

The Art of Listening

Dr. Carol McCall wants to know "are you listening?"

by Carol McCall Ph.D.

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"When you provide an environment where people are truly "listened to" for who they are... where people are honored and respected, they "heal", perform and become more productive."

That in a nutshell, is what international master coach/trainer/author Dr. Carol McCall is all about.

"For whatever reason, listening happens to be a gift of mine," she explains simply. "I can listen to people, even people I've never met before, and hear their innermost secret desires. I hear what's truly going on for them. As far back as I can remember, that has been so for me. When I was a child, I thought everybody could do that; I was shocked when I discovered they didn't/couldn't."

Dr. McCall began to articulate the importance of listening when, as part of her early training as a therapist, she spent some time working with the criminally insane in San Quentin.

"When someone would ask the question, "How could you commit such a heinous act?" the consistent answer was: "Nobody listened". I heard that a lot from my high school students, too. "Nobody listens to me, the way that you do". I feel so safe when you listen."

At one point, recalls Dr. McCall, she worked on a suicide hotline: "I could actually hear whether people really were going to jump off the deep end or were reaching out to avoid doing that. I could hear their pain or that they were deceiving themselves... or that they were just aching to tell their story."

Dr. McCall began to see dramatic confirmation of her own observations when she worked with the well-known, best-selling therapist/author, Virginia Satir.

"I watched her listen to whole groups of people so powerfully that I could see them actually shift before my eyes. I saw that when people were heard, they tangibly shifted. Their entire demeanor changed.

Early in her career, says Dr. McCall, when people denied what she was hearing and gave them feedback, she would confront them. "I would call them liars. Eventually, I came to understand that people are not always "ready" to hear their own truth. Actually it did not honor nor respect the phase of their life they were living... they were doing the best they knew how given the life conditions under which they were living. I have come to listen to people exactly where they are and "wait" for the time for them to hear their own truth by posing certain well-place questions so that they can reveal their own truth when they are ready... and... I do hear when people are ready."

With a small group of others, Dr. McCall eventually formed a company called The College for Life Planning, which featured a program called the "Design Your Life" workshop. She later changed the organization's name to The World Institute for Life Planning and thru additional evolution of the company the final name is The Institute for Global Listening and Communication, LLC.

"When people are listened to (heard), without any input, agenda, criticism, condemnation, judgment, advice or interruption,

a recovery of one's ability takes place.

When people are not heard, they produce toxins... they literally get sick. When one says "you make me sick", that's no joke. The role of listening in health and performance was the basis of her PhD dissertation. It has also formed the basis of a series of workshops she has offered, which have been extraordinarily popular with network marketers.

REMEMBERING HOW TO LISTEN

Why, one is tempted to ask, do people need a workshop to be taught something as elementary as "how to listen"?

"Actually, says Dr. McCall, "it's that people need to "recover" their ability to listen. To put it more accurately, to recover their own "trust" in that ability.

Long before we emerged from the womb, we were listening... at birth it is the only thing we do... listen. Listening is what lulls us to sleep, it's what wakes us up". At some point during childhood, she says, your listening is denied. Example being, "mommy/daddy, I'm scared. Are you mad?" The not uncommon response is "no! I'm not mad and you're not scared... you're a big boy/girl and big boys/girls don't get scared". Hearing that denial over a period of years, the result? One gradually doubts one's ability to accept what he/she is listening to as "true". My goal is to have people recover their trust in their ability to listen."

"MAKING STUFF UP"

In Dr. McCall's worldview, the impact of those formative childhood moments echoes down through the years, often drowning out entire dimension of our actual experience later in life. Part of her work centers around what she calls "The life decision" (a concept that grew out of her study of Erik Erickson and Piaget) and its impact in later life.

From birth through about five years of age, she says, in order to make sense out of our world, we "make stuff up". We have to because we don't have a lot of information. This is the point of origin for most prejudices, not having information.

By the age of five, she explains, we've made up" how the world IS. That becomes our myth/filter through which we listen. From age's six to twelve, we gather evidence to solidify the myth/filter to validate that what we have made up is true and we begin to listen for what validates what we've made up and filter out anything that opposes that myth/filter.

Whether we are conscious of them or not, says Dr. McCall, those myths/filters of listening dominate our lives; we use them to navigate through the world. We choose our relationships, jobs, where we live; we assemble our very personalities based in large part on those myths/filters. There is "good news". Those myths/filters can get us pretty far in life. There are a large number of highly successful individuals who are "driven and goal oriented"... and... *there is a better way.*

LIFE PURPOSE

That "better way" according to Dr. McCall, is discovering and listening to one's "life purpose".

"In the first few years of The Institute, I discovered my purpose: I am here to assist people to discover their life purpose and live congruently from it."

In my work, I support and assist people to understand the distinctions between the myth, which has "driven" them and their life purpose, which "compels" them.

When you're "driven", fatigue, dissatisfaction, incompleteness, stress and any number of symptoms show up.

When you're compelled by life purpose, you may work equally as hard and there is peace and satisfaction, joy and serenity, play and productivity.

The goal of all my work is to provide people with the information that will give them the freedom to be who they already are. That is the foundation of both "The Empowerment of Listening" and "Possibility of Woman" workshops. The principles apply equally to every man, woman and child."

Are there common myths/filters for men and common myths for women? Dr. McCall says, "Yes!" And they sound like "all men are"... "all women are... and children are... "When we begin to "accept and honor" the gender differences and the age distinctions, voila... that's listening!"

NETWORK MARKETERS: ARE YOU LISTENING?

Why have network marketers gravitated so strongly to Dr. McCall and her listening work, we wondered?

"Network marketers are a unique group; they have an entrepreneurial, adventurous spirit. I love their spunkiness, the adventure, and the willingness to try things, the exciting humanity that network marketers are. They're, generally speaking, go-getters... up to something in life, looking for something more... willing to take risks and step outside the box".

According to Dr. McCall, the "skill" of listening is crucial for network marketers. Indeed, network marketers who don't master "listening" will soon spin their wheels and "burn out".

When you listen, you can prospect more efficiently, effectively and with velocity.

You live less in hope and more in reality, because you listened. You begin to quickly identify the consumers, the leaders, the business partners, because you "listened" to the person.

So the \$64,000 question: Are network marketer's good listeners? "Yes!" says Dr. McCall... "sometimes." And network marketers are human, and as prone to "lazy listening" as anyone else. Sometimes they fall victim to resting-on-laurels syndrome. When one listens, she says, the message is always fresh... people are different... there is no "cookie cutter" in listening... one listening does not fit all. It has been my experience that people with large networks do have the ability to listen and sometimes they have turned it into a "technique"... therein lies the danger, they become stale and their organizations reflect it. They start to sound repetitive, giving out the same message time and time again. They've stopped listening. Some of the biggest names in network marketing have gone stale."

Even so, says Dr. McCall, "I have a love affair with network marketers. The very fact that these individuals would put themselves in network marketing/entrepreneurial organizations speaks volumes about one's willingness to grow.

Network marketing "compels" one to grow.

I have been asked for "scripts" for listening. Listening can not be scripted. To listen, being "present" is "required". That means giving undivided attention to what the speaker is saying, without anything else going on. There is a principle in physics that states "no two things can occupy the same space at the same time". That means you are either listening or you are "thinking about what you are going to say. Thus you are not listening. Listening from a place of total attention provides a form of intimacy that can be intimidating for many individuals."

The good news, she says, is that you don't have to "do" anything. You don't have to fix, solve, or explain when you're listening. You listen simply!

Indeed over her 40+ years of this work, she has seen her most fulfilling work unfold. Her most recent fulfillment is in taking her work to Israel, where a total of 500 people have taken her workshops with more

workshops scheduled. At this time in the Middle East, she says, listening is more important than ever.

"When you listen to serve and network marketers do provide service, then the world does stand a chance of being heard.

"Listen! There's a World waiting to be heard!"

(This article was printed in Network Marketing Lifestyles and written by Ana McClellan after a phone interview she had with me. I have taken liberties with it by editing and updating most of it. CM)



Carol McCall Ph.D., M.A., M.C.C., is the founder of The Institute for Global Listening and Communication. She has more than 40 years of experience as an educator, therapist, business executive and entrepreneur, and has impacted the lives of more than five million people through her workshops and public appearances, audio and book sales, corporate clients and performance coaching practice.

Dr. McCall is creator of *The Listening Course* and the *Possibility of Woman* and Life Development in Communication (LDCC) courses.

An established presence in the Network Marketing arena for 15 years, Carol is a contributing essayist in the book *Leadership in a New Era*, a featured expert in the e-book *We All Need a COACH*, and the author of *Listen, There's a World Waiting To Be Heard* and the *Empowerment of Listening* audio series. She has been the subject of national and international media coverage, including CNBC-Asia, *The Iyanla Show*, Clear Channel Radio Network, Success magazine, *Essence* magazine, plus numerous business trade and local newspaper articles.

A graduate of Northwestern University, Carol holds a Master's degree from San Jose State University and received her doctorate from Cambridge International University. She is a Master Certified Coach designation from the International Coaches Federation.

To learn more about Carol McCall, her schedule of courses and appearances and sign up for her ezine and see, visit her website here:

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