



**Hon. Juliana O'Connor-Connolly JP, MP**  
Deputy Premier, Cayman Islands.

## Highlights

## From a 'Learned' Profession to a 'Listening' Profession



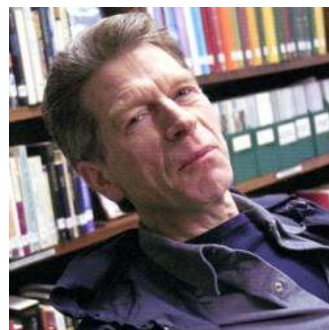
## Carin-Isabel Knoop

## Beyond Active Listening: Promoting Communication- Based and Relational Listening



**David T. McMahan, Ph.D.**

## The Listening Experience: Music and Voice



**Michael W. Purdy, Ph.D.**

## The Art of Listening in the Benedictine Wisdom Tradition



**Peter A. Huff, Ph.D.**



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Listening Legend and our Past Chairman  
Professor Jagadish meets Prime Ministers!



"I am grateful to the Honourable Anthony Albanese, Prime Minister of Australia for inviting me to the Dinner at the Sydney Opera House with the visiting Prime Minister of India, the Honourable Narendra Modi. It was an honour to spend time with Prime Ministers of Australia and India and other Ministers and dignitaries from both the countries."

**Professor Chennupati Jagadish, AC**

Past Chairman, Global Listening Board, Global Listening Centre.  
President of the Australian Academy of Science

## New Chairs (2023 - 2024)



**Alan R. Ehrlich**  
President,  
Global Listening Centre.  
Director and Chair  
(Listening Disorder)  
Global Listening Centre



**Lynette Louw, Ph.D.**  
Academic Chair,  
Global Listening Centre.  
Professor and Deputy Dean,  
at Rhodes University in  
Grahamstown, South Africa.



**Lance Strate, Ph.D.**  
Senior Vice President  
(Academic Affairs)  
Global Listening Centre.  
Professor of Communication and  
Media Studies at Fordham  
University in New York City. US



**Peter A. Huff, Ph.D.**  
Instructional and Spiritual Chair,  
Global Listening Centre.  
Director of the Center for  
Benedictine Values, Professor of  
Religious Studies at Benedictine  
University in Chicago. US

## A Message from the Executive Editor

Dear Listeners,

As Executive Chair of the Global Listening Centre, I have undertaken the additional responsibility of Editor of the prestigious newsletter, *The Global Listener*. In this capacity, my confidence in the Global Listening Centre as an organization of elite and distinguished scholars and practitioners has been reaffirmed.

As I have mentioned previously, the Global Listening Centre is dedicated to transforming lives through the healing power of listening. Initiatives promoting the importance of listening and supporting listening proficiencies--especially in pervasive non-listening environments--will, we hope, lead to better understanding, deeper relationships, increased critical awareness, greater well-being, and a much healthier world. We believe that listening is fundamental and indispensable.

One such example is an incredible interview given by Hon. Juliana Y. O'Connor-Connolly, JP, MP, Deputy Premier, Minister for Education and Minister for District Administration & Lands Caymans Island. Hon. O'Connor-Connolly represents and embodies an excellent listener, and her contributions have been invaluable.

Our members are doing remarkable work exploring and advocating for the importance of listening. The world needs listening like never before, and our members are aspiring to make our planet a better place. Articles by Professor Michael Purdy, Professor Peter A. Huff, Dr. Michael Stanley, and our respected Chairperson, Carin-Isabel Knoop, epitomize such work.

We welcome our new President Alan R. Ehrlich, who is a long-time member of our organization and Chair of the Listening Disorders Division. Mr. Ehrlich has spent more than 30 years in the field of listening disorders research, and he was honored last year for his service to the Global Listening Center. We are grateful to have such an elite scholar on our team.

Congratulations to all new Chairs of the Global Listening Board for their 2023-2024 tenures. We are looking forward to their contributions.

Thanks is extended to Professor Paaige Turner for serving as Chairperson for our 25 Outstanding Women Listeners in the World (25OWL) 2023. Our 25 OWL 2021 was a huge success which helped us promote listening in many countries.

Lastly, we wish to thank the Editorial Team of the newsletter, namely Associate Professor Jicheng Sun (China), Dr. Hal Swindall (Malaysia), Sobia Afzal (Dubai), and Jennifer Groner, for their marvelous work on such a great issue. Deep appreciation is extended to Professor Carol Bishop Mills for the phenomenal work as the previous Executive Editor.

To conclude, I encourage you to share this newsletter and to share the work of the Global Listening Centre with your colleagues and friends. I also encourage you to submit an article for our upcoming newsletters. Articles are peer reviewed, highly regarded, and read at universities and institutions around the world. You can find the submission guidelines on our website.

Listening Transforms Lives.

Yours in listening,



**David T. McMahan, Ph.D.**  
Executive Editor *The Global Listener*  
Executive Chair, Global Listening Centre  
Professor of Communication at  
Missouri Western State University.



**Professor David T. McMahan, Ph.D.**



**March 2024**

## From a 'Learned' Profession to a 'Listening' Profession



**Carin-Isabel Knoop**  
Chairperson, Global Listening Centre.  
Executive Director Harvard Business School  
Case Research and Writing Group, Harvard University.  
Co-Founder of HSIO

As children, we are often just *told to* but never *taught* how to listen. Some of the only instruction we'll ever receive on how to listen is when learning our profession.

What differentiates expertise from unawareness is the basis of knowledge, but of equal importance is structuring present problems with which to apply that knowledge. A person might say the exact same words, but they are heard differently by a lawyer, a doctor, or a priest because these learned professionals have internalized very different positions on listening.

Some might discard elements from what they heard, others might reframe what they heard into their own narrative, and a third might take what they heard as sufficient information for their purposes. Those purposes are generally explicit (one seeks a doctor for their physical care, a lawyer for their legal counsel, and a priest for their spiritual direction). However, even within those explicit purposes are numerous and shifting objectives, often negotiating the conversation with the patient/client/parishioner and managing the meeting's boundaries and goals – all guided by leadership through listening.

The authors, one a cognitive behavioral neurologist, and the other a management researcher and higher education leader, have begun to explore the axes upon which different professions construct their approach to listening “on the job,” as it were, and organize the shared principles as:

- a) **What is the listener listening to**  
(the nature or purpose of the messages and the speaker's intentions)?
- b) **What is the listener listening for**  
(the component elements of the message itself)?
- c) **Where is the listener listening from**  
(the personal processes that may inform and filter the incoming information)?

Using a medical conversation as an example, we aim to show that the listener should be conscious of the nature



**Michael P. H. Stanley, MD**  
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of their own intentions and the speaker's intention for the meeting. This sets the context to correctly identify the infinite array of information contained within the speaker's words for the listener to pay attention to. Why the listener is paying attention will determine how and what one is paying attention to. Being intentional about why, what, and how will help you check yourself for inattentions and distortions in what you think you heard.

### The Medical Conversation

In a medical consultation, there are specific forms of listening that follow parameters. Doctors ‘take’ histories; patients do not ‘give’ them. The pejorative often seen in charts that a patient was ‘a poor historian’ is as foolish as it is seeks to absolve the doctor from responsibility. Patients chronicle their experiences. It is the doctor who plays the historian. Shifting the burden of communication on to the patient/speaker fundamentally leads to misinterpretation of the active and intentional process of a doctor's listening.

### Taking the History of Present Illness

The goal of listening to the patient is to extract from an account of his symptoms the non-accidental elements of an illness's course and render its elements into a diagnosis that conforms with a synthetic category called ‘disease.’ This hypothesized disease is then explored with confirmatory tests to uncover a

specific pathology. If both patient and the doctor are lucky, we can treat the pathology from which the disease arrives, ultimately relieving the patient's suffering.

The goal of listening is to delineate the patient's understanding of their illness, its source, its effect on his life, and its therapeutic options (an ecological view of illness) given that these elements will organize the therapeutic approach. Depending on the patient's appreciation of the situation, this may determine what strategy is plausible.

The doctor is listening to the patient but also listening to self. Based on that self-monitoring, the doctor can permute the formula of questions to redirect the inquiry.



**Auscultation**  
(photo credit Antonio Sadaric and midjourney;  
prompt: a statue of a large ear with a stethoscope  
in a museum, in the style of Michelangelo)



Sometimes the inquiry can be reshaped to be more explicit or specific (e.g., yes/no answers only, leading questions), or purposely vague (open-ended questions to reduce influencing the response, or tangential questions to minimize the chance the patient can anticipate where the inquiry is pointing to). Sometimes this diagnostic inquiry can be paused to utilize an appreciative form of listening (not less active, to be therapeutic rather than diagnostic).

All conversations have a structure, but we're often not consciously considering how aligned the intents, objectives, and methods of the speaker and the listener are to the underlying structure. The doctor might follow one of the mnemonics in medicine, such as 'Oldcars,' to ensure he/she doesn't forget any steps. Using this device implies a formal structure to a doctor's listening, and that structure enables a function (diagnosis). The patient's autobio-graphical history may not align with that structure, and the doctor will reorganize the sequence in her head.

The patient is listening to the doctor and self. He adjusts what he says in response to the perceived connotations and implications of the doctor's questions. Sometimes, he discovers a previously unacknowledged feature of his experience while listening to himself. Other realizations come from this new selfdiscovery. Through speaking and listening, the **history of the present illness is defined**. This narrative is then written up in a special script encoded with actionable information, in the form of clinical notes.

The history of present illness will relay the symptoms shared by the patient. **Symptoms are sensations or feelings reported by the patient.** The symptom is what a patient says: "I have a headache." **What the doctor sees are signs — observable characteristics.** In this instance, "the patient presents with a nail sticking in her head."

Both have their own goals in the interaction. A doctor wants to find a problem or get the patient out of their office/appointment efficiently. The patient might have a primary reason for coming in to be seen but is also working toward a **secondary gain** — perhaps a note from the doctor to get out of jury duty. So the physician might also be listening for what else her interlocutor might seek.

As we saw, the doctor uses an approach generally for a consultation and carefully distinguishes between what is said and observed. This is not just letting one's client talk. It's using your response to signal that their

appreciation of the situation is being appreciated in turn by the consultant. Being listened to is being known, which goes a long way toward developing an alliance with the patient.

This approach is relevant to any consultant approaching a client's question. Consultation can be loosely defined. A supervisor listening to the concern of a subordinate or a junior colleague trying to understand the demands of a senior manager can and does use some of a consultative approach. When listening for anything other than pleasure, one should listen with intention and structure. Mort Adler's classic, "How to Speak, How to Listen" provides a general set of rules that can be a useful structure for anyone engaged in a productive, transactional dialogue (of which a consultation is a form).



**Signs, symptoms, and stethoscopes**  
(photo credit Antonio Sadaric and midjourney;  
prompt: "a large ear in the size of a human,  
listening to a conversation with a stethoscope,  
in the style of Wes Anderson")

**The listener should be conscious of the nature of the intention, as why one is paying attention will determine how one pays attention and to what one is paying attention to.** The listener should be conscious of the structure of reception and interpretation of the speaker's response. A doctor's structure is different than an attorney's, a pastor's, and an architect's etc., but each has a structure, and they deploy that structure in listening like a filter. The key is to ensure that the listener's sieve is set to the right grain for the speaker's purposes so that both catch what they need in the interaction to act on this information.

## Listening with a Third Ear

In the 1940s, psychoanalyst Theodor Reik wrote a book by the title "title of the book". A family institute describes this ear as being able to hear beyond the surface words to the underpinning emotions: "With our Third Ear we're like an audience listening while staying in our seats, never climbing onto the stage to join the drama."

Do different occupations listen differently, and in what ways? Occupations, by their nature, have specified outputs, whether a good or a service, and the ways someone functions as a Listener during career-context communication, in turn, might influence what they are listening to and listening for. In other words, a butcher, a baker, and a candlestick-maker might have different strategies for Listening. Whether or not you yourself, are a butcher, baker, or a candlestick-maker, their strategies might prove an adaptable strategy suited to your needs. How would knowledge of these occupational listening strategies circumvent or resolve cognitive traps?

When you have a chance to interact with a professional, consider the parameters of “listening to, for, and from” across disciplines, professions, careers (an athletic coach and a professional coach; a politician and a school-teacher), but also in those occupational roles that inter-play (a doctor, a nurse, and a patient; a 911 dispatcher and a policeman; musicians and conductors).

Ask what also impedes their performance as listener. These range from expediency (for a doctor, it might be to get to a diagnosis and send the patient along or for a DA to get a protective order) and dopamine (from the reward of having “solved a problem” and checked off a box), to the traps of assumptions (“patients always lie”), distraction (and the siren songs of the cell phone), and self-deprecation (listening to the voices about ourselves in our heads, “management does not understand me” or “my patients don’t respect me because I look so young”).

In leadership positions, we are often handed a bullhorn, when what we should reach for is an ear-horn. Those who lead from a position of listening—as is natural in the professions like pastors, attorneys, and physicians—do so because the scope of their practice seemingly makes clear why their parishioner, client, or patient has arrived. However, sometimes the care a patient needs is pastoral, not medical.

Recognizing one’s own premise and pattern for listening is the first step in learning to tune your ear to the registers of different professional pitches so that powerfully but paradoxically when the speaker listens to your response, it is they who feel heard.

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Authors (inspired by many others including coach Sylvie Maury, storytelling researcher Antonio Sadaric, PhD, mediators Eugene Kogan, PhD, and psychiatrist Doctor Daven Morrison)

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**Carin-Isabel Knoop** founded and leads the 20-member case writing team at Harvard Business School. Learning about managers’ challenges pushed her to improve their lives, which led to the publication of *Compassionate Management of Mental Health at Work* with Professor John A. Quelch (Springer, 2018). She also co-founded HSIO (Human Sustainability Inside Out), a provider of mental health support materials and educational programs, and speaks and publishes about mental health in the U.S., French, and Spanish-language spheres. She enjoys soft-serve ice cream, pragmatic idealists, and postcard writing



**Listening Legend Professor Steven A. Beebe, Ph.D.**

The British author C. S. Lewis, said his secretary Walter Hooper, was the best listener he ever met.

Hooper said C. S. Lewis was the best listener because he actually wanted to know what you had to say.

He listened and asked good follow-up questions.

Here is Professor Steven Beebe standing in front of Lewis’s home near Oxford, England.



## Beyond Active Listening: Promoting Communication-Based and Relational Listening



**David T. McMahan, Ph.D.**  
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**W**hen accepting the honor of serving as Executive Chair of the Global Listening Centre, I noted the Centre's dedication to transform lives through the impactful and healing power of listening. Initiatives promoting the importance of listening and supporting listening proficiencies – especially in pervasive non-listening environments – can lead to better understanding, deeper relational connections, increased critical awareness, greater well-being, and a much healthier world. Indeed, listening can be recognized as fundamental and indispensable.

Unlocking the full power of listening and all that can be achieved through its effective implementation, though, requires a comprehensive understanding of communication processes and recognition of the centrality of relationships. Doing so reinforces the need to go beyond superficial active listening and to engage in communication-based and relational listening.

In what follows, we will first examine communication as transactional and constitutive, a more complete and accurate view of communication than what might be typically recognized and understood by a casual observer. We will next examine the centrality of relationships in communication processes. We will then consider how active listening on its most basic and generally-enacted levels may not be sufficient and how the promotion of communication-based and relational listening can lead to more effective listening given the actual complex nature of communication.

### Understanding Communication

A cursory glance at communication might lead one to believe that it merely involves the sending of messages. The act of communicating, then, would entail one person sending a message to another person. Whether or not the message is received is of little consequence. Simply, a message has been sent. As with the prospect of a falling tree making a noise with no one around, we can philosophically ponder whether communication actually occurs if a message is not received. However, doing so would have little value in advancing the study of either communication or listening.

A slightly deeper examination of communication reveals it to be more of an interaction through which messages are sent by one person and received by another person. The original recipient generally then becomes a sender of a subsequent message received by the original sender. This view of communication is a

more accurate view of what takes place. However, this perspective positions communication as the mere exchange of messages, simply symbols being passed back and forth between people.

A more complete exploration of communication reveals its transactional and constitutive nature. Essentially, something happens beyond the mere exchange of messages, beyond symbols simply being passed back and forth between people. In fact, it is through communication that meanings are constructed. Yet, there is even more to communication than just the construction of meaning. It is through communication that fundamental components of our lives get created. It is through communication that relationships are created, where cultures are created, where identities are created, and where realities are created. These components are not only created through communication but also embedded within communication. Communication is where they exist, where they are maintained, where they are challenged, and where they are transformed. Our world is created and understood symbolically.

Viewing communication as simply sending or exchanging messages undermines recognition of its complexity and hinders understanding what is actually transpiring. Listening as if communication is simple rather than complex limits its effectiveness and limits what can be achieved through it.

### Centrality of Relationships

A more complete understanding of communication also requires recognition of the centrality of relationships, a theme of my Communication in Everyday Life series of books written with Steve Duck (2021a, 2021b). Communication and relationships are inextricably woven together. It is through communication, as mentioned previously, that relationships are created, maintained, and transformed. Moreover, when we are communicating, we are also relating. A relationship is assumed each time that a person communicates, influencing what messages are communicated and how those messages are being communicated. Equally important and not to be overlooked, the assumed relationship is also influencing what messages are not communicated and how those messages are not being communicated.

When communicating, even when not specifically addressing a relationship, relational information is being conveyed and a relationship is being reinforced. Consider, for example, waiting in a line next to two people you do not know and listening to their conversation. You could likely determine with more than a fair degree of certainty whether they are romantic partners, family members, friends, strangers,

acquaintances, enemies, coworkers, or if they share some other sort of relationship. You could determine this connection based on what they are saying, what they are not saying, and the methods, styles, and patterns of communication consistent with a particular type of relationship in a given culture.

Relationships not only influence what is being communicated but also influence the construction and assigning of meaning. Consider, another example of someone making a sarcastic comment to you. Your relationship with that person will guide how you assign meaning to that comment. If you understand that person to be a friend, you might determine or interpret the sarcastic comment to be uttered in jest and assign meaning accordingly. If you consider the person to be an enemy, you might determine the sarcastic comment to be uttered in malice and assign meaning as such.

Of course, types of relationships extend beyond the personal relationships employed in the previous examples. Social relationships experienced in the workplace, education, healthcare, commerce, community organizations, and other settings also have such an intertwined connection and association with communication. Accordingly, it is within the context of all sorts of relationships where we learn cultural ways of communicating and the meaning systems inherent within and composing the cultural systems to which we belong. As with viewing communication as a simple act or interaction, overlooking the centrality of relationships in communication and in our lives as a whole will hinder listening effectiveness.

### Communication-Based and Relational Listening

Such an understanding of communication and the centrality of relationships compels us to go beyond promoting active listening to promote/foster communication-based and relational listening. Too often, people attempting to listen actively, in spite of having the best of intentions, simply go through the motions without seeking deeper levels of understanding and without recognizing all that is taking place in the communication process. If communication simply entailed sending and receiving messages, active listening on its most basic levels would be sufficient. However, the transactional and constitutive nature of communication requires more. I am by no means maintaining that active listening is wrong. Rather, active listening as it seems to be understood and employed by the general public as represented through online guides, employee training manuals, and popular press literature is not enough to accomplish effective listening.

Engaging in communication-based listening means not simply going through the motions of active listening. It means fully recognizing, understanding, and addressing the complexity of communication and seeking deeper levels of understanding of messages and

deeper understandings of the other person. In doing so, an individual may go beyond cursory or surface level meaning. In addition, an individual may recognize identity, culture, and reality construction taking place as the other person communicates, creating selves and influencing the messages. An individual may further understand the other person's worldviews and perspectives are conveyed and displayed each time they communicate, both through the verbal symbols selected to construct a message and through the accompanying nonverbal behaviors used when conveying that message. While doing so, one may also acknowledge how their own identity and cultural perspectives are influencing their reception and understanding of messages and their subsequent responses.

As described in the *Communication in Everyday Life* series (Duck & McMahan, 2021a, 2021b), being a relational listener means going further still by recognizing, understanding, and addressing the centrality of relationships in communication processes and the interconnected nature of communication and relationships. Doing so acknowledges that relationships impact all messages and all messages impact relationships. It further enables the exploration of that mutual impact as part of the listening process. When engaging in relational listening, an individual must consider

- what meanings might be assigned to a message based on their understanding of the relationship,
- whether the message corresponds with their understanding of the relationship,
- what the message informs them about the other person's understanding of the relationship, and
- what impact the message has on the relationship overall.

### Conclusion

A communication-based and relational approach to listening will provide a more complete and a more accurate determination of meanings and will provide a more significant understanding of the influences that messages have on all aspects of our lives. Such an approach necessarily takes us beyond an active approach to listening, which has led people to appreciate that listening is not a passive endeavor but has potentially led people to believe that simply going through those active motions is sufficient. Promoting communication-based and relational approaches to listening can better equip people to engage in effective listening and to fully realize its transformational power and potential.

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## The Art of Listening in the Benedictine Wisdom Tradition



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The world's sacred library reveals to us the great diversity of tongues with which humanity's spiritual experience has spoken and continues to speak. The imperative mood is distinctly present, issuing commands and highlighting duties, but so are other forms of expression. Arguably narrative dominates—with epic mythmaking that enraptures but rarely pauses to explain or moralize. Dialogues, typically between culture heroes and deities or gurus and novices, are also quite conspicuous. The interrogative is especially noticeable, too. The unanswered questions of seers from ages past haunt us today no matter what our philosophical loyalties or inclinations might be.

Despite their trust in the power of words to unite the human spirit with its ultimate ground, virtually all the world's spiritual classics remind us that speaking, even in this broad array of modalities, is only one dimension of the communication that advances communion between the soul and its source. Listening, they say, is another. Along with professing and declaring and worshipping and wondering, listening has garnered profound respect among those most proficient in the dynamics of the spiritual life. It is an honored path to all that is good, true, and beautiful. It is also an effective way to pursue self-discovery and cultivate meaningful community. A survey of history's notable prophets and mystics offers remarkable portraits of spiritual adventurers who have not only leveraged gifts of inspired and inspiring speech but also mastered the sacred art of listening.

One illustration comes from the heritage of wisdom associated with the figure in late antiquity known as Saint Benedict. The small volume called the *Rule of Saint Benedict* is widely known in the international Christian community and for a millennium and a half has served as a cardinal text in the Catholic intellectual tradition. Long associated with the monastic impulse, so fundamental to early and medieval Christian spirituality, Benedict's *Rule* has also fired the imagination of devotees and the spiritually curious in realms far beyond the cloister. Today, Benedict's *Rule* occupies a niche in the emerging interfaith canon that attracts contemporary readers from countless points on the spectrum of belief and unbelief.

Benedict places listening at the core of his understanding of the human spiritual quest. In fact, "Listen" (*Obsculta* in the original Latin) is the very first word in his *Rule*. "Listen," he says, "with the ear of your heart" (RB Prologue)<sup>1</sup>. This emphasis on deep listening flows through the entirety of his work and functions as a unifying device for his reflections on a

life devoted to contemplation, simplicity, and community. Springing from the unique circumstances of his time and place, Benedict's vision of the spiritual importance of listening sparked a revolution in Christian experience and has stimulated reform movements throughout Christian history ever since. In our twenty-first-century world, characterized by endless and often pointless and even heartless chatter, his insights into generous and disciplined listening have special and potentially universal relevance. It was Benedict's singular genius to perceive the link between deep listening and a communal life marked by radical hospitality.

### Benedict's Life, *Rule*, and Legacy

Benedict of Nursia (c. 480-547 CE) lived in an era of social upheaval not unlike our own. The fall of Rome, long in the making due to aggressive colonization, over-militarization, and at least a dozen other reasons, was a historical and existential fact by the time of his birth. Violent conflict especially scarred his native Italian province of Umbria. Trade declined, poverty soared, corruption flourished, and liberal learning all but disintegrated.

The Christianity Benedict knew was particularly volatile. Once targeted as a dangerous sect, it paid for social privilege, before and after the empire's collapse, by betraying its founder's renunciation of sword and crown. Its creed was just gaining traction, its scriptures only recently consolidated, and its sacramental system in flux. Church leaders, inheriting the power and even attire of Caesar, attacked other Christians for variations in belief. Christians clashed with practitioners of older religions in the marketplace of ideas and in the streets, while also appropriating huge swaths of the pagan traditions they sought to abolish. Anti-Judaism, a fixture of Christian myth since apostolic days, spilled over into brutal actuality. And, in the mysterious way ideas imitate wind and water, currents of gnostic speculation eroded boundaries between allegedly unchanging traditions.

What we know of Benedict's life in these turbulent times comes mainly from the bishop of Rome called Gregory the Great (c. 540-604). In his *Dialogues*, Gregory narrates numerous stories about Benedict, many of which blend history and legend into hagiography. We learn of Benedict's scanty education in Rome and his disenchantment with the worldly church he encountered in the former imperial capital. A century and a half before Benedict, as Constantine rebranded Christianity as Rome's favored faith, a handful of hardy souls fled the cities of the realm to reclaim the original rigor of Christian discipleship in the wilds of Asia Minor and North Africa. Sometimes called the desert fathers and mothers, they rejected the regal Christ, created in the image of the emperor, and boldly forged lives of protest imitating the Jesus of the Gospels, whose celibacy, poverty, homelessness,

pacifism, and indiscriminate love charted a new way of countercultural freedom. According to Gregory, Benedict joined this exodus to the outback, lived for years as a hermit, and, after attracting many followers, organized monastic communities throughout Italy based on the wisdom he gained in solitary meditation.

Monasticism, of course, is an international phenomenon. Ascetic and communal experiments in India, China, and the Middle East, reflecting the spiritual aspirations of Hindu, Buddhist, Daoist, Jewish, and Hellenistic seekers, predated Christian ventures by centuries. Benedict never claimed originality. His distinctive contribution was his Rule, especially its approach and tone.

The *Rule of Saint Benedict* sometimes disappoints modern readers who expect uplift on every page. It is a down-to-earth book. Its purpose is not to dish out heavenly wisdom but to organize for the spiritual life in the here and now, especially the here and now of a collective. In a prologue and seventy-three concise chapters, Benedict proposes a blueprint for a planned community geared toward spiritual progress. Recognizing that those engaged in spiritual quests are embodied beings, he devotes most of his attention to organizational design: decision-making, problem-solving, the division of labor, the responsibilities of leadership, and the routines and challenges of everyday life. In a sense, there is more sociology than theology in the *Rule*. Commentators have praised its level-headedness, its moderation, and what twentieth-century monk Thomas Merton called its “spirit of humanism and of discretion.”<sup>2</sup> *Ora et labora* (pray and work), the motto of the Benedictine movement, expresses the appreciation for balance animating the document.

Since the sixth century, thousands of men and women have lived and worked in single-sex communities governed by Benedict’s *Rule*. Their network, the Order of Saint Benedict, is one of the oldest continuous communitarian movements in the world. Notable monks and nuns in the history of the order include the eighth-century Bede, hailed as the “father of English history,” eleventh-century figures such as the philosopher Anselm and musicologist Guido of Arezzo, and the twelfth-century polymath Hildegard of Bingen. In more recent times, sociologist Virgil Michel, historian Cyprian Davis, and spiritual writer Joan Chittister have applied Benedictine principles to modern social problems. Lay people such as philosopher Jacques Maritain and social activist Dorothy Day have graced the rolls of Benedictine oblates, seeking to live according to the *Rule* in secular society.

Today, some 20,000 Benedictine monks and nuns contribute to scores of monasteries, schools, hospitals, retreat centers, and publishing houses around the world.<sup>3</sup> Estimates put the number of Benedictine oblates at 25,000.<sup>4</sup> The number of persons in other walks of life, inspired by the Benedictine charism but not bound by monastic vows, is impossible to calculate. Some

speak of a “Benedict Option” in contrast to a life captive to capitalism.<sup>5</sup> Others look for the advent of “another—doubtless very different—St. Benedict,” as postmodern superpowers rise and fall.<sup>6</sup>

## Listening in the Rule

Everyone in the Benedictine sphere of influence knows the *Rule of Saint Benedict* and its conspicuous first word. Readers familiar with the Bible detect echoes of the Torah’s *Shema*, “Hear, O Israel...” (Deuteronomy 6:4), and Jesus’s repeated prophetic cry: “Let anyone with ears listen!” (Matthew 11:15).<sup>7</sup> The call to pay attention, to eliminate distractions is a theme emphasized in the spiritual teaching of many religious traditions. Benedict, acutely conscious of the importance of vocation, responding to a divine summons, assigns this kind of life-changing listening the most privileged place imaginable in his message. The spiritual journey, he suggests, especially that of individuals committed to a life in common, cannot commence until focused and active listening sets the stage for everything else.

Despite his practical intentions in the *Rule*, Benedict permits himself the literary luxury of embellishing his admonition to listen with what we have to recognize as the book’s most memorable image: “the ear of your heart” (*aurem cordis tui*). This phrase, with no precedent in biblical tradition or early Christian literature, has enjoyed great distinction in the history of spiritual writing. Commentators note its curious double effect on those who encounter it. While enlightening us about the kind of listening essential for spiritual growth, it also directly engages us in that style of listening as we connect with the text. We practice listening, in other words, while we learn about listening. A thousand years before Ignatius of Loyola penned his *Spiritual Exercises*, Benedict composed a guide to the “spiritual craft” (RB 4:75) that in its own way initiates our deepest senses into training right from its opening line.

Our understanding of such intentional listening extends and expands as we observe Benedict addressing areas of monastic life where listening is most needed and most productive. He shows how mindful speech accompanies mindful listening. Speaking with the tongue of the heart, we might say, creates the condition for genuine listening. This means taking the spirit of the Rule (*Regula* in Latin) and carefully regulating our verbal exchanges with others. Jesus advocated an austere watchfulness of speech: “Let what you say be simply ‘Yes’ or ‘No’” (Matthew 5:37). The New Testament writer James advised taming the tongue for the sake of justice and self-awareness (James 3:1-12). Benedict knows how irresponsible and ungracious speech can vitiate the life of a community and the inner life of an individual. He warns against gossip, vulgarity, and reckless laughter, all of which can breed cynicism and contempt. He even says there are times when good words would be better left unsaid. Mutual respect and the listening appropriate for a disciple



depend on a general “esteem for silence” (RB 6:2).

First-time visitors to a Benedictine monastic community often remark on its atmosphere of peace and quiet. Some are even unnerved by the calm, like city dwellers kept awake by a dark country night. Seasoned observers, though, find all is not immobile and mute in monastic life. Sound pollution and white noise are absent, as are thoughtless forms of interpersonal interaction, but unhurried patterns of prayer and work—ranging from agriculture to creative art—constitute a natural and non-intrusive soundtrack for a style of living attentive to fellow humans, other animals, the rhythms of the planet, and our deepest thoughts.

The *Rule*’s chapters on prayer especially seek to foster a culture of listening. In a Benedictine context, prayer principally means group recitation of the psalms, the 150 ancient hymns inherited from the Hebrew Bible and included in the Christian canon. Seven times a day, the community gathers for the chanting of the psalms—the entire Psalter each week. Neither performance nor self-expression nor mechanical mumbling, chant transposes monasticism’s countercultural way into soundwaves. Through repetition and the “liturgical anonymity” that Merton and many others have found so liberating, it serves as a contemplative practice that awakens the ear of the heart.<sup>8</sup>

Benedict’s approach to reading performs a similar function. The prominence of books and literacy in the *Rule* foreshadow the crucial role played by monasteries in the preservation of the ancient world’s classics and the founding of Europe’s first universities. In the monastic enclosures designed by Benedict, the library and scriptorium, where books are written and copied by hand, enjoy the same status as the chapel and oratory. It is especially relevant to remember that for Benedict, a beneficiary of ancient oral culture, reading means reading aloud. The act of reading, including reading alone, literally entails hearing the author’s words. Benedict mandates that a monk or nun should be selected to read a book audibly while the rest of the community eats their midday meal in silence. He also makes the practice of *lectio divina* a centerpiece of the community member’s daily schedule—that is, slow, alert reading that blurs the line between study and prayer, sharpens the skills of deliberate listening, and, as Esther de Waal observed, illuminates what we call learning “by heart.”<sup>9</sup>

Benedict’s reflections on listening culminate in his thoughts about another feature of monastic architecture—not the chapel or library or any other internal space but the monastery gate connecting the inner with the outer. Commentators have long underscored the primacy of love in the *Rule*. The whole document is a continuous application of the biblical command to “love your neighbor as your-self” (Leviticus 19:18). It is also one of the earliest Christian attempts to institutionalize the command to “love the alien as yourself” (Leviticus 19:34)—a critical insight from ancient Israel not

specifically quoted in the New Testament. In the moral climax of the *Rule*, Benedict fuses these commands into a single imperative best exercised at the threshold where monastery and world meet. “All guests,” he says, “are to be welcomed as Christ” (RB 53:1). Transcending pity, sympathy, and paternalistic toleration, this simple injunction to enact radical hospitality unites a concrete incarnation of unrestricted love with an idea still developing in the Christian mind during Benedict’s day—the concept of God’s incarnation in human form. Without encouraging theological debate, Benedict directs the monastic community, daily trained to listen with the ear of the heart, to attend, with all the senses, to the needs, stories, voices, and identities of the unexpected visitor, the “other,” whose dignity parallels Christ’s. The ultimate demonstration of a shared culture of listening, he concludes, is the way the community accepts the stranger.

## Conclusion

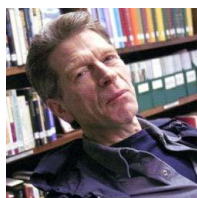
Benedict of Nursia, known to history and piety as Saint Benedict, occupies that unique point where the interests of social imagination and spiritual aspiration intersect. He envisioned an alternative community whose members would know social and economic equality and whose transhistorical goal would be the fulfillment of each member’s spiritual vocation. His little book, the sole product of his literary talents, distinguished by its simple title and unforgettable first word, has inspired seekers of various sorts for centuries. Today, it is numbered among the world’s sacred classics, and its influence is registered in fields as various as education, medicine, business, the arts, and sport.

Perhaps because of his unscripted wilderness experience, Benedict learned lessons, known to few of his contemporaries, about the power of listening and its relationship to the fragile ties that bind body and soul, individual and community. The wisdom tradition that bears his name continues to speak to people, regardless of creed, especially those all too familiar with the desert regions of twenty-first-century life—individuals who long to hear more than the rattle and roar of heartless empires. According to Benedict, listening is the way to be fully human, alone and with others.

## References:

- <sup>1</sup>The *Rule of Saint Benedict*, ed. Timothy Fry (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 1982). Quotations from the *Rule* are cited as RB followed by chapter and verse numbers.
- <sup>2</sup>Thomas Merton, *The Silent Life* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1981), 60.
- <sup>3</sup>“A Brief History of the Benedictine Order,” International Benedictine Web Portal
- <sup>4</sup>Sister Priscilla Cohen, OSB, “Monks and Oblates: A Sacred Relationship,” 8 July 2020
- <sup>5</sup>Rod Dreher, *The Benedict Option: A Strategy for Christians in a Post-Christian Nation* (New York: Sentinel, 2017).
- <sup>6</sup>Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. (Notre Dame, IN: University of Notre Dame Press, 1984), 263.
- <sup>7</sup>Biblical quotations are from the New Revised Standard Version.
- <sup>8</sup>Thomas Merton, *The Seven Storey Mountain* (New York: Harcourt, 1998), 419.
- <sup>9</sup>Esther de Waal, *Seeking God: The Way of St. Benedict* (Collegeville, MN: Liturgical Press, 2001), 148.

## The Listening Experience: Music and Voice



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

Listening to music offers clues for listening to a person's voice; both have some informative qualities that can help transform our listening.

Arthur Schopenhauer, a 19th-Century German philosopher, said that listening to music was the direct experience of the reality of the music. When we listen to music, nothing intervenes in the experience because we have direct access to the musical sound without distortion of perception. We feel what we hear, and we know it is true.

Schopenhauer wrote: "Music avoids and hence does not pass through the Ideas [sic] in its revealing of the thing itself; it leads directly to the will itself and immediately renders it available, present, and experience-able" (<https://that-which.com/schopenhauer-on-music-a-copy-of-the-will-itself/>). *Will* here refers to the needs, wants, and intentions of those who create the musical sounds and the experience thereof. Music also skirts the "Ideas," our interpretation and thinking—ideas--about the music, giving us direct access to the emotions and feelings stirred up by the rich experience of listening. Neuroscientist and musician Daniel Levitin in his book *This Is Your Brain on Music* (2006) claims that in excess of "100 neurochemicals are involved in computing music's pitches, durations, volume settings and timbres," and our brain seems to be fully engaged, stimulating "neurons in more regions of the brain than almost any other activity."

In this sense of listening to music, there is no perceptual interpretation; what we hear is what is being performed or played. Again, the music is not an *idea*, it is a sensibility, a direct perception without any *conception*--though some music does work to tell a story. Still, the effect of the sounds penetrates the body and we feel the mood, the rhythm, the intonation, the pacing, and the pulse of the music. Personally, when I listen to music, I am not so concerned with the lyrics; I just want to experience the color and delight of it. I want to experience its rhythm and mood, and sometimes it moves me so much that, if the space is open, I want to move my whole body with the music and dance!

Now, extend this shift in listening to the voices of others: their tone, the mood rendered by the feeling of their voices. We seldom listen to the voice of the other (in itself), but we should. Here, there is something to learn. Everyone has a "musical" voice, which we can experience in some fashion, directly, apart from the meaning of what is being said. Some voices are

high-pitched, others more baritone, or maybe raspy, or deeper as we get older. What is the timber of the voice? What is the range of the vocal tones? The directness? There is so much to appreciate in the music of the voice. When we listen to our friend, family member, colleague or coworker, we can very much appreciate the sound of their voices. Listening to the music of the voice is a rare direct experience of our shared lives.

Any shift in our way of listening, such as listening to the person's voice as musical, requires a fresh approach to listening, and a new awareness, and perhaps the learning of new skills--most would say an adjustment toward enhancing the art of listening. Changes like this reverberate throughout our listening awareness and offer a renewal of our listening knowledge and ability--chances are we will become better listeners as we appreciate the sound of a person's voice (from *persona*--literally through or by the sound itself).

As an example of the potential to learn anew about listening, consider the experience of the blind. They do not have direct access to all the signals of sight, such as the nonverbal cues of the body that accompany and complement the face of the other. They listen for the meaning of the conversation, but they must also be critically aware of the musical tone of the voice. The way we attend to another person as we listen is so vital! We depend so much on the face, particularly, and the look of the other; we usually face the person we are talking to; they are right there and we hear their tone of voice. Generally, however, we listen for what their communication means or for some conceptualization, rather than their mood or some sense of feeling conveyed through the voice. Perhaps, if we took more notice of the voice itself, the musical nature of the voice, we could attend to another dimension of listening and enrich that experience.

Hence, there is much to learn and to be aware of as we listen anew and become directly conscious of the other's voice. Maybe we will discover that we are listening better to the vocal resonances of those with whom we want to communicate. In the moment of communication, we find that we are listening to appreciate those who are around us in a new, more artful manner, in a way that enriches our listening experience.

*Listening to the person's voice as musical,  
requires a fresh approach to listening.*  
Professor Michael Purdy



## Honoring Our Members



### Lance Strate, Ph.D.

Senior Vice President (Academic Affairs), Global Listening Centre.

Professor of Communication and Media Studies at Fordham University in New York City, US

Lance Strate (PhD, New York University, 1991) is Professor of Communication and Media Studies at Fordham University in New York City, President of the Institute of General Semantics, and a Past President of the New York Society for General Semantics, the New York State Communication, Association and the Media Ecology Association. He is the author of 9 books, including *On the Binding Biases of Time* (2011), *Amazing Ourselves to Death: Neil Postman's Brave New World Revisited* (2014), *Media Ecology: An Approach to Understanding the Human Condition* (2017), and *Concerning Communication* (2022), as well as having co-edited 7 anthologies, and served as an editor of 3 journals, including *Explorations in Media Ecology*, which he founded. Dr. Strate received the Media Ecology Association's 2018 Marshall McLuhan Award for Outstanding Book and their 2013 Walter J. Ong Award for Career Achievement in Scholarship, the Eastern Communication

Association's 2019 Distinguished Research Fellow Award, the New York State Communication Association's 2019 Neil Postman Mentor Award and their 1998 John F. Wilson Fellow Award for exceptional scholarship, leadership, and dedication to the field of communication, and the 2022 J. Talbot Winchell Award for Service from the Institute of General Semantics.

Dr. Strate has served on the Global Listening Centre's Academic Board of Directors since 2016, as a GLC editorial board member since 2018, as co-chair of the Academic Board since 2020, and as co-chair of the Global Listening Festival in 2022. He has contributed to *The Listening Connection* and the *Global Listener*, presented papers on listening at the Global Listening Festival, and the Tyranny of Words Symposium in New York City, and he received the GLC's Outstanding Research Award in 2020 for his article, "I Hear You: Comments on the Sound Practice of Listening," published in *The Listening Connection* in 2019, which was reprinted in the journal *ETC: A Review of General Semantics* in 2021, and appears as a chapter in his most recent book, *Concerning Communication* (2022).

## Members News — New Members



## Welcome

### K. S. Jagannatha Rao,

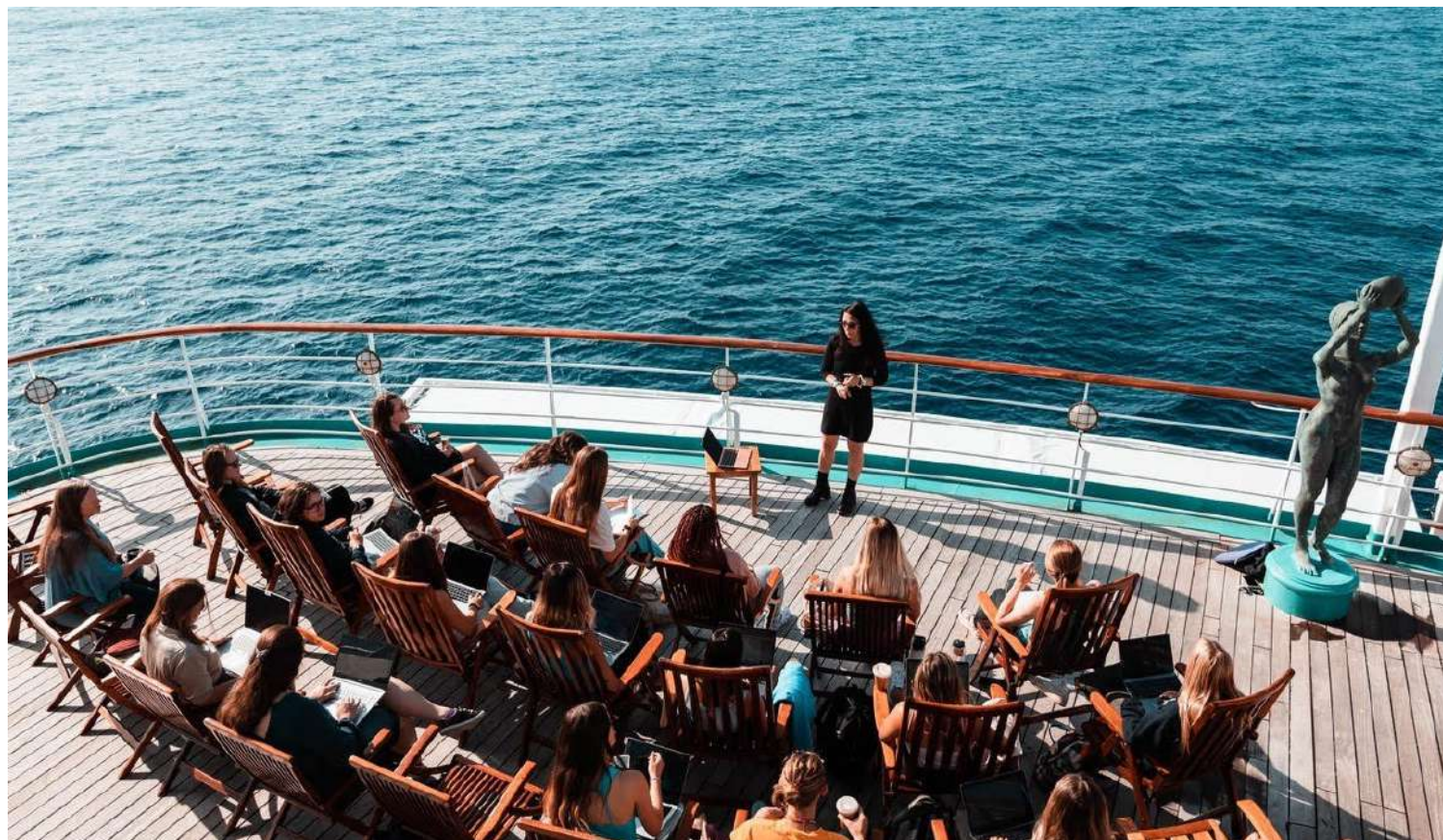
Ph.D. FNASc, FABAP, FABS, FLS (UK), FRSB (UK),  
FRSC (UK), FAPAS, FTWAS

New Senior Vice President  
(Listening in Science) and Advisor  
Global Listening Centre.

Pro Chancellor,  
KL Deemed to be University, India  
Distinguished Professor,  
National Science System, Panama  
Adjunct Faculty, UTHS, Houston, US



## Members News



### Professor Claude-Hélène Mayer Ph.D., Ph.D., Director (Academia) Global Listening Centre.

"I spend 105 days with Semester at Sea during the Fall 2022 voyage, starting off the journey in Bremerhaven, Germany, and ending it 105 days later in Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates. During the voyage, I taught mainly two subjects, namely Global Studies (together with a team of four US-American colleagues) and Conflict Management. The voyage took students with international backgrounds on an intercultural journey to study on the ship and visit 11 countries as well. Since one of the aims of Semester at Sea is to contribute to intercultural understanding, staff and students on the ship had to practice active listening throughout the voyage. To listen to each other was one of the major tools of building intercultural understanding and contributing to expanding intercultural competence and cooperation. By listening to each other, we created an experience of diverse cultural learning and building our intercultural identities. Listening proofed as one of the most important methods to create a cooperative, peaceful and understanding voyage and intercultural experience."

Professor Claude-Hélène Mayer Ph.D., Ph.D.



We wish to acknowledge **Dr. Jo-Ann Rolle**, our respected Vice Chair. Her unwavering commitment to active listening and lifelong learning has proven to be an invaluable asset to our community. Serving as the Dean of Business at Medgar Evers College, CUNY, and as the 2022/2023 President of the HBCU Business Deans Roundtable, Dr. Rolle has made considerable yet discreet strides in education.

Dr. Rolle will extend her leadership role with the HBCU Business Deans by serving as the immediate Past President on the Executive Committee, heading the Development, Nomination, and Awards Committees. Please join us in acknowledging Dr. Rolle's contributions to education and our community.

Deans of the HBCU Business Deans Roundtable.  
Our Vice Chair Dr. Jo-Ann Rolle seen in the first row 5th from left.



## Congratulations!



### William Patrick McPhilamy, JD

Senior Vice President (Listening in Law) Global Listening Centre.  
Principal at Attorney at W. Patrick McPhilamy, III.

#### Listening is at the core of negotiations and mediations

Internationally renowned attorney and mediator, Dr. William Patrick McPhilamy, III, will be serving as a judge for the CDRC Vienna-The IBA-VIAC Mediation and Negotiation Consensual Dispute Resolution Competition, which will be held in Vienna, Austria from 8-12 July 2023. The competition will be at the Law School for the University of Vienna in cooperation with the International Bar Association and the Vienna International Arbitration Centre and represents the biggest mediation and negotiation event this summer. This year's program will be based on the arbitration case of the Willem C. VIS International Commercial Arbitration 2023 moot. "Effective listening is at the core of effective negotiations and mediation", says Dr. McPhilamy, "and working with the students is always an honor."

### Leslie Ramos Salazar, Ph.D.

Director (Academic Division) Global Listening Centre.

Abdullat Professor of Business, Associate Professor of Business Communication & Decision Management, Paul and Virginia Engler College of Business, West Texas A&M University. US

Our member Dr. Ramos Salazar won the 2023 West Texas A&M Student Government Academic Partnership's Academic Learning and Community Engagement Award. Through community service her students learn to empathize with individuals from different perspectives. Dr. Ramos: "Our conflicting world is in such a great need in listening to nurture higher quality relationships. Without key listening skills, it is very challenging to understand and empathize with other people with different perspectives. Listening encourages open and authentic communication in dyads, small groups, and organizations."



### Glenda Balas, Ph.D.

Director (Academic Division) Global Listening Centre.

Professor and former Dean of Liberal Arts and Sciences at the University of North Texas at Dallas. US

"I was honored to be named 2023-24 BEA Vice President for Academic Relations at the recent Broadcast Education Association Conference held in Las Vegas, NV, and look forward to working with an excellent Board of Directors in the coming year. I also appreciated recognition for my service as BEA Research Committee Chair from 2019-2022, during which time I served as Series Editor for three volumes in BEA's annual Media Research Series and established the annual Kenneth Harwood Forum for outstanding dissertation authors."

Professor Glenda Balas, Ph.D.

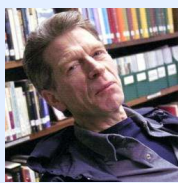


"Be Kind", Jonathan Fisher, MD, FACC.  
Director (Healthcare Division)  
Global Listening Centre.

*Listening  
is  
one  
of  
the  
loudest  
forms  
of  
kindness.*

*J. W. Perry*

## Listening Poems



Michael Purdy, Ph.D.  
Past Vice Chair, GLC.  
Professor Emeritus,  
Governors State  
University. US

## *Just Listening*

How delicate her gestures,  
Starting the performance like a conductor,  
Managing voices, holding her own,  
Not fully listening, still alive.  
Yet, all was not in concert,  
Something played the situation.

We focused on the issues at hand,  
Under the microscope ready to dissect,  
Egos were off the agenda  
What ease of discourse.  
Learning as we left truth behind  
Now, We were being conducted,  
Listening, the Music absorbed US

The silence carried us along,  
Beguiled by the melody,  
We touched the web of connectedness,  
What else could we do?



## *Listening to the World*

The world is filled with sounds,  
Some you may not want to hear,  
But even those sounds,  
Make it a joy to have ears.

Listening is sometimes hard,  
My patience often runs thin,  
I have to remember to regard,  
To keep my peace from within.

If my hearing ever went away,  
I know I would be in despair,  
For the sounds of my friends' voices today,  
Are very rare.

Some may say listening is our best sense,  
It's how we comfort those we love,  
Maybe even at our own expense,  
But the world brings us happiness thereof.



Morgan Macek  
Student at  
University of  
Northern Iowa. US



## Outstanding Listener's Interview



**Hon. Juliana Yvonne O'Connor-Connolly, LLB., B.A.  
(Honours/Summa Cumma Laude) MP, JP**

Deputy Premier & Minister for Education, District Administration & Lands, Cayman Islands

*Hon. Juliana Yvonne O'Connor-Connolly* is an internationally acclaimed, world famous, charismatic leader. Hon. O'Connor-Connolly was elected to the Legislative Assembly (now Parliament) for the first time in November 1996, to represent the District of Cayman Brac and Little Cayman. She made history as the first female to hold this position and has since served seven consecutive terms, earning the distinction of being the longest-serving female Member of Parliament in the Cayman Islands. Her exceptional leadership skills led to her being appointed as Speaker, Deputy Premier, and Premier, further cementing her legacy as a trailblazer for women in politics. Prior to her illustrious political career, O'Connor-Connolly worked as a Teacher, Accounts Assistant, and Attorney-at-Law, all of which helped her hone her skills in empathy, analytical thinking, awareness of verbal and non-verbal cues, and effective communication. As such, she is an outstanding listener who has demonstrated her unique abilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Her decisive leadership ensured that the Cayman Islands' educational institutions were among the first in the region to transition to remote operations. She also made it a priority to bridge the digital divide by providing digital learning devices to every child enrolled in Government schools, and initiated the Public Schools' Meal Programme to cater for the daily nutritional needs of all enrolled children. Hon. O'Connor-Connolly is a role model and icon for many listeners around the world.



### Interviewers



**David T. McMahan, Ph.D.,** Executive Chair of the Global Listening Centre, is a Professor of Communication at Missouri Western State University. An internationally renowned scholar, he is the author of multiple books, including the best-selling *Communication in Everyday Life* series, articles, and pieces included in numerous edited volumes. He has been the president of the National Communication Association and Central States Communication Association. He has also won many awards for his teaching, research, and professional service and was named a Centennial Scholar by the Eastern Communication Association.

**Mr. Sardool Singh,** Secretary and Chief Global Strategist of the Global Listening Centre, is a world-famous professional in the field of listening promotion. With a background in pharmaceutical marketing, Mr. Singh won the best country manager award seven times while in a senior position with a multinational company and was also a three-time gold medalist at the same company. He has spent many years selflessly promoting the power of listening worldwide.

## Outstanding Listener's Interview

**Sardool:** In the context of the Caribbean Region, how important is listening to regional development?

**Juliana:** Effective regional development in the Caribbean requires inclusive decision-making processes that consider all stakeholders, including Governments, Communities and Civil Society Organizations, diverse perspectives, needs, and aspirations. It is essential to listen attentively to the voices of all the citizens and stakeholders to identify key issues and challenges affecting the region's development. Regional policymakers can then prioritize and allocate the limited resources effectively by understanding these issues and engaging in open dialogue, consultations, public engagement and reciprocal accountability.

**David:** How has the art of listening impacted your career as a legislator in the Cayman Islands?

**Juliana:** My ability to listen has facilitated the following:

- **Constituent Engagement:** As a legislator, my main priority is to represent the interests and concerns of my constituents. By actively listening to them and taking their needs, opinions, and feedback seriously, I am more cognizant of their various and diverse issues. This allows me to make informed decisions and craft legislation that aligns with their interests.
- **Relationship Building:** Listening attentively to constituents and other stakeholders has also helped me build strong and treasured relationships. I have found that people are more likely to trust and support me when they feel heard and understood. This has also led to collaborations and partnerships that have been critical to my work as a legislator.
- **Identifying Issues and Solutions:** Effective listening has enabled me to identify emerging issues and potential solutions. I can discern patterns and areas requiring legislative attention by paying close attention to conversations, public opinion, and feedback from various other sources.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Conflict Resolution: In the Westminster styled Parliamentary legislative process, conflicts and disagreements are common. However, my ability to listen to the various perspectives and my ability to negotiate until common ground is attained, has allowed me to resolve several disputes, especially during my tenure as House Speaker.

**David:** Can you offer any suggestions for more effective listening amongst parliamentarians?

**Juliana:** As Parliamentarians, especially those who are newly elected, we must cultivate strong listening skills.

One effective way to achieve this is by attending training sessions and workshops emphasising active listening techniques. This will allow us to foster better communication and promote a greater understanding among our fellow legislators.

I also encourage fellow Parliamentarians to embrace various technology platforms such as social media, online surveys, and interactive websites to further hone our ability to listen effectively to the public. These tools will enable us to gauge public opinion on specific issues or proposed legislation.

Regular engagement with our constituents is crucial. Through town hall meetings, public forums, and individual meetings, we can actively listen to their concerns, ideas, and feedback on legislation. By engaging directly with our constituents, we can better comprehend their needs and represent them more effectively in the legislative process.

It is also essential to reflect on the feedback and suggestions we receive. By actively considering different viewpoints and weighing them against our own beliefs and values, we can refine our legislative approach and make more informed decisions based on the needs and desires of those we serve.

**David:** In education, listening is a simple but vital and effective tool. In your opinion, to what extent is it effectively used by our educators?

**Juliana:** Effective listening is a crucial skill for educators, but it can vary depending on their teaching style, experience, and level of professional development. Here are a few factors that we should consider when determining how well educators listen:

- **Active Listening:** Successful educators practice active listening by giving their full attention to students, understanding their perspectives, and responding appropriately. This involves being present, maintaining eye contact, and showing a genuine interest in what students have to say. By actively listening, educators create a supportive environment that fosters engagement and participation. Simply put a classroom must provide a student-centered environment.
- **Feedback and Assessment:** Careful listening is essential for providing feedback and assessment to students. Educators who listen closely to student responses, questions, and concerns can give timely and constructive feedback that supports academic growth. By understanding students' knowledge gaps, misconceptions, and learning styles, educators can provide targeted support that helps students succeed.

- **Classroom Management:** Listening is also crucial



for effective classroom management. Educators who listen to their students can anticipate and address potential issues before they escalate. Educators can respond appropriately, diffuse conflicts, and maintain a positive and inclusive learning environment by being aware of students' nonverbal cues, tone of voice, and emotions.

- **Building Relationships:** Listening is a fundamental element in building positive teacher-student relationships. When educators actively listen to students, they show empathy, respect, and understanding. This helps foster trust, rapport, and a sense of belonging, which is essential for student engagement, motivation, and overall well-being.
- **Parent-Teacher Communication:** Effective educators also utilise listening skills when engaging with parents or guardians as they can establish strong partnerships and work collaboratively to support student success by listening to families' concerns, goals, and opinions.

**David:** Do you change your listening style in different situations? Is listening different in the legal field? Or in private life?

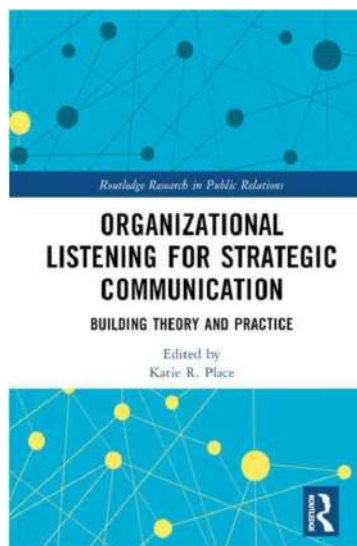
**Juliana:** Adjusting my listening approach to suit each specific scenario has proven effective, whether practising law, participating in parliamentary proceedings, or engaging in personal conversations. It requires more than merely listening in the traditional sense, but rather utilizing each of our five senses to meticulously receive, coalesce, and analyze what is being said or done albeit verbally, expressly or subliminally. Nevertheless, regardless of context, I always aim to integrate empathetic, analytical, and solution-focused listening strategies. Rendering one's undivided attention to the circumstances and or communicator is not always easy, but it is essential in the art of listening.

**Sardool:** What would you say are the most important characteristics of a good listener?

**Juliana:** To become a good listener, one must embody several crucial qualities, such as attentiveness, empathy, patience, active engagement, and a keen memory for follow-up. To foster trust and mutual respect, it is imperative to display a sincere interest in the speaker's words, maintain eye contact, and avoid any potential distractions. In addition, striving to comprehend and appreciate the speaker's experiences and viewpoints, responding with kindness, and providing ample time for expression can cultivate a secure and encouraging atmosphere. By actively participating in the conversation through thoughtful inquiries and thoughtful contributions, one can also facilitate a more meaningful exchange of ideas. Lastly, cherishing the speaker's contributions by recalling pertinent details and following up on any actionable items can reinforce and strengthen relationships.

**Sardool:** In your experience, have you noticed changes in how men listen to women who hold important positions? In other words, are men more respectful of women's perspectives now than they were in past decades? If so, what do you think has caused this change?

**Juliana:** Throughout my years in politics, I have observed a notable shift towards recognising and valuing the contributions and perspectives of women. This positive development may be attributed to the growing awareness of gender equality and the significance of women's viewpoints, particularly in professional settings. One recent statistic revealed that women currently occupy approximately 44% of leadership positions in both public and private sectors, here in the Cayman Islands, a heartening reality that may have also challenged gender stereotypes and prompted our male colleagues to reevaluate their assumptions and appreciate our insights more fully. At the end of the day, our respective communities consists of both male and female and in a representative democracy, more can be achieved working in collaboration together.



## New Book Release!

Professor Katie R. Place, Ph.D., APR, Director (Academia) Global Listening Centre and Professor of Public Relations at Quinnipiac University has published her edited book, "Organizational Listening for Strategic Communication." The book presents original research and case examples of organizational listening for strategic communication across corporate, government, and nonprofit environments. Chapters explore topics such as organizational listening via artificial intelligence and social media; listening for social justice and ethics; and fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion within and outside organizations via organizational listening. Congratulations Professor Katie.

**Link to book:** [www.routledge.com/9781032227153](http://www.routledge.com/9781032227153)



## Message from our Chair Committee for the Top 25 Outstanding Women Listeners in the World 2023 (25OWL2023)



The Top 25  
Outstanding Women Listeners  
In The World 2023  
Global Listening Centre



**Professor Paaige Turner, Ph.D.**  
**Chairperson Project**  
**25-OWL-2023**

**Director (Academia) GLC.**

Dean at College of

Communication, Information and Media at Ball State University.

Past Executive Director, National Communication  
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Dear GLC Members,

As the Global Listening Centre (GLC) implements the Top 25-OWL-2023 initiative, Executive Chair, Professor David McMahan, and Vice Chair, Dr. Jo-Ann Rolle, look forward to receiving the second round of nominations of Outstanding Women Listeners (OWL) from the members as soon as the nomination forms are distributed with the details of the selection process.

A Selection Committee as well as a Nominating Committee are in the creation process.

The next Top 25-OWL-2023 initiative shall be headed by the Chairperson of this project Professor Paaige Turner.

The main program objective of this initiative is to promote the noble cause of listening during a challenging time for our world. We look forward to your nominations for this prestigious award.

Respectfully,

Professor Paaige Turner, Ph.D.

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