as in the Lincoln Douglas debate rules which have debaters take alternating sides to an issue in a series of debates. This

practice should include leaders and managers. The idea is to help individuals distinguish task conflict from relationship conflicts (in which we ban people from our personal and social lives or ostracize them at work when we disagree with one of their ideas).

In *Think Again* Adam Grant argues that unless we are aware of these tendencies and monitoring them constantly, we turn our opinions into our identities — and do the same for others. We confuse feedback on ideas with an ad hominem attack.

Another good tool is the “left-hand column technique” designed by Chris Argyris, Professor Emeritus at Harvard Business School. In this exercise, participants break down what was said, what was thought to be said, and what was thought about what was said. This can help break conversations down into their essential parts, as well as analyze intent and avoid miscommunication. Researchers show how [“psychological distancing” can be used to build trust and encourage tolerance](#).

I practice this method in my approach to social dynamics and become my own contrarian – to read an article or statement, listen to a point of view or set of facts, and argue the pros and cons, see the world from different points of view, listening to (interior) voices that may not agree with our accepted point of view.

Wanting to listen

As I care for my father, I find myself focusing on listening again. When he speaks, especially about his difficult wartime youth, I stop what I am doing because I know that soon I will not be able to listen nor hear him again. That every word, like every breath, is counted. That I should listen to him without wishing the stories were different or wondering how I would have behaved in the situations he shares.

Then when he falls back into his happy daytime slumber, I wonder what world we could build if we all listened to each other with such loving intensity and understanding that every word and our perception of it is finite and unique.

Thank you for listening to my voice in writing.

Carin-Isabel Knoop, inspired by her collaboration with Amram Migdal and Mel Martin.

January 1, 2022

Oyez! Oyez! Oyez!



Steven G. Kellman, Ph.D.

Director (Academia)
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Listening is essential to success in many professions. A physician without a stethoscope is as handicapped as an encumbered without a microphone. Auscultation (from the Latin *auscultare*, to listen), the procedure of monitoring sounds within organs of the body, is a standard diagnostic tool in medicine. Film, theater, and orchestra directors assemble their performers by *auditioning* talented hopefuls. Furthermore, the procedure of inspecting ledgers for negligence or fraud is called an *audit*, because examiners used to require that financial information be read out loud to them while they listened for irregularities. “Oyez! Oyez! Oyez!” (from the Anglo-Norman *ouïr*, to hear), proclaimed at the start of each day’s legal proceedings, is designed to command the attention of all those present in court.

However, the hearing-impaired seem excluded from these models, unless we regard “to listen” synecdochically, to represent all ways of paying attention. After he became deaf, Ludwig von Beethoven was unable to hear the tumultuous applause that greeted the first performance of his Ninth Symphony. However, the sublime complexities of his final string quartets demonstrated that, despite his infirmity, the composer never flagged in his attention to detail.

A more sinister side to listening comes with the word’s sense of “obeying.” In a dictatorship, the leader dictates, and the submissive populace listens. Obedience might be a virtue in children, pets, and military recruits, but not in free, sentient adults. Yet the highest form of listening is not acquiescence. Attuned to perfect pitch, true listeners can discern the exquisite melodies beyond the clamor designed to subdue.

Although most of us who study literature possess healthy otic organs, we spend more time looking than listening. The invention of writing more than 5,000 years ago allowed the unstable, impermanent human voice to be supplanted by squiggles imprinted on stone, papyrus, parchment, and paper. The conclusion to William Shakespeare’s Sonnet 18 proclaims the enduring power of the written words that constitute that very poem: “So long as men can breathe or eyes can see, So long lives this, and this gives life to thee.” The poet could not make that claim about a fleeting utterance that is merely heard. Seeing is sustaining. Speech is not nearly as enduring as a pattern of letters on the page.

Of course, in alphabetic cultures, the study of literature is a matter of listening to oral performances. In modern

developed societies, live theater, poetry slams, and audiobooks also appeal to the ear more than the eye. However, designed to be encountered on a printed page in a silent room, much lyric poetry demands that we hear its sound patterns only in the mind’s ear. For the most part, sight is more useful than sound to scholars of literature. But each is a synecdoche for – an example of – the activity of paying attention. For all their differences, listening and looking are similar in that both are active and purposeful; hearing and seeing are, by contrast, passive and haphazard. One has to make a deliberate, conative effort to notice, whether it is through listening or looking. Without such an effort, the undifferentiated world remains leaden and inert.

Gertrude Stein’s oft-quoted declaration that: “Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose” is memorable poetry but faulty horticulture. Every petal, like every snowflake, is unique. While campaigning for the governorship of California, a state that prides itself on its magnificent redwoods, Ronald Reagan asked: “I mean, if you’ve looked at a hundred thousand acres or so of trees – you know, a tree is a tree, how many more do you need to look at?” Can the refusal to look at individual trees portend a tendency to regard individual human beings, too, as replaceable, even disposable? Anthropogenic mass extinctions are the product of human failures to listen to the natural world.

At a certain level of abstraction, all works of literature are the same. All are variations on love and death. It is the details that count, that distinguish *Madame Bovary* from *The Tale of Genji* and *The Death of Ivan Ilyich* from *King Lear*. I urge my students to look closely at elements of style, structure, setting, characterization, and plot, to notice what makes each text precisely what it is and not something else. Successful literary scholars are re-readers. They are continually finding something new in old texts, because, never satisfied with a single glance, they keep looking. The study of literature teaches us the importance of gazing carefully at details of the worlds we inhabit. Not to do so is to reduce those worlds to a dull, undifferentiated mass. As Socrates, who mistrusted written texts, famously – and tautologically – put it: “The unexamined life is not worth living.” That is advice worth listening to.

Steven G. Kellman, Ph.D., is a professor of comparative literature at the University of Texas at San Antonio. His books include *Rambling Prose: Essays* (Trinity), *Nimble Tongues: Studies in Literary Translingualism* (Purdue), and *Redemption: The Life of Henry Roth* (W.W. Norton).

The Importance of Listening to the Past



Donna L. Halper, Ph.D.
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Global Listening Centre.
Associate Professor at Lesley University of
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A few weeks ago, I received an interesting lesson about listening. It happened in an unexpected place: an old graveyard, in an out-of-the-way part of Boston, the city where I live. What I learned was something I had always known in theory; but standing among the old gravestones, it became much more real to me.

I understood more deeply why listening to our relatives' stories is so important—even the stories we've heard before, or the stories that don't seem consequential at the time. But listening to those stories matters. The person reminding me of this lesson was a man I had never met before: my maternal great-great-grandfather.

His name was Abraham Joseph Handverger, and he died in early February 1923. Since I wasn't born until 1947, I never actually met him in person. In fact, until a few months ago, I had no idea he even existed. When I was growing up, my maternal grandfather Samuel was still alive, but I never met my maternal grandmother, Dora—she died before I was born. I also never met my great grandfather Elias, nor my great grandmother Bessie. As for the people from the generations before them, I didn't even know their names.

In 2018, I was doing some genealogical research, but unlike most people who use sites like Ancestry.com, I wasn't creating a family tree. I'm a professor, a free-lance writer, and a media historian, and when I use a genealogy site, I am usually seeking further information on the early years of certain entertainers, athletes, or politicians—whoever I'm researching (and writing about) at the time.

One night, out of curiosity, I typed in the name of my mother. I wondered what information about her might have been preserved. As it turned out, there were a few documents I had never seen, and that led me to type in a few other family names. That is how I unexpectedly discovered one more generation of my relatives and began learning more about them.

In the Jewish religion, there is a custom of visiting the graves of our deceased family members during the Hebrew month of Elul (which usually comes in September). Having suddenly found that I had a great-great-grandfather named Abraham who was buried in Massachusetts, I became determined to visit his grave and pay my respects. That led me to an old graveyard, one that is seldom visited, where some of



the gravestones are more than 135 years old. The gravestones were in various conditions: some had survived beautifully, while others had fallen, and others were so faded with age that they were barely readable.

I had no idea where my great-great grandfather's grave was, and nothing was clearly marked, so I walked among the gravestones, looking for his name. I did not find the grave on my first visit, nor on my second, nor even on my third. I was beginning to think it was a hopeless situation. But then, a colleague, who is familiar with

that cemetery, was able to locate the grave, and he told me where it was. I was profoundly grateful.

Now, I was finally able to see where my great-great-grandfather had been laid to rest nearly a century ago. The terrain was hilly, but I climbed to the row where his gravesite was, and I stood before his grave to offer my prayers for his soul. And when I had finished, I placed a stone on the grave marker, another Jewish custom, to let the next visitor know that someone has been there, a sign that the departed have not been forgotten.

The Importance of Listening to the Past

As I stood there, thinking about Abraham Handverger, a man I knew so little about, I also wondered about some of the others whose names I saw. There were some who died in infancy or early childhood, and others who lived into their eighties. Some had names reminiscent of “the old country,” while others had names that could have belonged to anyone in Boston. The longer I stood there, the more I began to wonder about what kind of lives these people had led.

And I wondered what it was like being an immigrant from Russia or Lithuania or Romania or Poland, arriving in Boston in the 1880s, not speaking the language, not belonging to the dominant religion, not familiar with the dominant culture. I wondered what my great-great-grandfather thought of America, and why he chose to settle in a rural community, more than an hour from the big city, where he and his wife Eva raised nine children. There is so much I will never know about them, but I found myself wishing that I could tell their stories.

As I said my goodbye to the cemetery where I had spent several hours, I gave one last look back at some of the old gravestones, and I wondered if any of the people at rest there had anyone left to remember them—were there living relatives who came by to pay their respects? In the four times I visited, I only saw one other person. During their lives, these people mattered to someone; they were loved, they were important. And today, it seems that many of them are forgotten. Although I suppose that this is just part of life, it still made me sad.

I often give presentations about media history. I speak about old radio shows or popular TV personalities. I’ve got a large collection of rare photos and memorabilia, and before the COVID-19 pandemic, I would go to libraries or amateur radio clubs or civic organizations and give my talks in person. These days, I give them on Zoom, but the reaction is usually the same: people love to reminisce, and they love to remember the songs, the programs, and the announcers they grew up with.

I am increasingly asked to give my presentations for residents of assisted living facilities, many of whom are in their 80s and 90s; when I’m done with my talks, the attendees often want to chat about “the good old days,” and I’m happy to do it. After all, they have firsthand experience with what life was like during the Great Depression of the 1930s, and they lived through

World War II. I find their perspectives extremely valuable. They knew some of the people that I have only read about. Often, they also tell me about their own lives—with stories about what it was like having a husband or brother fighting overseas, or how much their favorite radio drama provided an escape and helped them get through difficult times. And whenever I can, I try to take some notes about their recollections, because the stories help me to understand life in an era long before I was born.

I realize that for some people, listening to an older relative telling a story that has been told many times isn’t very exciting. But sometimes, it’s not about the story. It’s about letting the person know you are willing to listen—that their experiences and their recollections still matter...that they themselves are still important and worth listening to. If I had ever met my great-great-grandfather Abraham in person, I would have wanted to hear about the old country, but I also would have wanted to know how he and my great-great-grandmother Bessie adapted to America, what challenges they encountered and how they dealt with them, what their hopes and dreams were, and so much more. I can only imagine the stories they had, stories I will never hear.

That’s why I wanted to share my experience with you, and the reminder I received about the importance of listening. So, if you have older relatives, take the time to listen to them while you still can. Let them tell their stories, even if you’ve heard them before; learn about how they lived, so that when they are no longer here, you can be the repository of some of their favorite memories and tell their stories to others. In a way, that helps to keep your relatives alive; it helps to keep them from being forgotten.

I’ve learned a lot from some of the stories I’ve heard: stories of disappointment, stories of resilience, stories of faith. I wish I could tell the stories of some of the people whose gravestones I saw. But that’s probably impossible. On the other hand, what *is* possible is learning from those people who are still with us and letting them know we *do* have the time to listen. While a lot of our lives are spent focused on the present and the future, sometimes it’s a worthwhile experience to make some time to listen to—and learn from—the past.

Impact of Technology on Listening



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The COVID-19 restrictions during the pandemic impacted how we communicate with others, and as a result how we listen to one another. Face-to-face communication is often avoided, especially amongst the unvaccinated or those who are at a high-risk of severe illness. Wearing face coverings to protect ourselves against the spread of COVID-19 has affected our ability to read each other's facial expressions, and the ability to listen clearly to one another. Not being able to embrace one another due to social distancing has also reduced our ability to express care and affection.

Many people work and attend school remotely, which has also affected our ability to listen to one another. Although there are advantages in the use of videoconferencing technologies such as Zoom, Webex, Microsoft Teams, Google Hangouts, etc., these technologies have also become a barrier in communicating and listening genuinely to each other.

In various professional and educational contexts, meeting [via videoconferencing technologies can create unnecessary external noise such as technological glitches and errors, Wi-Fi disruptions, and family and/or pet disruptions in the background](#). Although webcams provide richer nonverbal information in comparison to chat or microphones, workers and students often prefer to avoid using them at all for a variety of reasons, including the protection of their privacy.

Active Empathic Listening during the COVID-19 Pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic continues to take a financial, emotional, and social toll on our global community including our work and school systems. The social distancing restrictions and the reliance on computer-mediated communication technologies have resulted in alienated communities and individuals. In many ways, we have become self-centered when communicating with others, making it all about us and our happenings. We fail to truly listen to another's innermost needs. Yet, in this time of suffering, we need empathy. Active empathic listening is a powerful

technique that can re-establish our human contact and our desire to communicate with one another as "real" people, whether in person or in mediated settings. Active empathic listening strengthens bonds between people because it uses empathy, or putting one's self in another's shoes¹.

Who needs active empathic listening during the COVID-19 pandemic? Examine each conversation that you have on a daily basis with caution. Is the person in distress, or experiencing suffering due to the loss of a family member, the loss of a job, or the loss of a relationship such as a divorce? Is the person ill, or experiencing a problem?

Even if people are reticent to share their concerns, you can identify others' distress by focusing on their nonverbal communication. For instance, pay attention to the tone in the voice and their verbal hesitations, their eye and facial expressions, and body movements. Use each conversation as an opportunity to practice active empathic listening to genuinely support others and to nurture quality relationships.

What is Active Empathic Learning?

Engaging in active empathic listening requires three stages.

1. Sensing occurs when engaging and attending to another in a conversation². One may use active listening skills by focusing on the speaker's verbal and nonverbal communicative information.
2. Processing is making sense of the content in the conversation and being able to remember the information². Doing so enables us to recreate a narrative of the conversation in our own minds.
3. Responding focuses on using verbal and nonverbal communication to provide feedback using backchanneling cues². This can involve asking questions to clarify information to ensure that the information is clearly understood.

Poor listening occurs when one or more of the stages of active empathic listening are not fulfilled in the interaction. For instance, a person might be skilled at processing the information; however, without responding, it would be difficult to know if active empathic listening truly occurred.

Another person might be skilled at sensing, but if they are not able to process the information effectively,

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they might forget what was said. Also, if a person cannot process information due to an external reason such as multitasking, or not attending actively to the speaker, this will interfere in the listening process. Internal reasons such as having a disability such as not being able to hear, see, or touch, can also interfere with the listening process.

Active Empathetic Listening: Is it Possible Online?

With the challenges presented by technology, how can we become better active empathetic listeners? First, when interacting, regardless of medium, practice respect, especially if someone is speaking. Respect can be displayed by simply treating the person as a unique individual with a distinct background, experiences, feelings, and thoughts. In an interaction, respect can be manifested when a person's worth is maintained, regardless of the content of the conversation.

Second, practicing genuineness in the conversation can help reduce "fake" communication. When interacting, one might be tempted to be phony or not being one's true self to maintain one's professional identity, but this can interfere with the listening process. To maintain genuineness, one needs to match one's listening behaviors with another's feelings.

Third, build rapport and establish trust. Avoid deceptive communication or telling lies, this will only establish distrust. One can build rapport by finding things in common with the other person and engaging in self-disclosure by sharing personal stories. Trust can be established by being reliable and trustworthy, for instance, if you indicate that you will complete a report at work by a deadline, you will need to do this to establish trust.

Fourth, when listening, practice immediacy. For instance, in a face-to-face context, one can use gestures, head nods, and eye communication to demonstrate caring or concern, even with a face covering. In a mediated context, one can use a webcam to show caring facial expressions and use a tone of voice that is nurturing.

Practicing active empathic listening in mediated contexts will depend on applying the three stages. In a mediated conversation via videoconferencing technology, one needs to practice sensing by paying attention to the speaker. What communicative

information do you have access to? If the person is using chat, you can only pay attention to the language and words of the speaker. If the person is using a microphone, you can attend to the person's vocal cues. However, with a webcam, you can attend to both verbal and nonverbal cues. To practice processing, one needs to make sense of the content in the conversation.

In mediated settings, one can take note on what the speaker is saying and what they may be feeling irrespective of the technology being used. To ensure effective listening, one needs to practice responding in these mediated settings by using backchanneling cues and feedback, whether by microphone or webcam. Because misunderstandings are more likely to occur in mediated settings, it is important to ask questions such as, "can you repeat that?," "to clarify, you meant...," "if I'm understanding correctly, you are experiencing...," "how did that make you feel?," and so forth. One can also paraphrase what the speaker is saying to ensure that one is interpreting the content effectively.

In sum, the COVID-19 pandemic has remarkably influenced how we communicate with one another. It's important to take active empathic listening seriously to maintain quality relationships. Providing active empathic listening is a service to humanity, which can help us understand each other's sufferings and problems, and it can help us to heal our global community. All it takes, is treating each conversation, whether in person or in a mediated context, as an opportunity to practice our effective listening skills.

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With the gift of listening comes the gift of healing. - Catherine Doherty

Ethical Listening and Positive Organizational Psychology



Laura Dryjanska, Ph.D.
Director (Academia), Global Listening Centre.
Director of the Master of Science in Positive Organizational Psychology at Biola University,
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"There is a difference between truly listening and waiting for your turn to talk." - Ralph Waldo Emerson

Positive Psychology has been a growing, research-based field of study for more than two decades (Donaldson & Ko, 2010). Beyond just offering strategies for recovering from mental illness, its goal is to help people thrive in different settings. Positive organizational psychology is concerned with wellbeing at workplaces, as well as flourishing of organizations.

The premise of positive psychology is that wellbeing can be defined, measured, and taught (Seligman, 2011). It includes Positive emotions, intense Engagement, good Relationships, Meaning, and Accomplishment (PERMA). Recent research of PERMA in the workplace context suggests that these five dimensions are not exhaustive and could be further expanded (Donaldson et al., 2020). The question is: How does listening integrate with this premise of positive psychology?

Positive Psychology interventions cannot be implemented without a good level of listening, but a good level of listening not addressed to social and therapeutic purposes would only be an end in itself.

According to Parks (2018), there are some specific ways of being in the world that create a flourishing life and other ways that restrict that life, both for ourselves and others. Listening can be understood as one of these ways of being, as it gives shape to speaking, inviting other people into a dialogue that impacts our everyday lives. Parks (2018) emphasizes that acts of listening, like all communication, are shaped by cultural and individual differences. She says we must listen ethically, with an effort to show respect to other speakers. Furthermore, Hazlett (2021) points out that ethical listening can best be defined as the conscious act of fully comprehending another party's communication. As an active process, it requires participation by both parties in a cooperative conversation rather than a full-on confrontation.

It is well known that communication is not a

one-way street and all individuals involved in this process have ethical responsibilities. An ethical communicator tries to "understand and respect other communicators before evaluating and responding to their messages," which implies critical thinking skills.

The implications of positive psychology to improving performance, quality of work, and wellbeing at workplaces are vast and involve different levels. For example, listening and empathy are widely considered marks of competent communicators and leaders. But often the desire to assert oneself, to engage in self-promotion, alongside a very strong ego prevail over the style of empathic and ethical listening. This leads to problems of a moral and philosophical nature that shall be discussed further.

Researchers over the past three decades have consistently called for greater focus on listening in the organizational contexts. Even if listening is part of positive organizational cultures, and empathy is also considered a vital trait of communication and leadership at workplaces, these two virtues do not always emerge in the traditional organizational structures. There seems to be a missing emphasis on listening in organizational settings, even when it does actually take place in thriving workplaces.

A growing recognition of the importance of listening and empathy in organizational communication is now being acquired at many workplaces. However, in times of crisis or transition, such as the one experienced in the post-pandemic era, some clear guidelines are needed.

In the face of Great Resignation, are the organizations taking time to listen to the employees during the exit interviews? If yes, how do they use the information acquired? This is just one timely example of the importance of listening for a positive organizational culture that sees change as an opportunity for growth rather than an inevitable evil.

According to Kluger and Itzchakov (2021), listening is associated with and a likely cause of desired organizational outcomes in numerous areas, including job satisfaction, performance, leadership, quality of relationships, and wellbeing. Positive psychology research has found that enriching social interactions increase personal wellbeing and

Ethical Listening and Positive Organizational Psychology

provide greater life satisfaction, which easily translates to workplaces in terms of workplace wellbeing and job satisfaction.

The skill of listening, based on ethical and active listening founded on empathy, is necessary for healthy, functioning, and enriching relationships with co-workers, supervisors, and subordinates. Especially in multicultural and diverse workplaces, listening appears as a must for fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion, rooted in cultural humility. A humble individual takes time to listen to another human being, without making assumptions about what is going to be said. There is nothing more discouraging than a conversation with a person who assumes that they already know what a co-worker is going to tell them, as they consider listening a waste of their precious time.

The virtue of humility thus constitutes an example of many bridges between the art of listening and positive psychology.

Beyond psychology, listening has certainly been studied from multidisciplinary perspectives over centuries. In many countries, the science of psychology is historically rooted in philosophy. It appears worthwhile to consider the philosophy of listening. Haroutunian-Gordon (2011 p. 126) notes that philosophy of listening can be defined as “a set of beliefs about the topic of listening,” divided into the following four categories: (1) the aim of listening; (2) the nature of listening; (3) the role of the listener; and (4) the relation between the listener and the speaker.

What is the meaning of a lesson, presentation, or a talk by speakers in various capacities who want to attract bystanders to listen? If the speech does not stimulate questions and interaction, there will hardly be a positive and ethical listening taking place. Listening includes some relevant expectations of leaders and those who speak – before and while they share, they should consider the target audience and do all they can to facilitate ethical listening.

This is especially relevant in the context of workplaces and organizations, in particular in virtual teams. According to Trevisani (2019), an Italian expert in coaching, listening to a worker or employee is closely related to empathy. In psychology, empathy includes self-identifying with the moods of another individual, the ability to understand their

thoughts and, above all, their emotions. It is different from sympathy in its intent to understand the feelings experienced by another person, not through a rational explanation, but by sharing the affective dimension of their overall experience. Ethical listening in organizations is facilitated by such ability to “get inside a person’s head”, comprehend how they think and reason, while grasping the nuances of their decision-making. It takes into account cultural and individual diversity, which include belief systems, constraints of a language used, convictions and emotions. For a workplace coach or leader, listening is the cornerstone of a relationship based on mutual understanding and respect. It can be seen as an act of giving, understanding that another person is a form of a gift to us. While it may turn into a strategic act (for example, in a negotiation setting), the premise of ethical listening in a workplace context should not be seen as a means to an end, but as a worthwhile pursue in and of itself.

Organizational psychology often has to deal with a workplace conflict. Such conflict can frequently be traced to problems with listening on different levels: the non-listening or an unwillingness to listen, motivated by a conscious decision (“I don’t want to listen to her”) or a lack of ability for example because of being overwhelmed or tired (“I was so tired that I could not hear”), as well as apathetic, passive, or even distorted listening, for example when from the start a person chooses not to listen due to ideological and cultural reasons related to stereotypes and biases. The antidote to such workplace conflict is listening aimed at understanding the person in depth, including their emotional states in conditions of mutual appreciation and respect.

Coaching in organizational psychology uses some techniques for effective listening, including: fostering curiosity and interest; paraphrasing (or having the listener repeat what they understood); summarizing; rephrasing what the other person said in order to gather more information; encouraging targeted questions (conversational refocusing) in order to clarify unclear parts of the speech; avoiding personal questions until a solid relationship has been established; being attentive to non-verbal signals in order to assess emotions and moods; withholding from teaching or judging. Interestingly, while these are essential tools in a coaching relationship, they may also prove very

Ethical Listening and Positive Organizational Psychology

useful to a leader and subordinate alike. Applying such tools can likely reduce workplace conflict and stress, contributing to a greater job satisfaction, motivation, and efficacy.

Knowing how to listen is a prerequisite for understanding and sharing or not, consciously and without prejudice, the thoughts of others. This certainly paves the way to a positive psychology approach, made up of emotions, attitudes and moods that can lead to profound improvements in the individual, in their network of relationships, in the organization they belong to, in a word, improving the quality of relationships and therefore of the life and wellbeing of workers and organizations.

What are some practical implications of the above conceptual reflection? For one, it is the author's vision for the positive organizational psychology graduate program to consciously include listening as one of the cornerstones that guide the entire framework of the degree. In integrating industrial-organizational psychology, positive psychology, and faith from a philosophical perspective, ethical listening is the common thread, also in fomenting cultural humility and attention to diversity, equity, and inclusion in organizations.

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- Keywords:** positive psychology, industrial-organizational psychology, Plato, cultural humility, ethical listening
- Grade:** Higher education (graduate level)

Enjoy Listening 😊



Speaking
and
Listening

Outstanding Listeners Interview



Snježana Prijić-Samaržija, Ph.D.
Professor & Rector at
The University of Rijeka, Croatia.

Jasmina: As a head of a university and philosopher, who has championed the importance of listening, can you share how you have evolved as a listener? What do you do differently today than, perhaps, ten years ago?

Snježana: I came to comprehend the significance of listening with experience. I wasn't originally a listener: as a young, underrepresented female scientist, I thought that the objective of deliberation and philosophical discussion was to express your perspective, make persuasive arguments, and convince others that your viewpoint was correct. I reduced listening to hearing what others thought and stood for. My outlook genuinely caught my attention, endeavouring to grasp what I believed about the dialogue's topic. With time, I recognized that was how other people also perceived conversations, including my colleagues at the university. And while it's an approach and a concept moderately appropriate for scientific debates, it has proven questionable at the position of university management, where I must make decisions, coordinate with others, and find the best possible solutions.

I realized that the communicatory strategy where everyone is focused on their stance and arguments they could mobilize for their purposes, as sophisticated as it might be, closes us to others. Such inaccessibility hinders from stepping in someone else's shoes and observing the broader picture. In some cases, it even exhibits a lack of care and makes conflict resolution more difficult. Listening, giving others time to share their thoughts, and maintaining an honest desire to understand someone else's position, context, and motivation through conversing with them has proven to be a better strategy than merely explaining my position. Listening isn't just an act of perception: it's an intellectual and ethical attitude that demonstrates our desire to understand others, appreciate their motives and arguments, and seek either conflict resolution or rational disagreement. In a world that abounds in challenges, I am increasingly convinced we need more listening and inclusivity.

Jasmina: Can you discuss how your leadership has been influenced by your listening? And can you address how



INTERVIEWER:

Professor Jasmina Havranek, Ph.D.
Senior Vice President
(Academic Affairs)
Global Listening Centre.
Former Director: Croatian Agency for
Science and Higher Education.

problems could be better addressed if people were better listeners?

Snježana: The listener's attitude in everyday work is that you genuinely seek to understand and appreciate another person's stance. At first glance, I often disagree with other people's requirements at my job because it seems as if they want to impose their individual perspective regardless of the fact it isn't optimal for the institution. They strike me as eager to levy their interests or demand a privileged position. Listening is an attitude that enables me to subdue this starting resistance, suppress it, and attempt to understand why someone may believe they have earned a privileged position. Sometimes it comes to light that it is not an appeal for unfair conduct but a plea to remedy a past wrong, usually a form of discrimination. Sometimes, they believe they have demonstrated superior results that would justify such exceptional treatment. Sometimes there are cases where a person fears letting down those who compelled them to vouch for them, and sometimes they fear taking on new responsibilities. I have found a different solution or a different form of compromise in all these cases. Listening enables gradual harmonization and the skill of calibrating different positions that leads to valuable long-term solutions.

Jasmina: Listening can be a very complex process. Can you talk about tools or skills that are important for listening?

Snježana: You're correct. It's a complex process as it involves epistemic and ethical stances and the skill of moderating a conversation. It is natural for each person to feel resistance towards a different opinion that makes demands of our behavior. We call that cognitive dissonance. The farther away the other person's attitude is from ours, the more pronounced dissonance we feel. As if it was an automatic process, we immediately amass counterarguments. Listening requires us to understand the possibility of a rationally grounded dissonance and how vital it is to control our reactions.

Outstanding Listeners Interview

It requires the ethical attitude of respecting another person and the epistemic philosophy of exploring a topic in depth from another perspective before disqualifying someone or offering undue criticism. Listening is also the skill of leading quality conversations and the ability to ask constructive and benevolent questions rather than overarching, nosy, disdainful, or arrogant inquiries.

Jasmina: Do you have a philosophical position on listening?

Snježana: In philosophy, I endorse virtue epistemology, a position that focuses on the knower's – or epistemic agent's – intellectual virtues. For me, listening is a kind of intellectual virtue that includes intellectual curiosity, humility, conscientiousness, and responsibility. Listening presupposes a curious yet humble attitude, a desire to learn, and the consciousness that we don't always know everything that we have maybe failed to assess the question from a perspective we still cannot see, that there is always the possibility we have made a mistake, and we can improve our belief. That's precisely why, for me, listening is an act of epistemic conscientiousness and responsible conduct towards knowledge. Listening is undoubtedly a potent tool if we hope to approach correct attitudes or the truth.

Jasmina: What role does “ethics” play in listening, and from an ethical standpoint, what difference can ethical listening make in an organization's ...or a government's... plans and programs?

Snježana: Listening encompasses the ethical attitude of respecting others, difference, diversity, plurality,

difference, diversity, plurality, and inclusiveness. All of these are vital elements comprising the idea of academic integrity. Universities must be locations to rethink and practice ethical behavior and areas whose example should lead the political and broader community forward. I believe that we at universities have plenty more room to grow in that sense, to educate students and other citizens. Listening is a building block of the trust we are trying to achieve in citizens and the community.

Jasmina: In the context of higher education, does social media provide you with a listening tool?

Snježana: Social media is our reality. It has brought a lot of good, by which I'm speaking primarily of democratizing information-sharing and communication. Today all information is accessible to everyone and can no longer be the space of manipulation and powerplay. However, social media have burdened us with many challenges, so today, we all live in our informational bubbles where we exchange opinions with like-minded peers. Search algorithms present us with sources that confirm what we already think. It leads to us becoming all the surer of our stances and even more critical of others. Moreover, it leads to extremization as some informational bubbles function as echo chambers. People in them don't only not listen to people who hold different opinions, but they refuse to hear them and perceive them as threats. I think it's an occurrence that we must become aware of as soon as possible as it is the exact opposite of all the ethical and intellectual virtues that comprise listening.



Global Listening Festival

The Global Listening Centre (GLC) has established a global listening network of researchers and practitioners to further our understanding of effective listening practices. It is our belief that by sharing knowledge regarding listening we can better address societal challenges on the local as well as the international level. The GLC is happy to invite you to participate in a celebration of listening as we host a 10-day Global Listening Festival between **July 22nd and July 31st, 2022**, via Telecast or Zoom/YouTube. The Festival's objective is to promote research related to listening as a global community. We encourage presentations from both **members and non-members** related to topics such as listening in education, health care, environmental listening, law, corporate, listening disorders, listening for peace, etc. Activities related to listening are also welcome (i.e., art, music, campaigns, poster presentations, storytelling, panel discussions etc.). Presentations will be accepted in major local

languages also. **Abstracts** are due by May 20th, 2022. Non-members are kindly requested to include biographies. Upon acceptance of abstracts, full presentations should be pre-recorded, and the videos should be submitted by June 15th, 2022. Length of presentations should be between 18 to 45 minutes. Please direct any queries to us at info@globallisteningcentre.org or globallisteningcentre@gmail.com

Honoring Our Members



William and Ordelle Watts Professor Rebecca Day Babcock, Ph.D.

University of Texas Permian Basin,
Director of Writing and Past Executive Editor, *"The Global Listener"*
Global Listening Centre.

Professor Rebecca Babcock demonstrates her passion for listening through serving on various GLC committees. She has contributed immensely to GLC from its inception by working with Sardool Singh on many important projects that together they brought to fruition. A respected woman in GLC, she is a winner of its Significant Contribution Award. Despite these achievements, Rebecca believes that listening is needed today like never before. Her biographical brief is below.

Rebecca Day Babcock is the William and Ordelle Watts Professor at the University of Texas Permian Basin, where she also serves as the Director of Undergraduate Research and Freshman English Coordinator. Her interests are in writing centers, metaresearch, folklinguistics, and literacy. Her latest project is a book about the 60s folk-rock group the Lovin' Spoonful. She has also written or edited five books about writing center tutoring, including *Theories and Methods of Writing Center Studies* edited with Jo Mackiewicz (winner of the CWPB best edited collection award) and a revised edition of *Researching the Writing Center* written with Terese Thonus. Her most recent book is *Boom or Bust: Narrative, Life, and Culture from the West Texas Oil Patch* published by Oklahoma University Press and co-edited with Sheena Stief and Kristen Figgins. In addition she has won best article awards from both IWCA and CWPB for her work on tutoring deaf students and diversity in writing center directors. Rebecca, we are so honored and proud to have such an elite scholar in our organization. Our best wishes.

New Chair Announcements 2022-23



Jo-Ann Rolle, Ph.D.

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Dean School of Business,
Medgar Evers College,
City University of New York.



Professor Stacey Connaughton, Ph.D.

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Professor Jasmina Havranek, Ph.D.

Senior Vice President (Academic Affairs)
Global Listening Centre.
Former Director of Croatian Agency for Science
and Higher Education Croatia.

Congratulations ! Professor Jagadish.



Professor Chennupati Jagadish, AC, MNAE(US), FAA, FTSE, FTWAS, FNAI, FNA, FNAE, FASc, FNASc, FAPAS, FEurASc, FIEEE, FAPS, FMRS, FOSA, FlntSP, FAIP, FloN, FSPIE, FECS, FIET, FAAAS, FAVS, FEMA, HonMemMRSI

Chairman Global Listening Centre,

with

Ms. Anna-Maria Arabia, Chief Executive of the Australian Academy of Science at the Academy's Head Quarters "Shine Dome" our esteemed honorable Chairman, Professor Chennupati Jagadish, has been granted the privilege of leading Australia's prestigious science organization, the Australian Academy of Science.

"The Academy plays an important role providing independent, authoritative, and influential scientific advice to the Australian Parliament. I look forward to leading that work and being a champion for the cause of science and scientific excellence"; said Professor Jagadish. The Global Listening Centre is honored to have Professor Jagadish as our Chairman and wish him all the best in his new role. Professor Jagadish is presently associated with The Australian National University since years.



Professor Zuraidah Mohd Don, Ph.D., of the Universiti Teknologi Malaysia's presentation was attended by a huge audience online. Recognized as the top 25 outstanding women listeners in the world in 2021, Zuraidah is an acclaimed name in Malaysia and is highly respected because of her tremendous contribution in the field of academics and her integrity. Congratulations Zuraidah!

Thanks to Our Contributors

2021 was without doubt a challenging year worldwide. Despite the hardship, 25 extraordinary women listeners created a difference within their communities and so honored as the worlds' "Outstanding Women Listeners 2021" by the Global Listening Centre. The event featured an award ceremony followed by important presentations and insightful speeches from our distinguished guests, our Chairman, Past Vice Chair, event contributors and presenters.

At Global Listening Centre, we highly value every single contribution made by our esteemed members and guests. We would like to extend our gratitude to all our members and guests who made this event a memorable one.

For more information about The Top 25 Outstanding Women Listeners 2021 awards , please visit our previous newsletter, *The Global Listener, Issue 4*. (www.globallisteningcentre.org)

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The 25 Outstanding Women Listeners in the World 2021



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THANKS AGAIN!

"We wish to thank once more all of the contributors to the selection of the Top 25 Outstanding Women Listeners in the World of 2021. We deeply appreciate the time spent and the hard work invested in the transparent and difficult process of selection. Your listening makes the world a better place." Professor Chennupati Jagadish, Chairman, Global Listening Board. Global Listening Centre. Distinguished Professor at Australian National University.



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Quality Listening Tips

1. Listening means establishing a **relationship**: you are honoring the communication between you and the other person when you listen.
2. Listen with empathy and understanding. **Listen *with*, don't listen *to*.**
3. Listen with an **open mind**. Be receptive and avoid making assumptions.
4. We cannot learn if we are **interrupting**. Give others the chance to make their point without trying to dominate the conversation.
5. Hold space for **opinions** that differ from yours. Let them make you curious to learn something new.
6. Be understanding of **differences** in culture, age, gender, or social status. Show that you value every person for who they are and respect their essential humanity.
7. Listen with **patience**. Listen first to understand, not to formulate a response.
8. **Listen to yourself**, recognizing your feelings, biases, perspectives.
9. Adapt to the **listening context** and how positive or negative it is.
10. **Listening is a choice**. Consciously choose to listen.

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