



Person-to-Person Learning Exercise

Learning & Skills: Listening Skills
Speaking Skills

Time & Tools

Total Time: 15 minutes
Necessary Tools: None
Optional Tools: Flip chart or writing board

Note: Everyone needs to be sitting side-by-side or close enough to lean over and talk to the person sitting next to her. Sitting in a circle is ideal.

Step 1

1. Tell everyone they will be performing an exercise that involves listening.
2. The person leading the exercise has a piece of paper that has a sentence on it. This sentence can be anything that is at least 6 words long. For example, *it is a beautiful day in the city; we can always find a solution if we look for one; looking for a job takes time and money.*
3. The exercise leader **cannot share this piece of paper** with anyone.
4. The exercise leader whispers the sentence to the person sitting beside her. The exercise leader needs to make sure that no one else can hear what is whispered.
5. The person sitting beside the exercise leader then whispers what she heard to the person sitting beside her.
6. Each person continues to whisper the sentence “she heard” to the person sitting next to her until everyone has received the whispered sentence.
7. **The sentence can only be whispered once.** In other words, if someone said she could not hear the sentence, it cannot be repeated. The person has to whisper what “she thought she heard” to the next person.

Step 2

1. After the last person has heard the whispered sentence, the exercise leader **asks everyone to share what she heard.**

2. After everyone has shared she heard, the exercise leader reads the sentence on her paper.

Step 3

Note: For this Step, if a flip chart or writing board is available, capture this information for viewing by everyone.

1. After the exercise leader and everyone has finished sharing what they heard, ask the following general “take away” question:

What does this exercise tell us about listening?

Take Away Examples

Note: Below are some “take away” examples from the exercise. If the attendees do not mention these, the exercise leader could mention them.

1. Various things affect our ability to clearly hear what someone is saying (e.g., noise, location, feeling anxious).
2. Sometimes we make assumptions about what we hear.
3. The person doing the talking can have an impact on what we hear.
4. It is always useful to verify what someone said, when we can.
5. Information that is passed from person to person can get distorted.
6. Misunderstandings can happen when people start repeating what someone else said.

Optional Additional Question:

How could you use the ideas from this exercise in your personal life or your work life?

Adjustments to Person-To-Person Exercise:

1. Change the Time or Grouping: The time for this exercise is based on 6 – 10 people. Make adjustments based on the number of attendees at your meeting. If number of attendees is larger (e.g., 25 – 30 people), you could have them work in two groups. Each group would receive the same whispered sentence from the exercise leader.