



Unit: Listening

Skill 16: Listening Between the Lines**Activity A: I Think This Is What You Meant****Activity Skills:**

Small group interaction, brainstorming, listening and discussion.

Leadership Skills:**Suggested Level:**

Beginning

Time:

30 minutes

Supplies needed:

- Pencils or pens to write

Do Ahead:

- Make copies of worksheet

Source:

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Notes:**BACKGROUND:**

It's the bottom of the ninth inning in a crucial baseball playoff game. The bases are empty, there are two outs, and you're next to bat. As your coach walks over to you, you notice the person who will bat immediately after you. This person is playing with an injured shoulder and hasn't hit a single ball the whole game. When you're coach reaches you he just puts his hand on your shoulder and says, "Get a home run".

The question here is: What was the coach actually saying? Of course he does want you to get a home run, he certainly wants every single player to get a home run every time that they go to bat. But he took the time to say it to you. He did this because he wasn't *just* saying hit a home run. He was saying, "This entire game is riding on you."

People use many different forms of communication, aside from straight forward speech or writing. However, without up-front forms of communication like these, the message being conveyed is only an *implied* message. Implied messages can come from body language or, as the coach in our example did, by saying something that did not literally indicate his meaning.

This form of communication is so common that it is sometimes and by some people completely overlooked. That is what makes this kind of communication essential.

WHAT TO DO:

Discuss the topic of meaning vs. implied meaning with participants. Give them some examples of how one person could say something yet mean something else through tone of voice or body language. Once the subject is explained divide the participants into two groups. Have the participants pair up with someone in the other group and go through the worksheet together. The participants should alternate reading the quotes to one another, then discuss and record what they think the statement *could* mean, besides its literal meaning.

TALK IT OVER:**Reflect:**

- Could any of the statements on the worksheet have had more than one implied meaning?
- Why is it that people will make statements where the implied meaning is more important than the literal meaning?

Apply:

- In what kinds of situations might you have to make a statement with implied meaning?

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- In the past, when have you encountered these types of statements?
- How can these statements be a benefit to you? A detriment?

BEYOND THE BOX:

Optional Homework:

For the next two or three weeks, have students be aware of how they speak. Whenever they make a statement with implied meaning, whether in sarcasm or to be polite, write down or remember what it was that was said. Thinking about these statements, answer these questions:

- Why did I use a statement with implied meaning?
- Did who I was talking to effect how I made my statement?
- In similar future situations should I speak in the same manner?

Resources and Web Links: