

## Whole body listening



Some people listen with their intellect, attentive to the facts and the detail of what was said. Some people listen with their heart and easily empathise with the feelings and experience of the other person. Some people listen with their whole self, noticing how the discussion affects their body. What's going on, for instance, if you get goose bumps when a coachee shares their aspirations or purpose with you? Or if your 'stomach sinks' when a coachee tells you their intentions? Or if your heart beats faster in response to the coachee's attitude or behaviour? Would you notice? How would you interpret or be guided by the messages that your body is giving you?

Combine this awareness with being relaxed and centred, focused and fully attentive to your coachee's body language, energy and voice, and your response will be much more in tune with where the coachee is coming from, and with what really matters. With sensitive coaching 'radar' you'll pick up on the nuances, as well as the things that are not said, and the real meaning behind the words. You may find words or images pop into your head, which if followed intuitively, will make the coaching dialogue more meaningful and insightful.

*"You say you're OK about him taking on the project, but you seem disappointed."*

*"You're hesitating. Is there anything else you want to add?"*

*"Aside from what your head's telling you, what do you need and want from that meeting?"*



When the coachees communicate in an open and authentic way, being true to themselves, their body language reflects this. You sense they are congruent, not hiding or disguising their feelings or the truth of the situation, however challenging. This is very different from coachees who feel uncomfortable, who put on a brave face, who have 'a stiff upper lip' and who are inwardly struggling with e.g. guilt, shame or fear.

The skills, awareness, experience and trust that result from reading others, and listening to what's happening in you, evolve over time and with practice. Coaching triads are very valuable for practising how to express your gut instincts or intuition. When you notice and respond to the cues in yourself and the coachee, you will have different quality of result.

*Most of the time we ask other people questions because we want information that we can use. However, it can often be more valuable to ask other people questions that will help them to get more information they can use.*

*Emotional Intelligence Coaching ~ Neale, Spencer-Arnell & Wilson*