



202b

The listenings you speak into

Now you understand that you always speak into a listening, whether it's one person or 1,000. We'll be revisiting this concept throughout the course, and your practice from this day on is to ask the crucial question:

What's the listening?

Ask this every time you are about to speak and it will become a habit. Ask it repeatedly and you will simply get good at sensing the listenings, making your speaking so much more accurate and effective.

The other useful practice arising from this transformative realisation is to ask:

What are the listenings I regularly speak into, and how can I be more effective?

It's not easy to change the listenings, though in the case of family or friends it may be possible. This is not best done by criticising the listener! People are naturally defensive and don't like being made wrong (more on this later in the course). If you have someone in your life who is a poor listener, perhaps encourage them to join you in this course or get them a copy of my book; be



excited about the difference these things are making to you, without damning their own listening, and you may just enroll them.

However, most of the time we can't change the listenings – but we can change the way we speak into them. So, take some time to write a list of the listenings you regularly speak into (family members, friends, work colleagues, bosses, those who work for you, audiences you have to speak to). In each case, visualise the people and describe their listening with as many adjectives as possible. Then write about how you can change your speaking to be more effective.

Keep this list with you: as you go through this course, you will learn more and more about the tools at your disposal and you will be able to come back here and augment your techniques until you have powerful ways of making yourself heard in every situation.