

**Tool 3.3****Listening****CLARITY Competence Area:**

Embracing values that sustain the lives of all living beings

**GreenComp Competence Area:**

Embodying sustainability values

**Why use this tool?**

In order to embrace and embody new values that sustain the lives of all living beings, a key skill is that of listening without judging, in a spirit of empathy and compassion. This tool enables us to better understand how values vary among people and over time, to respect the perspectives of other people, to connect with the more-than-human world, as well as to become aware of the values we hold ourselves, which can either block us or move us towards more resilience, connection, creativity and regeneration. Because we are not used to listening without judging, this tool takes practice, and when mastered can positively affect all our relationships.

## Activity 3.3.3

# Deep listening to oneself

## Overview

The same basic method is used for this advanced-level skill, as in the Deep Listening to others activity (3.3.2). It is an effective practice for self-awareness, for improving relationships, for accessing intuition or tacit knowledge, and for making better-informed decisions. You can use this tool for yourself, simply by reading the instructions. Or, you can host a practice session for other educators or for senior learners, following the steps described below.

## Curriculum linkage

Language & Literature, Physical Education & Health (wellbeing and mindfulness), Civics & Social Studies, Cross-Curricular & Global Competencies and Ethics, Religion & Philosophy.

## Competences built

Deep listening, Empathy, Compassion, Inner compass and Self reflection.

## Prep

For background and context, please read the corresponding section of the Teachers' Guide before starting this activity.

## Competences/activities to practise first by the teacher:

Deep listening to others (3.3.2)

## Steps in the activity

1. Try it yourself
2. Guide another person through the same process
3. Introduce this tool to a group



### BASIC INFO

#### Age range:

15+

#### Duration:

10-40 minutes

#### Group size:

Flexible

#### Level of difficulty:

Advanced

#### Materials/space required:

Private space

#### Location:

Flexible

#### Engagement of external stakeholders:

No



## Step 1: Try it yourself

1. Decide how to enter your “inner silence”
  - a. Review your regular routines (e.g. yoga, meditation, physical activity...) to identify any activity that helps you reach your own “inner silence”.
  - b. Alternatively, consider using the suggested “Entering your inner silence” information, available with the teacher training material.
2. Formulate a question to yourself: something you’ve been meaning to “ask yourself”, or “sleep on”. Write down the question and revise it till it really resonates for you.
3. Use your chosen method in order to access your “inner silence”. Then drop your question into the silence.
4. Allow responses to surface with no censorship. You might “hear” words or other sounds, or see images, whether still or moving. Listen, without judging, but with discernment. Intuitive knowledge never sounds aggressive, and often sounds unexpected, according to Warren Zieler (see references below).
5. Feel free to interrupt the process to make notes or sketches. You can return to the process where you left it when the time is right.
6. You can also ask yourself new questions, for example to help clarify the responses you get.
7. Evaluate the experience. Did you learn anything of use/interest? Was it easy or difficult? This experience may not be immediately fruitful: it may depend on how the question is formulated. However the usefulness of the experience may become more obvious with more practice.

## Step 2: Guide another person through the process

1. When you have practised enough to feel confident to guide another person through the process, use the same steps as you did for Level 1.
2. At Step 3: you may choose (or they may request you) to read aloud the text “Entering your inner silence”, as a form of guided visualisation.
3. At Step 7: invite the other person to describe their experience. Make it clear that you are not asking them to tell you their question or the responses (though they may choose to do so) but to reflect on the quality of their experience, and any suggestions they may have for improving the process.



## Step 3: Introduce this tool in a group

1. Explain the basic principles of Deep Listening, and that it is a way of accessing inner/tacit knowledge, or intuition. Introduce 5 modes of Deep Listening, which are:
  - a. **Be silence:** Do not respond in any way to the speaker, either with words or with body language. Look away. No eye contact.
  - b. **Give attention:** Focus your entire self on what the speaker is saying, to the exclusion of all else.
  - c. **Be empathic:** Enter the talker's story and – to the extent that feels comfortable for you – live it as your own. Feel it in your body, your mind, your spirit, as if you were living the story. Be aware, however, that it is still the speaker's story, not yours; if the speaker is distressed, maintain a "safe" distance, for instance through a breathing exercise, movement or other ways you find useful for regulating your own emotions.
  - d. **Be non-judgmental:** This can be a difficult practice when the talker offers images (values, ideas, intentions) in conflict with yours!
  - e. Be **"empty"**: Put aside ("park") your present: your longings, knowledge and experience, hopes, dreams, problems, visions.
2. **Foster a group dialogue** in groups of 2-3. Asks the groups to first reflect on and then talk about two questions:
  - a. *Question 1.* How do you recognise transformative moments - those "Aha!" moments? For example, do you get a particular feeling in your body? Do you hear an inner voice? Do you suddenly see an unusual, unexpected image?
  - b. *Question 2.* Under what circumstances did these signals appear? Are there any particular settings (in the woods, by the sea, during a concert, in contact with small children...) where you experienced a sudden heightening of your senses? Are there moments in a relationship where you have experienced a sudden and completely different connection with the other person? Have there been moments of giddy happiness or imminent danger, when everything became clearer – and different?
3. Invite the other(s) to formulate a question for themselves based on the dialogue in Step 1. For instance, "When have I had contact with my inner source of knowledge? Was I paying attention or did I let the message slip by? How did it feel then? What did I hear or see?"



4. Invite learners to listen inwardly, in their inner silence, for responses to their questions. If they ask about time, suggest “around 10 minutes”. Encourage them to allow whatever happens to happen during that time. And tell them that when deep listening, they may perceive images or words or hear sounds... or nothing. That’s OK. No judgement. Encourage them to take notes at any time and then go back into their quiet self. Use your preferred method to help them to access their inner silence (unless they say they have no need). Invite them to drop their own question into the silence.
5. Ask learners to maintain silence for the duration of the exercise (8-15 minutes).
6. Watch for signs of completion.
7. In pairs or trios: each person in turn tells (in up to 3 minutes each) the main points from their experience. The listeners practise Deep Listening.



### Dos and don'ts

#### Do:

- Ensure a congenial and comfortable physical environment free of distractions and interruptions.
- Have patience. Deep Listening, whether to oneself or others, is a competence that is acquired over time, with practice.
- Make sure that those you invite to Level 3 are fully committed to the exercise – as an experiment.

#### Don't:

- Don't expect to be able to rid yourself (or others) of all preconceived opinions and assumptions, without exception. They will no doubt continue to pop up and surprise you – a valuable learning experience.
- Don't allow your own hopes and expectations to create pressure on your invitees.

#### Adaptations:

If your audience is new to Deep Listening, we suggest starting with Deep Listening to Others, tool 3.3.2, before trying Deep Listening to Oneself.

We invite you to adapt this activity to the specific needs of your learners, including by taking into account their neurodiversity. When adapting tools and activities for neurodivergent learners, please note it is not about treating others how you want to be treated, but how they want to be treated. Ask, listen, and stay open to different ways of learning and engaging.



## References

The activity is designed by Legacy17 and based on **Deep Listening**, a key method of the *Enspirited Envisioning* program developed and taught by Professor Warren Ziegler, a former teacher of futures studies at Syracuse University, USA. For several decades he worked with workshop participants from the public sector, academia, business, NGOs and Indigenous groups.

For further reading and more detailed instructions:

<https://hostingtransformation.eu/method/30187/>

Enspirited Envisioning – a guidebook to the enspiriting approach to the future, Warren Ziegler, 1995



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