



Mindful Listening Partnership FAQ

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When we have something difficult to resolve, we feel we have to try very hard, we tense up, and that is often counterproductive. Instead of thinking out of the box, we feel like we're going around in circles, inside the box. To free up our creativity, it helps to explore the issue in a *Mindful Listening Partnership*. It involves you (the Explorer), and a Listener.

What am I looking for in a Listener?

It is hard to go into those preverbal places on your own. The Listener's presence helps you stay with it. The Listener must understand that it is his or her job just to accompany you while you explore.

What you're looking for is a friend, relative or colleague who is willing to listen to you without giving advice, or trying to resolve your situation--someone who is *not* going to want to finish your sentences for you.

And, of course, you will do the same for them, when it is their turn to explore and be listened to.

How long does a listening partnership take?

Because people are usually not brought up to understand the value of listening to what can't yet be put into words, you might think that this process takes a lot of time.

Actually, 20 minutes of being listened to can produce breakthroughs that are difficult to reach on your own. The thing is to make regular appointments with your listener.

What does the Listener do?

A Mindful Listening Partnership is based on spacious, silent, but receptive listening. The Listener occasionally reflects back the essence of what the Explorer says.

It's as if the Explorer discovers something and hands it to the Listener in words. The Listener receives it (says it back), and that allows the Explorer to go deeper,

to see what is underneath what was said. You can ask your Listener to take notes for you.

Can I learn to listen to myself in this way?

You can learn to listen to yourself in this way if you cultivate an attitude of openness and interest in your inner world. Welcome the uncertainties, the gaps when there are no words.

For instance:

"I feel something very strongly, but I don't know what it is."

"I feel something subtle but it feels like it is important and wants to be known."

Over time, you will get used to listening to these "felt senses".

You might start noticing that there are subtle sensations in your body that correspond to the gaps. For instance:

"It feels like the whole situation is behind glass."

"It feels like my chest and head want to go along with it, but something in my solar plexus says "No."

The "feel" of these moments can take you to other moments in your life that somehow have something to do with the situation.

How can I know when I'm thinking "inside the box" as opposed to "outside the box"?

You might notice a stale and static inner feeling when you are still thinking "inside the box," or when you are closed to new ideas.

Or maybe you've been trying to move forward on a creative project but for some reason you are stuck.

When you notice feelings like that, you can shift gears. Usually there is something complex and wordless behind that stale, static, stuck feeling. In that moment, try relaxing into curiosity and openness to what is there. Sense into to the complexity. If you give it space, its meaning will come up to consciousness. There will often be the sense of understanding of what has been going on, and a sense of something fresh and new.

Developed by Beatrice Blake and Serge Prengel

This Mindful Listening Partnership is based on the principles of Focusing and Thinking At the Edge (TAE). We encourage you to start exploring this approach in a playful way, right away, without much theory. Once you experience how naturally this process works, you may want to find out more. For information on Focusing, sessions with a Focusing

*trainer, as well as workshops and trainings, visit the Focusing Institute's website:
<http://focusing.org>.*

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