




How We Listen Is What We Get


Exploring a new direction or wrestling with challenges at work? If you are not getting helpful answers or tired of running around in circles, you may need to ask and listen from a different place. In *Theory U* (my latest favorite book), Otto Scharmer explores four fields of conversation:

1. Downloading- Filtering through our habitual mind
2. Factual Listening- Listening for data
3. Empathic Listening- Seeing through connecting
4. Generative Listening- Experiencing what is emerging

 If we access only **level 1** we'll most likely replay patterns from our past. We download what is known but not necessarily what is meaningful or innovative. We tend to reconfirm opinions, beliefs, and judgments based on unconscious past experience and programming. This is the land of reruns, projection and status quo.

 When we thrive in **level 2** we debate the pros and cons of a given challenge. We glory in our intellectual capability by focusing on things, tasks, and facts. We defend our point of view as if it is who we are and spend time debating and psychoanalyzing instead of exploring ideas. This is the land of mind fields and (if we are willing) open minds.

 In **level 3** we access our capacity to relate. We listen from our humanity and see ourselves as part of the whole. We suspend our focus on facts and figures and drop into our heart. We don't "take on" or "wallow in" feelings we inquire and dialogue. Our capacity expands as we let go and attend. This is the land of deep connection and intuition.

 **Level 4** taps into a deeper conversation with stillness and what is moving through us. At this generative level, we align with our breath and what is wanting to happen. We silence the chatter, calm the emotions and deepen our relationship with source. Our pulse slows and we are more aware of what is in us, around us, and calling us. We release. We let come. This is the land of inspiration and co-creation.

To receive higher quality insight and solutions step into level 3 and 4 more often. Ask and listen with an open mind, heart and will. Start by putting your attention on your heart (you can physically feel it expand) and your breath. Be in the spaciousness. Allow wisdom from above, below, beyond and within to come into consciousness. Throughout the day ask yourself, "What level of listening am I applying?" and notice what you get.

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