

The Outline of the Activity of Listening

Transactional Analysis of the Listening Activity

Franklin H. Ernst Jr., M.D.

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INTRODUCTION

Listening is an activity. It is an activity avoidable by withdrawal, one carried out sometimes as a ritual, sometimes for passing the time. It is an activity highly cathected in intimacy and heavily weighted in the maneuvers and gimmicks of games. It is also an activity useful in work.

Listening is a most important activity for definition and study by the businessman, personnel manager, salesman, teacher, lawyer, and by those in the treatment professions.

An outline of THE THEORY OF THE LISTENING ACTIVITY is here presented. Listening procedures and listening attitudes as these occur in transactions between individuals contribute quite relevantly to how individuals behave with each other--to how a talking individual phrases and intones his words to the not-now-talking person.

CASE OF DOM

Illustration: Happening into a delicatessen to order some food, I saw over to one side three individuals sitting, one actively gesticulating and articulating. Indistinct words were barely audible, but the speaker periodically varied his amount of animation for initially unaccountable reasons. Old DOM, I will call him, sat opposite two younger individuals here called Mr. and Mrs. Inscrutable. DOM was an obviously old man, as was shown by his wrinkled face and very thick-lensed glasses. He

was recently shaven, perhaps as recently as 48 hours ago. He did not have his dentures in. His clothing and grooming were sub-par for the occasion. With sandwich in hand, Old DOM was as busily talking to the younger couple as they were busily cleaning off their plates. The onlooker's fantasy was that the couple, Mr. and Mrs. I, had charitably come to take Mrs. I's mother's uncle, i.e., grandmother's brother, out of a rest home for the day in order to later be able to report, "how well he looked, considering his age and mental condition, you know," when next writing back home to the family.

DOM looked undernourished, especially for someone to heed and consider his words, for someone to listen to him. He was talking and talking and talking. Every once in a while (at about 40 to 60 second intervals) as his tempo of syllables and movements would decrease, one or the other of the Inscrutables would give him the flicker of an acknowledging glance (less than 0.2 second) or an almost imperceptible nod ($\frac{3}{32}$ of an inch measured on the crown of the head).

With each semi-glance or semi-nod, his flagging tempo promptly picked up. It seemed the two dutiful Inscrutables were sitting there eating, impassively but busily listening to not one thing he said.

As I kept looking and watching this drama, I got caught with what my mommy taught me, "Don't stare at the people dear." So I corrected my attitude and posture. With this change, a different picture came to mind. What this man wanted was for somebody to talk to him--he was starved for somebody to talk to him. He had not had anyone talk to him for ever so long. His complaint was that "Nobody ever talks to me." What he was waiting for was for someone to talk to him, to say something to him, something for him to listen to, for this event to occur that would so abundantly revitalize his life, his physiology, give his existence meaning. If only he could think of something to say so they, the Inscrutables, would talk to him. But, each minimal, non-audible stimulus from them led DOM to another very minimally stimulating production of syllables and movements; and so time passed for all three.

CASE OF REGINA

A fifty-year-old girl, Regina, who could well have qualified for Billy Rose's "Aquacades" of 1938, periodically would be seen talking in her treatment group with her body and face motionless except for minimal lower face and jaw movements that accompanied a husky-toned, blurred articulation of syllables--her head held slightly back and 10 degrees to one side, eyes down.

To one of her 400-word, 30-conjunction, single sentences, there was no audible or visible response from the six sophisticated group members. After letting about 20 seconds of silence elapse, I commented to say, "what happened, Regina? No one responded to you!" She agreed, saying in a petulant tone, she guessed she'd done it again--done it wrong. Checking the second hand of my watch for time elapsed (30 seconds) since the conclusion of her "sentence," I asked her what she'd been saying. Although usually quite capable in this regard, she was at a loss to recapitulate idea or content. She acknowledged she had been listening to what she was saying in the same way as had the other onlooking group members in the room, i.e., very minimally. Nor could I (a) think of an appropriate verbal response to her "sentence" or (b) abstract its essence.

The example of Regina describes that although stimulated to talk, her talking did not cause any onlooker to become an engaged listener; even her own listening apparatus was not sufficiently stimulated to have become turned on.

LITERATURE

Psychiatric literature and scientific conferences have very few references to the activity of listening except Theodore Reik's "Listening with the Third Ear." It is an interesting commentary and no mention is made of listening with two ears.

DEFINITION OF LISTENING

The thesis presented is that listening is an activity evidenced by movement on the part of the not-now-talking person, evidenced by physical, visible motion. To listen is to move, to be in motion. Listening is a non-speaking, an inaudible activity in response to or evocative of audible activity from another person. Listening individuals have been found to be moving individuals--physically, visibly moving.

Listening is a neurophysiologic activity, a neuromuscular activity. It is very often a trained activity. It is quite regularly an activity for the person involving adaptational adjustment. It is a focusing, converging, differentiating activity with the environment. To be listening is to be engaged, involved, attentive. Listening is to be cortically stimulated and responsive--physically stimulated, meaning muscularly active.

Those activities available for a not-now-talking person in a group can be divided into (A) the semi-automatic auditory scanning activity called hearing, at times coincident with withdrawal, and (B) listening.

HEARING

The person sitting motionless in a face-to-face situation is not listening. When other visible voluntary muscle activity is no longer evident and the interval between eye blinks is longer than 5 seconds, the reasonable assumption can be made that listening in the situation has effectively ceased. Individuals having this verbalized to them quite often, and in short order, become not only more efficient in their own listening but much more effective in talking to others, i.e., looking for the listening of others to whom they are talking.

A little twenty-five-year-old woman with a Goldilocks-way-of-life had her leg fall asleep during her brief inspection tour of a therapy group. She stood--she fell down. "Oh, yes, doctor, I was listening to everything you said." Was she?

The new person noted to be unmoving in a group, when asked about his listening, almost routinely responds, "Oh, yes. I heard everything you said" and, often if not interrupted, begins to recite the immediately preceding trans-actions. This is related to another phenomenon, that of "absolute (hearing) recall for the last 30 seconds." This is different from listening activity. This hearing is similar to the replay of audio-video tape as if there were a 30-second supply of tape available in a continuous loop. The unmoving, non-blinking person quite regularly is a non-listener. The "urn, hum," borderline listening and the "illegitimate listener" with physical-movement-carried-on-out-of-sight-of-the-talker are special cases.

THE PROFESSIONAL AND LISTENING

At a very minimum of movement, eyeblinking occurs at least once every three to five seconds in the listener. With this basic information, a salesman, foreman, teacher, group therapist, etc., can estimate with a high degree of confidence which individuals are and which are not listening at any given moment. Something will be said later about the percentage of time a person can profitably listen during an interval of time.

What is variously referred to as alexic and nonlexical communication, nonverbal communication, and the non-audible aspect of semiotics, appropriately can be reviewed, redefined, and restudied as the phenomenology of listening--The Listening Activity. Listening is an experience, an activity of a viable ego state stimulated by an audible source. Quite frequently in treatment groups, the analysis of trans-actions has demonstrated that the listener (his listening attitude) has been exerting a significant, if not profound, influence on the speaking person. How? -- Via the non-audible movement or non-movement, via the attitudinal and postural sets, via the altering of bodily position.

A professional person's attention to the other person's listening activity is to study, differentiate and compute:

- (A) The effect of the speaker upon the listening person,
- (B) The influence of the listening person, his movements and physical attitudes, on the speaker's production.

The postural and attitudinal receptiveness of the listener is relevant and influential in determining the ego state of the talker. In treatment an individual's listening behavior, as with other behavior, can be determined to be emanating from one of three general categories of ego states, i.e., Parent, Adult, or Child.

An ego state is here defined as an organized system of coherent behavior patterns, motivated by a related system of emotion-reasoned experience (feelings) with adaptational capacity for social situations.

In an eight-patient, one-leader group, usually only one person at a time speaks. Arithmetically, this means that about 90 per cent of the man-hours spent during a group treatment session will be in some activity other than that of talking or "verbalizing one's feelings." It, therefore, becomes useful to be able to distinguish and define what is listening and what is not listening activity among the non-talking individuals in a psychotherapy group. The same is even more true for the public school classroom. If possible, it is also desirable to be able to classify the quality of the listener's listening activity; that is, whether it is a method of listening in the manner of a Parent with its prejudices and opinions or listening like a computer (Adult) or with a quality originating in the person's Childself.

EGO STATES AND THEIR FUNCTIONS

The three categories of ego states each have different functions. These are listed next. See also Diagram 1.

I. Parental functions are classifiable into:

Nurturing--both physical and emotional, and
Disciplining--prohibiting, limiting and training.

1. Parental functions are for the purpose of nurturing and disciplining the Childhood ego state. Disciplining parent is sometimes referenced as "prejudiced Parent" or "critical Parent."

II. Adult functions are:

Information input: "Tell-me-what-happened."

Information organizing: "Give-me-a-minute-to--think."

Solution producing: "The best-approach-to-this situation-now-is."

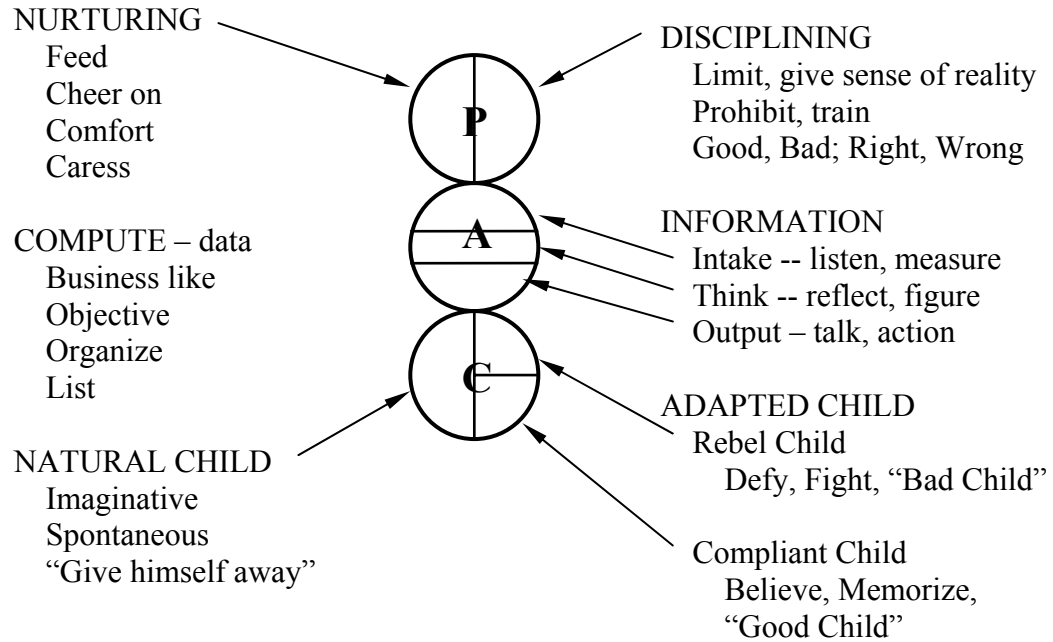
1. These have to do with the "here-and-now" situation.

III. Childlike ego functions are:

A. ADAPTIVE to Parental influences and training, and as such are either,
Rebellious--defiant in adaptive nature or
Compliant--believing, memorizing in nature.

B. NONADAPTIVE, "natural-Child" functions, e.g., spontaneity.

The Functions of the Personality



The Listening of the Ego States

The following is a description of behavioral characteristics of ADULT LISTENING, PARENT LISTENING, and CHILDHOOD LISTENING.

ADULT

ADULT LISTENING is evident in the quality of movement of the non-audible transacting person when his head is vertical to the ground, his eyes are parallel to the horizontal. This gives a balanced, level-headed, straight-forward appearance in which there is consideration of the situation at hand. This is manifest Adult. The mouth line is horizontal, often the mouth is closed with teeth touching. There is a slight turn of the head to one side on the vertical axis. This latter has the effect of bringing one eye and one ear closer than the other to the speaker and the opportunity for horizontal triangulating on the source of stimulation. The Adult is evidenced by the gaze periodically shifting from location to location and by the intermittent changing of trunk and limb position. Adult listening activity is "being-on-the-level" with the other person.

CASE OF NAN

Illustration: Nan, previously conversant with squaring-up and physical movement meaning Adult listening, was noticed unmoving (staring) at some-one talking to her in group. The group leader asked her, "Say, Nan, you're not very interested in what she's saying. So how come you're putting Jane on?" Nan's reply, "I know (smiling), I'm not blinking!" fluttering her eyelids playfully and "squaring-up." Jane, after a two-second pause, resumed her conversation to Nan, but this time more animatedly with concomitant increased interest on the part of the other members of the group. Jane later brought out that she had not noticed Nan's nonmoving appearance until it was brought up, but that after resuming talking to Nan, she felt more confident

that she was getting through to Nan and also she was less worried about whether she was boring to the others.

CHILD

CHILD LISTENING ego states are action portraits of (how) a Child (appears while) listening.

Impatient, restless-Child listening such as occurs during church sermons may also be seen in groups. It is epitomized by the individual turning to the speaker, then away, then back to him again with gross trunk and limb movements, not focusing attentiveness in one place for any interval of time. This (compliant-defiant) adaptation is often in response to the directive "Don't talk, don't interrupt when someone else is speaking."

Pouting-Child listening is defiantly compliant--secretly listening more intensely than he would care to let anyone know; face tilted slightly forward, gaze and face averted, secretly peeking at the one to whom the pout is directed.

Coy-Child listening is with head down, turned at a slight angle away from the speaker, looking up for brief glances out of the corners of the eyes.

Embarrassed-Child listening has an accompanying coloring. Attentiveness may be decreased; there may be jerkiness of movement.

Defiant-Child listening is head back, not unusually horizontal lines on the forehead, facial musculature perhaps flat "stony face", lower jaw protruding.

PARENT

PARENTAL LISTENING is in the manner of and with the attitudes, opinions, and views of Mother and Father. These opinionated ways of listening are meant to convey messages of approval (nurturing) or disapproval (prohibiting) to Childlike individuals with a listening look (a nonverbal communication),

i.e., with a minimal movement or change of expression to accomplish maximal results in the stimulating and/or responding Child.

Parental prohibiting listening is often with a scowl (vertical forehead lines) on the tilted head, with perhaps a horizontal movement of the head on the neck.

Very close in posture to the disciplining, prohibiting Parental listening appearance is the "nurturing" listening appearance. With this latter, the top of the neck is a little forward, head tipped forward and tilted somewhat to one side, perhaps eyebrows raised. This listening attitude is often accompanied by head movement in a fore and aft plane to describe approval, that is, symbolic feeding.

Both public speakers and group leaders have occasion to view the head nodding, Parental listener in front of them who nods while the speaker is talking. It is as if to say, "I completely agree with you. You are so right." It is as if the listener were feeding soft candies or marshmallows to the speaker for the recitation of approved topics.

In group therapy situations, this marshmallow-feeding Parent is usually offering sweet nothings to the problems of others, murmuring soft, seemingly compassionate phrases to indicate how much he cares not to have the distressed one give-himself-away, i.e., get well of his distress. These reassuring nothings have the effect of plugging the complaining mouth of the "problemated person."

This latter head-bobbing Parent is referred to in groups as the "coach," when the bobbing is accompanying his own words. "what-I-am-telling-you-is-important-for-you-to-know. It-is-for-your-own-good,-and-I-mean-for-you-to-learn-it." Implicitly it is understood that the affirmative headwagger, the coach, will become indignant if the listener does not recognize the perfectly obvious truth of what the coach is saying and bobbing about.

There is the "like-I-said-before," Parent who is watching and listening to get an affirmative nod from the listener-Child. "Like I said before" people wish to have events come out even and fair so they, the "before-sayers," can keep the peace; that is, so they can be "peacemakers" if only they can find some

contenders. "Like I said" with surprising regularity is associated with the game of "Let's You And Him Fight." "As I said (before)" is said to get credit for what he had previously said or done. "I said it first!"

CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND LISTENING TRAINING

The Childhood development of talk-listening, listen-talking, look-pointing and show-looking evolve in an intimately related pattern. From one-and-a-half to four years of age, these in-motion, mentation activities are mushrooming in numbers and skill of use, corresponding with the myelination of the central nervous system.

Fine focusing and pointing, specificity in discriminating, selecting and differentiating are abilities all rapidly advancing; e.g., an ability to listen to nuances, tonal changes, accents, and inflections.

TRAINING AND ADAPTATIONS

Childhood learning during preschool years is heavily invested in finding the best ways for adapting to the nurturing person's injunctions and edicts about anti-looking, anti-pointing and anti-listening.

Hear on to a few of these:

INJUNCTIONS

1. "We don't listen to those things, in our family."
2. "We don't listen to those things, do we?"
3. "Don't pay any attention to how he sounds, he means well," as with the following vignette:

"Mommy, Mommy! Daddy's mad at me." "Don't pay any attention to how he sounds, dear. He's tired (at 6 P.M.?). He really loves you."

So back to Daddy for the harsh word or the hand which proves it. Proves what? That you can't trust Mommy, or that you can't trust your own ear, or your Daddy's love of you?

4. "Pretend you don't notice!"
5. "Don't give yourself away!"
6. "Don't let them see that it got to you, bothered you!"

These latter three injunctions here have the effect of training the child away from giving evidence of having been stimulated to listen. This decreased responsiveness by the pretender leads him to be an unrewarding listener, as far as the talker is concerned. With continued practice of this pretense of not noticing, it becomes possible to become almost perfectly unnoticing. People who don't give-away that they are listening, that they have been gotten to with the word, those who practice this successfully may well become frantic, frightened, fat or frigid.

7. "Don't give them the satisfaction of knowing you heard them!"

Then later with his mommy, she says something--he doesn't respond. She says, "Now you listen to me!" He gives no satisfactory evidence of listening and so she hits him; bang! bang! He still doesn't show her that he is bothered, so she goes bang! bang! bang! She becomes bothered (infuriated); he wins, and this is how to make them tougher. And besides, "Look how hard she tried."

8. "Now you listen to everything I say!"

Some children are taught that "listening" all the time is good, that they are supposed to. "That's how to be a good girl (boy)!" Barbara recovered from schizophrenia when she no longer was required (internally compelled) to listen to everything that was said to her.

9. "Listen when someone is talking to you, dear."
10. "You listen to me while I am talking!"
11. "When I am speaking, you listen!"

A derivative corollary of these latter three is: "When I am speaking you are supposed to listen. Therefore, I don't have to listen when I am speaking. You are the one that is supposed to be doing the listening."

12. "Don't talk at the same time as another!"
13. "Don't talk when someone else is speaking!"
14. "Answer when you're spoken to!"
15. "Don't point, dear."
16. "Don't stare, dear (i.e. at individuals with appearance discrepant from previous experience, e.g. cripples).
17. "Quit moving all around while I'm talking to you.,,
18. "Stop wiggling. SIT STILL and listen to me!"

These last two are training methods for non-listening as those who obey them learn how to "let it go in one ear and out the other!"

TRANSACTIONAL ANALYSIS OF LISTENING

A transaction is defined as one conversational stimulus and the response to it. In analyzing transactions, there is attention given to identifying the nature of the active ego state in the person giving the conversational stimulus as well as to identifying the ego state in the not-now-audible other person who later may be vocally responsive. Groups at work repeatedly have demonstrated the speaker exerting an influence on the listener. In addition, however, there are the specific dynamic influences being exerted by the listener on the speaker. i.e. the effect of the listener on how the speaker behaves and talks.

The physical attitude and type of movement of the listener offer reliable, predictive information to the speaking or other observing person as to the quality of reception being given to the talker.

The listener not infrequently by "squaring-up" his head, "listening-on-the-level", being "straight" will influence not only the quality of his own listening perception i.e., his own ego state, with a corresponding change in his own experiencing, but also the listener's "squaring-up" has had an influence on the quality of the conversation coming from the talker. A listener, by tilting his head, reveals an "angle-in-mind" to the speaker (and other onlookers). This "angle-in-mind" indicates a quality of listening in which one PAC function of the listener's mind is weighted more heavily than the other.

Keeping track of the angle that the speaker has will enable the listener to be aware of an attempt being made to persuade, convince, fool or play with him, the listener. The talking person who notices that the listeners have a tilt to their faces might reflect that, (a) the listening may be occurring from a prejudicial, protective or playful point of view or (b) he, the speaker, may be coming across in a less-than-objective manner.

During serial transactions in a group, it is noted that an "angle-in-mind" stimulus from the talker usually stimulates an "angle-in-mind" listener attitudinal response. The converse also holds true. Often the inception of a game can first be noted as both listener and talker assume an angled countenance.

TALKER PHRASES intended "to angle" the listener.

Some angled phrases used in groups are the "pseudomentation" ones.

To list a few:

1. "I'm not altogether convinced that..." "I'm not convinced," usually invites more proof from the initiator "beyond a reasonable doubt."
2. "I don't accept that" in response to some observation or conjecture by another person in the group. This is a "spit-up" and invites more nurturing, feeding efforts on the part of the initiator.
3. "I don't believe I..." is inviting the other person to try to convert (if he can) a belief of his. Believing is a different order of experiencing from objective data-processing. A belief is not readily shiftable.
4. "I was following you good, but now you lost me." This stimulus not infrequently leads the preceding talker into talking-circles and eventually into confusion or anger.
5. Substitution of the word "feel" for "think," such as "what is your feeling," or "I feel that what we're talking about is..." rather than the more measured precision of "think."
6. "I was wondering if..." is checking out the other person's resistance, a preliminary probing. "You show me yours, then, maybe I'll show you mine."
7. "It seems to me."

LISTENER POSTURES, GESTURES intended "to angle" the talker:

1. Cheek Puffing: Facing forward, angled head, eyes down, cheeks puffed out for a second or two.
"You don't say so, I would not have thought so (and I still don't)."
2. Basket hands: The seemingly contemplative, care-fully considering posture and gesture of the hands and fingers in an inverted basket position.
The head is tilted to one side and slightly forward, gaze directed up away from the speaker somewhat; both hands are brought together but with the fingers separated and arched forward to form an inverted basket structure, the fingertips only of the two hands touching. The picture on verbal description in group has been of a money-lender who is not sure he has exacted enough collateral or interest for a loan, "so to speak."
3. Foot twitching: Beast of prey, tail-undulating-tiger, ready to pounce on misbehavior of another.

LISTENER SOUNDS "to angle" the talker:

The sounds referred to here are those produced by voluntary (striated) muscles.

1. Finger and foot drummers are well known to teachers, salesmen, and others. These are usually observed in Parental ego states indicating "hurry-up," "get to the point," "quit wasting my time with that," etc.
2. "TSK," the "tasty" audible, made by the tongue being pulled down from the moist upper teeth and front plate. One system of decoding "tsk's" goes as follows:
One "tsk": "Too bad, you lose," "(you) Dummy," "Stupid," "Oh, gee. How awful!" or the introjective forms, "Oh, Sh--!" "I shouldn't have."

Two "tsk's": "No, no!," "You mustn't!"

Three "tsk's": "Shame on you!," "Don't you do it!"

Four "tsk's": "Naughty, naughty," "Look what you did, you bad boy!"

These "non-verbal communicants" are describing what is-in-good-taste and what is-in-bad-taste. These individuals tastily give their taste approval or disapproval of the stimulator. One group member testily referred variously to these as "tasty, sweet kisses," "tough, sour kicks," "tiny, shiny kisses," etc., as expansions of the initials "TSK."

3. "Leather-working" sounds are described below.
4. Sighs: In some families, sighing is the principal method of exerting disciplinary direction.

GAME ANALYSIS AND LISTENING MANEUVERS

In adaptively selecting a particular method of obscuring what is listened to and looked at, a person is reflecting how this anti-listening-looking training was perceived as a game such as:

"Pretend that you don't notice," ("that you're not interested," "that you don't care.")

"We don't let anyone see that those things bother us, do we?"

These are dramatic and playful qualities as heard by children. Some individuals during their growing learn that a game can be played for small stakes, for example, a smile, a scolding word, a nickel, or small confusion. Others learn to play a game for very high stakes. These are the "hard games" referred to as third degree games; for example, for a jailing, a whipping, or to prove "I don't care," and "You can bet your sweet life on that," meaning the bettor is willing to bet his own life.

SOME TALKER GAME MANEUVERS INTENDED TO INFLUENCE LISTENER ATTITUDES

1. "Ya know": This maneuver is to secure affirmative head-nodding from listener, yet keep the listening nodder from verbally interrupting.
2. Politeness and Courtesy Rules. These maneuvers are to invoke the sanctity of certain rules in the listener, as inviolate sanctuaries for the talker.
 - a. "Let me say just one little thing," or "Excuse me, I have just one little thing I'd like to put in," then, after 0.1 to 0.3 seconds, to hasten ahead without waiting. If the listener lets this "just-one-more-little-thing" phrase go, the odds are good that it will be more than one thing.

- b. "I was just wondering if..." and "Has it ever occurred to you" phrases, in fact, are how a salesman literally gets his foot in the door to get inside to sell unwanted merchandise.
 - c. Simultaneous initiation of syllables by two persons. In the "syllable bumping" maneuver one person will persist about one-half syllable less in length than the other person and then will seemingly, politely retire. The person who goes ahead has "his-point-to-get-across completely," but the retiring person who seemingly gives in (actually gives up) does not listen to the speaker; instead he holds onto his words, stores up his point to then later get his point across. "Syllable bumpers" with their sharpened points (harpoons) to get across (into the other person) experience these events as validating or invalidating existence itself. They will give-up "politely" for a while but then their turn for "the floor" has to come or life's meaning is lost (unless vigorously defended as with the so-called "Free Speech Movement").
3. The Contention Breeding Stratagems.
- a. "I just want to throw out a comment here," usually is in fact a verbal throw-up (emesis) for others to clean up.
 - b. "I hate to say this but..." -- hate merchant.
 - c. "I don't see anything wrong with that (what he just said)," this often said to the leader, implying leader intended harm to the person just spoken to. This is siding with one person against another as if there were some hidden mischievous, critical, maligning motive intended by the preceding talker. This "protectiveness" has the aim of alienating one person from another. Marijane used this in group when her "solicitous" Parent saw a distressed group member "wince" as the distress was being treated by the therapist. Even in face of the distressed wincer calling her on her "interfering tactic" she often

would continue. Her "I felt I just had to help her out" frequently was M's own taking a second helping, "snacking" (she was obese).

4. The Rewording Tactics: "to straighten out what was said," is to invalidate the originally wording person, his thinking and way of expressing himself:
 - a. "In other words, you are saying,"
 - b. "I suppose we could say then that..."
 - c. "Well now, let me see. What you seem to be saying is..."
 - d. "Well now, let me see if I understand you correctly. What you are trying to say is..."
 - e. "Now, let's face it! You..." (You-had-better well-admit-it). The reworder in effect is telling the preceding talker (now the listener) that he, the reworder, is the only one who knows how to say it; he, the now-listener, is obviously inept, stupid, incapable of speaking clearly, to be understood.

5. The Agreeableness Artifices: These are intended to convey a sense of agreeableness on the part of the talker to the listener; as if the talker had an open mind when, in fact, he usually made up his mind many years before, i.e., has a prejudice.
 - a. "I was wondering if..."
 - b. "Have you ever thought that..."
 - c. "Now I don't want you to think that..."
 - d. "Well it seems to me that..."
 - e. "Now, wouldn't you say that...?"
 - f. "..., right? "
 - g. "I suppose then, you could say that..."

These openers would seem to indicate a willingness to consider another side of a situation, to be leaving an opening for another view; however, on analysis of the transactions, these openers are revealed as masking an opinionated Parent. They

are designed so as to appear considerate of the other guy, appear desirous of avoiding disagreement; however, the responsive options available are found more often than not to have been cut down to two only:

- 1) Agreement or
- 2) Being a disagreeable person.

h. "Well now, friend, (doctor, etc.) you don't mean to tell me that..."

This is "agreeableness" played harder. It is more obviously coercive and intimidating. If talker is allowed to go ahead beyond this point, the listener might just as well give in to listening to an extended, if not vitriolic, rebuttal. If the talker is not interrupted at exactly this point, any later interruption of the talker will be fought off as if interrupter were questioning the virtue of the talker's mother and his family honor. The listener's option is to interrupt here just at this point with "Well, I guess not, to you," or an equivalent.

CASE ILLUSTRATION OF AGREEABLENESS ARTIFICE

Jerry in a group was noted to be repeatedly cutting in when very germane items were being handled. He would invariably preface his remarks with, "Well, it seems to me that," and launch into a monologue, a filibuster. Various measures were initiated by members of Jerry's group to cut through this, for instance, "You're barging in on me." Jerry's "It-seems-to-me," was invoking a sacred rule of conversation. "Well, it seems to me, that after all, you know that when I have the floor the least you could do is give me the courtesy of listening while I am talking, until I have finished."

The fact was that "It seems to me," was explosively wired. One time Ron gave very careful attention to what Jerry was saying even though Jerry's head tilt matched the prejudice of his presentation. After Jerry's opinion had been well portrayed and at the appropriate occasion, Ron gave an appreciative "WOW!" "Seeming" Jerry was quite angered. When Ron did not take back the "WOW," did not cringe or apologize, Jerry barged out of the room. Later, after the "Well,-it-seems-to-me" bomb had been disarmed for exploration, it became evident that there was a little boy inside who had carefully copied and memorized in detail what his daddy had taught him. He had been very accurately delivering himself of these teachings. Jerry later, by way of a slip-of-the-tongue, told the group "Well, it seems to me that..." stood for "Well, my daddy says that..." Individuals who with any frequency use this phrase, "Well, it seems to me that..." are probably having trouble experiencing the reality of events. For them experiences are of a "seeming" quality; this because of extensive and intensive internal harking back to past teachings in order to handle, to deal with here-and-now events according to "the sacred laws of my daddy (mommy)."

Parenthetic to Ron's WOW--Why was a WOW appropriate?

Why work to get a WOW? WOW is what to say to the small person who has done something of considerable proportions. The small person has an appropriate expectation of being credited for such an accomplishment. The reason for saying (doing) something for credit is first for the WOW from mom. Mom is the one who initially teaches the manners of good listening, teaches the individual what are major accomplishments in life. These latter are deeply etched into the memory and as archived records will not be forgotten after she has departed the scene. These are to make sure the individual later in life will make good impressions and his friends will know that he has been well taught by a good and proper mommy. Mommy wants to make sure that her son's (daughter's) archives are properly established.

Mom gives WOVES so that what is very important to teach a child will be indelibly inscribed into the offspring's archives. The big thing to get from somebody later in life is a "WOW!" for "my mother, the archives." After all, you know, WOW upside down spells MOM.

LISTENER MANEUVERS INTENDED TO INFLUENCE TALKERS

1. Basket hands: The pseudo-contemplative, inverted basket hand gesture (fingertips only touching) mentioned earlier.
2. The "hell-on-leather, `sufferer' " listener: This person causes leather articles to make audible squeaking sounds during the talking of another person. Shoe squeaking caused by movement of locked ankles is frequently accompanied by low back pain. Lock your ankles, squeak your shoes, and see for yourself!

The "hell-on-leather" listener is describing particular listening experiences as having been "saddled" onto him and conveys that the talker is being experienced as riding

the listener. One man regularly "worked leather" when his wife was talking in a monotonous, plaintive tone from which she could be jarred or loosened only with considerable difficulty. He did not interfere in words with her talking but was effectively complaining "What's-a-poor-guy-to-do,-his-wife-the-way-she-is" to the group.

Transactional analysis of the "hell-on-leather," "cowhide audible," regularly has been portraying the listener as saddled, suffering, ready to be ridden and experiencing, "why doesn't he (she) get off my back?"

3. The "Um hum" head nod maneuver:

The "ah, huh," "uh, hum" headwagger, listening maneuver is in response to another person's seemingly "endless talking." In this maneuver the "ah, huh" head bobber fancies himself to be giving reassurance to the speaker, that he, the listener is understanding the talker. In therapy groups, the "uh hum" headbobber reports wishing that the talker would stop boring him, but at the same time he wants to be nice to the "yakker," because he wouldn't want the "yakker" to get mad at him. After all, Mr. "Uh, huh" is doing the right and courteous thing. The extended series of closed lip murmurs usually is discontinued by the headwagger before he stops his nodding. The "uh, huh" is usually done with a deadpan expression, jaws slightly apart, teeth not touching, mouth closed, muscles of the cheeks below the eyes sagging. When Mr. "Uh, Huh" lapses into silence, he is thinking to himself that if he is silent long enough, the other person will take the hint, stop talking and get off his back. What occurs often resembles the initial examples of DOM, the old man whose appetite for being audibly recognized was stimulated by the "Uh ums" and/or head nod of Mr. and Mrs. Inscrutable. Invariably, these "angled" nodding listeners with their "uh, huhs" report that people keep getting mad at them. Often the game is "Look How Hard I Am Trying (to listen and understand you)." The gimmick is "You at least owe me the courtesy of not getting mad at

me." The payoff is talker's blowup. The talker on his side is often playing, "You Gotta Listen To Me" for his "one-free-mad" payoff. The antithesis (solution) to this game is for the "uh, huh" headwagger to instead audibly enunciate various, different, distinct monosyllables and then explicitly discontinue the transactions.

The serial "um hums" and nods of the wagger have in sequence stood for:

"I hear you,"

"I understand you,"

"I wish you would stop talking,"

"Isn't it awful,"

"Isn't that all?"

"This is very nice to know,"

"Get off my back!"

"Yeah! Go practice drowning," etc.

SOLUTIONS to LISTENING PROBLEMS

Some of the techniques used to improve the activity of listening, to control one's own listening behavior are listed below:

- (a) Leveling one's head,
- (b) "Get-a-Move-On,"
- (c) "Give-with-an-Audible,"
- (d) Selective Responsiveness (stroking),
- (e) Brush Touch,
- (f) Sound Screen.

A. LEVELING ONE'S HEAD refers to the specific activity of squaring the head and face to the vertical-horizontal plane so that a level-headed physical posture is evident and a straight forward presentation of attitude is apparent to the other person, for listener or talker. "Leveling" has been presented by the therapist in groups and also by patients to each other as a procedure in treatment. At an appropriate clinical moment "tilt" and "square" are analyzed and demonstrated.

The following then may be explained: Using both hands, the thumbs are placed on the posterior angles of the lower jaw (mandible). Both index fingers are placed on the bony ridge (zygomatic process) running from the ear forward to the cheek, and the tips of the middle fingers are placed at the outer angle of the eye sockets. Using these points and the balance (kinesthetic) sense of the arms and head, a rather good level of the head, as visualized across the eyes, can be obtained. The level can be verified by a person looking in a mirror. Those wearing glasses often use the upper rims of their spectacles and a known horizontal plane, e.g. wall shelving, to aid in aligning head posture. Although this procedure has, on occasion, been called a gimmick or a trick, it has been used with beneficial results by members of training seminars in order to differentiate their objective from

their non-objective views. Since its discovery and introduction as a "treatment prescription" by the author, "leveling" has been successfully used by people being treated for various diagnostic categories including sociopathic disturbances, chronic and acute anxiety, panics, etc. It has been used by patients in institutional and private treatment settings. It has been used by listeners to assess when speakers have an "angle-in-mind." An "angle-in-mind" goes with an angle of the countenance. Of those instances studied to date (in excess of 5,000 observations), a level appearance has corresponded to an actively cathected Adult ego state in over 95 per cent of the occasions; that is, individuals who are appraising, objective, thoughtful, reliable, reasoning, etc., are persons "on-the-level" either in listening or in talking. These persons without an "angle-in-mind," without a "tilt" are, with remarkable regularity, workmanlike in approach; are thoughtfully compassionate, relatively non-opinionated and humorless with this attitude. (The remaining 5 per cent afforded interesting treatment, diagnostic situations of trance-like behavior, Child confusions, etc.)

Theoretical considerations are multiple; for this occasion: **manifest behavior** and **internal experiencing** do not long remain divergent in any individual. A change of one will bring about the change of the other.

- B. GET-A-MOVE-ON: As a prescription, "get moving" is given to patients in groups, in individual treatment, and in the treatment of couples. The non-moving, unblinking person can very reliably be estimated to be a non-listener. When consistent with the treatment goal, the therapist may appropriately remark to the 'non-moving person about the probable, internal non-listening being manifested. This is the example of Nan and Jane earlier. When other movement has ceased and the eye blink rate has fallen below once every 3 to 5 seconds, listening, for practical purposes, has stopped.

- C. GIVE-WITH-AN-AUDIBLE: Particularly in treatment groups, the effects of non-audible attentiveness compared to audible syllabic recognition by a listener are noteworthy. The recognition value ("stroke" value) of an audible response has been repeatedly demonstrated to have much greater social effectiveness than any extended inaudible, although moving, responsiveness from the listening individual. This "give-with-an-audible (sound)" recommendation has been of value in the treatment of married couples where one will be letting the other talk endlessly, presumably with the intent of letting the talker "unwind." Instead of unwinding, the non-audible responsiveness serves to "wind-up" the talker. This is similar to the "um, hum" head nodding responsiveness to the "You-Gotta-Listen-To-Me" player mentioned earlier. The audible response, especially its tone, gives a much clearer indication to the talker of the quality of reception being given to his verbal stimulus than any number of head nods. Recall, for example, that "uh, hum" head bobbing has equivalent meanings ranging from "That's very interesting" to "Drop dead!" The "tilt" rebuttal sometimes heard from patients, in response to the "Give an audible" prescription, is "I can't think of anything to say," to which the therapist may respond with, "I wasn't asking for you to think of something to say. How about talking to her (him, me) !"

(From a treatment orientation, as well as from an educator vantage point, choice-making, learning, focusing-converging, differentiating, the act of making new information one's own information; these involve look-pointing, listen-talking, and talk-listening.)

- D. SELECTIVE STROKING: There are occasions when it is appropriate not to become engaged in transactions. When these occur, an initial interval of four or five seconds of non-looking, non-moving, non-audible, non-engaging responsiveness will reduce by 95 per cent the likelihood of persistent, undesired reattempts by the would-be stimulator of a conversation. While to some, this may seem like "cruel and inhuman" (un)responsive behavior, many a poised

individual has referred to this method as "selective, discriminatory listening." This is the specific antithesis to the injunction "Answer when you're spoken to."

E. "BRUSH TOUCH," THE 0.2 SECOND NON-EROTIC SKIN TOUCHING OF THE OTHER PERSON:

This prescription is most often given to married couples in treatment. This particular self-describing procedure is Adult ego state energizing. It is an activity which stimulates "here-and-now" awareness in both individuals. It presumably stimulates the cerebral reticular-activating-system. Interestingly, couples have reported occasions of one brush-touching the other in the midst of playing, e.g. "If It Weren't For You." It has taken at least 10 to 15 seconds to resume the "mad" previously going. Although the instant verbal response may well have been "What did you do that for?" there is a heightened awareness of the "here-and-now" as contrasted to the just preceding "feeling-mad" experience with its inherent anachronisms. Couples have recorded bringing their marriage to effectiveness with the utilization of this procedure coupled with "giving an audible" more often to each other.

- F. SOUND SCREEN: This is the use of sound such as music to screen out external distractions. Contrary to what many parents will say, it is advantageous to the adolescent studier to have his radio on while studying. The Sound Screen handles the feeling of isolation, of being shut-out, shut-away from their surroundings, whereas the absolute dead silence of the library--often soporific and hypnotic--intensifies these feelings and detracts from reasonably efficient studying. The Sound screen serves to stimulate the cortex, keeping the learning mind awake ("stroking" advantage). The radio Sound Screen acts to screen out external stimuli as well, as when Mom and Dad are screaming at each other or at one of the other kids in another room. Students who get very good grades with a remarkably high frequency have their radios on while studying in their rooms.

LISTENING EFFICIENCY

Optimal listening efficiency in the demonstrably improving patient varies between 30 and 70 per cent of the time in a treatment group. Listening less than 30 per cent is correlated with a lowered rate of clinical improvement. Patients in group who listen about 50 per cent are the ones most likely accomplishing their treatment objective. Theoretically, this is consistent with the fact that events in the groups are first experienced, then reviewed, to then be assimilated in some measure during the session. When an event is being assimilated, externally directed listening activity is decreased. Some events are of less significance and some are more pertinent to each individual in the group. In order to most efficiently utilize the information coming in, the patient will be storing some information, partially working through other, and occasionally completing a piece of working through during a group session. Many of the transactions in a group are repetitive, especially as to new information becoming available. So, there will be less call for complete attentiveness.

The 100 percent listeners have been found to be ruminants, grazers, who later go home to sit down, regurgitate and chew over the material (away from the group, away from the therapist) to then formulate and energize countering, interfering opinions.

"I'll have to think about that. I will think about that later," accompanied by a "tilt" from a patient, usually means to figure out how to disregard what was said to him, to prove that it will not work.

Individuals who have consistently reported and manifested "100 per cent listening" in group, to date, have been troubled either with (latent) psychosis or manifest obesity.

SUMMARY

1. The activity of listening is manifested by visible, physical bodily movement.
2. Listening activity is to be differentiated from hearing. Hearing is a semi-automatic, auditory, environmental-scanning operation.
3. The non-listener is characterized by an absence of visible, physical movement and by an eye blink rate less than once every 3 to 5 seconds.
4. In psychotherapy groups with eight patients, about 90 per cent of the man-hours are spent doing something other than talking, "expressing feelings."
5. "Not-now-talking" group treatment time is occupied with:
 - (A) listening activity,
 - (B) withdrawal, including time spent to accomplish working through, "working it over" in group after cogent transactions have taken place, plus
 - (C) the semi-automatic, auditory environmental scanning operation of hearing.
6. Listener attitudes and behavior as with talker behavior can be viewed as originating from one of three general categories of ego states, i.e., Parental, Adult, and Child. The listening experience (internal reason feeling) of each is associated with corresponding characteristic external manifest behavior, attitudes, postures and movements.
7. Adult listening is associated, with almost uncanny regularity, with a "level," "squared-up" countenance (over 95 per cent of treatment instances observed by the author).

8. Parental and Child-like listening ego states are usually accompanied by an angle of the face and head. A "tilt" of the head and face usually means an "angle-in-mind" listener or talker.

Characteristic Adult, Childlike and Parental listening attitudes, postures, movements are further differentiated in the text.

9. During childhood very vigorous training is given to the developing listening-looking-pointing-talking activities. This training is concerned with:
 - (a) masking (or exaggerating) responsive evidence of this auditory sensory input and the ability to logically organize it;
 - (b) learning of pretending and other reality-questioning, denying techniques (e.g., "It-seems-to-me"); and
 - (c) being knowledgeable of rules (opinions) and rights (prejudices?) about denying (or enforcing) satisfaction to (from) another person in social encounters.

The childhood training programs about the developing listening-looking-pointing-talking activities also have long lasting educational learning consequences in addition to the psychological, developmental, social-skillfulness consequences.

10. The Parental listener is concerned with approving (feeding) or disapproving (prohibiting) of the talker.
11. The repetitious, non-audible responsiveness such as silent head nodding to vocal stimuli is experienced as deprivation by the talker.
12. In treatment groups the analysis of transactions (one stimulus and the response to it) between two individuals demonstrates:
 - (a) The influence of the talker on the listener and
 - (b) The influence of the listener (gesture, posture,

movement) on the talker.

This latter phenomenon is perhaps better known under the euphonious but misleading terminology of "non-lexical" and "non-verbal communication."

13. Some (game) maneuvers are described as used by talkers to influence the listener and others used by listeners to influence the talker.

The talker maneuver of "It seems to me that ..." is dealt with in some detail. When this phrase is being used as a maneuver in a game, the substitution of the phrase, "My daddy says that ..." will be complementary and in context.

14. Some treatment techniques (prescriptions) used in the treatment of patient listening operations is described. In the social idiom, these are :
 - (a) "Get a Level"
 - (b) "Get a Move On"
 - (c) "Give with an Audible"
 - (d) Selective "stroking"
 - (e) The Brush-touch
 - (f) The Sound Screen
15. Patients in treatment groups who are demonstrably getting better, listen between one and two thirds of the time; i.e., maximum listening efficiency in the individual varies between 30 per cent and 70 per cent.