

Comparison of Learning Styles in Listening



Different learning styles influence how a coach listens, processes, and integrates information in a session. Below is a comparison of how different learning styles approach listening in coaching:

1. Auditory Learners (Learning by Hearing)

How They Listen:

- Focuses on tone, pauses, and verbal cues in the client's speech.
- Pays close attention to word choice, intonation, and pacing to detect emotions.
- May replay words or phrases in their mind to process meaning.



Potential Pitfall in Coaching:

- Might over-rely on words and miss non-verbal cues such as body language or energy shifts.
- Can be tempted to restate what was said rather than reflect deeper meaning or patterns.

Best Practice for Growth:

- Practice listening beyond words—notice shifts in the client's breathing, silence, or energy.
- Use reflective statements that integrate both words and underlying emotions (e.g., "I hear hesitation in your voice—what's happening for you in this moment?").

2. Visual Learners (Learning by Seeing)

How They Listen:

- Observes body language, facial expressions, and gestures to understand the client's emotional state.
- Notices patterns in behavior and imagery in language (e.g., if a client frequently describes obstacles as "walls" or progress as "light").
- Often visualizes the client's journey or situation as they speak.



Potential Pitfall in Coaching:

- Might become distracted by physical cues and over-interpret non-verbal signals instead of verifying their meaning with the client.
- Can be tempted to "see the solution" too quickly rather than allowing the client to discover their own insights.

Best Practice for Growth:

- Balance observing and clarifying: "I noticed your shoulders dropped when you said that—what did that shift mean for you?"
- Use visual metaphors to reflect and deepen the client's awareness (e.g., "You keep describing this as a mountain—what does that tell you?").

3. Kinesthetic Learners (Learning by Doing and Feeling)

How They Listen:

- Focuses on energy shifts, emotional resonance, and bodily reactions while listening.
- Attuned to how the conversation "feels" rather than just the words spoken.
- Picks up on somatic responses—client's breath, tension, or movement.

Potential Pitfall in Coaching:

- Might internalize the client's emotions rather than staying neutral and present.
- Can focus too much on how the session feels rather than what is being said.

Best Practice for Growth:

- Use body awareness exercises before coaching to stay grounded (e.g., mindful breathing).
- Reflect both feelings and words to deepen the coaching conversation:
 - *"As you said that, you placed your hand on your heart—what's coming up for you right now?"*
 - *"I feel a shift in the energy of our conversation—how do you experience that?"*



4. Logical Learners (Learning by Patterns and Structure)

How They Listen:

- Focuses on analyzing client statements, spotting logical inconsistencies or contradictions.
- Identifies patterns over time in the client's thinking or behaviors.
- Looks for underlying assumptions or limiting beliefs in what the client is saying.



Potential Pitfall in Coaching:

- Might focus too much on problem-solving rather than holding space for exploration.
- Can unintentionally challenge the client too quickly instead of allowing deeper self-discovery.

Best Practice for Growth:

- Practice staying in the moment rather than predicting patterns too early.
- Use curious, open-ended questions rather than leading questions:
 - ❌ "So you're stuck because you're afraid of failure?"
 - ✅ "What's keeping you from moving forward in the way you want?"

Bringing It All Together: How to Expand Your Listening Style

Great coaching requires integrating multiple learning styles into listening. Here's how:

Learning Style	Strength in Listening	Growth Edge	Integration Strategy
Auditory	Picks up on tone, pacing, and key words	Needs to notice unspoken shifts	Practice listening to energy and not just words
Visual	Reads body language and emotional cues	May interpret non-verbal cues too quickly	Verify interpretations with client: "What did that shift mean for you?"
Kinesthetic	Senses energy and emotional shifts deeply	Can absorb client emotions instead of staying neutral	Stay grounded and reflect both words and feelings
Logical	Identifies patterns and limiting beliefs	May overanalyze and jump to conclusions	Stay present and let the client lead their own insights

Final Thought:

At a **PCC level**, masterful listening comes from balancing **multiple styles**—hearing words, noticing emotions, sensing energy, and reflecting patterns. By expanding how you listen, you can create **transformative coaching conversations** where the client feels **deeply heard and understood**.