Section 2
LEARN
(THE “L” STEP)

Section 2: the Learn step.
In this section you will understand why the Learn step is important and you will be presented with some guidelines for a successful Learn step. You will learn the reasons for using open-ended statements and open-ended questions and short paraphrases in the Learn step. Then you will see some examples of the open-ended statements and questions and examples of short paraphrases.
We often experience the LIST© process as a client when we deal with “professional consultants” such as doctors and lawyers. However, some of them do **not** follow the LIST© process. Let’s listen to such a doctor and his patient. While listening, put yourself in the place of the patient. How would you feel?

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**Scenario: Doctor Visit**

**Doctor:** Ah Mrs. Lee, my nurse tells me that you’ve been having problems with your stomach.

**Patient:** Ah --yes…

**Doctor:** You know, there has been a lot of that going around lately. If I were a betting man, I would wager that I’ve been involved in 42 stomach operations this month alone.

**Patient:** I…

**Doctor:** I am not sure what is causing it to occur – but I suspect that entirely too much spicy food is being eaten by the general population.

**Patient:** Ahh…

**Doctor:** It’s taken its toll on our stomach. Now fortunately for you, there is a cure. Now we simply do what is called a total gastric resection. That’s right. We get rid of the problem area – we take it right out – and once it’s removed, presto, like magic, no more stomach problems. You can’t argue with that kind of success now can you?

**Patient:** But wha…

**Doctor:** Now it does not take all that long. The surgery is only 4 or 5 hours and afterwards you will be in the hospital just about two weeks or so.
Patient: I…

Doctor: Well, I'm glad we got that settled. It's good to see you again. I'm glad we had this talk. Now, if you just ask my nurse to schedule you for surgery next week – and then send in the next patient. Probably another stomach problem, heh heh heh.
When the doctor talks more than he listens, he misses the opportunity to learn about the patient and the patient’s problems. Now let’s observe the doctor dealing with his patient when he does use the LIST© process.

Scenario: Doctor Revisited

When the doctor talks more than he listens, he misses the opportunity to learn about the patient and the patient’s problems. Now let’s observe the doctor dealing with his patient when he does use the LIST© process.

Scenario: Doctor Visit

Doctor: Ah, Mrs. Lee, how are you today?
Patient: Well, OK I guess. I just been having a bit of trouble with my stomach lately, so I decided to come in and have it checked out.
Doctor: So, you’ve been having some stomach problems lately.
Patient: Yes. It just came on all by itself a few days ago. I was at work and reached across a desk and...
Doctor: Uh huh.
Patient: — I don’t know — it just sort of hit me.
Doctor: Yeah?
Patient: Yeah, you see, I had to stretch a ways to get a paper, so I figured I pulled a muscle or something.
Doctor: OK, so at first you figured you might have pulled something?
Patient: Exactly -----but it didn’t slow me down at all. --- I went ahead with my house work when I got home — I even did some lifting.
Doctor: Uh huh.
Patient: Yeah, well it was kind of sharp pain — it took my breath away.
Doctor: Yeah?

Patient: You know, kind of like when you get the wind knocked out of you.

Doctor: Yeah, I know.

Patient: Well it happened a couple of times since.

Doctor: Oh?

Patient: And that’s the funny thing, doctor. I really wasn’t doing anything – and that’s what made me decide I might not have pulled a muscle. One time I was just drinking coffee – and the other time I was fast asleep.

Doctor: OK – if there is anything else that you can tell me?

Patient: No – no, not really. That’s about it.

Doctor: Alright. Let me just summarize briefly what you’ve told me to this point: You’ve been having problems with your stomach. It seems to have started a few days ago when you reached across a desk at work. The pain didn’t slow you down much and you were able to continue your normal physical activities, even lifting things. Now the pain itself was sharp – almost stunning, as if you couldn’t catch your breath. There have been two additional incidences since then – and these occurred when you were not engaged in any type of physical, strenuous activity – and that makes you think that it is not a pulled muscle or tendon. Does that about cover what you have told me so far?

Patient: Yeah – yeah. That’s about it.

Doctor: Alright, have you been under any unusual stress lately – worries on the job – at home – anywhere?

Patient: No not really, no more than usual.

Doctor: Good. Now when the pain occurs, is it always exactly in the same spot – or does it just kind of float around in general – in the various areas of your stomach?

Patient: Hmm. That’s right. It is in the same general area but not exactly in the same spot every time.

Doctor: Ok. When the pain comes, do you feel any sudden or intense heat – as though you were running a high temperature?

Patient: No. nothing like that.

Doctor: Did you ever faint – I mean not just out of breath but light headed but sort of off-balance.

Patient: No, not like that either.

Doctor: How about queasiness? Has this pain been accompanied by the feeling that your stomach is upset or unsettled.

Patient: Yeah. Come to think of it, you know, that does happen every time I get that pain.

Doctor: Well, taking everything you’ve told me into consideration, I think I can tell you that you may have been experiencing some of the symptoms of the intestinal flu that’s been going around. Now all your symptoms: the gripping pain, the queasiness, the lack of connection between any ongoing physical activities and the pain – these all match the symptoms of this flu. The fact that it happened to you while you were reaching across something when the pain first hit – it’s probably just a coincidence.
Patient: Oh.

Doctor: However, before I go any further with my diagnosis, I’d like to give you an examination. This exam will provide me with some additional information that will either help me to confirm my diagnosis – or refute it. Now there is an antibiotic that I can prescribe which will help ease the gripping pain and some of the flu symptom you have been experiencing. If my initial diagnosis is not confirmed by the examination, there are some additional tests we can run to isolate the cause of your stomach problems. Does that sound like a reasonable way for us to proceed?

Patient: Sure. Let’s get started
Like good doctors, we need to provide our service in a consultative manner and begin by listening to our clients and asking them open-ended questions to learn their perspective. Gaining understanding of a situation or need from the client’s perspective requires more than simply listening attentively. We must encourage the client to openly share information. If we talk too much or confirm facts (rather than feelings), we tend to interrupt or redirect the client’s thought process. This often has the unfortunate effect of causing a client to forget or give up on telling us about an additional need or concern.

By learning as much as we practically can about the client’s needs, we are adding his or her information to our own and actually increasing our power in that interaction. Gaining a good understanding of the client’s need, situation and concerns positions us to lead the conversation.
Here are some guidelines for conducting the Learn step.

1. Act like a counselor or doctor.
2. Use open-ended statements and short paraphrases to encourage the person to tell you his or her needs, concerns and problems. This information provides you with a deeper understanding of your client’s perspective. Save complete paraphrases for the “I” step.
3. Try to do less than 20% of the talking.
4. Demonstrate your complete attentiveness. If you are meeting face-to-face, maintain eye contact, nod your head affirmatively, and respond to your client’s movements appropriately. On the telephone, communicate your attentiveness by frequent vocal acknowledgements including responses that are natural to you – such as “um, hm”.
5. Watch for non-verbal communication. More than 90% of communication is non-verbal. On the telephone, your tone-of-voice is a strong form of non-verbal communication.
6. Express appropriate concern when the client tells you about a problem or concern. Make your comments brief and be sure to address each issue presented by the client.
7. Save fact-finding questions until the Solve step.
8. Do not interrupt the client. In fact, look for cues that the client wants to say something while you are talking. Promptly stop what you are saying and encourage your client to speak his or her thoughts right away.
9. Do not rush this step. Rushing this step can prolong the process and cost more time in the end.
Think about which two of these guidelines promise to best improve your effectiveness with client interactions if you apply them immediately.
Use open-ended questions or open-ended statements during the Learn-step to encourage your client to tell you his or her needs, concerns and perspectives. Here are some examples:

“What else might be helpful for me to know?”
“How is this affecting your operations?”
“Tell me more about this situation.”
“What other concerns do you have?”
Use short paraphrases during the Learn-step. Paraphrasing is a method of restating your client’s information in a positive manner. It also encourages the client to give you more information – but do not completely paraphrase the entire problem as a summary in this step.

Look at these examples of paraphrasing.
Shown here are some more examples of paraphrasing and Open-ended Questions.

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<tr>
<th>Client</th>
<th>Paraphrase</th>
<th>Open-ended Question</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>&quot;We just received a bill from you and I’m not sure if we really should be billed yet. The contract is pretty long and confusing, but I think I remember that the salesperson promised to delay payment&quot;.</td>
<td>&quot;You expected to be billed later.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;What else should I know about this?&quot;</td>
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<tr>
<td>&quot;We need one of your experts to come teach us how to use our new printer. We have a major mailing that has to go out to more than a thousand VIPs today.&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;You need to print those VIP letters today&quot;</td>
<td>&quot;What is involved in printing these letters?&quot;</td>
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<td>Section Conclusion</td>
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<td><strong>In this section you have learned</strong></td>
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<td>➢ Why the Learn step is important</td>
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<td>➢ What the guidelines are for a successful Learn step</td>
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<td>➢ What the reasons are for using open-ended statements and questions and short paraphrases in the Learn step</td>
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In this section you have learned the importance of taking time and effort to “Learn” about the client’s perception of the problem and why it is important to him or her. You have learned some guidelines for a successful “Learn” step. You have learned that the reason for using open-ended statements and questions is to encourage the client to continue talking – and that is also the reason for short paraphrases. You have also seen some examples of open-ended statements and questions, and some examples of short paraphrases.
Now check your comprehension of the Learn Step by answering the following questions.
This concludes Section two, you may either close this window or continue with the next section.