



The Challenge:

This month, your challenge is to **LISTEN FIRST** by practicing the Pause, Paraphrase, Probe technique in professional and personal conversations.

The “Why”

In a world of constant communication and quick replies, we often formulate our responses before others have even finished speaking. Our "Listen First" challenge is all about giving people your full attention. Instead of thinking about what you'll say next, the goal is to truly hear what others are saying. Doing this helps you understand people better, build stronger relationships, and find smarter solutions to problems. It's an easy habit that can make a big difference in how you work and lead.

This month, we challenge you to master one of the most powerful and often overlooked professional skills: listening. Our "Listen First" challenge is about more than just hearing words; it's about making a conscious choice to truly understand the perspective of others. Do you accept the challenge?

Pause-Paraphrase-Probe

The Pause-Paraphrase-Probe technique is a powerful method for active listening that helps you move from passively hearing to truly understanding. We practice this technique as part of KALA's Mentor Certification program.

By following these three simple steps, you can ensure you're fully engaged in any conversation.

- **Pause:** After someone speaks, take a moment of silence to process what they said before you respond.
- **Paraphrase:** Briefly restate their key points in your own words to confirm you've understood correctly.
- **Probe:** Ask an open-ended question to dig deeper and encourage them to share more.

This technique transforms conversations from a series of statements into a collaborative dialogue that promotes listening with the goal of understanding. Start practicing today, and you'll immediately notice the positive impact it has on your relationships and conversations.



Listening Checklist

This month, use a simple checklist to get into the habit of practicing good listening skills. At the end of each day, reflect on your conversations and check off each box that you did well.

- ☐ I was present and fully focused during my meetings and conversations (professionally and personally!)
- ☐ I listened for understanding.
- ☐ I paused for a moment before speaking.
- ☐ I paraphrased what the other person said to make sure I understood.
- ☐ I asked a variety of question types to learn more.
- ☐ I didn't interrupt someone mid-sentence.
- ☐ I didn't immediately jump to a solution.



Types of Questions

To help you with the "probe" part of the challenge, here are some different types of questions to use in your conversations.

Open-ended: Encourages a detailed, thoughtful response.

- Example: "Tell me more about your process for that project."

Closed-ended: Gets a quick, specific answer.

- Example: "Did you send the report?"

Probing: Digs deeper into a topic to get more information.

- Example: "What was the main challenge you faced with that?"

Clarifying: Ensures you have the correct information.

- Example: "Tell me more about your process for that project."

Leading: Guides the person toward a specific answer you're looking for.

- Example: "We should probably move forward with option A, don't you think?"

Multiple Choice: Provides a set of defined options to choose from.

- Example: "Do you prefer we meet at 9 a.m., 10 a.m., or 11 a.m.?"

Ranking: Asks for an order of preference or priority.

- Example: "Of these three options, how would you rank them in order of importance?"

Hypothetical: Asks about a possible situation to get a person to think creatively.

- Example: "What would you do if we had an unlimited budget for this?"

Reflective: Encourages someone to think about their own experience or feelings.

- Example: "How do you feel that went?"

Summary: Checks your understanding of a conversation by recapping it.

- Example: "So, what I'm hearing is that we need to finalize the design before we move to production. Is that right?"

Remember, listening is a skill that takes practice, not perfection. This month, let's put in the work and discover the incredible power of truly hearing what others have to say. We're all in this together, so share your progress with us!

