



DISCERNING LEADERSHIP

MINISTRY FOR SERVICE AND RESPONSIBILITY

Cultivating Cultures of Listening



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*Dispositions and Practices:
The Five Ways of Listening*

(based on the Levels of Listening, Otto Scharmer and the Presencing Institute)

❖ Starting from my own experience

Being Listened to

→ Personal Reflection and Journaling (4 minutes)

Bring to mind a conversation/experience where you really felt listened to:

- What did that kind of listening feel like for you?
- What impact did the experience have? on your relationship and/or on the outcome/result
- What elements (behaviors, dispositions and attitudes...) made your partner more capable of listening?

If no particular situation comes to mind, bring to mind a person whom you believe is a really good listener. What makes them such a great listener?

❖ Going back to our own experience

Not Being Listened to

→ Personal Reflection (3 minutes)

Remember a conversation where you did not experience being listened to:

- How did that experience make you feel?
- What impact did it have? on the relationship, on the outcome/result...
- What behaviors or attitudes made the person not/less capable of listening?

❖ Some perspectives to help us cultivate deeper presence

The 5 Ways of Listening

- Tending our soil. The importance of setting the ground for synodal listening and sharing
- Making space for Grace. Noticing where we struggle and asking for the grace we need to assist us at each level

Growing our awareness to different ways of listening

in service of a deeper connection and a more discerned response

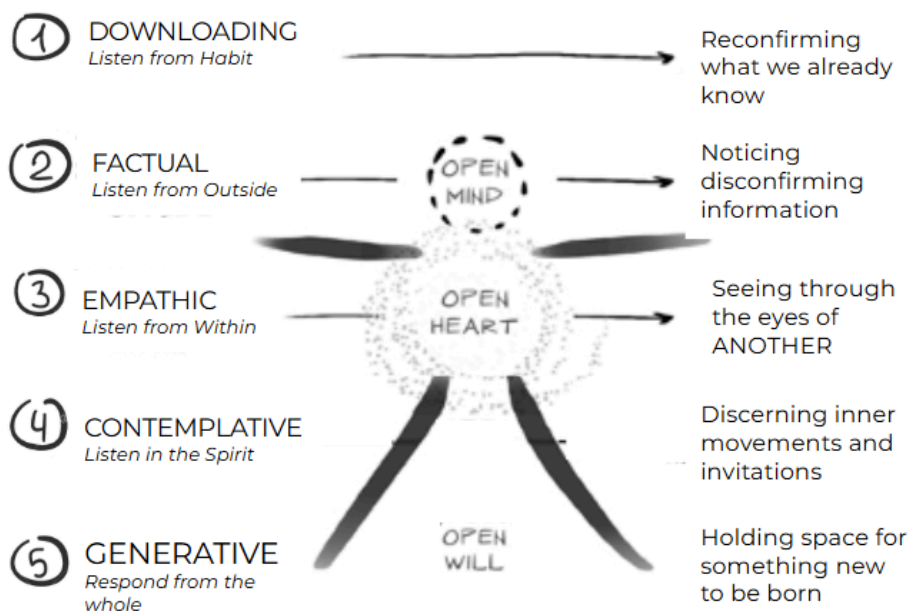
Daring to “see” each other - from the Retreat Meditations by Fr. Timothy Radcliffe

«The foundation of all that we shall do in this Synod should be the friendships we create. It does not look much. It will not make headlines in the media. ‘They came all the way to Rome to make friendships! What a waste!’ But it is by friendship that we shall make the transition from ‘I’ to ‘We’. Without it, we shall achieve nothing.

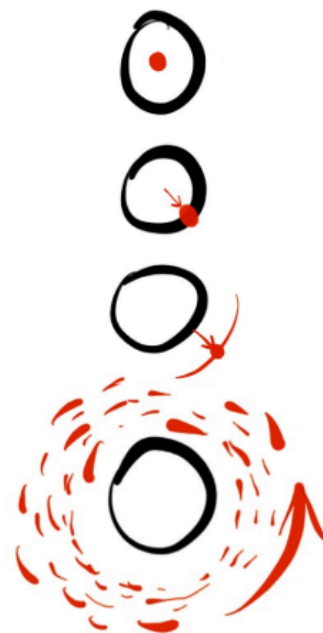
The Instrumentum Laboris refers to the loneliness of many priests, and ‘their need for care, friendship and support.’ The vocation of parenthood can be lonely too and needs sustaining friendships.

We have the creative task of making improbable friendships, especially with people with whom we disagree. Friendship flourishes when we dare to share our doubts and seek the truth together. What is the point of talking to people who already know everything or who agree completely?

The foundation of friendship is just being with one another. It is the enjoyment of another’s presence. (...) If we are with each other in this way, we shall see each other as if for the first time!»



Inspired and adapted from Otto Scharmer's work on Theory U and the levels of listening



Now I understand that there are two melodies playing,
one below the other, one easier to hear, the other
lower, steady, perhaps more faithful for being less heard,
yet always present.

(...)

I want to stay in that music without striving or cover.
If the truth of our lives is what it is playing,
I stop and stop again to hear the second music.
I set my ear to it as I would to a heart.

Extracts from "The Second Music" by Annie Lighthart

From the Retreat Meditations - Fr. Timothy Radcliffe

«In his book on Spiritual friendship, St Aelred of Rievaulx, the 12th century Cistercian Abbot, wrote: "Here we are, you and I, and I hope that Christ makes a third with us. No one can interrupt us now... So come now, dearest friend, reveal your heart and speak your mind.»

- *Part III - 16. Towards a Listening and Accompanying Church*

Placing Jesus at the centre of our lives requires some degree of self-emptying. In this perspective, providing a listening ear means being willing to 'decentre' oneself in order to leave space for the other. It is a demanding ascetical exercise that obliges each person to recognize his or her own limitations and the partiality of his or her point of view.

Listening has a Christological significance; it means adopting Jesus' attitude toward the people he encountered.

❖ A time for integration and sharing

Personal Reflection (4 min)

- What insights from today's conversation particularly resonated with me?
- How can these perspectives on listening practically enhance my role and shared purpose? What would I like to practice moving forward?

Listening to one another in pairs (8 min)

Process in pairs/triads:

- Choose a timekeeper (each person will have 3 minutes).
- When one person shares, others listen deeply without interrupting.
- Once the first person is finished, the other person follows in a similar fashion
- In the remaining time, briefly share what touched you as you listened to one another.

❖ Closing Prayer

Open our ears Lord, our whole being,
That we may become a listening presence to each other,
Give us the generosity to listen with openness
Grant us the curiosity of a child
The wisdom to understand what is heard
The joy to celebrate new discovery
The prudence to know when not to speak
The surrender that treasures silence after word
The strength to be changed by what is shared
Enliven in us the freedom to let mystery be
Grant us the grace to listen with humble love
The awe to hear you speaking in us.