LEARNING FROM UNLIKELY PLACES

WHAT AN FBI NEGOTIATOR CAN TEACH US ABOUT LISTENING

Diane Zajac  | Agile 2019  | August 5, 2019
Two Truths and a Lie

#1
I worked at a donut shop in college.

#2
I met Madonna in Manhattan in ’13.

#3
I am 100% Polish.
Debrief: Two Truths and a Lie?
“Assumptions blind... Hypotheses guide.”

-Chris Voss, *Never Split the Difference*
“Negotiation is not an act of battle; it’s a process of discovery.”

-Chris Voss, Never Split the Difference
Why do we listen?

What happens when we don’t?
Debrief: Why do we listen?
“Who has control in a conversation? The person talking or the person listening?”

-Chris Voss, Never Split the Difference
“The listener, of course”

-Chris Voss, Never Split the Difference
What prevents us from listening?
DEBRIEF: WHY DON’T WE LISTEN?
“Tactical Empathy is... listening as a martial art.”

-Chris Voss, Never Split the Difference
Repeat Last 3 Words (or 1-3 Critical)
Debrief: Using Mirrors To Listen
“Mirroring is a... conversational Swiss Army knife valuable in just about every professional and social setting.”

- Chris Voss, Never Split the Difference
The Sound of Silence
Debrief: How Long Was That?
“Don’t worry, the other party will fill the silence.”

-Chris Voss, *Never Split the Difference*
“Why don’t you breathe through your nose for a little while?”

- Pastor Brian Kelly, McLane Church
It seems like _________ is important.
It sounds like _________ makes it easier.
It looks like _________ is valuable to you.

It seems like you don’t like _________.
It sounds like you are worried that _________.
It looks like you’re reluctant to _________.
DEBRIEF:
LABELS
“Labels **diffuse** negative emotions; **reinforce** positive emotions.”

-Chris Voss, *Never Split the Difference*
What does “no” mean?
“When you recognize that your counterpart is not irrational, but simply ill-informed, constrained, or obeying interests that you do not yet know, your field of movement greatly expands.”

-Chris Voss, *Never Split the Difference*
Calibrated Questions
WHO?
WHERE?
WHEN?
WHAT?
WHY?
HOW?
Calibrated or Not?

1. Is this project important to you?
2. What is the biggest challenge you face?
3. Can you work with me on this?
4. What’s the objective?
5. What would you need to make it work?
6. Does this agenda meet your needs?
7. Do you want me to reschedule?
8. How is that worthwhile?
9. Are you okay with this as our top priority?
10. What happens if you do nothing?
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Answer</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Is this project important to you?</td>
<td>FALSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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How Can You Calibrate These?

1. Is this project important to you?
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3. Can you work with me on this?
4. 
5. 
6. Does this agenda meet your needs?
7. Do you want me to reschedule?
8. 
9. Are you okay with this as our top priority?
10.
DEBRIEF: CALIBRATED QUESTIONS
How Can You Calibrate These?

1. Is this project important to you?
2.  → **What about this is important to you?**
3. Can you work with me on this?
4.  → **How can we solve this problem together?**
5.  → **What is missing that would make it better for you?**
6. Does this agenda meet your needs?
7. Do you want me to reschedule?
8.  → **How would you like me to proceed?**
9. Are you okay with this as our top priority?
10. → **How can we align on the priorities?**
“How am I supposed to do that?”

-Chris Voss, *Never Split the Difference*
One of the Greatest Negotiators of All Time
1. What did you hear that validated something you already knew?
2. What was the most surprising thing you learned today?
3. How can you use what you learned?

Feedback for me
- Favorite activity?
- What worked?
- How to improve?
“The person across the table is never the problem. The unsolved issue is.”

-Chris Voss, Never Split the Difference