

Last updated: 16:00 (GMT+04) Wednesday, July 23, 2008. Rajab 20, 1429.

gulfnews.com **THREE PROGRESSIVE DECADES**

Search Mobile edition ePaper Live weather Shortcuts Go

GNAds4U

- JOBS4U
- WHEELS4U
- PROPERTIES4U
- CLASSIFIEDS4U
- THE NATION
- THE GULF
- THE REGION
- THE WORLD
- BUSINESS
- SPORT
- TECHNOLOGY
- IN DEPTH
- GALLERIES
- YOUR PICTURES
- VIDEO
- FEATURES
- TABLOID
- FRIDAY
- E+
- EXPLORE
- UNWIND
- NOTES
- SPORT EXTRA
- ASK THE LAW
- RESIDENTS GUIDE
- ABOUT THE UAE
- SPECIAL COVERAGE
- YOUR SAY
- LETTERS
- POLLS
- EMAIL US
- OPINION
- EDITORIALS
- COLUMNS
- WEEKEND REVIEW
- GN FOCUS
- ABOUT GULF NEWS
- SEARCH
- PAST EDITIONS
- FRONT PAGE PDF
- EPAPER
- MOBILE EDITION
- SUBSCRIPTIONS
- GN REWARDS
- RSS FEEDS
- JOBS AT GN

BUSINESS

COMMENT AND ANALYSIS

The art of moving negotiations forward

By Carole Spiers, Special to Gulf News
Published: October 29, 2007, 23:51

Anyone who regularly conducts negotiations soon learns a good deal about the theory of conversation - chiefly how dialogue is driven by many different forms of question (open, closed, rhetorical etc.), each of them stimulating quite different kinds of response.

Clearly, people who can master this kind of conversational terrain enjoy a big advantage when talks have broken down and there is an urgent need to re-start them.

At these times, they often make use of a subtle and diplomatic form of questioning that does not make people feel they are being questioned at all - 'active listening'.

This is the technique of guiding a conversation by making minimal gestures and utterances that suggest empathy, while not actually indicating agreement or making concessions.

This diverts attention away from the questioner and on to the speaker, so it feels to them more like a flattering interview rather than a negotiating session. The effect is to maintain conversational momentum - a vital factor in moving negotiations forward.

Active listening is sharply distinguished from passive listening, another officially recognised mode in which you go through the motions of listening but do not actually become engaged and involved, not remembering any of it (in other words, basically ignoring.)

In active listening mode, you are specifically aiming to retain and recall what you hear.

One active listening tactic is to repeat the other person's point back to them, not parrot fashion, but in a summarised form (paraphrase) that shows you have given it proper attention, and are genuinely wanting to understand it.

An alternative response is to play-back the emotional charge that is coming out of the other person's dialogue ("I can see that you may feel frustrated at times like this..."). Both of these clearly generate a degree of goodwill that can only help to lubricate a tense situation.

Active listening has been defined as the essential blend of factual comprehension and emotional accord.

It is easy to see how widely it can be

RSS RSS FEED

>> Get Business as a news feed

YOUR MONEY

>> Latest Forex rates

LATEST STORIES FROM BUSINESS



BUSINESS
Mercedes-Benz launches new generation cars



BUSINESS
Oman plans makeover of ancient forts and caves

AUTOMOBILES

>> GM unveils 2010 Camaro

AVIATION

>> Etihad flights to Almaty in Kazakhstan start in December

BANKING AND FINANCE

>> Emirates NBD profit soars 45%

>> AUB net profit touches \$211.7 million in midway 2008

>> UNB earnings soar 41% to Dh764.6m

>> Emirates NBD plans Saudi operations

>> Noor in venture to open Islamic bank in Maldives

>> Darling hints at 'profound' effects of global credit crisis

>> Sukuk issuance in Gulf rises 17% to \$17b

COMMENT AND ANALYSIS

>> IT industry holds much potential for future growth

>> Winners of oil prices aren't only international majors

>> Going through a transformation

>> Chinese banks could see shrinking profits in coming days

COMMODITIES

>> Apple posts \$7.46 billion third-quarter revenues

>> Costly food and fuel drive Italy's consumer morale to 15-year low

>> Vietnam to tax rice and fertiliser exports

CONSTRUCTION

>> Housing quality in Dubai has a 'long way to go'

DEVELOPMENT

>> Mubadala forms \$8b GE venture

>> IFA launches \$200m project in Thailand

>> Lifestyle City raises budget to Dh4b

>> Depa venture wins Singapore contract

>> Work begins on tallest building in Jordan

ECONOMY

>> Inflation in Kuwait accelerates to 11.4%

GENERAL

>> e-governance gains ground in Abu Dhabi

>> Russian firm wins \$418m Dolphin deal

HOTEL & TOURISM

RADIO 1



Listen now

RADIO 2



Listen now

>> Streaming FAQs
>> Radio schedules

SPECIAL COVERAGE



Olympics 2008



Pictures from the past

applied in cases where someone is reluctant to talk. Industrial disputes are the most obvious one. But police work, investigative journalism and salesmanship are three others.

The overcoming of a silence takes a very similar routine of sympathetic promptings - and for the same purpose. There is the same need to ask the right questions.

There is the same need to show that you are genuinely listening.

There is the same need not to appear judgmental. The parent is having to encourage the sharing of an important confidence, perhaps with serious implications, while not alienating the child and driving it further into secrecy, perhaps further into trouble.

Key points: How to practise active listening

- These routines of repeating and interpreting can be formally studied.
- There are clear parallels with talking to difficult teenage kids.
- Active listening is distinguished from passive listening (basically ignoring).

- *The writer is a BBC broadcaster and motivational speaker, with 20 years' experience as CEO of Carole Spiers Group, an international stress consultancy based in London.*

More from [Business](#)

Email
this
article


Printer-
Friendly
version


Email
the
Editor


Bookmark
this
article


Post this story to:

[Del.icio.us](#) | [Digg](#) | [Facebook](#) | [Reddit](#)

>> [Travelodge plans to boost UK seaside holiday market](#)

INDUSTRY

>> [Swatch, Rivoli tie up to boost market share in Saudi and India](#)
>> [Caterpillar's earnings climb 34% on Asia sales](#)

MARKETS

>> [Dubai market advances for third straight day as Arabtec gains 7.61%](#)
>> [Wachovia reports record quarterly loss of \\$8.9b](#)
>> [DuPont earnings up 11% as sales gain](#)

OIL & GAS

>> [Fuel price rise boosts Chinese demand](#)
>> [Iran not to press for output cuts at Opec's next meeting](#)
>> [Demand for oil products hits two-year low in Korea](#)

TELECOM

>> [etisalat leads global mobile operators posting fastest first-quarter growth](#)

TOURISM & TRAVEL

>> [Oman takes a 'different approach'](#)

TRADE

>> [Strong currency forces Dubai to import less from euro zone](#)

MORE STORIES FROM BUSINESS

AUTOMOBILES

>> [Mercedes-Benz launches new generation cars](#)

AVIATION

>> [BA to transfer to Dubai Terminal 5](#)

BANKING AND FINANCE

>> [Doha Bank Q2 net profit increases 25%](#)
>> [Noor Islamic Bank expands in Maldives](#)
>> [Emirates NBD expands in Saudi Arabia](#)
>> [Emirates NBD profit up in Q2 2008](#)
>> [UNB records Dh764.6 million profit](#)

COMMENT AND ANALYSIS

>> [Do you really fly economy class?](#)

COMMODITIES

>> [GCC-based jeweller posts 55% growth](#)

ECONOMY

>> [Map of the global food crisis](#)

INDUSTRY

>> [GE, Mubadala tie up for global venture](#)

INTERNET

>> [Web threatens MidEast business growth](#)

OIL & GAS

>> [Dolphin Energy taps Russian contractor](#)

REAL ESTATE PROPERTY

>> [Limitless to build Jordan's twin towers](#)

TECHNOLOGY

>> [BlackBerry or Apple?](#)
>> [Joining the competition](#)
>> [Wearable gadgets are in](#)
>> [The degeneration of online debates](#)