

Hello, everyone, how are you today, I want to tell you that I am really energized. I just had a great workout played with my puppies who are now one year old, I cannot believe that. And I'm super, super excited about today's topic. The title is Going From Hear to Here and I will explain exactly what that means. But I want to start off with a quick story first. I was just on a team call with about a group of six leaders. And the session hadn't started yet. And people were coming on and saying hello to one another and just chit chatting back and forth. And one person came on, and they were still muted, and they did not know it. And they started talking and saying hello to other people. And other people are like, hey, sounds so you're muted, we can't hear you. And she didn't hear them either. And so, she kept talking because her headphones weren't working either. So here we were a group of people saying, hey, you're muted, you're muted, you're muted. And it wasn't until she looked up and she saw what people were doing in terms of how they were gyrating towards her like, you know, pointing to their mouths, we can't hear you that she realized not only that she was on mute, but that also that she couldn't even hear anybody.

So, everybody got a little bit of a chuckle out of that. And it really made me think about how important it is to physically be able to hear someone to hear their words, or to receive their words or their ideas, and how often even when we can hear the other person when they are not muted, how often sometimes we still aren't really hearing them, and that we can literally miss their words or their intonations, because we aren't really here as an H E R E as in we are not present to the other person and to what they're saying. And if we cannot hear them as an H E A R hear what they're saying. And we are not present as an H E R E here in this moment, then we certainly are not communicating with one another.

And that's what this episode is all about. It is about both hearing people truly actively listening. And then simultaneously being present in the moment as in being right here. So that's why the name of this episode is From Hear to Here. And being able to hear someone and also to be present simultaneously is a massive leadership skill. So, for those of you who are in the Healthy Leader Inner Circle, we have been working on communication this entire month. And many of you have made incredible progress as it applies to being able to show up in relationships differently, manage difficult conversations in a different way, and are really seeing the power of how shifting your perspective just a little bit doesn't cost you anything but it takes out a lot of the drama, it sucks the air out of the drama balloon, if you will, and allows for so much more productive energy and conversations. And so, we're going to zero in on how you can go from here, H E A R, to here, H E, R, E, and back and forth.

Because in the last episode, we talked about the three main elements of communication. And basically, it boils down to you, the other person and how you are communicating. And once we understand and are aware of those, then it's a matter of going back and forth being present to them and being present to yourself and hearing someone for what they are saying or communicating and truly being present to that enhances communication. And it takes your connection with the other person to an entirely new level.

And I want to share with you this one phrase that really summarizes the concept of truly hearing someone and being present with them in the here and now. And it is a phrase that I first learned when I was at a coaching conference many years ago now. And Susan David, who is a renowned psychologist and co-founder of the Institute of Coaching was speaking and she is from South Africa, and she started her talk by sharing this Zulu greeting and the Zulu greeting is Cibona. It is literally translated to I see you. Think about that. Think about what it means to actually greet someone in that way to actually see them and I love this because it helps me visualize going from hear what I'm hearing. I'm pointing to my ear right now, to here and pointing to my heart

and to being present with the person that I'm speaking with. It allows me to connect with the other person and that is really what communication is really all about.

The tendency for many of us is to go right to problem solving or strategizing a solution or sharing ideas. And of course, all of that is extremely important. We want to create solutions and be successful and create things in this world and serve the world and make it better. But often we jump right to the solution or get wrapped around who's right or wrong, or the story of what's going on, and we forget to see the other person to be with them. And seeing someone does not mean staring deeply into their eyes. Although it could mean that it just means taking a moment, to shift your perspective, to slip into their shoes, and to see how they are to see them right there as they are as a fellow human being. And there is an amazing opportunity and all of our discussions and all of our interactions to truly connect with one another human to human. So, we want to recognize that.

Now, you might be rolling your eyes and thinking, hey, why do I want to connect with other people I've got a job to do I have enough people to connect with in my life. And I'll tell you why. I was just rereading this amazing report that came from an affiliate of Harvard Medical School. And it was a coaching report on the future of leadership and the value of coaching leaders. And what they did was to interview over 33 executives across a multitude of industries to find out the impact of the pandemic on organizations on leaders leadership and leadership coaching. And the aim was to explore lessons for leaders and coaches in shaping basically this post pandemic future. And the gist of it was that leaders were recognizing more than ever that they needed to expand their roles, beyond striving for organizational results, and to engage deeply with individuals. And that it wasn't just a nice to have to build connections, but a requirement. Leaders were learning that they needed to cultivate relationships, support employee wellbeing expand their own self-awareness, so that they could create cultures of agility and resiliency before the next panic before the next chaos, and ensure leaders were recognizing the value of what that Institute of coaching calls Human Centered Leadership.

And human centered leadership is fascinating to me, the focus is that we prioritize our people in our culture, not about people pleasing, or just about feelings, but it is about compassion, and connecting, and having the ability to be sensitive to the challenges that people are facing, and to respond with empathy, and to take action to support and to develop them. And I have found that the best way to do that, for our leaders to do that is to first and foremost, see the other people that they're with. To show up to the conversation to the meeting to the strategy session, first and foremost in the state of awareness with this willingness to see the other person.

This is so big, I just I have goosebumps here. This is huge. Imagine you taking a quick second, to see your child as they come bounding through the door and to be genuinely curious about what is going on for them, before we jump into the fact that they didn't take the garbage out or to hurry up and get them into the car to soccer practice, to take just a moment even to appreciate them. Just a pause. Imagine doing that with your spouse or your partner. Imagine doing that at work. And again, we're talking about staring deeply or being really awkward and staring at people, but to just take a moment to recognize them and to see them.

And I'll tell you that I was just working with another team. And one of the things that they implemented in their meetings was just a minute of silence before each meeting. So, they call the meeting to order they get started on time, they say alright, we're going to get started. And everyone puts down their pens, they put down their phones, and they look up and they look at one another. They exchanged glances and smiles, and they just connect and see one another. It is so powerful. One minute, we are all in such a hurry. We've got deadlines and emergency and things to do and customers who are yelling at us in school and work and fill in your blank. And so, taking a moment to slow down to see another person to see them fully right where they are. It's not

just great for them. It's great for your relationship. And here's the big drumroll. It's great for you because it gives you space to get off of the mental hamster wheel that's going on in your head and slow down and come to your heart to connect with another person. And by the way, as a side note, it feels good to be affected, you are literally creating chemicals in your body that feel good, it feels good to relate to other people to have a sense of belonging.

So that's the first piece of going from hear to here is really taking a moment to see the other person and to be present to the other human that you are connecting with. And that goes for conversations. It goes for emails, it goes for sitting in a room, when you aren't even presenting and just being aware of the people around you. It's a very, very powerful way to bring yourself here to the present moment.

The second piece has to do with differentiating between hearing and listening. And often we use the word hearing and listening interchangeably. And there's a nuance between hearing and listening. One is more active, and it requires effort, while the other is basically involuntary. So hearing is the process or the function or your ability to perceive a sound, a drum, a knock on the door, somebody's voice music that's hearing. And listening is to hear something with thoughtful attention. It's like you're adding your focus and your presence to the sound.

So, when you think about listening and hearing, I want you to be aware of three primary distinctions. And the first one is that listening is active, and hearing is passive. Listening requires active attention and focus. Whereas hearing this passive, you can't close your ears, sounds will enter and they're going to be heard. The second thing is hearing is continuous. You will hear sounds all day long because it's a physiological aspect of your being. Listening is temporary. It's something that you do purposefully requires, again, attention and that focus, which you cannot do every moment of the day, every minute of the day, or even sometimes every hour of the day. So listening is psychological. It's a mentation, something you do vary purposefully, and you do it in temporary spurts. And then the final piece is hearing is involuntary, meaning that you don't choose to do it. That's why you can hear people talking, but you can choose not to listen to them, it's why I can hear Emmy chomping on her bone in the background, I can hear Oscar snoring a little bit, I can't avoid it. I can't close my ears. But listening, I do consciously. And I do it voluntarily. I'm doing it on purpose.

And one of the reasons I wanted to go through these three differentiations between hearing and listening is because not only can we use them with other people and in our conversations and in our communication, we can also use this understanding in terms of our own ability to listen to ourselves and to hear our own thinking to hear our own inner voice. And this is key to self-leadership. And those three elements of understanding that it is an active process, meaning you have to be conscious of what you are doing and do it on purpose. And two to do it voluntarily. To go inside our own heads and to listen what's going on can sometimes feel a little scary or a little overwhelming. So, we want to voluntarily go in there and truly listen to what is going on in our heads. And we don't have to do that 24 hours a day. But pick a specific time, a temporary amount of time where you can really zero and consciously and purposefully listen to yourself.

For those of you again, we're in the Inner Circle, we have a specific process around the thought download to do exactly that. So that we can listen to ourselves. And as we practice doing that with ourselves and as we practice doing it with others, then we are honing this amazing meta skill of truly listening of hearing what is going on listening to it and bringing ourselves to the present moment and processing it in a clear and concise and organized way. One of the things that I do is I turn on a sound machine that I have behind me here in my office, when I am creating or wanting to focus my thinking, I can still hear sounds in the background, but they

are muffled, and I purposefully do that so that I can stay focus and listen to my own thoughts. So, the second piece to truly hearing someone and being in the here with them is to be aware of the difference between hearing and listening.

And so, the last piece I'm going to share with you basically separates passive listening and active listening. And I think that they both have their place. So, for passive listening, that is akin to being aware that someone is talking, and they are saying things to you, and you are taking it in but you are not really being present with them. So, we hear the words are not connected with them. We may even understand their needs and their meaning but we're not necessarily responding to them. And passive listening has its place. If you're in a meeting and they are reviewing something that doesn't involve your department or pertain to your team or to you, you might be listening kind of with one year. And so passive listening is something that we all do, and it has its place for sure.

But often passive listening, I think can also be detrimental, especially if we are in a conversation with someone, and they think that we are actively listening, they have something to share, it could be a new idea or a process, it could be their feeling on a subject. And there might be a part of us that is like, yeah, yeah, I know, you're going to say I'm just waiting for you to finish talking. And people can tell when you're doing that people can tell when I'm doing that. And I think that understanding the difference between active and passive listening is especially important in our intimate relationships with our partners. And also, with the people that we work with, and we're very familiar with. If you've been with someone for a while, or you grew up with them, or you've worked with them for a while, you know, their opinions, you know, what they're going to say about a particular subject, you know, the story that they are getting ready to tell. And, and, and people change, they learn, they grow, they think they change their minds. And if we are here with them, H E, R, E, here with them, and truly hearing H E A R their words and listening for the meaning under their words, then we can have a fresh interaction with them.

Think about that. If you feel like you're in the same meetings with the same people going over the same thing, and wearing a t-shirt that says same stuff, different day, then this can help you in terms of spicing up the way that you interact with other people spicing up your life spicing up and engaging and getting curious and thriving in those meetings in those conversations, and being willing to be present to what is going on here in this moment. That's for you, that's for you to feel better, no matter if the conversation is the same no matter if the person hasn't changed. It's a different way for you to show up. It's a different way for you to experience being in the here and now.

So that segues into the final piece of this, which is how to be an active listener. And what I was just going through is the first key point that's being willing to be curious about people and what they are saying right now here in this present moment. Because when we're curious like that has the power to take us to greater levels. And if you are curious when you're listening and genuinely want to know more, you not only will feel better, you'll be better focused and pay attention and they will feel it. So that's the first way to be an active listener.

Another way to be an active listener, is to ask good questions. And there are two parts to this. One has to do with focusing in on really understanding the information being conveyed getting clear on the facts and the data. And I know that that seems a little bit like a no brainer. But so often we make assumptions, and we fill in the holes for other people. If there is a part of someone's story that feels like it's missing, don't fill in the blanks yourself. Instead, ask the questions that will help you clarify and make sense of the information and move the conversation ahead. And a second way that you can use questions is to further the collaboration and the joint

thinking. And this is especially useful if you are disagreeing with something that somebody is saying. So, for example, in a work setting, if someone comes up with an idea of how to deal with a particular client in your head, you're thinking that's absolutely ridiculous that clients never going to go for it. This is just a waste of time. Instead of saying something like I think that's going to be a waste of time, the client is not going to agree to it, you might use a question instead and say, if we go that route, how do you think that the client might respond? When you ask a question, instead of making a controversial statement, you keep the communication lines open.

Another way to engage in active listening is to be on the lookout for the other person's emotions and needs that may not be being conveyed by their words. In the last podcast, I talked about Rosenberg's nonviolent communication, which is an extremely popular model and methodology that coaches study, and that many people study in order to communicate with compassion and empathy and to strengthen our communication process. A common example of this I've experienced myself, and the scene is that someone is annoyed about something and they're not speaking or saying anything, but they actually are being very silent. And then when someone comes up to them and says, hey, what's wrong? The person says nothing, or everything's fine. When clearly, there is something wrong. Y'all know what I'm talking about. You have someone in your life who sometimes doesn't use words but actions to communicate. If that's the case, that's totally normal, and it's really common.

In fact, I just heard a comedian talking about this Nate Bargatze. I love this comedian. He was talking about being in an argument with his wife, and how awkward it is when they're in their house, and they have this one long hallway and they are walking down the hallway and they are passing one another, they're like, excuse me, excuse me not touching. And in being very formal with one another, they're not talking. And they're not making eye contact. But clearly, there's emotion, and there's needs that are not being met. So, when someone is acting disconnected or not speaking, or even saying things that you don't quite understand, look for the emotion and the underlying need that the other person is experiencing. And you might believe that they are angry, and so they need some time to cool off. Or maybe you think that they're sad, and they need some connection, or perhaps a hug. And here's the thing about this process, even if you get the emotion or the need wrong, what you are doing is connecting, you're showing up, you're showing that you care and that you are interested. And that is a massive form of communication.

And then the final piece of active listening that I want to share with you really puts a bow on all of this. It brings us from here to here to this present moment. Basically, what we are doing is using communication, and active listening, to hone our ability to focus our mind to be present in the moment to what is going on to be strategically aware of the external environment, and also our internal environment. And that takes practice. Interestingly, our brain can process words way faster than people can speak to them, people speak on average, 125 words per minute, but our brains are capable of taking an 800 words per minute. That's why we can take in words, but still be thinking as the words are coming in. So, hearing and listening to what is going on outside of us and paying attention. while also being here, in the present moment and within ourselves is a practice. it's a balance. Being able to go back and forth and to be present to both of those is an amazing meta skill. And it is an amazing skill that will serve you not just in communication with other people, but in all of the ways that you lead.

So, the next time you are on a zoom call and someone's mouth is moving, but you cannot hear them instead of saying, hey, you're muted, I can't hear you. Take a moment, take a moment to see them. Smile at them and connect with them. And to let them know that you not only want to hear their voice, that you want to listen to

them. Maybe you could say hi, I would love to hear what you're saying I can see you, but I cannot hear your voice. And I'd really love to listen to what you have to say. Now, that may sound a little corny, and maybe it is but I'll tell you I love it when people are muted on Zoom, because it gives me a chance to be with them. To take a breath to be with myself. And to remember this practice to slow down to ask good questions to listen for their needs and their emotions to be present in the here and now. So go forth today and commune with other people right in the middle of communicate is commune. And that Latin origin means to share to let the people in your life share themselves with you let them share their thoughts, their ideas, and their hearts with you. Hear them and see how good it feels to be here, right in the present moment.

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