

Generative Speaking

The framework of Generative Speaking is designed to support you as a Mentor to play your part creatively and effectively in ensuring the quality of the conversation. As we saw in Generative Listening there are 7 Principles that will support your Mentee and the quality of their thinking. And in the Time to Think approach we explored how to apply those key thinking enhancers to enable the thinker to think and follow their own stream of consciousness.

However, we know that there is an exchange when communicating. Listening and speaking and this framework addresses the second part of the dynamic. The speaking.

The mindset behind this framework is to gain clarity about what has been heard and what hasn't – as the Mentor am I gaining greater clarity and enrichment of understanding from what I am hearing or is the emerging picture still or becoming obscure to me?

Here is the framework. It enables a reflection on the listening and whereas as a Mentor I stand in my understanding of the situation and the sharing by the Mentee.

Generative Speaking

		Present in what I heard	
Enriching the Picture	1. What have I heard and learnt, that is clearer for me, after listening?	2. What do not I understand or what still needs clarifying after listening.	Obscuring the Picture
	3. What new ideas have been triggered by what I have heard but was not present in what I heard whilst listening?	4. What feels or seems crucial to me but I have not heard whilst listening?	
		Not present in what I heard	

Let's explore each of these four positions in more detail.

Position 1. What I understand and is clearer for me now. This is a traditional position of self-observation that enables us to check our understanding and conveying to our Mentee that we have been fully immersed in listening to what they shared. Beyond that, it is a way of checking in on alignment and continually defining common ground based on shared meaning.

It doesn't mean agreement with the content of the sharing, but that there is clarity about what was said. It puts aside any value judgment on what the Mentee disclosed.

Position 2. What I don't understand and still needs clarifying. This is directly linked to principle 6 of Generative Listening. It enables consolidation and grounding of the conversation, to ensure completeness. Again, this also shows that the Mentor has been truly listening yet hasn't been able to the meaning conveyed. By naming it – it can also support the Mentee refine their own thinking and to find other words in order to create shared understanding. It requires humility in stating that as Mentor you don't understand at this point. However, genuine humility at this point will strengthen the trust in the relationship. Remember it is a partnership not an expert/learner dynamic.

Position 3. New ideas triggered but not present in what was said or heard. Often as we listen to others speak our mind gets engaged in creating new thinking or building on insights with questions, what-ifs or out of the box possibilities. This is precious and must not be left to dissipate, though at the same time it is important to acknowledge that this is not the thinking of the speaker – that the Mentee didn't generate these thoughts. And may not actually agree with them.

When you don't acknowledge that you had, a thought when they were speaking, and create the assumption that it came from there speaking, this will introduce assumptions into the conversation that may result in issues later on, and potentially derail the alliance and partnership you have developed. It is again critical to delineate between what is theirs and what is yours.

The way to deal with this is to state ... the reality. That whilst he or she was speaking, an idea or thought just popped into your mind. By acknowledging your part in the creation of this idea – you are not stealing their limelight, but you are anchoring your insight in a shared meaning that was triggered by their speaking.

Position 4. What to me seems crucial, but I'm not hearing you mention. This position is probably the most important one for a Mentor. It's that one that can bring you closer to your Mentee. It is important that there is nothing 'personal' or demeaning when addressing this position. Very often this may be a bigger picture element that you as the Mentor can see clearly but the Mentee who is caught in their own flow cannot see. EG. Financial or time implications of a path of action.

Missing factors once included open a door for a larger context to emerge and all relevant elements to be including for consideration. The key is that when reacting from this position – it is not about a 'gotcha' moment but about expanding horizons or checking in on their response to what they are saying – if that is a key element but is not being expressed.

Whilst getting use to using this thinking you may wish to use the four positions to make notes as you are listening to your Mentee. And of course, as always, this matrix of four positions will be available in the [Library of Reference Materials and Templates](#) upon completion of this session.