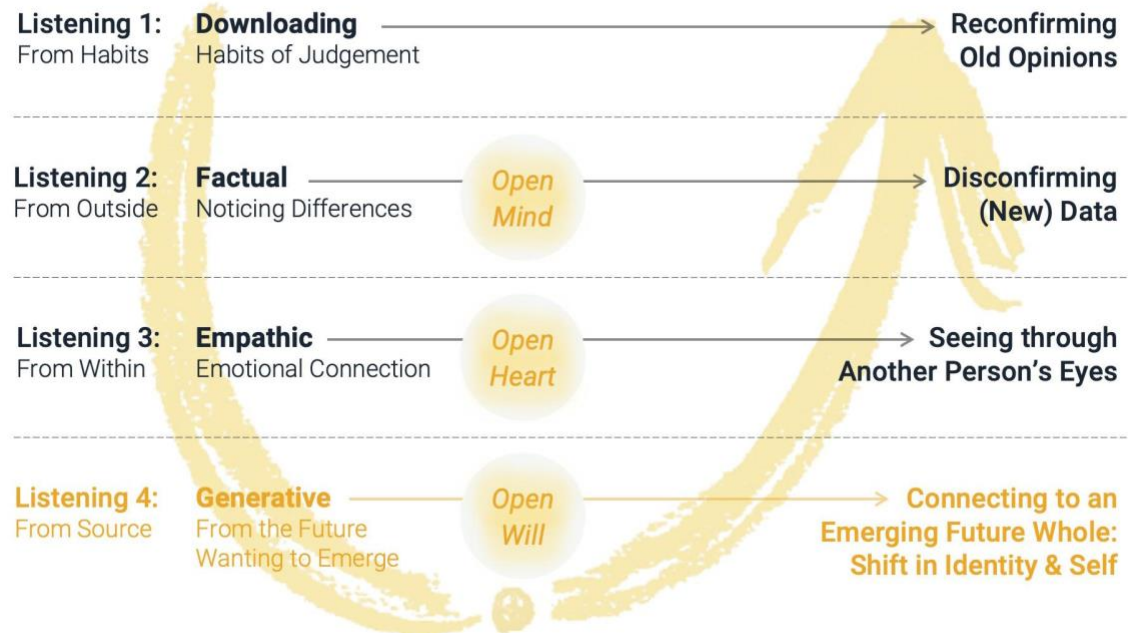


## Levels of Listening

One of the core ideas of Theory U is that form follows attention or consciousness. We can change reality by changing the inner place from which we operate. The first step in understanding the impact of attention on reality is to look at our own individual practice of listening. The image below introduces four levels of listening, representing four distinct places from where our listening can originate.



### Leading through Listening: Reflection

What did you notice?

# Tool: Listening Assessment

## Overview

In u.lab, we offer an online tool ([on presencing.org](https://www.presencing.org)) that helps you to observe changes in your ability to engage in deep listening over time. Tracking your listening on a daily basis is one of the key tools to help you increase your capacity to listen at different levels as appropriate to the situation in which you find yourself.

While the online tool is helpful, you can also track your listening in a journal. In fact, before we ever had an online tool, Otto had his MIT Sloan students track their listening in their personal journals. In case you're unable to use the online tool - or if there are some days where you are unable to track your listening online - just use a journal. The power of the practice comes from reflecting on your listening on a regular basis, regardless of how you track it.

## Process

### Step One

Once a day, at the end of the day, take some time to reflect on your quality of listening during the day. Estimate what percentage of your time each day you spent in each level of listening. As a reminder, here are the descriptions of each level:

- Level 1: Downloading - Listening from your habits, from what you already know; the result is you re-confirm what you already knew.
- Level 2: Factual - Noticing something new, something that differs from what you already knew or expected to hear.
- Level 3: Empathetic - Listening from the place from which the other person is speaking, experiencing/sensing an emotional connection.
- Level 4: Generative - Connecting to the emerging future - to a future possibility that links to your emerging self; to who you really are.

### Step Two

Share a story about a moment today when you experienced a shift from one level of listening to another. Then select the tag below that indicates which shift you experienced.

In your description, simply describe what you noticed about the moment - paying particular attention to your mental state, emotions that were present, any felt sense in your body, and shifts in your perception of time and space. You may write as much or as little as you would like. Also note which level you shifted from, and which level you shifted to (example: shift from level 2 to 3).