



LISTENING!

With Carol McCall

Special Report #1

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Edited by John David Mann

Coaching is a conversation.

In coaching, you're just like a prospector, digging for gold. Speaking and listening are your pick and shovel.

Speaking is simple. It's asking questions.

What are the right questions to ask? When you're listening, really *listening*, you always know the best right questions. That's why listening is the single most important tool a coach has.

In this Special Report, you'll learn about the art and science of listening from *the Master*, Carol McCall, founder of the Empowerment of Listening workshop and author of *Listen! There's a World Waiting To Be Heard*.

This conversation begins with Rusty Peterman and me, then Coach Carol McCall and I talk, and next we open it up to our players.

Thanks for *listening*. I appreciate you! — JMF

JMF: Rusty, you once told me you were “indebted to me forever” for introducing you to Carol’s work. Can you share one or two things that have been the most meaningful things you picked up out of the Empowerment of Listening?

RUSTY: It boils down to one thing, and that is to just listen.

To be intentional in not having a conversation in my head in reaction to what I'm hearing. To just remain in that listening mode as purely as I possibly can.

That was a real insight for me, because in my work as a minister for the past 23 years, I was paid to say a lot of words. I'm also in a situation where I try to read into what others are saying, and I've fallen into that habit. But applying this insight over the last few years, being free to

simply listen to a person through a conversation, I've been able to carry on better conversations in my friendships and other relationships; I've become a better listener for my children, and it has also brought Sallye [Mrs. Rusty Peterman] and me closer together. I've seen it make a huge difference.

JMF: Has that shifted something in your relationship with the men and women in your church and your ability to counsel them?

RUSTY: Yes, it's made a big difference. Rather than my spending the first five minutes of a conversation trying to figure out what direction we need to go, we really take a journey together through the conversation.

JMF: Carol, people use the term, "active listening." What is different about listening, empowered listening, as you speak about it?

COACH McCALL: I've been continually looking at how to refine, streamline and have people acquire the feel of what we're discussing here. I use the term "skill" only so that people will get that there is something that they can practice.

The art of listening to someone is not "active." If you're active about it, then you're thinking you need to *do* something. You need to paraphrase. You need to make sure you're understanding. You need to be engaged with the conversation. All of that is called "active listening."

The listening work I have spent my last 40 years engaged in and working with people to master is one of listening to exactly what is being said.

Recently a scientist said to me, "You know, Carol, what you do is very much like quantum physics, which says that 'No two things can occupy the same space at the same time.'" That's exactly what's going on in listening. When you're truly listening to someone else, it is impossible for something to be going on in your head. You cannot have two things in the same space at the same time in your mind, either.

JMF: You mean I can't answer my email while I'm talking to you?

COACH McCALL: No. Not while you're listening to me. Sure, you can talk to me and answer your email. You're not listening to me, though.

I have a group of coaches now where we truly emphasizing *listening*. And when people truly *listen* to what is being spoken, the other phenomenon that happens is that people become present.

Now, I know that phrase is thrown around these days. People say, "Yeah, I'm really present to what's going on"—and they're not. They're busy *doing* present; it's like they're working at bringing themselves to being in front of whatever is going on, except they're working at it. But it doesn't take work. It does take a shift, yes—but you don't have to *work* the shift.

It's very much like when you get lost in a project you love. You get lost in the thing that you love doing, you get lost in performing it. You love it so much, you get lost in it. What's happening there is that you're *listening*. I'm using that word as synonymous with you listening to what you're involved in: you're truly present to that. Everyone has had that experience, when you're so engaged in something, so involved in it, you become one with it, you get lost in it. I call that listening.

When you're really listening to someone's words, you become connected with that person. That's the kind of connection that all of us are seeking, at least in that moment.

I'm not talking about years of intimacy and life-long best buddies forever. I'm talking about in that moment, maybe for five seconds, for 50 seconds, for an hour, we have truly been connected with each other, and it's through listening.

Listening is one of the most intimate, non-intrusive, respectful, honoring things we can do in the course of communication—yet our culture has emphasized *talking* as the fulcrum of true communication. If you're a great speaker, that's quite valuable; but the true strength of a valuable thinker is what she listens to as she speaks. A great communicator will speak to what is in the unspoken, because she has heard it—because she has been listening.

In what people call "silence," there's a lot of communication going on. When you listen, you can hear what people are *not* saying—not what you're making up about what they're saying, but what you truly hear they aren't saying. When you can answer and respond to that, people have the experience of, "My goodness, they really did hear me, even though I didn't use those words."

That's the difference between "active listening," which is all the doing, doing, doing around communication, and the listening that I work with, which is about being still.

JMF: Carol, can you help point out what are some of the typical “other things” that occupy the space and time that prevents us from listening?

COACH McCALL: Thoughts, lots of thoughts:

What have I left unfinished?... What are people going to think about me?... What am I going to say when they're done?... What's this got to do with me?... I already know this... If I just keep talking enough I'll eventually find out what they really want... What do you really want?... How can I get you to do what I want you to do?... What does she really mean by that thing she just said?

All these sorts of agendas are going on in our heads, and we're not present to what's going on in front of us. We're present to what happened in the past, or what's going to happen in the future. All those thoughts are what occupy the mind—and they are what occupies “communication” when we are attempting to listen to someone else.

JMF: Carol, let's say somebody says, “I'm listening, I heard you,” but they do not agree with what I said, or don't do what I wanted them to do. This is a simple example, but, let's say I tell you, “Carol, I really want you to take out the trash. It's very important to me that you take out the trash. One of my values is that you take out the trash, and you agreed that you would take out the trash.” You say, “I heard you, John”—but you don't take out the trash. What's going on there?

COACH McCALL: The speaker left out the most important part, which is to make a request. “I request that you take out the trash *now* (or within the next 15 minutes, or within the next day)...” You make the request, and then wait for the listener to respond to that request.

People will sometimes say, “Well, I *did* make the request.” You ask, what was the request you made?, and find out that what they said was, “It's cold in here.”

Well, that's nice: it's cold in here. And now I'm supposed to do something about it? That's a news report, that's not a request. Here is a request: “I request that you turn down the air conditioner within the next 15 minutes; will you do that?” Then you wait for the other person to respond with a “yes” or a “no”.

So back to your wanting me to take out the trash. When I say, "I heard you," that's the truth. I did hear you. You just didn't make a request.

JMF: We have a very hip phrase now called "permission marketing." What people often do is say, "Can I have permission to market this to you?" and then boom, jump right in and start marketing, without waiting for an answer!

COACH McCALL: Exactly. People make the request and then don't wait for the response. People will say, "I have something to offer you, are you interested?"—and then jump right in and explain the offer without even waiting for the person to say "yes" or "no".

Another thing that happens is that in the response, people are not bold. Being bold is one of the listening tools I teach. To be an effective listener, you must be bold—bold enough to say, "That was not my question," or to say, "You didn't answer my question."

Let's go back to the trash. I make a request: "I request that you take out the trash within the next 15 minutes. Will you do that?" And you say, "Well, you know, I've got something on the computer I've really got to complete, and I have this call coming in, and after that, I've got this to do and that to do..."

If that's the way the conversation goes, I need to stop you and say, "What I asked was, would you take the trash out in the next 15 minutes?" That's being bold; and now the other person is going to say "yes" or "no".

If it's a family member or someone else you are close with, you're probably already pretty familiar with each other's communication patterns. In that case, it's not unusual to say, "Hey, it's a yes-or-no question—will you take out the trash, yes or no?" but it's just as important to be able to be bold with other people, even those you don't know well.

JMF: What normally prevents us from asking in that specific way. Is it the fear of rejection, not wanting to hear the "no"?

COACH McCALL: That's part of it.

It goes back to a question you asked earlier, about what prevents us from hearing things. It's all that chatter: that conversation we've got going on in our heads called, "Well, I don't want them to think I'm

pushy...I don't want them to think—" finish the sentence. Or, "I don't want to look like—" whatever. I don't want, I don't want.

However, you *do* want something: You want them to take out the trash!

Now, do you want to look like you are a partner? Like you are cooperating? If you want to look like that, then it's okay for you to come from a place of partnership and cooperation. You're not coming from a place from nagging.

People will say to themselves, "I don't want to look rude." Do you know that it's rude to withhold what is true? Most people have no idea how truly disrespectful they are in their communication by withholding the truth. Now *that's* rude and disrespectful!

JMF: I can see how this could get dangerous. Are you suggesting that I can say something like, "No, I don't like you in that dress," and by saying this I still want you to like me and love me? Do I go that far?

COACH McCALL: Depending on the relationship, yes. And, you don't have to say "no." You could say, for example, "For you, this isn't the dress that highlights you, that makes you look the best you always want to look; not this dress. You know that other dress you've got? That one absolutely makes you look like WOW." That's the way to have that conversation.

JMF: And that's not manipulative.

COACH McCALL: No, that's not manipulative. It's the truth, isn't it?

JMF: So it's got to be the truth.

COACH McCALL: It's got to be the truth.

JMF: And we're backing off the truth for fear that you won't like me, you won't love me, or I might look... something like that?

COACH McCALL: Yes. Yet the truth is so freeing when it comes from love and respect.

If someone says, "Do I look fat?" you can say back, "No, you don't look fat." I'm clear that you look fat *to you*—otherwise you wouldn't ask me that question—and that you don't look fat to me. I'm also clear that

I don't care how you look: the way that I want you to look is so that you're satisfied with you. That's what makes me happy.

Now, I just said "no."

JMF: Right.

COACH McCALL: But how did I say "no"?

JMF: Beautifully.

COACH McCALL: And truthfully. I'm clear that you look fat to you. You don't look fat to me. It's about telling the truth in a way that's forthright, that's honest, that's bold, and that's respectful.

True communication and listening is never with an intent to harm. It is with an intent to have clarity, to have completion, and to have communion.

JMF: So something ceases to become a hidden agenda when we speak it.

COACH McCALL: That's right. Do you know how much energy it takes to keep from speaking something?

JMF: Mark Twain has a wonderful line about that: "It's so much easier to tell the truth — you don't have to remember everything you said."

COACH McCALL: Exactly.

JMF: Who has a question for Carol, please?

Player One: Carol, on your Empowerment of Listening tape album, you mention one of the listening tools being "brevity." That's something I really need to master: I've been accused of waiting for someone to ask me what time it is so I could tell them how to build a watch. How do you cultivate brevity?

COACH McCALL: The tool of brevity is about saying what you need to say in the moment. What time is it, Player One?

Player One: It's 1:30.

COACH McCALL: Thank you. That's brevity. How to cultivate and master it is to answer the question—and *only* the question; then ask, "Is there anything else?"

What I interpreted from your request was that you give people the breakdown of the watch first, *before* you answer the question.

Player One: That's correct.

COACH McCALL: Great: give them the answer first. Then ask if there's anything else. It's about you training yourself.

Another tool for brevity is to count to 10 before you answer. You can let the other person know, "I'm thinking before I answer you." This is an amazing phenomenon for brevity. Most people don't think before they answer, and they certainly don't announce that they're thinking before they answer.

So if you're someone who is long-winded—who likes to give the whole preface and epilogue to the book before you read it—just say, "I'm thinking," count to 10, and then answer the question. If you practice that, you will begin to master brevity.

JMF: I've often been accused of telling somebody the same thing three different ways, three or four times, in the same conversation. What I noticed was that I am listening to them as some kind of stupid... as if they couldn't "get it" if I just said it straight out. Is that common, or am I the only fool on the hill doing that?

COACH McCALL: No, you're not: it is a common one. The listening is that you are holding the other person as not capable. Doing the opposite, holding someone as capable, is one of the Empowered Listening tools.

JMF: Can you say more about how we use our listening in that way? That's something I've never heard from anyone but you.

COACH McCALL: You mean, holding somebody as capable?

JMF: I mean the fact that people can and do show up in exactly the way we listen to them.

COACH McCALL: That's right.

JMF: So if I listen to somebody as an idiot, what space do they have to show up as anything else?

COACH McCALL: None. People show up in our listening. Listening is a very powerful, dynamic way in which we interact with each other.

People can scoff at this or dismiss it, "Yeah, well that's just your opinion, nobody's ever proven it." In fact, I am doing exactly that. I have been demonstrating that when people are truly heard without criticism, condemnation and judgment, they create endorphins and their energetic, magnetic field expands. This work is part of my doctoral research.

When people are interrupted or listened to in a certain way, their magnetic field diminishes. You can actually view this happening on a computer monitor. I'm out to demonstrate that when we are heard, when we are listened to, it physically increases our vitality and our ability to produce.

This is especially important for coaches, sales people, entrepreneurs, company team leaders, network marketers. If in your listening you have already determined that this person is a twerp or a dweeb—or whatever the new words are these days for "jerk" or "idiot"—if you've already said, "Well, he's obviously not gonna follow through, he's not gonna be much of a producer," then that's the listening that you take onto the call with you or into the room with you every time you're in that person's presence. If that is your listening, then this person cannot possibly show up any other way than how you are already listening to him.

You can listen to someone in all sorts of different ways, but when people are first starting to master listening, I recommend that they listen to everyone as *capable*.

Remember, no two things can occupy the same space at the same time. Here's what is great about that: If you're listening to the person as capable, then whatever he says, he is saying into the thought, the listening, that he is capable. There's something there that's empowering. You will hear him differently—and he will experience being received differently. Instead of being received as "He's never gonna make it," or "Yeah, right, whatever," he is being received as someone who is *absolutely* going to be successful and achieve his goals.

Now, this takes practice, especially at first. But it really does work—and it works consistently.

Have you ever gone back to a family or high school reunion? You meet your old school mates and they say, "Oh, I remember when you

were...”, “There’s old so-and-so, what a jerk he was...” or “...what an intense guy he is...” or whatever their listening is. And you know, no matter what’s happened in the years since, where your life has gone or what you’ve done or how much you’ve changed, you will show up in their listening as that you haven’t changed a bit. How does that feel?

Or you go home and Aunt Mertha says to you, “You’ll always be Little Johnny.” And sure enough, around Aunt Mertha, no matter what you say, your words come from the mouth of this child, Little Johnny—not from this full-grown adult who has children of his own, a successful business, and an entire adult life Aunt Mertha can’t even begin to grasp. None of that matters: *you’re still Little Johnny*—because of Aunt Mertha’s listening. How does that feel?

That’s all in the listening they have for you. Listening is a transformative process. When you really listen to someone in communication, that person can actually grow in your presence—or can be actually diminished in your presence.

JMF: Carol, what can you say about listening to someone as a leader?

COACH McCALL: I have a wonderful granddaughter; she just turned seven. When she talks to me, I listen to her as, she’s a leader. Because she is: she is a leader in her own right. And when I listen to her as a leader, I am amazed at the things that come out of her mouth. She’s very bright. She’ll put a whole sequence of things together, and I can follow her, because I am listening to her as I would if I were listening to one of the world’s great leaders.

When you start to listen to someone as she is one of the world’s leaders, I don’t care how young or how old she is, you’ll be amazed at what you hear. “I am listening to a leader.”

And notice: not a *future leader*. If you say, “I am listening to a future leader”—that means she hasn’t gotten there yet, and then in creeps your criticism and my judgment. In creeps your thought that, “Well, when she gets there—*eventually*—she’ll be great.” No, I’m listening to her as *right now* she is great. What a leader I’m listening to!

When you listen to people as powerful business leaders, that’s what will have them be that way. They will go as far as they can go, of course; but in your presence and in your listening, they’ll go a lot farther than they would go if you were to hold them as somebody “on the way,” rather than as somebody *already there*.

JMF: So I'm literally co-creating their being a leader with that person.

COACH McCALL: That's right. And when you interact with them as a leader, they get it. It's not like you have *expectations*—like they should, or they ought to, or you hope they will. It's simply that you are listening to a leader, and when you interact with them that way, their behavior aligns with how you're listening to them. It's an amazing dynamic.

Player Two: I have a six-year-old. What adjustments do I make, if any, for communication with a child, as compared to an adult?

COACH McCALL: I'm not clear about what you mean by "adjustments."

Player Two: The way I listen to adults is somewhat different than the way I listen to my son, simply because there are times when I listen to my son where I still need to direct him. In other words, he may tell me something and I need to guide him, versus just totally listening to him.

COACH McCALL: Yes. Isn't that true for an adult?

Player Two: Not really, because when I listen to adults, I don't feel responsible for them.

COACH McCALL: Ah ha. So the adjustment is in terms of responsibility.

Player Two: Yes.

COACH McCALL: So in listening to your six-year-old, what are you responsible for and what are you not?

Player Two: Well, I'm responsible for his protection.

COACH McCALL: Okay. So you listen to him like he has a certain amount of experience at six in terms of how to protect himself. Doesn't he?

Player Two: Yes.

COACH McCALL: So with a six-year-old, you do a lot of brainstorming about what he already knows about protecting, and you give him information, and you keep reinforcing the information he already has about how to protect himself. You give him information that he needs in

order to continue to protect himself, and you let him know that you trust that he will protect himself like a leader.

But the minute you say, “And don’t forget to...,” you’ve stopped treating him as a leader. The minute you think you have to remind him, then you have made him into less than a leader. Would you remind a leader to take his gloves outside when he leaves?

Player Two: No.

COACH McCALL: Okay. So, set it up so that your son has his own system in place—he’s got his gloves, he’s got his coat, he’s got his galoshes, he’s got his this, he’s got his that. You set up a system in partnership with your six-year-old. You’re training him *and* you’re allowing him to experience his own independence.

When I was raising my own children, I allowed them to pick out their clothes. As their mother, I wanted their clothes to match up, so I put the same kind of symbols on different items that matched. I didn’t care exactly how they put them together; that was their choice, as long as the symbols matched. They learned to dress themselves. That was part of training them as leaders, treating them like they were adults, even though they weren’t yet. They had this kind of independence: they could dress themselves, they could choose their clothes. That is listening to them like they’re leaders.

Of course, I gave them guidance. But I didn’t say, “What? Why’d you put that and that together? That really sucks.” No: when they put this and that together, that’s what they wore.

And you know, that’s exactly what you do with leaders. They put this and that together: okay! And, they will learn through trial and error. We cannot prevent our children from experiencing trial and error. As a matter of fact, most learning occurs through trial and error. Our job is to listen to them with respect that says, you are going to make it through, because that’s what leaders do.

Player Three: What’s the difference between having an intended result for a conversation and having an agenda for that conversation?

COACH McCALL: You’re committed to the result—and you’re not attached to the outcome. Being attached to an outcome is an agenda.

Your committed result is that you have a conversation where you hear what is an inspiration for that person. You literally hear what’s

going to happen—whether it's with a business partner, a prospect, an employee, a client or a consumer—that is going to have this be a rewarding conversation for that person. You're listening to that person, and as you're listening, you'll begin to hear these things—and you're not attached to the outcome. The outcome will be what it will be.

Yes, I know, all your conversations in your network marketing business are about having people do this or do that. But everybody is *not* going to do this or do that. That's a fact. So the more people that you speak to where you really listen, the more you will begin to get—within, say, the first ten seconds—whether or not this person's going to do this or do that. When you're really listening, you'll get who's on the other end.

Then you can start being bold and ask them direct questions. "Is it your interest to do this or do that? What is your interest here?" That helps you and them both know where the conversation is going—and you're not attached to the outcome.

That's the difference between a committed or intended result, and having an agenda. I use the term "committed result"; I don't use "intended result" anymore.

Player Three: And why is that?

COACH McCALL: Because an *intention* often slips into that sneaky thing called an agenda. When you have a committed result, *you* are committed to something. You are committed to having a certain thing happen, and you're not attached to the outcome.

If you're committed to a result happening, you're committed to the result being that you and that person had a certain communication. You are committed to having that conversation, so you have that conversation. And whatever happens - happens. It frees you up from having an agenda sneak into it.

Player Four: I have a question about being listened to—in particular, in relation to my spouse. Sometimes I'd like him to listen to me in a certain way. Do I come out and let him know that?

COACH McCALL: Yes, you do. As a matter of fact, it's very useful to let people know how you want them to listen to you.

You can say something as simple as, "I'd like you to listen to me for about five minutes without any interruption or feedback, without giving

me any input. Just for five minutes. And then, after that, I'd really like some feedback." I wouldn't push it past 15 minutes.

JMF: That tool of brevity again.

COACH McCALL: Yes. Also, there is a major difference in listening between the genders, between men and women, and it's important to understand, know, and respect those differences within yourself, within the same gender, and within the different genders. I teach this at great length in my woman's course, "The Possibility of Woman."

Player Two: Carol, when I learned that from you, I was amazed to find out that when I asked to be listened to for 15 minutes, it actually took me about four minutes to say what I had to say, when normally it would go on for a half an hour.

COACH McCALL: That's right. The experience of being listened to engenders brevity. When people really get that they are being listened to, they say what they have to say and then shut up. It's amazing. They'll look at you and say, "What are you doing?" And you'll say, "I'm listening." And they will say, "Well, I'm done!"

JMF: So, players, what is one key thing that you are taking away from this conversation with Carol McCall today?

Player Two: Carol, the contribution that you made to me is listening to my son as a leader and as responsible.

Player Four: I learned that it's a good idea for me to let my husband know how I expect him to listen to me.

Player One: I got some new tools, especially counting to 10 before answering the question.

Player Six: I'm taking the idea of brevity—and also that it's all in how I listen to the other person. I listen to my son as a leader and young entrepreneur; that's how I listen to him.

Player Seven: What I got was the distinction between seeing someone as a future leader and seeing him as already a leader.

Player Five: I got the connection between being present and brevity.

JMF: I encourage you all to involve yourselves deeper in Carol's work. Carol is indeed the premier teacher of listening on the planet today. She's *the* Master. She's taught me more about the transformational skill of listening than anyone or anything — and that has been the single most life - and work-changing learning I've ever experienced.

To learn more about Carol McCall and her work, visit her website at:
www.listeningprofitsu.com

Carol offers two workshops. Here's how she describes each one:

The Empowerment of Listening goes into the distinctions of the filters that we listen through. One of these is called "The Life Decision," a very powerful filter through which we listen not only to other people but also to ourselves. Once you identify that filter, then you'll see how it threads all the way through how you are listening to everyone, and how it puts a limit on the qualities of conversation that you can be engaged in. You get to the source of it, you find out how come, and you find out what to do about it.

The Possibility of Woman has an emphasis on listening as women. In our culture, we have the role of passing on tradition, mores and customs; how we listen impacts the family dynamic, and impacts the people with whom we associate. In this course we look at how we as women can get a handle on the impact we have on others, what we can do about it, and how we can shift that through our listening. We learn a tool for shifting from our past and future to our present.
