

The Following are copies of a Blog Series Coach Banks' wrote on the topic of LISTENING. If you would like to read more recent posts please visit <http://claybanksstudio.com/blog/>

Are you LISTENING to me?!

April 25, 2016 By [Clay Banks](#)

We're plowing into the extremely important **topic** of...LISTENING. But first...take a good look at the following **definitions**:

- **SOUND** – a vibration that propagates as a typically audible mechanical wave of pressure and displacement.
- **NOISE** – a sound, esp. one that is loud or unpleasant or that causes disturbance
- **VOICE** – the sound produced in a person's larynx and uttered through the mouth, as speech or song.
- **HEAR** – perceive with the ear the sound made by someone.
- Perceive – become aware or realize... (sound only).
- **LISTEN** – give one's attention to a sound
- **Attention** – interesting or important notice of someone or something.
- **DISCRIMINATIVE LISTENING** – the most basic form of listening and does not involve the understanding of the meaning of words or phrases but merely the different sounds that are produced... as in early childhood.
- **COMPREHENSIVE LISTENING** – involves understanding the message or messages that are being communicated.
- **CRITICAL LISTENING** – when the goal is to evaluate or scrutinize what is being said.
- **THERAPEUTIC LISTENING** – putting yourself into the speaker's shoes, sharing their thoughts. Empathy.



- **SELECTIVE LISTENING** – This is a more negative type of listening, it implies that the listener is somehow biased to what they are hearing. It's a sign of failing communication... you have filtered out some of the message.



- **ACTIVE LISTENING** – a way of listening and responding to another person that improves mutual understanding.
 - Understanding – comprehending.
 - Comprehension – capability of understanding.
- **RELATIONSHIP LISTENING** – important factor in developing and sustaining a relationship – incorporating

like and trust.

- **POWER LISTENING** – being present in the moment having nothing else going on in your mind/thoughts besides what's being communicated at that present time. The incorporation of ALL of the positive and beneficial definitions listed above.

BUILD YOUR ARSENAL

As you can see, when we casually use the word **LISTEN**... it can be like **using** so many other words that have many different meanings. Similar to the word **LOVE**, understanding the **FOUR** categorical ways **to use** love will communicate what you're desiring much more effectively.

Knowing and understanding the meaning of and how to use words will make you so much more effective in what you're doing and ultimately trying to communicate. When it comes to acting and actors, words are our **POWER TOOLS** — the better we know how to use our tools, the better **CRAFTSPEOPLE** we become.



POWER LISTENING requires that the listener fully concentrates, understands, responds, and then remembers what is being said to them. This means you have to **WORK, FOCUS, and BURN**

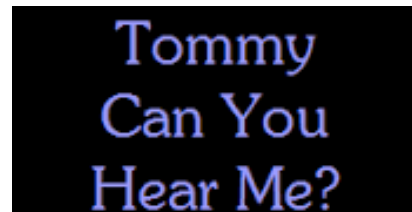
The word
LISTEN
contains
the same letters
as the word
SILENT.

— Alfred Brendel

CALORIES when you're in a scene exchanging dialogue and information. You can't afford to be caught up in your own thoughts of: "What's my next line?" "*What do I do next.*" "*How do I look?*" "*Wait, this scene is very cool... I need to take a selfie!*"

All too often when people talk to each other, they don't **listen** attentively or fully. They are far too often distracted, **half listening, half thinking** about something else all together. Not falling into this trap takes instruction, discipline, and training. The **active application** of instruction, discipline, and training is **YOUR WORK!** And, that's precisely what we are and will continue to do over the next several weeks... **LISTENING WORK!**

**Your Active Listener,
Coach Banks**



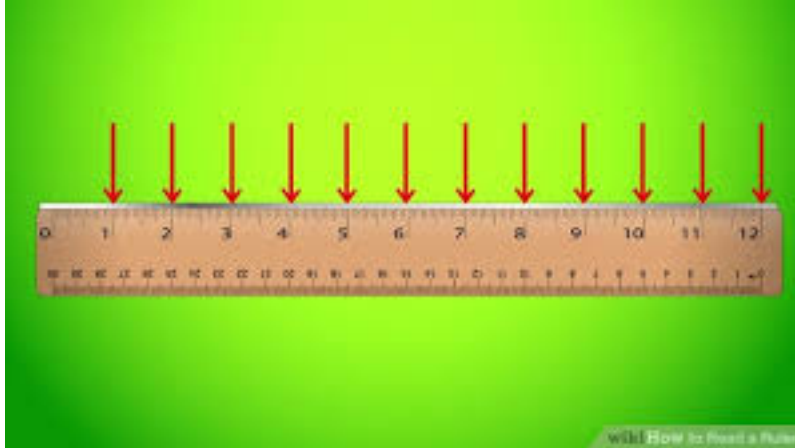
THE ACTORS FREEWAY – [Your free weekly exercise]

Actively pay attention to *people* in your world who are listening — or not listening.

Try and catch *yourself* at different times, listening and not listening to others.

Envision a fully spoken thought as a 12 inch ruler. When the speaker speaks a full thought, that will equate to a full measure (12 inches). Now, watch to see how much of the 12 inches the listener actually *listens* to. Measure that. You'll often notice that the speaker will get out about 3 inches of dialogue when the listener engages thought and

stops fully listening. At what point does the listener activate themselves and cut off listening?



NOTE: You can do this on both sides of the communication and/or just observe this between two (or more) other **people**.

THE TWO COUNT:

Now...do this again with **YOU AS THE LISTENER**. Only, this time, when the speaker stops talking and it's your turn to talk...wait 1 to 2 full beats before responding (we call this the two count). This will force you to actively and fully listen to complete concepts and process what your listening to.

Make notes about how your experiences go. Positive and Negative.

WARNING! Because a majority of the population on planet earth has terrible communication skills, application of the TWO COUNT may have you sitting around doing quite a bit of listening. When given the chance, some people just won't stop talking.

LISTENING — ROUND 2: IT'S REALLY NOT ALL THAT COMPLICATED!

May 3, 2016 By [Clay Banks](#)

Attention!

In order to gain **MAXIMUM BENEFIT** from this **BLOG POST & EXERCISE**, you must adhere to all of the listed directions carefully. Silence your **SURVIVALIST** and plan for **20 good, solid minutes** of undisturbed, undistracted **CREATIVE TIME**. If you're not able to do that now, close this page and save it for when you are. When you are able... follow the bullets below carefully... and in order.

YOU SHOULD ONLY BE READING THIS FAR ONCE YOU'VE CLEARED THE TIME NECESSARY TO DO THE WORK PROPERLY... 20 MINUTES !

- Play the **VIDEO** all the way through. **(8 min.)**
- Listen to the **Song on YouTube** the way through. **(3 min.)**
- Sit and listen to your own sounds of **SILENCE** for 3 whole minutes (5 if you're serious)... becoming aware of as many **LAYERS OF SOUND** as you're able to detect. **NO DISTRACTIONS (5 min.)**
- **WRITE DOWN** all of what you became aware of. **(2 min.)**
- **RECORD** your full experience. **(2 min.)**





JULIAN TREASURE - 5 WAYS TO LISTEN BETTER

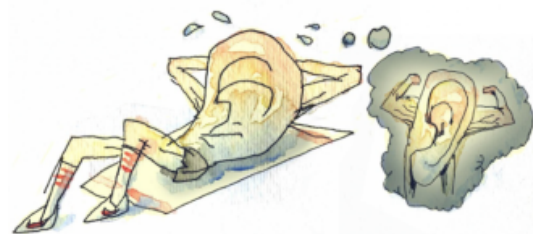
The Sound of Silence

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4zLfCnGVeL4>

CONGRATULATIONS! If you followed through with the work as listed, you've just given your listening skills a **SOLID WORKOUT!**

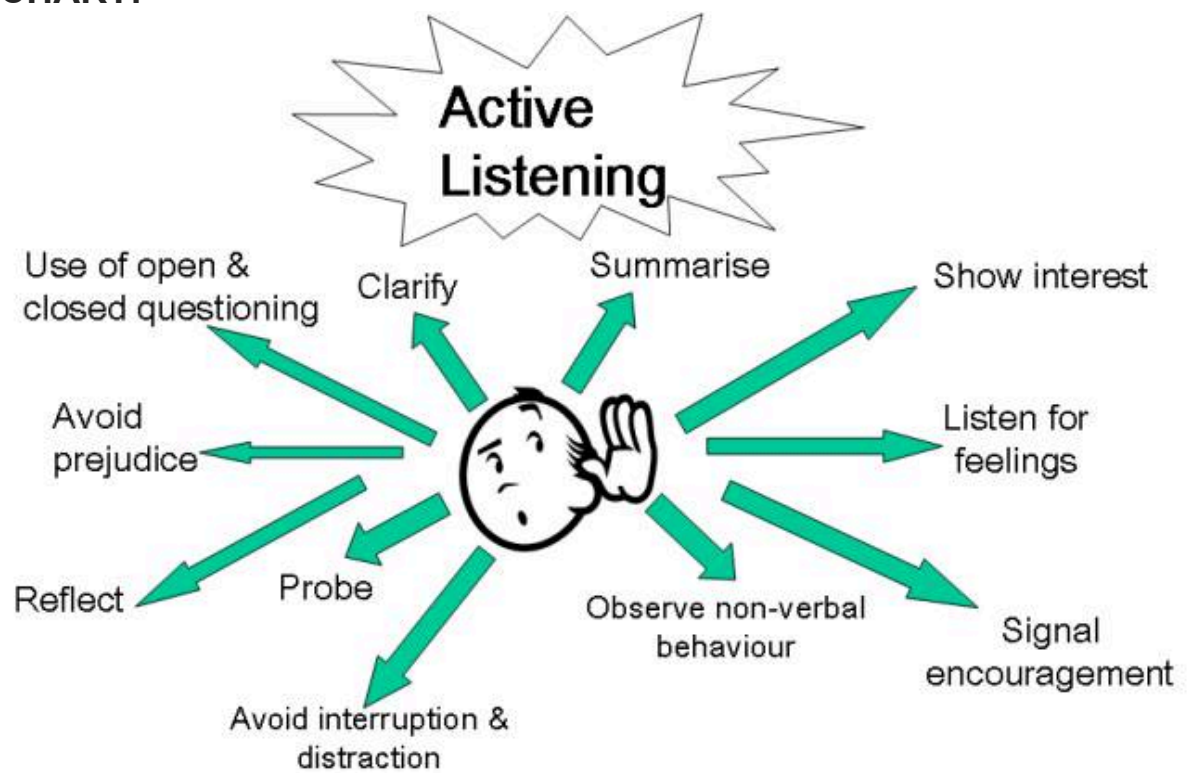
And, here's your **BONUS!** Not only have you strengthened your listening... you also strengthened your ability to:

- **FOCUS!**
- **RECEIVE!**
- **MEDITATE!**
- **CONCENTRATE!**
- **FOLLOW DIRECTION!**
- **EXERCISE PATIENCE!**
- **IMPROVE YOURSELF!**
- **BECOME A BETTER ACTOR!**
- **BECOME A BETTER HUMAN BEING!**



Always Listening!
Coach Banks

Now, if you're eating this stuff up and wish to go further... learn this **CHART!**



WHOLE BODY LISTENING – FINAL ROUND

May 10, 2016 By [Clay Banks \(Edit\)](#)

OK, before we move on from this intensive on **POWER LISTENING**, let's review a few things.

First off it's important to keep in mind that you're not just doing exercises here; you're growing in an important area of **PROFESSIONALISM!**

This **VIDEO** is a very good 3 minute **RECAP** and **EXAMPLE** of how powerful and important **LISTENING SKILLS** are. Not just important for **ACTING** but all **RELATIONSHIPS...** as well as **GOOD BUSINESS** in **GENERAL**. So, go ahead... give it a view!



[If You Aren't Listening, You Aren't Communicating](#)

I thought I'd take it a little easier on you this week by keeping things pithy using video, pictures, and color. The chart below illustrates and recaps **WHOLE BODY LISTENING**. It's fun and simple and makes it somewhat easy to remember. It also helps drive home exactly how to

use your **ENTIRE BODY** to listen more effectively. Try and commit it to **MEMORY**. And, remember, your **EXERCISE** this week is to **OPEN UP YOUR ENTIRE BEING** — and listen to **LIFE** (and everyone in yours), with **ALL ASPECTS** of **YOURSELF**.

A – S T R E T C H yourself!

B – (STRENGTHEN) those **LISTENING MUSCLES!**

C – Become a **BETTER PERSON** all around!

Next, it's crucial to bear in mind that most all of this can be encapsulated in the word, **CARE**. To **LISTEN WELL** you must **CARE** about what you're doing and who you're in communication with.

- **GET INTO IT**
- **BE FULLY INVOLVED IN PEOPLE**
- **BE FULLY PRESENT IN THE MOMENTS**
- **CELEBRATE more than TOLERATE**

Whole Body LISTENING



EYES

Looking at person talking



FEET

Quiet on the floor



EARS

Both ears ready to hear



BODY

Facing the speaker



MOUTH

Quiet (no talking, humming or making sounds)



BRAIN

Thinking about what is being said



HANDS

Quiet in lap, pockets or by side



HEART

Caring about what the person is saying

Do all of this and make it (not only) a **LIFESTYLE** — Make it the **NEW YOU!** A **BETTER, MORE PRESENT, MORE CARING YOU**. Keep in mind that an investment in **OTHERS** pays powerful **DIVIDENDS!** Take on the **LISTENING CHALLENGE!** The results may just surprise you.

**Ever-Present,
Coach Banks**

THE ACTORS FREEWAY — [Your free weekly exercise.]

LISTENING WITH YOUR WHOLE SELF

Next time you find yourself in a conversation (or going into a conversation), make it a specific goal to apply all that we've covered in this blog post. Picture yourself as an **ABSORPTION MACHINE**. You know, a **HUMAN SPONGE** of sorts. Raise your **CARE LEVEL** and go for it! Here are a few bullets to help you along:

- **Decide on an AMOUNT OF TIME to dedicate to the exercise**
- **Set an IN-POINT to begin**
- **Make yourself FULLY ATTENTIVE to whom you're in conversation with**
- **Truly CARE about what's being said**
- **CELEBRATE all that you can about the person you're conversing with**
- **BURN SOME CALORIES (doing this correctly takes energy)**
- **At the CONCLUSION of the conversation set your OUT-POINT (indicating the assignment is over)**

NOTE: You don't just have to sit there and take it. You should be attempting to converse *with* the person. People are all different so you may want to try this a few times with a few different types of personalities.

TIP: Before going into the exercise, set your alarm (watch or phone) to go off 5 or 10 minutes from beginning. This way you can safeguard yourself from getting in too deep and/or spending way too much time playing therapist.

BONUS — Wednesday Day Student, Lisa Luna thought you all would appreciate [THIS READ](#). It's not directly related to listening, just some good acting stuff!