

Essay on non-verbal listening patterns

[Experience](#), [Belief](#)



The two conversations I have chosen to discuss took place recently and involved two people I know: one who I know very well and another who I am friends with but not to any great extent. The first conversation took place with my Mother who I have had a strong relationship with from birth – she has always played an active role in my life and as such, we are extremely close. The conversation took place over lunch in a local restaurant. The second conversation was with a friend who I have known for a couple of years but who I have not spent a lot of time with and who does not know me all that well and nor I her. This conversation took place in my home. I deliberately chose two quite informal settings to better compare the two conversations without the environment being a factor. However, both conversations were carried out with two people who I am familiar with but on vastly differing scales.

The conversation with my Mother was quite an informal one, albeit one which discussed quite an important aspect of my future career. As my Mother, she obviously took quite an impassioned stance on this and the conversation was driven by her speaking persuasively to me. Whilst we were both eating, both of us placed our knives and forks down at certain points of the conversation which seemed to indicate that we were making quite an important point at that moment. Equally, because of our ease and familiarity with one another, a lot of the conversation was able to take place without an excessive amount of eye contact: our knowledge of one another meant that we were able to carry out the conversation without a need for hand gestures and eye contact. The conversation lasted for around 20 to 25 minutes and consisted largely of me listening to her speak. Presumably, this was because

I respect my Mother and as my elder, her opinions and experience were worth being listened to before my own, although I did regularly interject with my own opinions of the situation and my experiences, given that it was my life that we were discussing. Our postures were comfortable and at ease due, again, to our familiarity although we were obviously both aware of being in a public place and our voices were lower than normal.

The second conversation was a general catch-up chat with a friend of mine who I met whilst completing some work experience a couple of years ago. She and I get on very well and have a number of things in common but, for one reason or another, we have not spent all that much time together over the time we've known one another and, as a result, we are not as comfortable as we could be in each other's company. On a number of occasions, I found myself prompting myself to ask a number of questions to cover up small gaps in the conversation – questions about her partner, for example. We both had a glass of juice and whilst I placed mine on the coffee table, she held hers throughout the conversation. To me, this demonstrated my ease at being in my own home and her discomfort at being outside of her comfort zone with regard to spending time with me and not in her own home. However, the conversation was enjoyable largely due to the fact that we shared smiles regularly which re-affirmed our friendship. At the beginning of the conversation, our postures were quite awkward – my friend, in particular, looked quite uncomfortably sat on the sofa but by the end of our conversation, we had both shifted our positions and were both sat, cross-legged, with our feet on the sofa which, to me, indicated that we had felt more at ease with one another as the conversation progressed. However,

throughout the conversation, my posture was quite open – I did not cross my arms, for example – which I felt demonstrated my increased comfort for being in my own home.

Whilst having the two conversations, I made a number of observations about my own non-verbal listening patterns. I maintain eye contact when the other person is talking to me and when I am talking to them, although I do so to a lesser extent. This is demonstrative of my low confidence and so, when I am talking, I find it easier to not maintain constant eye contact as then I am less aware of myself. If I managed to maintain eye contact more fully whilst talking, the other person might hold more confidence in what I am saying. I will endeavour to improve upon this in the future as in professional scenarios; it will stand me in good stead. Secondly, I noticed that my posture was far more at ease around my Mother than my friend. This is largely, again, due to confidence as I am not worried about my appearance when around my Mother. Around my friend, I tended to fidget a lot and this can be quite off-putting when talking to someone. Lastly, I noticed that I smiled less when talking to my Mother. This is probably not to do with my enjoying the conversation any less, but when talking with my friend, I was more aware of trying to make her feel at ease and attempted to do so through extra-friendly behaviour such as smiling and laughing.