Hi everyone and welcome to the December Life-Changing Leadership Blast! Today I want to talk about three tips when it comes to listening in the workplace or just listening in general.

The first tip I have is to monitor both our impulsive, external comments in the form of interruptions, as well as our internal judgments.

What can often happen if someone is communicating with us and they are presenting incorrect information, or where they're speaking from is not well-rounded, or maybe they're missing a piece of information, we might start to judge what it is that they're saying internally. We might start to tell a story or might start to think about how it is that we're going to correct this individual or how it is that we're going to present different information. The issue with that is that if we're judging it internally or if we're evaluating it or trying to process it internally, what can happen is that individual is still communicating and, as a result, we actually are still or we’re in a position where we're listening less because we're doing more thinking than we are listening.

When it comes to our external impulsive comments, this can also happen in the sense of someone's communicating with us and maybe they're using data that's old or they're missing something and again instead of waiting for them to finish speaking, we might just challenge them, interrupt them and correct them and this can really impact negatively, and in some instances, quite negatively, our ability to listen and communicate with one another.

The next tip I have is our ability to reframe requests and directions that are being given to us. What I mean by reframing is our ability to communicate back to someone what it is that they're saying to us or asking of us, but we're doing it in our own words. So I have an example here, if I was just say asking someone to do something I have here, “Can you produce a progress report using the global database and pictures from the trip Julian took last month?” I'm just making a request of another individual and that individual might respond, if they're going to reframe what I'm asking, they might say something along the lines of, “Okay, so a progress report from the global database and were you wanting pictures from Julian's trip to Toronto last month or are you wanting pictures from the Montreal trip?”

When I'm reiterating or when I'm reframing this back to the individual, it's showing that I'm hearing what it is that they've said and I'm also able to ask for greater clarification. This can often make communication much more valuable and spend less time repeating ourselves and even actually come across more authentic in that we really are present when people are speaking to us, and that can be really important.

The last tip I have here is really to be okay with silence and comfortable inside of silence. Not everyone thinks and processes speech at lightning speeds, especially when emotions and attitudes are involved. So with this said, I will often encourage clients to feel comfortable requesting space and time to respond appropriately. I have some examples here but even just our ability to say, “You know, do you mind if I think about that and get back to you via email?” or even, “When might you need an answer or response by? I would prefer not to share my immediate thoughts.”

These can be just some subtle tips but they can go a very far or a very long way when we're talking about listening to individuals and really landing communication and really increasing our effectiveness inside of our dialogue with individuals.