

Personal Listening Profile®

Individual Report



Larry Sample

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This report is provided by:



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Training that Stands the Test of Time...



Overview

Personal Listening Profile®

Research shows that people listen with a natural or preferred style. The purpose of the *Personal Listening Profile*® is to help you identify your preferred listening style and to develop an appreciation for other approaches that may be more effective in different situations. With this knowledge, you will be able to develop more effective communication strategies for a variety of environments.

The *Personal Listening Profile* identifies five approaches to listening. These approaches are important because they reflect the focus of our listening. These approaches are:

APPROACH	FOCUS
Appreciative	to relax and enjoy the listening experience
Empathic	to support and understand the emotions of the speaker
Discerning	to gather complete and accurate information
Comprehensive	to organize information and understand the meaning of the message
Evaluative	to critique information and make a decision

We all use a variety of different approaches depending on the situation, but research suggests that each of us tend to use some approaches more than others. That is, we have a natural **Listening Style** that is comprised of one or more different **Listening Approaches**. The listening style that we use determines both the quality of the information that we gather and the reaction of others to our behavior. And although our listening style is the one that comes most easily to us, experience tells us that we can adapt our current listening approach to the needs of almost any situation with appropriate insight and motivation.

- [Page 3](#) includes a narrative description of your most natural **Listening Style**, which will give you a picture of your natural approaches to listening.
- [Page 4](#) contains a **Listening Approaches Graph** which indicates how inclined you are to use each of the five listening approaches.
- [Page 5](#) describes your potential strengths and possible growth areas.
- [Page 6](#) discusses your expectations of others as listeners.
- [Pages 7 - 8](#) include your **Communication Gap Analysis**, an overview of how your strengths or limitations in each of the listening approaches relates to the intended message of the speaker.
- [Pages 9 -11](#) contain a personalized **Action Plan** which will help you determine positive next steps for developing strategies that work.
- [Pages 12 – 16](#) include a detailed overview of each of the five listening approaches.



RECEPTIVE ORIENTATION

Larry, your two most natural listening approaches are **Discerning** and **Appreciative**. Your discerning approach indicates that you focus on gathering complete and accurate information. Your appreciative approach indicates that you also focus on relaxing and enjoying the listening experience. People with your listening style have a receptive orientation. That is, when listening, they are open and attentive to all of the factual and stylistic information communicated in a message.

People with your listening style are usually very engaged in a conversation and expect that the speaker will be engaging in return. You may often be happy to just sit back and be entertained or “take it all in.” You probably appreciate the spirit of the conversation and are motivated to find inspiration in a message. You may be as interested in how something is said as what is said. That is, you are not just focused on the information presented, but also the general tone of the conversation. Further, as a listener with this style, you are interested in both gathering information and enjoying a relationship.

When you are the listener, speakers probably recognize that they have your full attention. They may sense that you readily respond to humor and appreciate creativity in a conversation or presentation. You may be more likely to listen when speakers are enjoying their presentations and when there are few distractions. You may, in fact, make extra efforts to eliminate distractions. If distractions are too numerous, you may be inclined to tune out.

Most likely, you are also attentive to details in a conversation. Like others with this listening style, you may want to make sure that you get all of the information and assure that nothing has been missed. Therefore, you may take notes or use other memory aids to ensure that the information is both correct and complete. You may frequently ask questions to clarify a point and ensure accuracy. Most likely, you are attentive to details and are aware of a wide variety of cues in the conversation, such as the speaker’s appearance, mannerisms, and intensity.

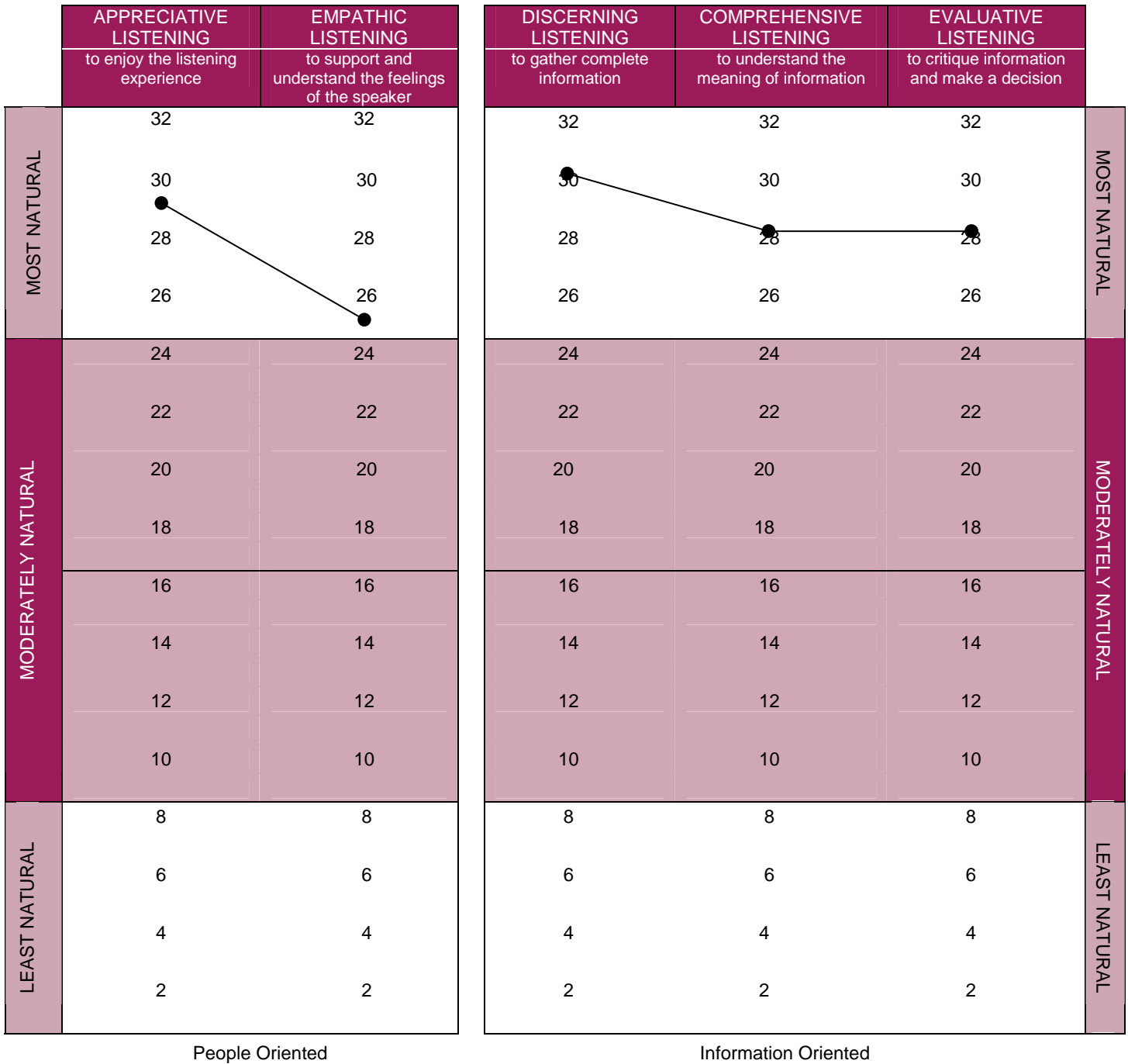
When listening, you are probably motivated to identify the main message in a conversation. You may want to sort out the details and decide which ones are important. Ultimately, you most likely are interested in understanding the speaker’s message as clearly as possible with little or no distortion.

Although this profile will focus on your two most natural listening approaches, it is worth noting that the **Comprehensive** listening approach also appears to be highly natural for you. This indicates that as a listener your focus is often on finding the underlying meaning within a message and organizing the ideas that are presented to you. You probably relate what you hear to what you already know by organizing and summarizing. You may be good at recognizing key points and links between one message and another, even when a speaker is disorganized. You probably listen for how speakers develop their arguments so that you can understand the rationale of those arguments. In addition, you may find that you can figure out what people intend to say, even if the speaker is not explicit.



Your Listening Approaches Graph

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The Listening Approaches Graph above shows your scores on all five Listening Approaches. The height of your score represents how naturally you listen using a particular approach. Listening Approaches that are “most natural” for you are ones that you use automatically and without much conscious effort. Approaches that are “least natural” for you are ones that you are likely able to use, but require more deliberate effort on your part. As detailed on the following page, our patterns of listening tendencies tell us something about our strengths and growth areas as communicators.



Your Listening Style

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Your Strengths as a Listener:

As mentioned earlier, one major strength of your listening style is your attention to detail during a conversation or presentation. Most likely, this means that you pick up on information that others may forget or never even attend to in the first place. You may have thorough and correct records of interactions that are helpful for both you and others. Furthermore, because you are committed to accuracy, you probably make sure that you hear the message correctly before you draw any conclusions. This is a valuable practice, as others might be inclined to make decisions on incomplete or distorted data.

Because of your listening style, your presence may help others relax and feel comfortable. Your ability to find humor in a situation may help create a lighthearted atmosphere in which others can put down their guard. You may have a gift for encouraging others to take a needed break from a task to have a good laugh.

Your Growth Areas as a Listener:

This section of the report is designed to provide feedback on potential growth areas for you as a listener. This feedback reflects the listening approaches that are not natural for a particular individual. Because all of your listening approach scores were relatively high, such feedback may not be relevant for you at this time.

People receive this pattern of elevated scores for a variety of reasons. On rare occasions, an individual may actually use all of the five approaches in a very natural fashion. In other cases, listening approach scores may be elevated because the person was reluctant to answer questions in the “Not Like Me” or “Somewhat Unlike Me” categories. Consequently, that person’s listening approach scores may be artificially elevated.

You may wish to turn to page 4 of this report and consider if any of the listening approaches seem less natural for you than this profile reports. You can turn to pages 12-16 to read a more detailed description of each approach.



Your Expectations of Others as Communicators:

Because our listening styles reflect our unspoken values and motivations, we often assume that others will have listening styles that are similar to our own. When others do not share our style, the chances of a miscommunication significantly increase. Even more important, we frequently misinterpret the real meaning of this miscommunication.

Given your listening style, you probably expect speakers to present information in an organized and sufficiently detailed manner. You may find speakers frustrating who are too conceptual or abstract in their presentations. You may be particularly annoyed by speakers who are not clear about their purpose or who provide broad outlines or theories in a confused manner. When speaking, you may expect others to pay as much attention to you as you do when it is their turn to speak. In addition, you may expect that others attend to and remember details as well as you do. When others do not remember these details, you may be inclined to think that it is because they don't care. This lack of memory, however, may have more to do with their personal listening styles than with their interest in what you have said. Further, as someone who relies heavily on appreciative listening, you may expect that others share your need and desire for diversion and inspiration. From time to time, you may be frustrated by others who are too task-oriented to take a break and enjoy casual interaction.

Your Listening Style in Different Situations:

Experts estimate that people filter out or change the intended meaning of what they hear in 70 percent of communications. The biggest contributing factor to miscommunication is using a listening approach that is not appropriate for either the environment or for the message being communicated. Effective listeners consider not only their own intentions, but also the intentions of the speaker. Below are four common goals that motivate us to converse with another person:

Persuading: to convince the listener about an idea or course of action

Informing: to convey information and ideas

Self-Expressing: to share personal feelings, values, and experiences

Pleasing: to entertain, comfort, or bring enjoyment to another person

Because of your listening style, you tend to choose listening approaches that interact well with many of these communication goals. And like everyone, your natural inclinations may, at times, lead you to choose less-than-optimal listening approaches. The Communication Gap Analysis grid on the next page highlights some of the situations in which you may be a particularly good communicator and some situations in which you may benefit from improvement.



Your Communication Gap Analysis

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The Communication Gap Analysis grid below displays the interaction between different listening approaches and different message goals. The feedback in each box is based on the degree to which each listening approach is natural for you.

- The unshaded boxes highlight some of your greatest strengths as a listener
- The lightly shaded boxes indicate strengths or growth areas of moderate importance
- The heavily shaded boxes draw attention to some potentially important growth areas for you as a listener


		GOAL OF THE MESSAGE				
		Task-Oriented		Relationship-Oriented		
		PERSUADING	INFORMING	SELF-EXpressING	PLEASEING	
LISTENING APPROACH	People-Oriented	<p>APPRECIATIVE Focus: enjoying the listening experience</p>	<p>Your manner of listening probably lets speakers know that they are invited to present their arguments.</p>	<p>Speakers probably sense that the conversation is accepted warmly and openly.</p>	<p>Most likely, speakers feel that their expressions are welcome and well-received.</p>	<p>You probably encourage speakers to feel fulfilled and validated in their efforts.</p>
	<p>EMPATHIC Focus: supporting and understanding the feelings of the speaker</p>	<p>Speakers probably sense that you understand the emotion or passion behind their arguments.</p>	<p>Most likely, speakers understand that you are aware of the unspoken concerns behind message they send.</p>	<p>Speakers probably sense that their feelings and concerns are not judged, but rather are highly valued and understood.</p>	<p>Most likely, you communicate an understanding of the speaker's desire to entertain or please.</p>	
Information-Oriented	<p>DISCERNING Focus: gathering complete information</p>	<p>You probably collect the relevant facts necessary to make an informed decision.</p>	<p>Most likely, you are able to gather thorough and accurate information with complete records of the interaction.</p>	<p>Speakers probably know that they have your full attention and sense that you are engaged in the conversation.</p>	<p>This approach is probably not relevant for you in these situations.</p>	
	<p>COMPREHENSIVE Focus: understanding the meaning of information</p>	<p>Most likely, you are able to identify and organize the important, core issues of the argument.</p>	<p>You are probably skilled at relating information to existing knowledge and processing the underlying meaning of the message.</p>	<p>You may be highly skilled at identifying the deeper, fundamental concerns that drive the expression.</p>	<p>This approach is probably not relevant for you in these situations.</p>	
	<p>EVALUATIVE Focus: critique information and make a decision</p>	<p>You are probably able to critically process the arguments made by a speaker and reach well-thought out conclusions.</p>	<p>Most likely, you scrutinize the accuracy of the information presented and identify erroneous reasoning.</p>	<p>At times, others might feel threatened or judged by an evaluative approach when expressing themselves.</p>	<p>Speakers may feel that their efforts to please are being received too critically.</p>	



Your Action Plan

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Next Steps:

 This section of the report is designed to provide suggestions for growth as a listener. This feedback is based on the listening approaches that are not natural for a particular individual. As mentioned earlier, all of your listening approach score were relatively high. Consequently, such feedback may not be relevant for you at this time.

As described on page 5 of this report, people receive this pattern of elevated scores for a variety of reasons. On rare occasions, an individual may actually use all of the five approaches in a very natural fashion. In other cases, listening approach scores may be elevated because the person was reluctant to answer questions in the “Not Like Me” or “Somewhat Unlike Me” categories. Consequently, that person’s listening approach scores may be artificially elevated.

You may wish to turn to page 4 of this report and consider if any of the listening approaches seem less natural for you than this profile reports. You can turn to pages 12-16 to read a more detailed description of each approach.





Action Planning Grid

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In the first column below, list significant people in your life with whom you would like to improve communication. Below each name, list that person's most natural listening approach(es). If you don't know a person's natural listening approach(es), use the descriptions on the following pages to estimate which approach(es) best fit this person. Fill in the boxes in each row to identify potential communication problems and solutions.

Your Most Natural Listening Approaches: <i>Discerning</i> <i>Appreciative</i> <i>Comprehensive</i>	Areas where you might misinterpret the behavior of this person:	Areas where this person might misinterpret your behavior:	Specific actions that can help minimize or avoid miscommunication:
Person: Natural Listening Approaches:			
Person: Natural Listening Approaches:			
Person: Natural Listening Approaches:			
Person: Natural Listening Approaches:			



Appreciative Approach

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Description:

People with a preference to appreciate while listening want to enjoy the listening experience. Since these listeners like to be entertained, they are more likely to pay attention to others if they enjoy their presentation.

Appreciative Listeners listen for inspiration and prefer listening to speakers who make them feel good about themselves, which helps them relax. Appreciative Listeners are also more likely to listen if the speaker is enjoying his or her performance. Appreciative Listeners care more about the overall impression of the speaker than the details being presented.

Appropriate Environment:

- Enjoyment of a concert, conversation, or pleasurable event

Focus

- To relax and enjoy the experience

Motivation

- To be entertained
- To be inspired
- To enjoy
- To find humor in the situation

Behavioral Indicators

- Pays attention to the context and style of presentation
- Responds visibly to color, sound, language, and rhythm
- Finds the humor in the message
- Identifies with the pleasure of the sender
- Relaxes



 **Description:**

People with a preference to empathize while listening want to provide the speaker with a sounding board to offer support and reflection. Since Empathic Listeners are patient listeners, they tend to listen to the feelings and emotions that are revealed. They find it easy to relate to a speaker's feelings and may recognize what a speaker wants even before the speaker sees it clearly.

Empathic Listeners reflect what they hear others saying and let others know that they care about what has been said. As a result, Empathic Listeners are often approached by people who want to "let off steam." If asked for advice, however, the Empathic Listener will encourage others to decide for themselves.

Appropriate Environment:

- Counseling a friend, providing an opportunity for someone to "let off steam" or express their feelings

Focus

- To support the sender as he or she talks through concerns

Motivation

- To provide an opportunity for someone to express thoughts and feelings
- To accept the message without judging
- To learn from other people's experiences

Behavioral Indicators

- Lets the sender know they care
- Lets the sender do the talking
- Shows interest
- Asks open-ended questions
- Remains relatively silent, not offering solutions immediately



 **Description:**

People with a preference to discern while listening want to make sure they get all the information. They frequently take notes on what a speaker says so that they will not forget it. Discerning Listeners want to know what the main message is, and they focus closely on any presentation or conversation.

In addition to the message, Discerning Listeners usually remember the speaker's appearance, behavior, and voice. Discerning Listeners find distractions very annoying and will do their best to eliminate them. They will likely tune out if there are too many distractions at any time while listening.

Appropriate Environment:

- Learning, gathering information

Focus

- To get complete information

Motivation

- To determine the main message
- To sort out the details
- To decide what is important
- To make sure nothing is missed

Behavioral Indicators

- Takes notes
- Asks for clarification
- Concentrates
- Eliminates distractions
- Repeats to confirm accuracy



Description:

People with a preference to comprehend while listening relate what they hear to what they already know by organizing and summarizing. They are good at recognizing key points and links between one message and another, even when a speaker is disorganized.

Comprehensive Listeners listen for how a speaker develops the arguments, so that they understand the rationale of the argument. They may ask questions to clarify a speaker's intention and relate what they hear to their own experience in order to better understand the message. Comprehensive Listeners can generally figure out what people intend to say, even if the speaker is not explicit. They can also recognize when someone is saying one thing and meaning something else. Comprehensive Listeners can tell when an individual does not understand what has been said, and they will be able to re-explain it more clearly.

Appropriate Environment:

- Taking direction from someone, determining what to do

Focus

- To organize and make sense of information

Motivation

- To relate the message to personal experience
- To understand the relationships among the ideas
- To determine the rationale of the speaker's argument
- To listen for the main idea and supporting ideas

Behavioral Indicators

- Elaborates on what has been said
- Asks for clarification of the sender's intended message
- Brings up related issues
- Summarizes
- Explains the message to others in their own words



 **Description:**

People with a preference to evaluate while listening tend to look for the facts that support a speaker's comments. They do not accept something as true just because an expert says it. Evaluative Listeners listen for how a speaker develops the arguments in order to critique the message.

Evaluative Listeners try to figure out the speaker's intention before responding to the message and may mentally "argue" with the speaker. They will listen until they know what the speaker is saying, and then they will reply. If Evaluative Listeners do not like what a speaker is saying, they quit listening. Evaluative Listeners also tend to be skeptical of a speaker who is overly enthused about something. They think about how they would present the speaker's message differently.

Appropriate Environment:

- Making a decision, voting, drawing conclusions

Focus

- To make a decision based on the information provided

Motivation

- To relate what is heard to their personal beliefs
- To question the sender's motives
- To support the message with facts
- To accept or reject the message

Behavioral Indicators

- Actively agrees or disagrees
- Responds selectively
- Expresses skepticism
- Gives the sender advice
- Quits listening