



TOOL: Inquiry Tools for Getting Information

Good coaching involves good listening. There are many ways you can “listen” to what your colleague or employee has to say. Use the techniques below to improve your listening skills, strengthen the relationship you have with your coachee and show respect.

Technique: “Bracket”

Purpose: To create an open mind so that you can listen, free from your own filters, to the other’s point of view.

How to Do It: Turn down the volume of your own internal chatter by reminding yourself that it is both useful and respectful to understand the speaker’s words, thoughts or feelings.

For Example: *“Linda, I can hear that you are bothered about something. Why don’t you tell me about it.”*

Technique: “Paraphrase”

Purpose: To validate the coachee and confirm what you think you heard him or her say.

How to Do It: Repeat back to the coachee what you understood them to say. Offer them a chance to confirm if you heard them correctly.

For Example: *“What I heard you saying, Linda, is that you are finding some members of the team are resistant to the improvement team idea.”*

Technique: “Ask Probing Questions”

Purpose: To get more information and deepen understanding.

How to Do It: Ask basic questions using “who,” “what,” “when,” “why,” “where” or “how.” Make sure the intention of your question is to seek more information, not to veil an evaluation or challenge. Try to avoid questions that seek a “yes” or “no” answer. Instead, make them “open-ended.”

For Example: *“What other concerns did the team express about the proposed change?”*

Technique: “Check Perceptions”

Purpose: To confirm something you suspect the coachee may be thinking or feeling (“reading between the lines”). This deepens your ability to understand and empathize with the coachee.

How to Do It: If you pick up any unspoken assumptions, conclusions or feelings the speaker may have, name them and then ask if your perceptions are correct.

For Example: *“Linda, you still seem kind of agitated. Do you think people are doing this deliberately?”*

Source: Interaction Associates www.interactionassociates.com