

## Hungry Like the W.O.L.F

(excerpted from Hungers: The Hidden Motivators)



### Step 1: Discovering the W.O.L.F.

Listening is a skill we use hundred, or even thousands of times every day, yet for most of us it's an unconscious process. Although we hear and understand a lot of data, we haven't necessarily stopped to look at how the process of listening actually works.

We don't have a clue about why some things tend to stick in our memory and other things go "in one ear and out the other." We're not aware of what really motivates us to listen, and how our individual paradigms of listening, determine what we hear.

For example, take the simple statement: "I saw my mother today, and I gave her a big bouquet of flowers." Imagine how a mother might hear that statement. Now imagine how a therapist might hear that statement. Next, imagine how a florist might hear the statement; or a person whose mother had just died. Imagine a truck driver...a kindergarten student...a Hell's Angel...or a high-powered CEO. All of them would hear that same statement differently.

Each of us listens with an agenda that's based on the essence of who we are. We call this agenda our W.O.L.F. because it determines "What One Listens For." Our W.O.L.F. agenda is formed by our unique background and experiences. It's driven by either our conscious intentions or our unconscious hungers; sometimes even both. A coach's job is to be able to separate themselves from the Hunger-generated listening (The W.O.L.F.) that most people have and the more powerful listening appropriate to a coach.

In this section, we'll explore:

- How to deepen your listening skills
- How to discover the hungers that drive your listening
- How to get your hungers met so you don't "listen on an empty stomach"
- How to tame the W.O.L.F. (What One Listens For)
- What a masterful coach does and doesn't listen for
- How to listen to yourself
- How to use your natural listening strengths as a coach

## What One Listens For

Although each of us has our own unique listening agenda, these agendas often fall into typical patterns. Recognizing your patterns, although not always comfortable, is the first step toward becoming an excellent listener, and a Masterful Coach. Review the list below and place a check mark by the listening pattern(s) that describe what you typically listen for.

- An opportunity to contribute
- A chance to make a point
- A place to say "See, I'm right!"
- A place to create affinity; "I know, I've been through the same thing!"
- A place to fix or solve the problem
- The moment where we may have to defend ourselves
- An opportunity to show we care
- A place to put forth a belief or teach a lesson
- A chance to change the subject or make a joke
- A chance to join the conversation; to participate or belong
- A chance to gracefully exit
- A chance to distinguish ourselves or prove that we're different
- A chance to promote ourselves or prove that we're better
- An opportunity to correct
- Clues that show that we are "good enough"
- Signs that prove the other person likes us

Behind and beneath each 'listening for' is a hunger within us seeking to be fed by the food of what's heard in the listening. The coach's job is to subtract the hunger, or get it fed some other way so they don't come to the coaching session looking for food.