

## CREATIVE LISTENING GETTING TO THE NEXT LEVEL IN A DISCUSSION

In a group discussion it is common for ideas and discussion to flow rapidly. Group members hear things and respond. Not much listening is going on. There are many times when this is absolutely appropriate – especially when the group is in a very creative mood.

However, a group can be stuck “wheel” spinning, or skimming along the surface without actually getting to the core of the issue. At this point it helps to slow things down and start listening.

This technique is very effective at giving a creative boost to a group that is stuck.



### **Step One**

Everyone is given a fixed time to prepare a two or three minute talk about the topic or issue. Five minutes is usually ample.

### **Step Two**

One person gives their two or three minute talk. Timekeeping is strict. No questions are allowed during or after the presentation.

### **Step Three**

At the end of the first presentation, all group members have to jot down one item that struck them as interesting, important, puzzling or surprising in that presentation. Then they jot down one thing that popped into their own mind whilst listening to the conversation. (ie listening to the speaker and listening to yourself). A minute or so is given for this. Again no discussion allowed.

### **Step Four**

Repeat Steps Two and Three for all group members. No presentation is allowed to refer to another person's presentation (eg “I agree with Joan that ...”), but can cover the same areas. It is possible that some members of the group will become increasingly frustrated as time goes on, and find it very difficult not to chip in. This is a perfectly natural response. However this process is about listening not talking.

### **Step Five**

All members of the group then read out their two items recorded after each presentation. This is best written on flip charts or whiteboard.

### **Step Six**

The group then looks at these reflections, seeks to draw any conclusions and returns to whatever style of group discussion is appropriate. It is often beneficial to focus on any contradictions, puzzles, surprises or notable absences in the reflections.