



How to listen like a hostage negotiator to achieve your goals.

(In 10 easy lessons.)

Before an important meeting or call...

01

Know your outcome.

When you have an outcome in mind, you can be clear about what constitutes success. Expectations drive results. So think about how you're going to approach this interaction. What do you want out of it?

Ask yourself

- What's my intention on this occasion? (If it's a first meeting, you're probably looking to get a second meeting.)
- What's my overall aim?

By setting yourself an outcome you avoid woolly thinking. If what you hear changes that outcome, re-set it using the intelligence you've gained.

02

Choose your mindset.

You can pre-select a positive mindset. Don't give the other person permission to change your mood. Remember life's a game; how you play it is your choice.

Remember you're looking to identify facts, emotions, motivators, values and currencies.

| | Such as... |
|---|--|
| Facts | Time/ Place/ Amount |
| Emotions | Fear/ Excitement/ Frustration |
| Motivators | Money/ Family/ Power |
| Values | Fairness/ Kindness/ Decency |
| Currencies i.e. What makes a person tick? | Relish a challenge?/ Like variety? / Pride themselves on their attention to detail? |

These words and phrases are key...

| | |
|--|---|
| Descriptive words i.e. The words that jump out at you. | Urgent/ Bad/ Important |
| Absolutes | It's obvious/ Anyone can see that... / Everyone knows that... |
| Ambiguity | We're aiming to have it done by.../ We intend to... / Our normal fee is... |
| Drivers | Need/ Want/ Determined |
| Imperatives | Should/ Must/ Ought to/ Got to |
| Modifiers | It's all ok, really/ Quite good/ Pretty sure. |
| Fog language | My life is a mess/ Things are getting on top of me / I need a break from all this. |

03

Get ready to listen at an elite level.



When you first meet or speak...

04

Put yourself in the listening position.

This is the, 'You paid how much?' position. It's the position your body naturally assumes when you hear something that catches your attention. By adopting it you can fool your brain into a state of intense listening.

Sit forward with your hands relaxed. If you're in a meeting, adopt the 10-to-2 position i.e. not directly facing the speaker. This allows you to make eye contact without 'eyeballing' your companion.



05

Prepare your opening line.

Set the scene with an opening line that includes a benefit to them. Remember to use the word 'you'.

First meeting

'We need to get this information correct to design exactly the right solution for you.'

Second meeting

'As you know at the last meeting we looked at improving your supply chain.'

Now lead with an open question.

Open questions demand more than a one-word answer. Pair any TEDS request with a PIE specifier.

T/Tell me

E/Explain to me

D/Describe to me

S/Show me

P/Precisely

I/In detail

E/Exactly

Now keep them talking and listen.

You want your companion to open up. You want to understand their viewpoint and agenda. Your goal is to keep them talking, because their secrets lie in their ramblings. Your job is to listen for facts, emotions, motivators, values and currencies. They will expect you to take your turn in the conversation. Here's how to do so without changing the subject:

Play your part in the 'your turn, my turn' exchange with these minimal encouragers.

- and
- and after that
- and then
- go on
- oh
- so
- tell me more
- then
- uh-huh
- ummm

Also use nods of the head, smiles, hand gestures and whatever expressions you might make naturally.

06

Use minimal encouragers.

07

Echo.

Casually repeat the word/phrase that gives the other person's words energy, or strikes you as unusual.

'Should?'

'You've got to do that?'

'Everyone thinks like that?'

'Things have been difficult recently.'

08

State your impression.

This technique allows you to guess at what you think the other person means, or what has upset them.

By stating your impression you can address what you feel is really being said. By owning your interpretation you tell the other person that you're not sure. They will agree, or put you right without taking offence. Either way, you gain understanding.

Stating your impression is phenomenally powerful. It allows you to speculate and gives you immediate confirmation or correction.

- Listen to what they're saying and their tone of voice.
- Offer your interpretation of the emotion that lies behind what they've said
 - state what you think they really mean or feel.
- 'Own' your interpretation i.e.
 - I get the impression...
 - I feel as if...
 - It sounds to me like...
 - It seems to me
 - I sense that...
- In this way you turn what could have been a question into a non-judgemental suggestion. For example:
 - 'It sounds to me like you're feeling betrayed.'

09

Summarise.

You can summarise at any time and as often as you find useful.

'So, if I've understood correctly...'

'To recap briefly...'

'Just to make sure I've got this right...'

You benefit because it

- buys you time to think
- helps you control the conversation without appearing to
- gives you 100% clarity.

Top tips

1. Know your desired outcome.
2. Stop asking questions.
3. Concentrate on their agenda.
4. Listen for facts, emotions, motivators, values and currencies.
5. Turn the questions you want to ask into suggestions, simply by stating your impression.

10

5 top tips.