Listening for the Crux

Why this manual?

The literature on change is sometimes shaped to serve the interests of folks who benefit economically or have a vested interest in a narrow perspective at the expense of evolving a coherent and measurable discipline. For example, there are those who skew change into the arena of improving emotional intelligence, or competencies, or character flaws, or who re-label skills training as change. The intent of this manual is to provide listeners themselves with an integrated system of concise testable small-scale linked ways to listen to persons

The use of the word "crux" for the style and method of listening offered in this manual is because "crux" carries connotations of centrality, and essentiality. It also carries connotations of a pivot or fulcrum. A further connotation is an implication that a crux is the most difficult or important portion of a process. When a listener is listening for the Crux, she wants her work to be on the crucial issues confronting the person. If what is crucial is resolved, much of what is peripheral or secondary can become aligned.

The reader is invited to visualize a system of linked and interlocking components moving through time or as an integrated set of lenses requiring the listener to attend to which system component is being addressed; and how. It offers a map with the following features for the listener to facilitate movement, change, or development:

1. Concentric circles, each one containing all the content of the prior circle, but expanded outward to encompass yet more content and more processes.
2. Natural hierarchies or "stages" that encompass prior stages, but are oriented to different central themes.
3. Emergence and then repetition of similar or central themes (cruxes) over time and course of development.
4. Separated frames of reference for content (layered content and domains), for process (epigenetic unfolding and expanded concentric circles), and for functions or purposes.

Credit and originators

While any errors and omissions in thinking are my own, I credit the TA clinicians, the Gestalt therapists, and the Family Systems therapists of the late 60's and early 70's for evolving small scale dynamic descriptions of patterns of observable behavior. Those who have been trained in those traditions will hear echoes of those perspectives. Aside from reinterpretations of Martin Groder's OKness circles, Paul Watzlawick's focus on first and second order change, accountability and contracting parameters explicated by Jacqui Schiff, Steve Karpman's work on roles, HD Johns article on anger, and Charles Osgood's and Bernadette Pellissier's work on the semantic differential; much of Crux listening is my own mapping of what I have observed as I worked with people to resolve a plethora of family and individual problems and listened to emerging and established leaders.

A second set of theorists informing my thinking include Erik Erikson, Elliot Jaques, and Warren Kinston; each of whom evolved theories and models centered on hierarchical epigenetic development and application of these to leadership readiness and work roles. A practitioner who exposed me to both Jaques and Kinston and also taught me to use his Talent Pool Evaluation process is Glenn Mehltretter. These epigenetic models are also common in biology, where development moves forward in stages, with prior stages serving as precursors for following stages in a hierarchical ordered unfolding.

The framework for Crux listening is based on the principle of parsimony. Flawed as these may be, they are explicit and available for discussion and refinement. The criteria for evaluation of model contained within the framework is:

1. Is this model (map) necessary or at least helpful for the listener and person to consider as a pathway to arrive at a shared understanding of the problem at hand?
2. If the person being listened to (the coachee) and listener share this model, are the dimensions or components included in the model sufficient for the person to compare himself against a baseline?

Who is writing this manual?

My undergraduate academic training was in anthropology and sociology. My graduate training was in Social Work with a concentration in group and individual therapy. My post graduate training was in Clinical Pastoral Education and Transactional Analysis. I have, at various junctures, been a Provisional Teaching Member of the ITAA, a member of the American Academy of Psychotherapists, a training supervisor for the American Association of Marriage and Family Therapists, and an adjunct faculty member of several universities (all in Training and Development roles).

I have been employed as administrator and lead clinician of a 24 hour therapeutic community, as professional services director and therapist for a family counseling agency, as a private practitioner of psychotherapy, as a founder of a software company focused on real time performance management and feedback, and as a consultant to scores of companies and academic institutions on leadership development change and team building. In the course of my work, I developed multiple change tools, professional development programs, and assessment techniques including the Human Patterns Inventory. There are currently over 100 certified administrators of the Human Patterns Inventory. I have also been issued six patents for business methods to enable real time data trading and real time triggered responses to changes in data. My belief and mission for the software company and the patents is that "the right information to the right person at the right time with sufficient context" carries the most impact for personal and professional development. I bring the same belief and mission to the change process.

The metaphor of the garden

Let's assume there is a plot of land. The land will have a topography that may include a variety of soils and a variety of existing flora and fauna down to beneficial and harmful insects and soil organisms. The land will be exposed to different patterns of light due to its location in relationship to the tree line, mountains, buildings, and other structures. The land will be in a climate zone and a microclimate that exposes it to variations in light, temperature, and rainfall. Portions of the land may be proximal to resources such as water or soil minerals and other chemicals. Portions of the land may have been farmed or gardened in the past, or prior owners may have contaminated portions of it with chemicals, or introduced non-native plant species or pests or other variables that distort the ecosystem. Portions of the land may be comprised of rock or sand or clay, or contain contaminants or debris, or a pattern of erosion may be impacting it.

There is much to assess and catalog and consider even before a shovel hits the soil! The wise gardener will walk the land, take multiple soil and water samples, observe the way it is exposed to light and the elements, map out the way water flows through it, catalog the existing flora and fauna, and begin to develop a plan of action for the land. The gardener's mission is to evolve a garden that will leverage the land as much as possible to generate high yields of valuable or useful crops over multiple seasons. He may plan for portions of the land to lie fallow for a time. He may structure seasonal sequences of plantings to improve his soil. He may consider companion crops and plantings. And he may, after his evaluation, conclude that he needs to site his garden on another plot of land.

The person being served by the Crux Listener is the owner of the plot of land. The Crux Listener is the gardener. Together, they consult and evolve a plan to evolve a self-sustaining ecosystem that yields as much as possible for the person. Just as no plot of land is identical to another, each person owns a unique portion of the genome as his garden and each person has a unique capacity and development potential.

The plan for the garden is now dependent on the assessment and cataloging of the present status of the plot, the desires of the owner, the available seed stock and soil amendment resources; and finally the current weather and the season. Including the metaphor of seasonality and long term soil amendment and improvement is central to Crux Listening. Many of the choices to be made must be subordinated to the current weather, the season itself, and the stage in the life-cycle of the garden plot. Unless the plan is fully evolved, the garden will stutter through some seasons, be stymied in others, and flourish in yet others. The contract of the Crux Listener and the person (owner of the garden plot) is a reflection and outgrowth of a joint and comprehensive assessment and responses that follow the assessment.

The budget, irrigation plan, and purchase or rental of garden tools are sometimes constrained by an external funding resource. The crops to be planted can also be constrained by an external funding source. The owner and the gardener must sometimes jointly go to the funder (or go in sequence), arrive at a decision on the crops, accept the risk involved, and determine what yields will be sufficient to cover funding and provide an ROI. The funding source may require reports and inspections as part of the due diligence process for risk reduction and return on the capital they are providing.

As the budget for the right quantity of seeds and soil amendments is determined, and these are bought and stored, the gardener and the owner will select gardening tools of the right scale for the plot. The irrigation plan is often implemented first in accordance with the layout of the garden because retrofitting can be a costly endeavor in lost time for the season.

Gardening itself is now dependent on the plants selected. Each will have its own ideal growth process – epigenetic path - and environment that can be further enhanced by appropriate seed spacing, proper thinning of seedlings, companion plants, water management, soil amendments, weeding, inclusion of beneficial insects, and so forth. Selecting objectives, timing, prioritizing, sequencing, and arranging the context for growth are all analogous to the Crux Listener's work with a person.

As the seeds germinate, the gardener monitors the progress of the seedlings to provide, at a minimum, three crucial resources to the garden - **Soil, Light, and Water**. Within the metaphor of the garden, soil is analogous to the crux labelled Connection; light is analogous to the crux labelled Identity; and water is analogous to the crux labelled Exchange.

The Cruxes - Impediments, Bandwidth and Stages

3 Cruxes – the three crucial girders for development
Connection, Identity, and Exchange can also be thought of as three girders that serve as a scaffold for individual development.

Nutrients/soil, light, and water - developmental cruxes
For the listener, the fully executed development agenda is one where the person is able to leverage and maximize his capability. At that point, the ability of the person to access and utilize the developmental cruxes is self-sustaining.

The ability to connect – to "love" is a crucial for human development. When connection fails – as in situations where a child can't or does not receive caretaking – the child may simply wither away. Alternatively the child who receives insufficient caretaking will have significant problems with trust and do preemptive abandonment of others or experience disabling terror if a connection might break

or be severed. "Good enough mothering," as Winnicot described it, is required for a child to be able to connect and thrive.

Let's draw an analogy of connection to soil and the nutrients comprising the soil. This is the matrix in which the human **Connection** evolves. Can the child trust the connection enough to be nourished? Does that connection evolve from the mother, to the family, to the partner, community, and to "Mother Earth" herself? Indeed, we will see how connection gets mirrored as the individual evolves through stages of moral development.

Identity is centered on the ability to separate out from the mother (from the connection) and operate autonomously (to the extent this is realistic). Identity is analogous to light. The shift from autonomy (saying "NO" in the terrible two's) to identity and sense of self in adolescence, to a career and work identity in adulthood are all ways the individual experiences the world according to his own "lights." Later in the manual, we'll see how identity evolves into competencies, roles, and career choices.

Exchange is the expression of Identity and Connection through interaction itself and involves learning how to befriend, collaborate, mate, support, and contribute to the community. The feedback from exchange – the enrichment of connection and the sense of identity - is analogous to water, enabling the roots to take up nutrients from the soil and convert the nutrients to chlorophyll to accept light. CONNECTION, IDENTITY, AND EXCHANGE form a system and the person's history and capability in each of these system components will determine how the Crux Listener will need to engage with him.

Stages, bandwidth, and domains
Much of the work with a person is linked to the person's developmental stage for one or more of the cruxes. However, a crux is too amorphous to be the subject for change per ce. Face to face work with a person occurs with a valence to a domain and a specific content that implicitly involves a crux or the interaction among cruxes and results in moving the person from one crux stage to another.

There are loose correlations between stages and "bandwidth" because movement from stage to stage will extend the range of capability or bandwidth of the person beyond that of the earlier stage within a domain. Each person has a current bandwidth or capability within a particular domain.

The number of stages for a domain or a Crux is not arbitrary, but they are - and will probably continue to be - subject to discussion and even disagreement. The Crux Listener is evolving a language for a discipline in its infancy and language will change as listeners clarify the "differences that make a difference."

Both skills and competencies are evolving within a stage. For example, the domain of problem solving includes the competencies and skills that are brought to bear on problem solving.

As the discipline of Crux Listening evolves, better and more specific language will evolve.

8 Impediments to a well-functioning system
The Crux Listener considers the cruxes to be the scaffold upon which an understanding of the person, change process, and change interventions are built. While cruxes may overlap with one another, it is useful to think of them as "nodes" where lines of a triangle intersect. Thus the intersections of lines of a triangle form a system of Connection, Identity, and Exchange. Any functioning system may require components analogous to the cruxes. Analogies drawn from physics and cell biology reflect similar systemic requirements. For example, an atom has the proton which identifies (Identity) it, an electron which involves and enables exchanges with other atoms (Exchange) and the neutron, which gives its nucleus weight and coherence (Connection). An analogous system exists in a cell which has a nucleus which contains the DNA for the identity of the cell, a cell wall or membrane which regulates exchange with other cells, and an endoplasmic reticulum which enables connections and links internal to the

cell. Systemic problems can arise in any system and the list below describes these as they relate to a person and the cruxes of Connection, Identi9ty, and Exchange.

1. Exclusion. The person excludes one or both of the complementary cruxes to the one he has currently accessed.
   Since each crux is essential to full functioning, when the person excludes a crux, the behavior and performance of the person suffers significantly. Being able to readily access each "node" of the system is central to the person's capacity to be responsive to emergent situations.
2. Lability. The person switches cruxes too readily.
   If the person switches too readily from one crux to another without integrating, consolidating, and mastering the issues involving the current situation, the behavior and performance of the person will suffer.
3. Entrapment. The person gets locked into one of the cruxes and does not shift.
   Rather than exclusion, in this case the person has difficulty shifting out of a crux once he is in one – even if the situation calls for using competencies and skills available through another crux.
4. Automatic Invocation. A chemical or situational trigger will automatically shift the person into one or another crux - even if this is not advisable or helpful.
   These are commonly called "hot buttons" and can seem to others to be inappropriate responses, because they are coming from a different crux than the one that is expected.
5. Contamination. The content that informs a crux is inaccurate.
   Sometimes, the person has prejudices or other distortions that preclude reacting to a situation appropriately. At least some of the change process can be viewed as "decontaminating" the content of a crux.
6. Rigidity. Processes for implementing the function of the crux are inflexible, so responses to change are ritualized or avoided or misdirected.
   Contamination involves content; rigidity involves process.
7. Unintegrated. Processes for implementing the function of the crux are unconstrained, so responses are irrational and unfocused.

Often the person needs to integrate more than one crux into a response to a situation. For example, an exchange will often include expression of both identity and connection. When these are well "integrated," they are experienced by others as effective and congruent and well formed. However, sometimes the person has difficulty balancing across the cruxes in his response to situations. The content related to a single crux may be clean, but the balance of ingredients in the exchange may be off.

A cooking analogy might also be helpful in thinking about flexible and effective use of the cruxes. Chefs often talk about the five cruxes for flavor as sweet, sour, salt, bitter, and umami. These are always at work in a flavor combination. Textures of food and cooking technique, which are also central to good cooking are not included below; just flavors.

- The chef who "excludes" one of these favors offers an incomplete menu, so the diner feels unsatisfied in some portion of his palate.
- The chef who is too "labile" will present an uncoordinated menu where each dish might be fine, but the combination of dishes is arbitrary.
- The chef who is "entrapped" will serve a menu overusing just one of the 5 flavors across his ingredients.
- The chef who is "automatically invoked" will be triggered to use one flavor with a particular ingredient even if it throws the dish and his menu off kilter.
- The chef who is "contaminated" will use ingredients that are past their prime or have off flavors.

- The chef who is "rigid" will use similar spice combinations in all his dishes, so each dish on his menu tastes similar.
- The chef who is "unintegrated" combines ingredients arbitrarily and prepare a menu that does not coordinate his dishes.

First and Second Order Change

Out of the tunnel

A helpful story from the clinical tradition illustrates the difference between first and second order change - the two classes of change. Here is a severely modified version of a parable Eric Berne offered to illustrate these two classes of change.

A person presents to his "listener" as very anxious because he feels like he is gripping the sides of a vertical tunnel and will have to let go at any minute and thus fall into oblivion.

First order change is getting the person to be comfortable holding onto the side of the tunnel. For example, the listener will work with his person on effective procedures for resting while holding onto the side of the tunnel; even to the point of enabling helpful and useful events and transactions to occur while the person holds onto the side of the tunnel.

Second order change is a result of the person getting out of the tunnel. Getting out of the tunnel is a requirement for further change in a hierarchical set of stages.

The Crux Listener is trained to think about the change process as a combination of first order and second order change. Achievement of first order change is often a precursor for second order change.

The contract between the listener, the person, and the organization retaining the listener may constrain the listener to first order change. Some contracts may require a focus on second order change.

Layers and change

If an individual is viewed as a layered system, the top layer can be considered as the BEHAVIORAL-ROLE level. Behavioral or role change is what Crux Listeners consider to be first order change. Behavior is concrete and enacted in the present situation and then ported into subsequent situations. There is little need for insight, but an emotional component is often present, because the change in behavior induces changes in emotion and has social and psychological consequences for the way the person addresses Crux issues. The performance of a role may change for any of the cruxes, but the change, if it is first order, is not much more than surface adjustment and fine tuning. Performance improvement is the result of behavioral change.

The second layer of an individual system is an EMOTIONAL-INSIGHT layer. These are not usually conflated in psychological models, but they do seem to be linked, because emotions – when examined - are subject to an interpretation of their cause and that interpretation is commonly considered insight. For the Crux Listener, an interpretation or understanding of emotion triggered by behavioral change enables the person to anchor the change by recognizing the emotion and assigning it a meaning. While "meaning" or "insight" will often be debatable, when the person has internalized a connection, the behavioral layer is more likely to become congruent and consistent with the emotional layer. The change is still a First Order change, but it is an anchored First Order change and it is less likely the person's behaviors will revert back to those he was exhibiting before developing insight.

A change in the emotional layer will sometimes evoke a shift or conflict with the EXISTENTIAL-DECISIONAL layer. The existential layer is where Second Order change occurs. As people experience significant or traumatic events that impact the cruxes of Connection Identity and Exchange, they may

be forced to "make sense" of these events without the necessary information or tools. They may even view their interpretations of events as essential to survival and convert their interpretations into hard and fast beliefs and rules that are not to be questioned or challenged. Sometimes these interpretations are even pushed into the background so they are not readily accessible as conscious choices and remain outside of the awareness of the person. Addressing these interpretations is the province of second order change. The Crux Listener is in the fortunate position of having a contract for her work with the person, and may engage in second order change interventions if the contract includes it.

A good deal of effective work can be done with a person on First Order change, though some Crux Listeners will also be able to offer change to deal with "Second Order" change interventions. When interventions directed to Second Order Change are integrated into the change process, achievement of the Second Order change – change in one or more associated Existential Decisions - enables the person to progress to a next developmental stage. Thus, Crux Listening may result in a developmental stage change for the person.

Linking the life cycle to cruxes

The Crux Listener is sensitive to the intersection of the current performance of the person with the developmental stage the person may be transitioning through. Crux Listening links Erik Erikson's developmental framework and the developmental Cruxes of Connection, Identity, and Exchange:

1. **Connection I** - Trust vs Mistrust – Infancy – Can I connect?
2. **Identity I** - Autonomy vs Shame Doubt – Early Childhood – Can I operate on my own?
3. **Exchange 1** - Initiative vs Guilt – Playgroup - Can I interact without doing harm?

4. **Connection II** - Industry vs Inferiority – Elementary School to Middle School – Can I connect to a play/school group or institution?
5. **Identity II** - Identity vs Identity Confusion – High School – Can I stand apart as a unique and separate individual?
6. **Exchange II** - Companionship vs Isolation – College and Courtship – Can I mate and play and stimulate and be stimulated by others?

7. **Connection III** - Productivity vs Stagnation – Early to Mid-Career – Can I connect to professional, organizational, and community life?
8. **Identity III** - Integrity vs Despair – Mid-Career to Late Career – Can I see myself and my roles and functions as a positive whole over time?
9. **Exchange III** - Stewardship vs Withdrawal – Retirement – Can I offer something (an exchange) to the next generation?

Whenever traumatic events occur or circumstances arise that are unresolved over time, the current stage and following stages of development can be impacted. The person and the Crux Listener might find themselves exploring the past in order to better understand what is happening in the present, but it is essential that the contract for change in the present takes precedence. A common metaphor for an unresolved issue and its impact is the image of a skewed or twisted penny in a stack of pennies. The pennies placed above the skewed penny will destabilize the stack, and as more pennies are added, the stability of the stack will become increasingly compromised. Understanding an antecedent might inform how best to generate a change, but it is important for both the listener and person to resolve Crux issues in the present – in effect hammering the skewed penny flat enough to enable stability in the stack. Some Crux Listeners may be licensed psychotherapists and have training in tools and techniques that include directed regression and reparative emotional experiences, but the typical Crux Listener will view his process and interventions as building supplemental resources to resolve an impasse at the point where a developmental stage went awry. The therapist may view the problems of

his clients through the lens of the present or the past. The Crux Listener views and addresses connection, identity and exchange through the lens of the present. For the listener, current systemic problems can be addressed by modifying a combination of boundaries, content, and interaction across and within the Cruxes.

The stages of the life cycle of childhood, youth, and adulthood have a different fulcrum related to the cruxes. The fulcrum for childhood is connection; for youth is identity; and for adulthood is exchange.

Linking first and second order change to the Behavioral-Role level and linking social roles to cruxes

A helpful map of social roles on the BEHAVIORAL-ROLE level was offered by Stephen Karpman in the late 60's. Karpman suggested a dynamic triangular set of roles that are linked into a system where a person might shift from one role to another in what he called a Drama Triangle. The roles he described were of the Rescuer, the Persecutor, and the Victim. These were accompanied by behaviors that correlated with the roles. Switches in the roles were almost inevitable, because each of the roles was unsustainable in isolation. Adopting a role meant that the roles of others would be complementary, but relationally asymmetrical. Adopting a role also tended to induce others to adopt the complementary role. When one of the participants decided to or was enabled to "switch," the other person or people would also switch to become complementary again. In effect, this was a closed system of roles that cycled until at least one person removed themselves from the system.

The Crux Listener may see the Drama Triangle being enacted, but will link the roles to a Crux issue. The person adopting a persecutor role, for example, asserts a right to define the other person and is coopting the crux of "identity". The person who adopts a rescuer role, is asserting a right to manage and drive the exchange between persons and is coopting the crux of "exchange". The person who adopts a victim role is asserting a disconnection (while paradoxically being tightly linked to the rescuer or the persecutor or both) from others. Parameters for "connection" are coopted by the victim.

If the adopted roles are interrupted, an emotional component underlying the role may be exposed. At this level – the "emotional-insight" level, the driving energy for adopting the role is usually related to personal history or experience. Expectations of others may have actually been unmet or undercut or the person may have learned or been taught to discount the capabilities of others. The rescuer sees the victim as incapable of meeting expectations or standards and "helps" the victim out. The persecutor sees the victim as refusing to meet expectations and chastises the victim. The victim sees both rescuer and persecutor as necessary allies in remaining connected and engaged, but as failing to provide the "expected" loving validation, connection, and support to energize the victim to actually solve the problem. If the listener is successful at teaching the person to limit expectations to what the other person is actually able to deliver, the dramatic intensity is reduced and the fuel for the drama dissipates.

However, limiting expectations surfaces the existential position of the crux issue the person with a valence to a role has adopted. For the persecutor, a need to control his environment through force and direction has been made, and his Identity is wrapped into his ability to control those people assigned or opting for the victim role. The rescuer is enacting a decision to control the way interaction and exchanges are directed to the person in the victim role.

Fears or anxieties underlie existential decisions that result in role adoption. However, a person who adopts the role of a victim is continuing to remain vested in the social matrix and decries a betrayal of Exchange. The typical complaint for this stance is that there is not enough help. When the victim addresses the persecutor, he empowers the persecutor to support or undermine his identity. He decries how the persecutor has coopted all the positive identity options.

Linking the three levels to the cruxes – the example of anger

In the 70's, H.D. Johns described anger and fear as being different facets of the same coin. He suggested that defiant anger was a reaction to the fear that identity was being undermined. He further suggested that resentment anger was a reaction to the fear that a relationship agreement was being undermined. Frustration anger was related to a fear of loss of power resulting from inadequate tools or resources. Johns also offered the view that indignation anger is a result of a fear that the better option is being bypassed or ignored, but this writer believes that indignation is a social level expression of any of the 3 varieties of anger. Examples of indignant statements are, for example:

Frustration – "Why doesn't this tool/person/process/resource do what it is supposed to do?"

Resentment – "Why don't you follow through on our agreements regarding our relationship?"

Defiance – "Don't tell me what I think or who I am!"

When detachment fails and expectations get set, an investment at the emotional-insight level of a crux is enabled. Karpman's social roles intersect with John's types of anger/fear and are reflected at the emotional-insight level. The emotional-insight level is tied to expectations and unmet expectations are reflected in emotional reactions.

- The crux for defiance is the identity crux. The anger surfaces into a socially adopted role of persecutor. The fear of loss of identity occurs at the existential level.
- The crux for frustration is the exchange crux. The anger surfaces into the socially adopted role of over-control of the exchange – a kind of self-sacrifice along with over-direction that a Rescuer emulates. The fear is loss of power at the existential level.
- The crux for resentment is the connection crux. The anger surfaces into the whining or complaining offered at the social level by the victim. The fear is the loss of relationship at the existential level.

Linking emotions to the cruxes and the cruxes to archetypes

When a child experiences trauma or parenting goes awry, the crux involved in the trauma or parenting failure is associated with non-verbal themes, emotions, and images that carry a weight reflecting the intensity of the trauma. When the crux is connection, the individual experiences despair. When the crux is identity, the individual experiences shame. When the crux is exchange, the individual experiences guilt.

Because the child has a limited capacity to formulate concepts or terms to associate with the difficulty or crisis involving a crux, the child will collect and link archetypical images drawn from fairy tales or religious teachings or other cultural artifacts he is exposed to. These are best reflected in the grammar and vocabulary of myths, where one child may latch onto a Cinderella; another a Persephone, another an Icarus, another an Atlas, another a Narcissus; another a Moses; another a Ruth, another a Samaritan; and so forth. These images, however, are not fully formed and seldom have a narrative line associated with them. Instead, they tend to be extracted from the narrative line and remain static and rigid in proportion to the intensity of the triggering trauma.

Spiritual or religious life and the cruxes

Crux Listeners who are committed to a religious tradition are discouraged from introducing a religious component to the change process unless the contracting organization and the person specifically request it. Training for a Crux Listener assumes that Socratic dialogue and evidence based discussion is preferable to any references to canons or to specific dogma. Every argument and premise put forth in this manual is available for challenge and revision.

The Centrality of Assessment

Efficiency

For a clinician, a correct diagnosis is essential for appropriate and measured intervention. For the Crux Listener, diagnosis is achieved through assessment. Correct assessment provides a Crux for the change contract and implies many of the outcomes that reflect performance of the terms of the contract.

Psychometric assessments and their limitations and advantages

Psychometric tools are constrained by their underlying theories. Because they compare the person against a baseline, they can provide a context for discussion between listener and person about the implications of the difference from the baseline (norm) measured by the instrument. The temptation for the listener, especially if the listener is incentivized through volumes of administrations, is to view every person through the lens of the theory underlying the instrument. A jargon evolves where the listener serves as an interpreter of the underlying theory and applies the theory to the problem at hand, sometimes at the expense of relevance or utility. This circular process, especially if the person's more central preferences and interests are not covered by the instrument being used, becomes an impediment to well-formed and reasoned interventions. The cliché applies that "when I have a hammer, everything becomes a nail" can result from use of "quick and dirty" psychometric instruments and can contaminate the change process.

Crux Listeners use a proprietary tool, the Human Patterns Inventory, which administers many (250) ipsative items resulting in a series of graphic representations of hierarchically ordered lists of preferences and interests. These preferences and interests are grouped to align with multiple theories or "lenses" that might apply to the person, provided that the differences from the norm group (over 5000) are significant enough to merit consideration. The large number of labels for preferences and interests generated through the instrument (over 200) can preclude over-interpretation. However, the time the person must invest to complete the inventory and the volume of hierarchically ordered labels reported as standard deviations can be confusing and an overload of information for the person. The inventory does offer the advantage of a comprehensive template of preferences and interests for an extended change process.

Much of the literature on psychometrics is directed to the validity of the constructs (theory), replicability of the results over time (test-retest reliability), and explanations of variance within the instrument. The less an instrument measures the higher the validity that can be achieved by the instrument. The Human Patterns Inventory does not rise to the level of validity to merit inclusion in the Mental Measurements Yearbook. The trade-off is the richness and versatility of the template generated through the Human Patterns Inventory. It is a tool for coaches, not a tool for selection, unless an experienced Crux Listener is advising on placement or congruence with organizational or work group culture. The only exception is when a baseline specific to a job role has been developed using valid sampling and other external measurement criteria.

For the Crux Listener, an appreciation of differences in preferences and interests is a necessary foundation before actually engaging in contracts for change. The first step in candidacy as a Crux Listener is to become a Certified Human Patterns Administrator. Reasons for this training as a precursor to other training are that use of the instrument teaches:

1. An appreciation of human variety
2. An appreciation of statistical or measurable differences and how to interpret these
3. Methods and processes for measured and calibrated dialogue about preferences and interests
4. An appreciation and understanding of small heuristic maps and models and how they can be used to facilitate a discussion of larger issues

5. An exposure to pattern recognition across heuristic maps and models and training in how to translate these patterns into everyday language
6. An exposure to comparisons with a "real person" receiving an interpretation as against a set of statistics on a page so the listener learns the value of clinical observation and of testing assumptions.

Assessing the person's value gestalt to accelerate rapport

Charles Osgood polled people worldwide to tag the hierarchy of constructs or factors they used to sort words in their language. His "semantic differential" identified many factors, but four primary factors were always in the lead. Was the action or noun viewed as "Good" or "Bad"? Was it viewed as "Strong" or "Weak"? Was it viewed as "Fast" or "Slow"? Was it viewed as "Stable" or "Unstable"? These were universal. They were also always in the first set of four factors.

For the Crux Listener, Evaluation (good-bad), Potency (strong-weak), Activity (fast-slow), and Stability (constant-changing) are the four screens or frames through which we sort our semantic environment. Every Crux Listener is trained to "meet his client where his client is" in order to begin the process of developing rapport. The Crux Listener, at her initial interview with her person, listens for the distribution and intensity of these factors within the language of the person to tag the pattern the person uses.

Once the pattern is captured the Crux Listener does his best to use a similar pattern or gestalt as he and the person jointly define the presenting problem and evolve the change contract. It can take some time for the listener to speak naturally and fluently in the frame of the person. It is similar to preparing for a role in a theatrical production where the cadences and attitudes of the character are integrated into the personality of the actor.

The semantic frame can shape how the person's reacts to events in his life.

Evaluation: "I must be right because I can't be wrong."

Potency: "I must be strong because I can't be weak."

Activity: "I must keep moving and changing and be stimulated or I will wither."

Stability: "I must protect and maintain my beliefs and current situation because these are all I am."

The relationship of the value gestalt to the cruxes is an important indicator for the Crux Listener as to which is pivotal, and the order of the following cruxes in the set. Evaluation is tied to Connection. "I belong to the world because I am good enough to be included" is the existential theme for the person driven by evaluation. The person will immediately sort for whether what is coming into the frame is "good enough" to be included. While judgment is being exercised the harshness of it or the energy behind it is dependent on how the other semantic frames are applied to it. If the crux is Identity, Potency tends to be the existential theme. If the crux is Exchange, Activity tends to be the existential theme. Bernadette Pellissier's researched how Stability interacts with the cruxes. Essentially, if Stability moves from the last priority upward, it begins to rigidify and lock in the issue of the crux. Thus, "A good man can't do a bad thing" or "A strong man can't be weak in any area" or "Once you start on a path of action you will continue that path forever." Stability and its role in relationship to the other cruxes can operate as a ghost in the machine and needs to be carefully challenged and dismantled if change is to occur. Stability also plays a role in cultural life and cultural strife, with cultures where stability is a significant factor having difficulty letting go of vendettas or allowing for the modernization of their language or integration of scientific discoveries into their world view. Even therapeutic or change oriented disciplines will sometimes split into factions where the stability factor provides the framework for argument between the orthodox believer and the revolutionary change agent.

Assessing the person's exchange addictions or currencies

The flexible implementation of the pivot Crux of exchange and the preferences and interests of the person can be disrupted if the person has developed one or more "exchange addictions". These can even evolve into life themes. It can be helpful to think of these currencies as both focus of continual attention as well as outcomes of career paths. They have a rich tradition in cemeteries, where the headstones will sum up the exchange addictions or themes central to the person's life. While these are often phrased positively, they also can severely limit flexibility and range for the person. Any of these, when carried to extremes, will become career stoppers or blocks. Much of the drama in life (indeed in theater itself) centers on whether the protagonist will forego the addiction or allow the addiction to become a fatal flaw.

1. Power and Control – "He was a hard man to say 'no' to."
2. Status Symbols - "He loved his jet."
3. General Popularity – "Everybody liked him."
4. Moral Righteousness – "He was upright and just and always did the right thing."
5. Inside Knowledge – "He knew where all the bodies were buried."
6. Access to Power – "His had many famous and important friends."
7. Helping the Downtrodden – "He invested his time and effort standing up for the 'little' guy."
8. Emotional Intimacy – "He connected with people and loved them."
9. Suffering and Loss – "He had a hard and difficult life that he struggled through."
10. Excitement and Stimulation – "He was always where the action was."

While these addictions can be viewed as separate entities, it can be helpful to the listener and the person to work out the overlaps of the exchange addiction with the other cruxes of Identity and Exchange. This is quite evident, for example, in addiction to "power and control" or "status symbols" where Identity issues fuel it, or in "excitement and stimulation" where Exchange itself provides the fuel.

The semantic frame can also be viewed as bracketing the addiction. For example, the Potency frame will bracket the "power and control" addiction, the Evaluation frame will bracket the "moral righteousness" addiction, and the Activity frame will bracket the "excitement and stimulation" addiction. The Stability frame can also play a role in how difficult it can be to break any addiction.

The Crux Listener introduces metaphorical language and descriptions of the consequences of unchecked exchanges of the person's currencies to obviate the danger they can pose. Events get "interpreted" in light of the currency and trading of it. Gradually humor and play are introduced to break the pattern and force acknowledgement of it – but without humiliating the person. This kind of intervention is not to be engaged in frivolously because it can severely disrupt rapport. Further, if the person begins to have "insight" into the consequences of the currency, and attempts to shift away from it, the person will sometimes experience a terrific sense of being unmoored and lost. Support systems need to be in place and the person will need to have planted seeds for alternative currencies to emerge to avoid relapse or collapse of the effort at change. These changes are second order changes and usually require a Supervisory Crux Listener to serve as the listener.

Note: Chemical addictions and sexual addictions are commonly subsets of excitement and stimulation addictions, but not always. Genetic predilections and traumatic events can be part of the syndromes for any of these addictions, but especially for the excitement and stimulation variant.

Thought constraints that dictate a person's responses

Adverbs and adjectives can dictate how the person shapes her responses to work situations. These can operate like lesions or "hot buttons" that automate the person's response. The Crux Listener needs to use desensitization or some other technique – similar to a medical intervention where a blister is punctured and the pus removed from it in order to allow healing to proceed. These thought constraints

limit the flexibility and range of responses for the person. Often, the person interprets the constraints as positive attributes, and they can be positive if they are responsive to the right context. When they are absolute, they create dead-ends for the person and can operate as irritants for supervisors and peers or generate flawed performance.

1. Always. I always arrive at work on time.
2. Never. I never deviate from the options we determine at the outset.
3. Try to. I try to arrive at work on time. (There is sometimes a paradoxical failure to perform in the "trying" itself and some might phrase this as "Almost.")
4. But, then. Something is in the offing that will get in my way.
5. Unless. I'll won't do this if a condition/trigger is not met.
6. Until. I'll do this until a condition/trigger is met.

Assessing the person's listening valences to accelerate communication

As far back as Plato, the idea of temperament as a force that shapes the way people respond to stimuli has been used to inform communication. From early groupings like phlegmatic choleric sanguine and melancholic, psychological thinkers evolved many classifications in sets of four. Suits of cards (swords, wands, pentacles, and hearts) evolved into NTs, SPs, SJs and NFs that Meyers Briggs aficionados like to discuss. For the Crux Listener, it is simpler to think of temperament as a vector that draws the person's attention – the person's listening or attention pattern or hierarchy. Some people tend to hear and attend to ideas, others to people, others to events or actions, and others to sequences or procedures. Why, Who, When, and How are the vectors that differentially engage us. We tend to be inattentive to communication that is not aligned with our own temperament hierarchy. Until we hear our first choice, we are not engaged. Following hearing our first choice we become available to hear our second choice and then our third and finally our fourth.

Why: The conceptual listener is most interested in ideas and theories and therefore in the reasons behind what is being discussed or presented and the rationale for the outcome.

Who: The interpersonal listener is most interested in understanding how what is being discussed or presented will impact the people involved.

When: The action oriented listener is most interested in the immediate situation and the actions and behaviors that are expected to get the indicated outcome.

How: The procedural listener is most interested in the order of the sequences or steps to be taken to achieve the outcome.

When the Crux Listener tags the person's listening valences, and adopts a similar hierarchy for communicating content, understanding can proceed more quickly and efficiently due to the listener's ability to sequence information in a way it can be heard best by the person.

Assessing the person's sensory channels and the anchoring process

Probably one of the more important differences between individuals is the manner in which they access and anchor their experiences. The person will often have a primary "sense" that serves as a doorway or lever to the person's engagement and responsiveness. Following are the most common sensory channels.

1. Auditory
2. Visual
3. Tactile
4. Olfactory
5. Gustatory
6. Digital

Language used by the person will often be the indicator of the primary sense. A situation may "stink," "suck," "look bad," "not add up," "feel awful," "be rotten," "be touch and go" and so forth. Another situation may be "rosy," "sweet," "ugly," "turn sour" and so forth. Just as a listener assesses the listening valences to enhance and speed up rapport and communication, so can an assessment of sensory doorways enhance the ability of the listener and person to make "sense" to each other. There are also perhaps a "digital" or mathematical sense and a musical sense, and they may also be used as rapport channels. The Crux Listener will attend to the texture or flavor or tone and so forth of the person and, to the extent that the language can come naturally to the listener, skew her language toward the sensory style of the person.

The sensory channels can be particularly useful for anchoring changes that serve the interests of the person. Rewards to encourage behavioral change, as practiced historically by behavior modification psychologists, can anchor a change. If the listener uses folds appropriate sensory language into communication complimenting her person for a positive change or completion of an assignment, the person may anchor that communication better than he would if the listener uses less targeted or apt language.

Assessing the person's problem-solving ecology
A well solved problem has the following characteristics:

1. The solution is bounded. The boundaries of the problem have been identified and the limits and conditions that will apply to the solution are in place.
2. The solution is aligned. The organization's values and ethics are congruent with the solution.
3. The solution is inclusive. The people and processes that are involved with the problem are involved, informed, and invested in the solution.
4. The solution is measurable and parsimonious. Data and facts involved in the problem have been considered and are addressed by the solution efficiently and a measurement or review of the solution is scheduled or structured into it.
5. The solution is supportable. Other solutions and alternatives have been considered and discarded with the current solution left standing.
6. The solution is sustainable. The solution has characteristics or components that lead to the solution being "energizing" and that actually result in work being more pleasant and enjoyable.

The Crux Listener, through discussion with the person about her work history and her current roles and functions will listen carefully for the order or sequence for problem solving, note any gaps in the problem solving patterns and makes sure that the person learns how to fill the gaps and leverage his particular problem solving ecology.

Developmental Stage Assessments
Developmental assessments offer the listener a direction for a change process. The person is usually unaware of his own developmental stage unless a frame is offered for him and he is invited to explore or integrate a next stage. Even if a path to the next stage is explicit, the person will often have difficulty giving credence to the need to transition. Many conflicts that arise spontaneously between people are conflicts across stages. To the person at a higher stage, the other party is seen as ignorant or intentionally malicious. To the person at a lower stage, the other party is viewed as demeaning and misguided. Much political conflict results from folks at one stage coalescing against others at a different stage. Policies can be assessed through a grid of stages to discern the parameters that frame an organizational culture. Diplomacy and negotiation is often a process of translation of the point of view of incumbents at one stage to those of another. If the listener challenges or contradicts the boundaries of a stage, rapport can be lost. Midwifing the developmental process to move from one stage to another alongside the person is often the best option. Some charismatic leaders are able to

offer visions that merge or unify people across multiple stages, but the leader herself needs to be at an equivalent or higher stage compared to the group being led to be able to achieve this.

Stages of the connection crux

Connection is tightly associated with moral development and receptivity to the "other." Marty Groder offered a simple model of a set of pronouns; me, you, we-us, they-them, and it. The expansion from "me to you" to "me to us" to "me to them" and to "me to it (the world or the ecosystem and so forth)" is naturally staged due to increasing cognitive capacity as a person matures. There are differences of opinion about when the cognitive bandwidth is reached or when expansion of the bandwidth might end. For the ethical development or moral theorists, the broadest consensus is that this is accomplished in large part by late adolescence or early adulthood.

But ethics and morality can also be modeled and shaped within the interpersonal and broader social matrix, because cultural and religious precepts and interpretations of the history of groups that share an identity can significantly influence the perception of any of the variants of the "other." Even within the same identity group, factors like gender, birth order, parental history, and so forth can introduce further granularity to inclusiveness and the granting of full and equivalent rights and respect. Much political and social history can be viewed as a result of expanding or contracting the circle of inclusion.

The default assumption of the Crux Listener is that part of her role is to enable the person to expand his accepted included and respected set of pronouns as much as the person and the contracting organization will allow. This, however, should not be interpreted as a Pollyanna naiveté, but as an operating principle which can be adjusted to the realities of organizational and political life and the person's roles and responsibilities within them.

Evaluating the semantic framing used by the person for the set of pronouns can also be a useful assessment exercise. The resulting grid of "pronoun" inclusion along with the assignment of a marker for degree and designation of the semantic category can be helpful for tracking the impact of the a change process on both moral and ethical development of the person.

Semantic errors, such as deletions, distortions, nominalizations, and generalizations about the pronouns can also be inserted or included into the grid to generate a fuller picture of the person's current perspective.

Assessing the person's time horizon for work roles and decisions

Work naturally lends itself to time segmentation. An individual will have windows or time horizons that feel comfortable and natural for him. An individual will also have one or more horizons that he will fall back upon when pressured. Each individual also has a limiting horizon that may increase over time, but constricts the time frame within which the individual can competently plan and execute work assignments. Elliot Jaques developed a systematic rigorous and rich theory of the fit between time horizon, job role, and developmental trajectory that Glenn Mehltretter has enriched with interviewing and consensus based assessment methods.

The Crux Listener is familiar with time horizon as an important area to explore and assess with her person. One reason for focusing on time horizon is the degree to which it correlates with patience and maturity, irrespective of work assignment. Youngsters who are patient and take a longer view than their peers tend to be more successful in achieving career goals and financial success. The time intervals listed below are typical intervals used in business settings for assignments or roles.

Time horizons may reflect the capacity to anticipate threats and opportunities; though the correlations are only hypothetical at this point.

1. Hour
2. Day

3. Week
4. Month
5. Quarter
6. Year
7. 2-3 Years
8. 3-5 Years
9. 5 years +

Assessing the person's organizational processing

Correlated with time is a capacity for processing work assignments that has been explicated by both Jaques and Warren Kinston. This manual offers a framing that is less rigorous than either Jaques or Kinston, and integrates with Connection, Identity, and Exchange as a Meta model. Organizational work assignments and activities are viewed as a hierarchy of increasingly complex roles and tasks. Identity is correlated with "What," Exchange is correlated with "How," and Connection is correlated with "Who." These repeat in the same hierarchical sequence and order as the person works up the "ladder" of organizational roles and assignments.

1. What – (Task) – Identity
   I know what I'm supposed to do. I break assignments into tasks and I draw my Identity from doing my tasks well. I perform

2. How - (Process) – Exchange
   I arrange and link my tasks and those of others into steps and sequences that allow us to sequence and coordinate tasks and adjust steps and sequences in order to complete our assignments. I monitor

3. Who – When – (Project) – Connection
   I organize and align people and timelines in order to connect a series of assignments into projects that can be completed in the context of the work unit. I manage

4. Which (Task + Function = Department) – Identity
   I enable my managers and employees to complete their assignments by arranging the functioning of my department as a subset of the functions performed within my organization. I direct.

5. Why (Process + Reason = Policy) – Exchange
   I enable my departments to perform their functions by building policies and programs that support them and enable them to interact in a consistent and productive fashion. I evolve programs and policies.

6. Whether (Project + Direction = Business Unit) - Connection
   I tie our business model to our mission through our policies and programs to achieve our targets. I allocate resources across departments.

7. Where (Task + Departments + Organizational Direction) = Organizational Identity or Mission
   I coordinate our business units as I manage business risks and leverage business opportunities in line with our identity or mission.

8. Path (Process + A culture or framework for business evolution) = Organizational Exchange
   I coordinate our business and our organization's relationships with other businesses and integrate us into an ecosystem and economy.

9. Transcendence (Project + A synthesizing vision that can survive for more than one generation) = Institutional Embedding [Connection]
   I institutionalize our business to be sustainable over multiple generations and to survive multiple iterations.

A dilemma faced by a person transitioning from one organizational assignment to another is to resolve not just the complexity of the changing assignment, but the change in the crux that is central to the

assignment. These transitions can be difficult, because a shift in a crux requires the person to pivot her energy into an arena that may carry different degrees and layers of prior resolution and consolidation or prior social, psychological, or existential baggage.

Listening for Role and Value Congruence

Organizations of any size begin to develop hierarchies reflective of roles and functions that correlate with time horizons and capacities for processing work assignments. The higher the level of the hierarchy, the fewer incumbents are assigned to the role. The CEO tends to be at the Organizational Identity or Mission layer in the set listed in the section above this one.

A dilemma faced by a person may result from a lack of congruence between the person's time horizon or capacity for processing work assignments and the actual job assignment. Just as incongruence between preferences and interests of a person and the person's work assignment can induce distress and dissatisfaction, a mismatch between the person assigned to a role or job and the requirements of the role or the job can induce maladaptive or disruptive performance – even if the assignment of the role and the performance standards are clear and even if all of the people involved are operating in good faith and with positive intent. If the person is capable of performing at levels above the role or assignment, boredom and disinterest are a natural consequence. If the person is incapable of performing at the level of the role or assignment, frustration and failure to meet standards are the natural consequence.

The trajectory the available time horizon and capacity for processing work assignments tends to be logarithmic throughout a career, so those who have greater capacity when younger tend to continue to evolve additional capacity. The evidence of this is difficult to argue with, even though many might think Social Darwinism is at play. When measurement of time horizon and competency is evidence based, misplacing people in roles and assignments can be reduced significantly. The Crux Listener will sometimes use Glenn Mehltretter's Talent Pool Evaluation Process to determine whether role and assignments are rationalized or "requisite" – whether the person is properly located within the organizational structure.

Value congruence is an intervening variable that can provide a solid scaffold for members of an organization to identify with and become the scaffold of an organizational culture. When members share a similar set of values regarding connection and parameters for behavior with each of the five pronouns (I – you –we – they – and it) employee engagement and reciprocal expectations are eased. The Crux Listener may have a preference for a pattern of connection and parameters for behavior, but will need to adjust her "map" to a map similar to the one of the organization when engaged in listening. Surprising and intense resistance to the listener and the listening interventions can emerge when the listener contravenes the organization's culture. Adapting, however, is not equivalent to endorsing, and the Crux Listener may need to consult upline with organizational leaders in order to include into the listening agreement addressing or challenging the values and culture of the organization. When a Crux Listener intervenes on values without a contract, the listener is often extruded by the organization and the person is left high and dry.

Lateral-Collegial

Social and cultural anthropologists have noted that societies typically assign individuals to age related groups where common values and interests are encouraged, common competencies are assumed, and tiers of roles and assignments are rationalized. Out of these peer groups teams and squads, leaders will emerge who surpass the norms of the group in competence or skills. Competition for leadership roles within these teams and peer groups may be friendly or unfriendly, but the rising leaders are usually selected according to criteria relevant to the groups' survival and functioning. The military is a good example of how leaders emerge and how membership and inclusion within the group is achieved.

Camaraderie among peers is common and the team or peer group leader operates similarly to a supervisor in a work structure – being one step ahead of the group in order to lead it. If there are members of the group who do not meet the group's competency level or share sufficient points of identity in preferences and interests, these members tend to become peripheral and may be excluded or isolated or left behind. When there are members of the group who surpass the group's competency level and do not attain a leadership position, those members will often voluntarily leave for another group where they can function as a peer with other peers at their current level.

College and university selection and admissions processes used to be one of the rough markers for determining peer group assignments and anticipating competency levels with SAT scores serving as significant variable for measurement. Whatever the method of measurement, the Crux Listener will evaluate the work group and the person to check for the probability that the work group matches - in large part - the person's time horizons and the person's capacity for processing work assignments. When these are mismatched, the Crux Listener will work with the person to identify alternatives and evolve survival strategies within the current peer group.

Upline- Immediate Supervisor

The supervisor's interests are served by subordinates performing their assignments as instructed. A supervisor who does not have an agenda contrary to the person's interests or the supervisor's own role will find that a person functioning at a level immediately below that of the supervisor will accept direction, trust the judgment of the supervisor, and respect the competence of the supervisor. The assignment of the subordinate in these cases is hierarchically sound and congruent with the needs of both parties.

The person who is capable of functioning at the same level as his supervisor may induce competitive responses from the supervisor because the two parties are natural peers and the supervisor may think the person is insufficiently deferential. The person, rather than doing his job as instructed by the supervisor may adjust or revise his assignment as a peer might and be viewed by the supervisor as insubordinate.

When the person functions at a level higher than his supervisor, the supervisor may feel undermined or threatened and may attempt to contain or constrain the person. The person functioning at a higher level than the supervisor may view the supervisor as less than competent – even if the supervisor is actually in an appropriate role and operating effectively. Frustration and second-guessing the suitability of assignments from the supervisor is a typical consequence. This is an organizational assignment problem, but the result is that person will be in awkward position, and conflict with the supervisor may arise.

The Crux Listener has several alternatives. She may mediate and translate the conflict between the supervisor and person. She may help the person adapt to the current situation until a promotion or reassignment can be arranged. She may work with the contracting organization to implement better assignment practices. She may work with the contracting organization to put protective practices and policies in place to apply to incumbents in misaligned roles. She may even work with the supervisor on ways to leverage her person's capacity.

Upline – Boss's Boss

The upline supervisor of the person – the boss's boss – has a different perspective of the person. If the person is functioning at the same level as his supervisor, the upline supervisor will view the person as a potential successor to the supervisor. This positive frame may play a part in inducing a conflict between the person's immediate supervisor and the person. The upline supervisor is usually better able to able evaluate the potential of the person because he is not as dependent on the person's shorter term work product.

Down-line – Direct Report

If the person has people reporting to him, he will focus on the person's performance of his assigned job role and functions. The work product that supports his agenda as a supervisor and leader of a work group will be subjected to critical evaluation by his own supervisor. If the person has employees in the wrong roles for any reason, it is still incumbent on him to enable and extract performance aligned with the assigned job. However, he may need to determine the capabilities of employees reporting to him and adjust assignments of his reports. The listener can be quite helpful in teaching the person operating as a supervisor how to calibrate capability of the employee and think through appropriate assignments.

Down-line – Developmental Monitoring

If the person is responsible for supervising other supervisors who have employees reporting to them, he may be in a position to do developmental assessment and monitoring. The Crux Listener, in this case serves as an advisor or sounding board regarding strategies for doing a correct assessment and helping the employee's direct supervisor both manage the employee and provide room for the employee to reach his proper potential.

Semantic Errors and Listening

Many listening processes include training or education of the person in critical thinking because clarity and rationality is a central competency for almost all roles. Measurements of IQ's and assessment of thinking styles are often part of the assessment of the person that listeners use to inform themselves as to the better way to plan listening interventions. The Crux Listener, in line with her premise that immediate and "in course" correction of errors the person might be committing, will opt to attend to the actual verbal products of the person.

Nominalization

The person turns a verb into a noun. He may think he's doing this in order to communicate efficiently.

This can result in the person providing labels that reduce his options to backtrack and account for the actions or steps or processes involved in generating the label. An example is labeling (nominalizing) a person who drinks alcohol regularly an "alcoholic." At the point the person does so, he gives them a permanent and static attribute. This results in AA members, as an example, standing up at a meeting and saying "I am an alcoholic."

Other consequences result from nominalization. For the "alcoholic," rather than manage or stop his consumption of alcohol, he now takes on a permanent identity. It becomes more logical then for him to decide I need to submit to "higher power" because his identity now may preclude his own management of his emotions and behavior.

An appropriate direct intervention to a statement like; "I am a fool" becomes "Learn to think." "You are a thief" becomes "Stop stealing and start earning what you want to possess."

Generalization

The person expands or exaggerates the implications of a noun or a verb. He may think he is doing this because he is following a logical path.

This can result in the person evolving what are commonly called stereotypes. He may produce sentences like; "Women are better managers than men because they account for emotions;" or "Women managers are meaner and more demeaning than male managers." The qualifying adjective or adverb is typically absent from a generalization. Simply adding the term "some" prior to the noun

allows discourse regarding "how" and "when" and "where" and "why" and other variables that feed into the underlying generalization.

There is also a conflation of the noun with the attached descriptive phrase and untying the conflation can require considerable energy. To reduce the need to think more thoroughly, the person may tolerate the conflation and the resulting generalization.

Deletion and distortion as precursors and consequences of nominalization and generalizations

When the person formulates a nominalization or generalization he leaves out or twists information that might qualify and enrich his understanding. Deleted information is usually unconscious and can be quite difficult for me to accept because it would require a reconfiguration of associated sets of ideas (gestalts) that are also unconscious. Thus, even accepting obvious or impactful information can be denied or "deleted." For example, acceptance of the evidence that the earth revolves around the sun or the earth is round met significant resistance because it affected multiple constructs about the nature of Man and his role in relation to his deity.

Distortion carries a connotation of an active process to maintain the nominalization or generalization. This is where what is commonly called "pseudo-science" comes into play. Indirect evidence or genuine emotional experiences is sometimes "distorted" into direct confirmation of the generalization or nominalization.

Humor and deletion and distortion

There is a wonderful joke illustrating how generalizations evolve into distortions. It is about a restaurant customer who is clicking his tongue to the increasing irritation of the other patrons. Finally, a patron at an adjoining table asks him why he is clicking his tongue. He replies "To keep the polar bears away." The patron says "But there are no polar bears around here." He replies "You see, it works!"

Another joke illustrating deletion is about a man arriving at a psychiatrist's check-in counter with an ostrich who is asked by the nurse what his problem might be. He replies. "Oh, I don't have a problem. It is my wife here. She thinks she's an ostrich."

The convoluted reasoning resulting from deletion and distortion is nicely represented by a variant of Freud's favorite joke. Two business competitors are in a hotel lobby, both with their luggage, awaiting a cab to the airport. One asks his competitor. "So… where are you going?" His competitor replies. "I'm flying to Boston." There is a silence until the person who asked the question says. "You are telling me you're going to Boston so I will think you're going to Chicago. But you are not going to Chicago. You really are going to Boston. So…why are you lying to me?"

Degrees of deletion and distortion

Deletion and distortion can be calibrated and assessed according to degree. The most severe deletions and distortions result in the person to engaging in a process that is often labelled "denial." The very existence of contravening or qualifying information is not merely ignored, but remains unheard and unprocessed. A second degree of deletion and distortion, even if the person is not denying the information, results from his disqualifying the significance of the information. Finally, even if he accounts for the significance of the information he may still discount the utility of it or its applicability to his own situation. Thus he introduce an "exception" that allows him to maintain his position or opinion.

Degrees of deletion and distortion may serve as a measure of the person's desire or need to defend against change. In his personal history, there may be events that had a great enough impact on him to

induce him to make a decision he continues to believe to be essential and connected his viability. He then deletes and distorts to maintain and rationalize the decision despite changed circumstances.

Deeply embedded denial may trigger associated behaviors and thoughts that appear completely irrational to the listener, but are part of a constellation of deletions and distortions that are part of the very structure of meaning for the person. The person who chooses to function as a suicide bomber may have multiple constructs that motivate him. Torture or punishment will not "change" his mind. The process that counterintelligence people use is often called re-programming. When a trained clinician engages in re-programming, it is often called "therapy". Values and religious beliefs intersect the dialog between the listener and the person and can lead to complicated chains of reciprocal deletions and distortions. Even referring to research or to groups of experts can lead to circular reasoning, because the research or the expert may be selected because of a shared view. A common current example is "talk radio" where deletion and distortion run rampant.

Implications for listening

Listen for nominalizations and generalizations. Ask questions to get to the deletion or distortion. Just this exercise can be quite useful for the person you are listening to. If the person is receptive, probe for the "need" for the deletion or distortion. Determine if there is a potential value in correcting the deletion or distortion. Offer the best available evidence to obviate the deletion or distortion. Assess the response to the evidence. If your intervention is thorough, but remains ineffective, consider a referral to a resource who can determine whether the current deletion or distortion is a result of a "life decision" or trauma or other impactful event.

A way to open a circular looping of a dialog that is precluding change and new understanding is for the listener to ratchet up or down the "level" of the question that is central to the dialog.

Implication for clarification and problem solving

When a listener is clarifying the parameters of a problem in order to begin a process of problem solving, at least six vectors for clarification are helpful. The most important vector is to capture the facts and the details involved in the nominalization or generalization. The second vector is to determine the boundaries for the nominalization. These get at the conditions under which the nominalization or generalization might actually be true. A genetic marker and a family history might justify assigning a permanent status of "Alcoholic" to a person. These are supported by the facts and details. The third vector is to tag the exceptions to the problem to see if they can support a broadening or narrowing of the nominalization or generalization. "Only people with this genetic marker are alcoholics" is an example of a limiting condition. "Anyone who is convicted of committing three felonies will be called a "habitual offender" is an example of a broadening condition. A fourth vector is to provide an incentive or consequence or invoke from the person sufficient energy to actually examine and change the nominalization or generalization.

Semantic Errors and Leadership

The literature on leadership is rife with the semantic problem of conflation with organizational functions that differ from the leadership function. For the Crux Listener, leadership is an organizational function directed to insuring the sustainability of an enterprise. This centralizes the leadership function around crafting responses to identified threats and opportunities facing the organization. The leadership function can be implemented for any unit at any layer or level of an organization when a member functions as a leader and operates in such a manner as to address the sustainability of an organizational entity. This functional definition of leadership also means that a given stage in the development or life cycle or history of the unit may call for different leadership behaviors, skills, or competencies to insure sustainability. Leadership failure results in loss of organizational sustainability. Leadership successes result in increased organizational sustainability.

1. Leadership is often conflated with management. For the Crux Listener, management is the implementation of systems and methods for allocating and distributing resources. It is a logistical function. A leader may "manage," but she then operates as a manager.

2. Leadership is often conflated with supervision. For the Crux Listener, supervision is the direction of the work activity of a "supervisee." It is an interpersonal function that also requires knowledge of how the supervisee's work activity and product fits into the activity and product of other participants in a work group. A leader may "supervise," but she then operates as a supervisor.

3. The literature on leadership will often identify a skill or competency and center leadership upon that skill or competency or a combination of them. For example, there are those who conflate leadership with interpersonal skills, or skills related to maneuvering through organizational bureaucracies, skills related to generating and communicating unifying symbols, skills related to incentivizing loyalty, skills related to defining a mission, skills related to negotiation, skills related to identifying business tactics or strategies, skills related to marketing or engineering or analysis, skills in critical thinking and problem solving, and so forth. While any set of skills and competencies may be required of a leader by an organization at a point in the organizational life cycle; it is helpful to keep competencies separate from the function of leadership.

The Crux Listener tends to organize competencies and skills into sets of those that facilitate or enable Connection, Identity, and Exchange and to arm the leader with those that are most likely to be needed by the person as he operates as a leader. Much of the assessment process is directed to generating a map for the listener to facilitate movement, change, or development of the person who will be assigned a leadership function within the systemic frame offered at the beginning of the manual. To review that frame:

Concentric Circles
Development occurs as a widening set of concentric circles, each one containing all the content of the prior circle, and expanded outward to encompass yet more content and more processes.

Hierarchies and Stages
Development is also a succession of stages within a hierarchy. Stages change over time and occur naturally, but each stage is oriented to different functions and themes. While a stage may encompass prior stages, it will commonly introduce a different kind and order of competency or function.

Emergence and then Repetition of Functions and Themes
Central themes (cruxes) emerge, move to the background, and then re-emerge over time and course of development.

Separable Frames of Reference

The listener is careful to rationalize and organize frames of reference in the listening process. The "language" of the listening process is divided into content (layered content and domains), process (epigenetic unfolding and expanded concentric circles), and functions or purposes.