

Listen

What does it mean?

- **I am focused** - Listen in a close, thoughtful and silent manner
- **I am present** - Listen to what the person is truly saying
- **I am aware** - Listen to the body language as well as the words
- **I try to understand** - Listen with a purpose; ask clarifying questions as needed

True listening requires focusing on others, not just ourselves and our own needs. It begins with determining your role as a listener. Is the speaker seeking your support, advice, clarification, encouragement or empathy?

We listen to 'understand' - it is not the same as agreeing with or approving.

An important benefit of listening is learning!

"Much of the conflict in our lives can be explained by one simple unhappy fact: We don't really listen to each other." - Michael P. Nichols

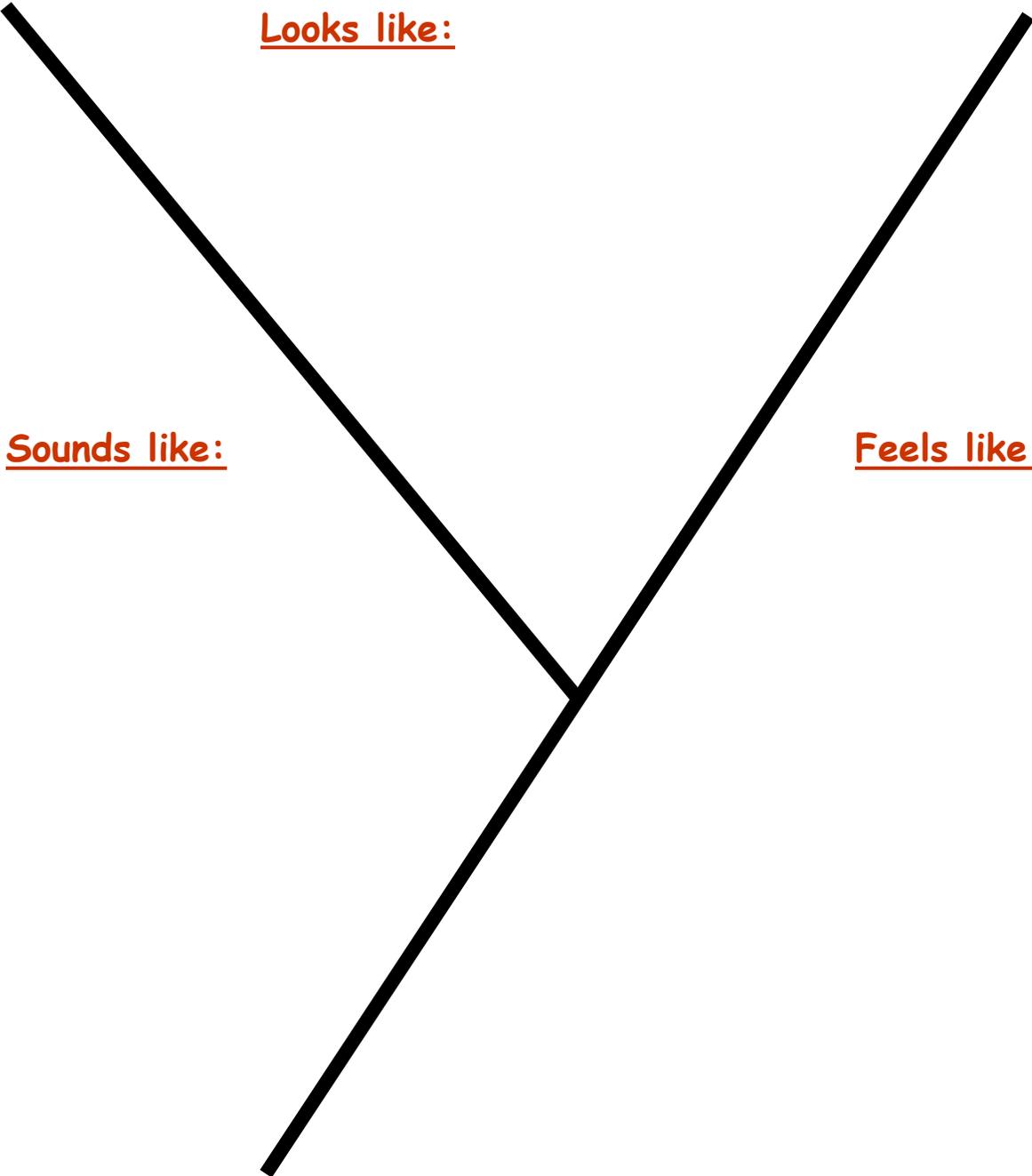


Listen

Looks like:

Sounds like:

Feels like:





Listen

Looks like:

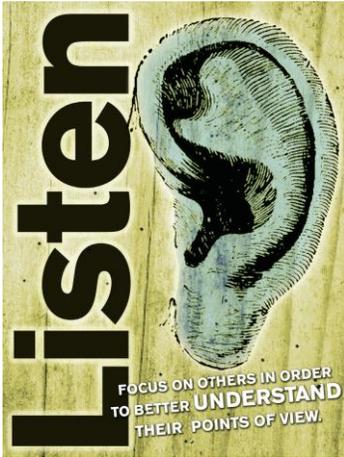
- One person speaking at a time
- Eye contact, focusing on the speaker
- Nodding, leaning towards the speaker
- Interested silence

Sounds like:

- One speaker at a time
- Restating what someone says
- Reflecting what someone is feeling
"Yes, I understand, you feel..."
- Asking open-ended questions like,
"What happened? How did you feel about that?" "Can you explain that in another way?"
- People building off of one another

Feels like

- * Acknowledged
- * Understood
- * Valued
- * Safe to challenge another's ideas



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Discussion Starters:

- If you are in a group or with another person and the tool of listening is effectively being used, what does it look like? Sound like? Feel like?
- Identify a specific time when you failed to listen. How did that impact the speaker? What were the consequences for you? How did it impact the conversation?
- How do you feel when someone is not listening to you? Do you let them know? How? What do you say?
- What can you learn from or about others by listening to what they say and how they say it?
- How do you show someone that you are really listening to them? What expressions do you use? What follow-up questions might you ask? What non-verbal behaviors do you show?

Situations to Discuss:

- You try to talk with a friend about something upsetting to you. Your friend keeps checking their phone messages, looking through a notebook and checking their watch while you talk. What do you say or do? Do you continue to try to talk or ask to talk another time?
- You're out having coffee with an acquaintance when he/she starts telling you about a recent problem they had with their cell phone. The same thing happened to you a few months back! When do you choose to relate your similar experience?
- You're on the phone with a distraught friend who is telling you about a personal problem he/she is having. In the middle of the story, your second line beeps (call waiting). What do you do? Answer? Let it go to voicemail?