

LISTEN FULLY

PURPOSE: This exercise helps individuals practice how to slow down and listen. In this exercise, participants will experience what it means to listen fully to another person and to be listened to fully.

TIME: If you're reading an article during this activity, allow at least 45 minutes. Allow each speaker two minutes to speak on each topic. The facilitator may want to limit the experience to one topic or explore several topics and switch speaking and listening partners for each topic.

MATERIALS: Copies of articles to be read by participants, 3x5 cards, marker.

POSSIBLE TOPICS FOR THIS EXERCISE

- What I like best about myself as a teacher.
- Why I became a teacher.
- Why I continue to teach.
- Why I chose to teach the subject and grade level that I'm teaching today.
- What my students are capable of learning.



DIRECTIONS

1. Do a jigsaw reading of Chapter 7 of *Falling Awake* or select another article or book chapter that also describes the qualities of listening completely. (See the Dec/Jan. 2002 issue of *Tools for Schools* for directions on a jigsaw reading.) *Time: 20 minutes.*
2. Invite participants to share the attributes of listening fully that they have gleaned from this article or chapter. *Time: 10 minutes.*
3. Identify the topic for this exercise.
4. Ask participants to select a partner. Distribute 3x5 cards labeled "sender" and "receiver" to each pair.
5. The person with the "sender" card speaks first. While the "sender" speaks, the "receiver" listens completely. The "receiver" does not speak or make any noises in response to what s/he is hearing. *Time: 2 minutes.*
6. Next, have the partners trade cards, switch roles, and continue on the same topic. *Time: 2 minutes.*
7. After completing this exercise, the facilitator invites participants to reflect out loud about the experience. *How did they feel while speaking? How did they feel when listening? What did they learn about themselves as speakers and listeners?*

*Adapted from **Falling Awake: Creating the Life of Your Dreams**, by Dave Ellis. Breakthrough Enterprises, 1999. Available through www.fallingawake.com.*

"Why is being heard so healing?"

I don't know the full answer to that question but I do know it has something to do with the fact that listening creates relationship. ...

Listening moves us closer, it helps us become more whole, more healthy, more holy.

Not listening causes fragmentation and fragmentation always causes more suffering."

— Margaret Wheatley,
Turning to One Another
(Berrett-Koehler, 2002)