

# Empathic Listening Training – Rough Draft

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This document serves as a minimal guide and training outline for developing empathy and sophisticated listening skills. It integrates models from recognized communication experts to facilitate deeper listening, understanding, empathy, and cooperation.

Susan Christy: This includes some materials from my Power of Listening programs delivered at major corporations, universities, medical schools, and healthcare systems.

## Program Overview and Outcomes

(Speaker = S, Listener = L, Participant in training = P, T = trainer)

Topic	Activity	Desired Outcomes	Comments
Voice Mirror	T demonstrates voice mirror exercise  L hears words and rhythm	Quiet the distracting inner self-talk; experience quiet inside and out.	Open with a curiosity-based exercise.  Ref: Walden
Empathy Empathic listening	Define/Explain  Maybe types of empathy  A way for the listener to <b>be</b> with the speaker	Bring concept to life  Support S's inner life/lived experience	Metaphors  Empathic vs active listening  Ref: Rohlfs, Gendlin, Miller, Gordon
Agenda, etc.	.Agenda .Desired outcomes .Logistics	Preview, manage expectations	Timing depends on audience and desired outcomes
Listening facts	List	Perspective	Add more recent facts Ref: Gendlin, Christy,
The conversation  Listener's role: reflect S's meaning  L says/does          Resonance	.S speaks and naturally pauses .L attunes to the S's message (verbal and non-verbal) .L responds; paraphrases briefly demonstrates understanding of S's meaning .L is tentative, open to correction .L encourage S to continue talking .L&S shared meaning	L listens, curious, available "people are their inner process" .L reflects S's meaning .S 'gets' that L is attending, interested, and understands S's message .S continues, goes deeper, comes to life	This is the crucial moment  Ref. Rohlfs, Rogers, Gendlin, Satir, Miller, Gordon  T ask P's metaphors
Empathy  Mutual empathy over time	.L "feels" into other S's inner process... in the moment <b>AND over time</b> .L cares about S, works	.People ARE their inner process. .We learn rapport skills to build relationships .Picture family/company/	Examples Negotiators Children  e.g. SC as consultant

Topic	Activity	Desired Outcomes	Comments
(Maybe put this later)	<p>with S, empowers S</p> <p>.L respects and matches their style</p> <p>.L seeks to understand S and visa versa over time</p> <p>.Examples of common patterns that help us understand ourselves and others</p>	<p>world of empathy</p> <p>.Adopt an ongoing inquiry into “who S is” and meet S there!!!</p>	<p>Ref: Christy</p> <p>List methods/types like MBTI, Enneagram</p> <p>E.g. Thorns and roses at dinner</p>
The Model	<p>Review Encoding/Decoding dynamics.</p> <p>Your inner experience (consciousness) and theirs</p> <p>S needs 3X to express ideas</p> <p>Satir: aware of self-Other-Context + chart of survival stances</p>	<p>P understands complex inner experiences</p> <p>Empathy = Shared understanding.</p>	<p>Understanding does not mean agreement.</p> <p>Ref: Christy, Satir, Arrien</p> <p>Maybe metaphor of circus</p>
Five exercises	T demonstrates and pairs practice	P pays attention to inner process	Take notes on the experience
Applications Poor listening habits Assumptions get in the way	P read, discuss	Go deeper, think thru, feelings	Ref: Christy
Listen for many dimensions	<p>Person tells story to group</p> <p>Ls listen for different topics</p>	<p>Listening interests/habits</p> <p>P identifies preferences</p>	<p>See list</p> <p>Ref: Christy</p>
Feelings and needs	You feel into other’s experience	Attune to feelings and needs	Ref: Rosenberg, Satir
Listening when S is overloaded, overwhelmed	Overwhelm: Loss of normally available resources	Listening calms both S and P	Ref: Hornach
Poor listening habits	List		
5 step process		Facilitate S’s experience, thinking, understanding	Ref: Christy, Rohlfs, Arrien
Listen during	3 or 4 people – Topic	Ps: practice	Ref: Miller

Topic	Activity	Desired Outcomes	Comments
conflict	Take emotional stand Paraphrase previous message before you speak	Slow process down	
When to listen/ when to assert yourself	Gordon chart		I messages Ref: Gordon, Miller
Summary and close			Reading list

## Some materials below

### Universal Human Needs

A core skill in empathy is listening for the underlying needs (inspired by Marshall Rosenberg). Recognizing these basic human requirements helps bridge the gap between different viewpoints.

Category	Examples of Needs
<b>Autonomy</b>	Choosing dreams, goals, and values; choosing plans for fulfillment.
<b>Physical Nurturance</b>	Air, food, water, movement, protection, rest, shelter, and touch.
<b>Integrity</b>	Authenticity, creativity, meaning, and self-worth.
<b>Interdependence</b>	Acceptance, appreciation, community, empathy, love, and trust.
<b>Spiritual Communion</b>	Beauty, harmony, inspiration, order, and peace.

## A 5-Step Guide to Facilitating Understanding Christy

1. **Pay Attention:** Choose to be present. Take in the whole message—words, tone, and body language.
2. **Create Rapport:** Provide an environment of interest. Use attentive posture and cues like nodding or "Um-hum."
3. **Track the Speaker:** Trust their message to unfold. Stay curious and encourage them to continue (the 3X rule).
4. **Repeat the Essence:** Paraphrase content and feelings back to the speaker to clarify needs and goals.

5. **Expand for Results:** Help the speaker explore ideas deeper. Build an empathic relationship over time.

## Roles: Listener/Counselor vs. Sender/Influencer

See Thomas Gordon

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Understanding when to employ different communication skills is critical for effective relationships.

Role: Listener / Counselor	Role: Sender / Influencer
Goal: Support the speaker's decision-making and problem-solving.	Goal: Pursue your own immediate goals and address your experience.
Focus: Primarily interested in the other's needs.	Focus: Primarily interested in your own needs.
Nature: Passive, acting as a sounding board.	Nature: Active, acting as an influencer to find personal solutions.

## References [Add more](#)

1. Connolly, Mickey. *Communication Catalyst*. Dearborn Trade Publishing, 2002.
2. Gordon, Thomas. *Leader Effectiveness Training*. 2002.
3. Rosenberg, Marshall. *Nonviolent Communication* (Underlying Needs Framework).