



Honor Story (Listen)

WHAT: Honor Story

WHY: Deep, focused listening without judgment creates space for leaders to process and be heard, and allows a coach to gather data and build trust.

HOW: Listen

Be Curious

- Ask: “What’s clearer to you now?” any time you get stuck, or want to have the leader reset or synthesize for clarity.
- Consider issues that arise, then identify the most pressing or salient strand(s) that need(s) attention, or ask the leader to identify it/them.
- Offer back to the leader what you heard, including perceived meaning and assumptions.

Listen

- Listen to word choice, tone, pauses, breathing, and other vocal sounds that you have learned about how the leader processes. Offer your own occasional responses to help the leader know you are listening.
- Wait through silences to allow for processing time.
- Try not to interrupt unless the leader gets stuck in a pattern.

Be Present and Quiet Your Ego

- Notice your own feelings and silently name them in order to manage them. Notice your breathing and other cues that indicate you might be feeling distracted, stressed, or triggered, so that you can quiet your ego and be present to the leader. Intentional breathing, shifting your position in your chair, and placing both feet on the floor, can help you reset.

Before Moving On

- Make a note of topics discussed, key details you want to retain for the future, and next steps.
- Ask: “What’s clearer to you now?”

Potential Traps

- Allowing judgment and your own emotions to cloud listening
- Interrupting
- Being distracted
- Rebutting rather than responding
- Making assumptions
- Being attached to outcome
- Solving the problem for the colleague
- Forgetting that *everyone has a piece of the truth*, including the person(s) cited in your leader’s story