



INTERNATIONAL DAY OF LISTENING

SEPTEMBER 19, 2019

Be Bold! Listen for Common Ground

A Listening Guide by Sheila Bentley

June 19: Find three things that you have in common

First Step:

Let's Get Started!

1. Regardless of the size of your group, start by getting into **groups of two or three people**. Try to partner with someone that you don't already know well. However, if you already know the person well, you can still participate.
2. **Introduce yourselves** to each other if you don't already know each other.
3. The goal is to find three things that you have in common with the person you are partnered with. **Proceed to explore what you might have in common**. These can be interests, experiences, or other characteristics. They don't have to be big or significant commonalities. It could be that you both own pets, or like to read, or have siblings. Just find three things that you have in common.
4. If an item comes up that you don't have in common, that's OK. Just move on to another potential commonality.
5. Once you have found at least three things that you have in common, **raise your hand to indicate that you have completed the task**.

Process the Experience:

1. **What did you notice happening** with your partner as you explored and found commonalities? If a bigger group is participating, what did you notice happening in the room? Did it get noisier? Was it good noise or bad noise?
2. **How do you feel towards your partner?** Describe the relationship. (Positive? Negative? Neutral? Friendly? Trusting? Cooperative? Other?)
3. If there is time, **share some of the commonalities you found with the bigger group**. Were the things you had in common significant things or just ordinary? Did it make a difference which they were?
4. **What happened if you found something that you didn't have in common?** Did you notice how you felt towards the person when you found the difference? Was it an important issue that you didn't have in common? What do you think would happen if you found significant differences, such as in religious views, political issues, or values? How would that affect the relationship you have with the person?

5. Do you think you would be as willing to share additional significant information? **Do you think your level of trust with this person would be affected?** In what way? Why do you think that would be the case?
6. Do you think you could overcome this difference and move on to a more positive interaction?
7. **Would you be able to work with this person to solve important problems?** Why or why not? How could you resolve this? Might you be able to move forward if you found significant things that you have in common? This could be things like: You both want to solve a problem. You both want what is best for the family or the company or the earth. You both want to avoid a war.
8. **If you have come to a snag in building a relationship go back to finding things that you have in common** and see if you can move forward because of these important common characteristics.

Significant information for finding common ground:

1. As people share information with each other, they are more likely to trust the person.
2. The more you trust a person, the more likely you are to cooperate with that person.
3. The more you trust and cooperate with a person, the more likely you are to share additional information.

Thus, an increasing spiral of

- Information sharing
- Trust increasing
- Willingness to cooperate
- More information sharing.



This is a relationship that is building and getting stronger

On the other hand:

1. If someone is not sharing information, others react by also not sharing information. (Information can be a source of power, so people want to hold on to their power.)
2. When people don't share information, trust decreases.
3. When trust decreases, willingness to cooperate diminishes.
4. And willingness to share additional information diminishes.

Thus, a decreasing spiral of

- Information sharing decreasing
- Trust decreasing
- Willingness to cooperate decreasing
- Willingness to share additional information decreases.



This is a relationship that is worsening or falling apart.

Next Step:

Identify a significant issue or problem that you would like to resolve or at least improve.