

STEP 2 The speaker and the listener

The workshop leader explains that the next step is an activity intended to provide an experience of attentive listening. Participants will listen to the words of another person and will practice silence, as they will interact only through eye contact and body language. This activity is usually used as a warm-up exercise, but in this context it is used to raise awareness of the act of listening and speaking, and certainly to know each other better.

The trainer explains the whole exercise by describing each of the following steps. After that, they can start.

The participants are split into smaller groups of two persons. Each pair sits together.



When the trainer marks the starting time, one person in each pair is the 'speaker' and tells about one of his/her experiences, or about a topic of interest, to the other person who is the 'listener'.

The 'listener' can only express his/her attentiveness with eye contact or gestures, body language, not by speaking.

The 'speaker' has five minutes to speak. The trainer marks the end time.

After that the person who has been the 'speaker' becomes the 'listener' and the procedure is the same as above.

After the leader has marked the end time, the participants gather and share their feedback on the experience.

Possible questions to stimulate reflection: was it easier to be a listener or a speaker? Think of a person you admire, is s/he a better speaker or listener? Was it difficult not to speak when the other was speaking? Do you feel that you know the other person

better because you have been able to listen attentively and /or because you felt that you were listened carefully? Do you feel a sense of trust just because you were more consciously listening to each other? Did you feel a sense of inclusion? Do you think that you could understand very well what the other person was telling you?

Duration: About 30 minutes.

Learning outcomes: Participants will have experienced a deeper contact than ordinary with the person with whom they have been paired off and have a clearer understanding of the levels of listening.