



## JPICE LENTEN JOURNEY 2019

### *The 7 Steps of Generative Listening Explained*

1. ***Slow down and notice more of what is present.*** It could be colors, sounds, the person speaking. Sometimes when we enter into a conversation we bring what we were just involved in or a desire for a certain result which means we are not in the present moment.
2. ***Listen with all my senses.*** To listen not just with one's ears, but with the eyes. Look at the person speaking, see her non-verbal communication. It could also be to feel or taste what is being said to me. Try to feel the experience being presented to me and not just to understand it.
3. ***Listen to the words/images chose; those specifically and not others.*** It is important to listen to the words chosen. These are often bearers of images. What is important is to be faithful to the words chosen and not translate, abbreviate or interpret them. We choose specific words, sometimes consciously and sometimes unconsciously. The words can reveal important information and meaning.
4. ***Listen to the emotions conveyed by the person who is talking.*** The emotions are present in the words, the images we choose. These can be very strong. We also feel emotion in tone of voice, the silence and the rhythm of the spoken word. Generative Listening is a disposition of being open to what is being said at many levels.
5. ***Suspend judgement.*** This means not pre-empting, classifying, or dismissing what the person is saying. It is her reality as she is experiencing it and making sense of it. Certainly this includes moral judgment, but also every temptation to say "That's good" or "That's bad." There is also cognitive judgment which is a judgment I make where I try to anticipate what the person is saying. For example, when we finish the sentence because in my head I have judged where the person is going. That is a big no-no here! Sometimes we also classify why someone says something based on where she comes from or a role she holds or previously held. S/he says that because of the country she comes from or the role s/he has held. It is easier for us, but it can destroy something in the conversation. It does not mean being in agreement, however. Generative Listening is not a matter of agreeing or disagreeing. It is a matter of accepting what the other person is saying as her reality





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6. *Notice what I don't understand or what triggers questions for me rather than what I don't like about what I hear.* Often there are so many more things that I have not understood as I may have initially thought. This happens especially when the speaker speaks my own language or a language I understand well. This principle invites one to really bring our attention to that which we do not understand.
  
7. *What do I feel as I listen to what is being said and why?* This is fundamental to generative listening. It is important that I listen with my heart, my affectivity as well as my mind. It takes me somewhere: joy, sadness, frustration, etc. Sometimes I am not consciously aware of it, but it can still bring one to an emotional state. Generative Listening is important to do with oneself, as well. This is the heart of this principle. What is being touched in me as I listen to the other person? The feelings that arise are rooted in our own experiences and stories. Therefore, it is important to distinguish between my reality and the reality that the person is bringing. I need to distinguish between the two: What is mine and what is that which the person is bringing?