



# New Language of Sales

## The Coach Approach to Sales

## Listening Skills

**We think communication happens in talking, it actually happens in listening.**

It seems so obvious that listening would be one of the primary selling skills. In fact, selling happens in a very particular kind of listening.

### **Level 1: Internal Listening**

When a person listens at Level 1, they are actually listening to their own private conversation. That's where their attention is. They may hear the words of the other person, but they are primarily aware of their own concerns, opinions, assessments, judgments, assumptions, values, belief and standards – their own feelings, needs, and itches. They may be nodding, and going “uh huh”, but inside they are saying things like: “I had an experience just like that.” “This is starting to bore me.” “I really want to get home to watch some TV.” “I'm hungry; when was the last time I ate?” “I'm terrified I'll say the wrong thing and look stupid.” “I know exactly what they need.”

There are plenty of times in our lives when it is perfectly normal – it's actually important for us to pay close attention to our own needs and opinions – essential that we listen at Level 1. For example, when the contractor is asking you how you want your kitchen remodeled; that's a situation that is 100% about what you want; your opinions, judgments, desires. And of course, it's essential that clients and prospects in a sales interaction be at Level 1. The Advisor's attention is fully on them: their lives, what they want, where they are and where they're headed.

### **Level 2: Listening for emotion**

At Level 2 you are aware of the energy between you and others. You are also aware of how that energy is changing; you detect sadness, lightness, a shift in attitude. You are conscious of the underlying mood, or tone, or the impact of the conversation.

Picture two young lovers sitting on a park bench; they're both at Level 2 with their attention completely focused on the other person. They are two people completely at Level 2, listening intently to every word and “listening” for every nuance in the conversation. It sometimes even occurs like they can read each other's mind.

### **Level 3: Listening for commitment**

This can be the most challenging of all levels to achieve and requires practice.

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Commitments are strong promises to yourself or others, ones that you intend to keep. They are tied into your values and principles.

At level 3 you are listening for what they are committed to making happen in their lives. What's important to them? What do they desire?

Beware of the word "should". There is no commitment behind that word.

I *should* go to the gym; however, I've been a member for a long time, but not in action.

Commitment has action attached to it, producing results.

The most effective selling takes place when the Advisor is at Level 2 and 3. There will be times when Advisors will drop into their own Level 1 place. The Advisor will fall back into judgment and opinion about whatever is happening in the sale, and in effect, disconnect from the client/prospect. The Advisor may be analyzing his or her own performance, as in, "that was a stupid question to ask", or "That was a good question, I think they really like me". At Level 1, the Advisor may be pushing his or her own agenda – something with the best intentions of "helping the client" but may not be what the client/prospect actually desires. As a Advisor, the key is to notice when you are in Level 1 and find your way back "over there" with the client/prospect. Sometimes all it takes is asking a provocative, curious question.