

# Listening is Hard:

Become an effective listener to help your customers, partners, and employees feel heard

# Hello!

**Jenny Morse**



Jenny helps professionals develop their confidence and credibility as business writers through her company [Appendance, Inc](#), which offers corporate seminars and online courses. She was a finalist in the 2020 PitchNoCo competition for her [Better Business Writing Pro](#) course, which won the 2021 Excellence in Communication Consulting award from the Association for Business Communication.

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# Our Agenda Today

## 1. Introductions

## 2. Components of Listening

- The Communication Model
- Noise: What gets in the way
- The Difference Between Active and Passive Listening
- Nonverbal communication
- Giving Your Attention
- Asking Questions
- Keeping the Focus on the Speaker
- Being Patient

## 3. Wrap Up

# Introductions

- Introduce yourself to someone nearby who you have \*not\* met before
- Your introduction should include
  1. Your first and last name
  2. Preferred pronouns
  3. A touch or gesture—shake hands, bow, fist bump, touch elbows or feet, wave, etc.
  4. Ask each other one question from group A
  5. Ask each other one question from group B

## Group A

- Are you from Colorado?
- Do you enjoy your work?
- Do you have pets?
- Do you like traveling?
- Did you eat breakfast today?

## Group B

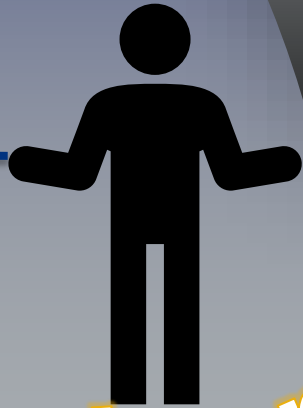
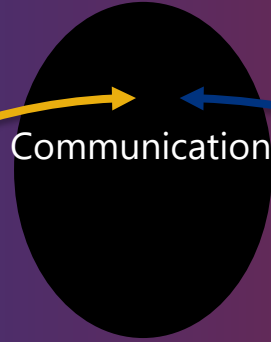
- What's your favorite season?
- How did you get to school today?
- Where are you from?
- What are you most looking forward to this week?
- Where do you want to go on your next vacation?

# Communication Model

Sender



Communication

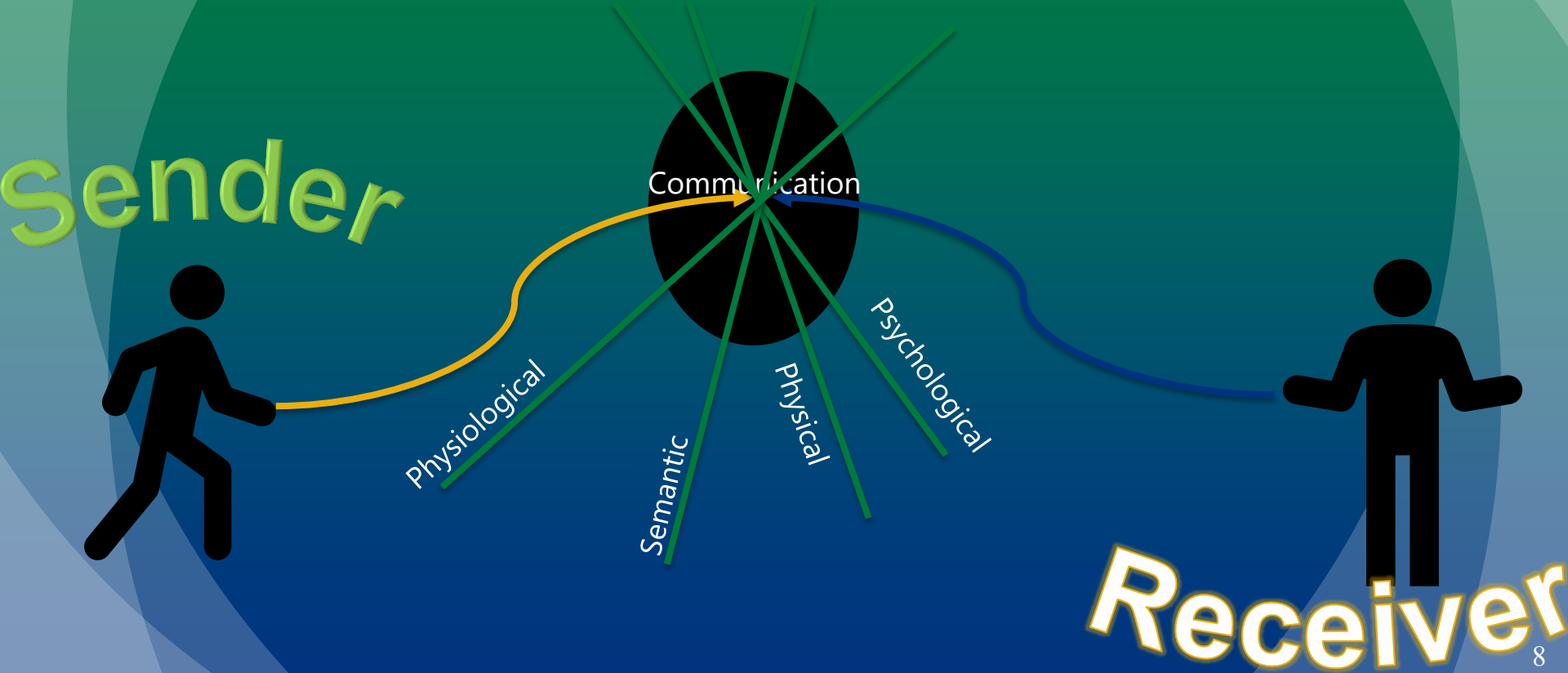


Receiver

# Introductions

- Find another pair to connect with
- Introduce your new friend to the other two people, using the information you collected

# Noise: What Get's in the Way





# The Difference between Active and Passive Listening

A, choose one of the following topics to talk about. You will be talking to your partner for about 3 minutes.

- Who is your longest friend? Where did you meet them? What do you appreciate about them?
- What were you really into when you were a kid? Why did it capture you?
- Describe a book that's had an impact on your life. What was the impact and how is it affecting you today?
- If you could call up anyone in the world and have a one hour conversation, who would you call? What would you talk about?
- What are some things you want to accomplish before you die? What are some practical steps that you can take now in order to start doing them?

# The Difference Between Active and Passive Listening

**B**, as A talks, pay attention, but do not speak.

Make eye contact, nod, smile, lean in, use gestures to engage—thumbs up, waving for them to continue

**B**, now **stop** responding to A.

Don't make eye contact, don't nod, keep your face still, lean back/away from them, start looking around the room, checking your phone, etc.

# Nonverbal Communication

Up to 93% of face-to-face communication is **nonverbal**, with nearly all studies showing percentages of 60% and greater.

## Body

- Eye contact
- Facial expressions
- Posture
- Gestures

## Voice

- Pitch
- Pace
- Inflection
- Intonation
- Volume
- Breath
- Musicality
- Emphasis

# Giving Your Attention

The brain cannot multitask. Multitasking is in fact the ability to switch very quickly between or among different tasks.

- Avoid doing anything other than listening
- Focus on what the person is saying
- Notice how they are saying it—non-verbals

The brain also anticipates what the other person will say. This skill is useful in conversation, but detrimental in listening as we *assume* we know what they are saying and try to skip ahead to our turn—interrupting and problem-solving.

- Avoid interrupting
- Avoid telling people what to do, what you would do, or what to fix it—until they ask
- Try not to guess or anticipate what they are saying
- Do not judge

# Giving Your Attention

Try to write down the following paragraph word for word as I read it out loud.

Now, exchange your record with your partner.

Check your partner's work against this "answer." How well did they capture the content of the paragraph? What grade would you give them?



If you're like most people, you get aggravated when people don't listen to you, and worse when they condescend to listen to you. But what does it mean to really listen to someone? Interestingly, people can more readily describe what makes someone a bad listener than what makes someone a good listener. The sad truth is people have more experience with what makes them feel ignored or misunderstood than with what makes them feel gratifyingly heard. Among the most frequently cited bad listening behaviors are: interrupting; responding vaguely or illogically to what was just said; looking at a phone, watch, around the room, or otherwise away from the speaker; fidgeting (tapping on the table, frequently shifting position, clicking a pen, etc.). If you do these things, stop.

**--Kate Murphy, *You're Not Listening***

# Giving Your Attention

Try to listen to this paragraph as I read it. Take it in. When I finish, take 1 minute to write down what you remember.

Now, exchange your record with your partner.

Check your partner's work against this "answer." How well did they capture the content of the paragraph? What grade would you give them?



At its core, empathetic listening is about connection. It is what happens when we deliberately slow things down and seek to understand others' inner worlds.

It means taking in what another person is saying—or not saying—with the intent to understand and relate to them on a human level. When we listen with empathy, our conversation partner should feel not just comfortable but seen and known in some way. We do this by listening not just for what is said but also for what is meant—and then going deeper still to understand what is felt. With empathetic listening, it is much easier to see what our teammates need to confidently get their project over the finish line, when our partner can use our support, or when our friend must get something off his chest.

**--Ximena Vengoechea, *Listen Like You Mean It***



# Asking Questions

## Clarifying

- How did you feel about that?
- Why do you think that happened?
- What did you think about that?

How

## Encouraging

- And then what happened?
- What did you do?
- What did you learn?
- What would you do differently?

What

## Reflecting

- So you're saying x?
- Is x an accurate summary?
- Are you suggesting...?
- I hear you saying x. Does that sound right?

Why

# Asking Questions

You may **not** tell them anything about the drawing. Only tell them what shapes to draw.

**Don't say: Draw a cloud**

**Do say: Draw a line and then draw a small quarter circle from the right side of the line**

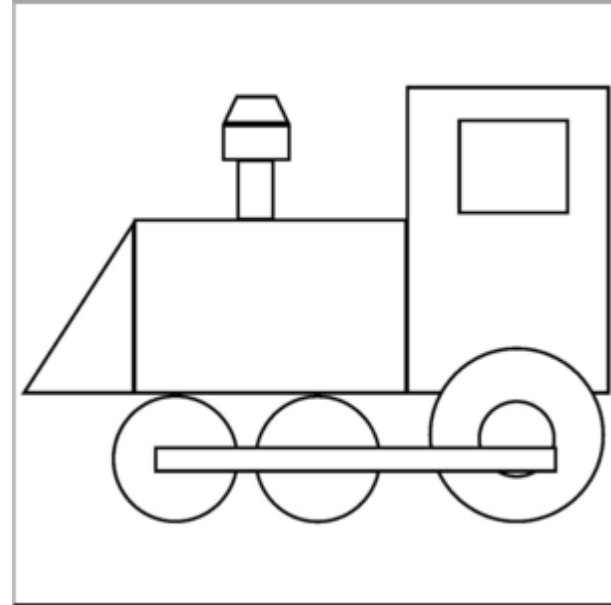


# Asking Questions

You may **not** tell them anything about the drawing. Only tell them what shapes to draw.

**Don't say: Draw a train**

**Do say: Draw a rectangle**



# Final Challenge

- **Keep the focus on the speaker**
  - Identify a problem and share it with the listener.
  - Listener, practice asking questions. Do not tell a similar story or experience.
- **Be patient**

# Q&A

What questions do you have following today's class?

# Additional Resources

If you want writing tips and resources, sign up for our [mailing list](#).



If you found today's class helpful and want to learn more, sign up for one of my [online courses](#).

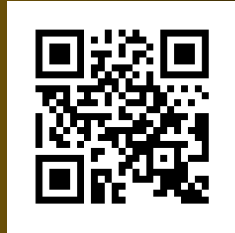


\*Take a look at [Business Writing Basics](#), which teaches you planning and sentence strategies you should use every time you write anything, and [Better Business Writing](#), which helps you become an efficient and effective writer for your job.

# Wrap Up

1. **Additional Questions**– I'll be available to answer questions after class as well
2. **Additional Resources** – Check out [appendance.com](https://www.appendance.com) for online courses I offer through Appendance.
3. **Call to Action** – Download the free [email tip sheet](#).
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