



EFFECTIVE CONVERSATIONS

Effective listening

Elizabeth Erickson / OFA Training Director
Alexis Conaway / OFA Organizing Project Manager

A close-up portrait of a woman with light brown hair pulled back, smiling warmly at the camera. She is wearing large, gold-colored hoop earrings with colorful beads. The background is a blurred, textured wall.

Liz Erickson

OFA Training Director
[@LizzGErickson](#)

A portrait of Alexis Conavay, a woman with short, straight purple hair and bangs. She is wearing dark-rimmed glasses and has a small nose ring. She is smiling slightly and looking directly at the camera. The background is a dark, textured wall.

Alexis Conavay

OFA Organizing Project Manager
[@AlexConavay](#)

A photograph of Barack Obama smiling and interacting with a crowd of people. A young girl is reaching out to shake his hand, and another person is holding a sign that says "Obama". The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent dark blue filter.

We Are OFA

Organizing for '18

#OFAAction

Learning series

- Week 1:** Effective listening
- Week 2:** Know your ‘why’
- Week 3:** Your theory of change
- Week 4:** Motivational interviewing
- Week 5:** Voter contact best practices

Goals for this session

- 1 Explain effective listening and questioning techniques to foster effective communication.
- 2 Apply effective listening technique to people that have different opinions than our own.

[Bit.ly/effectiveconvo1](https://bit.ly/effectiveconvo1)

**Think of a time you changed your
mind about something that deeply
mattered to you.**



Type in the chat box



Effective listening

Agenda

The difficulty with listening

Effective listening techniques

Effective listening applications

Synthesis

Close and next steps

**How many F's do you read
in the below statement?**

**Finished files are the result of
years of scientific study combined
with the experience of years.**

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- Requires self-awareness
- Desired outcome is relationship, community, change

**Why does this matter
for organizing?**

**So what is effective
listening?**

Effective listening:

Actively absorbing information given to you by a speaker and identifying their message, intent, and beliefs about what they're sharing.

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EFFECTIVE LISTENING TECHNIQUES

Reflecting

Reflecting

- Giving a summary statement of what you heard
- “What I am hearing you say is XYZ—is that correct?”



2 minutes

Reflection

- What ways did you hear the listener reflect back to the speaker?
- What reflection statements would you have asked the speaker if you were at the door?

EFFECTIVE LISTENING TECHNIQUES

Exploratory questions

Ask questions

- Asking additional questions to understand the landscape of a person's beliefs
- This also gives us more time when we need a moment to think



2 minutes

Reflection

- What types of questions did you hear the listener ask?
- What questions would you have asked to gain a better understanding of the speaker?

EFFECTIVE LISTENING TECHNIQUES

Probing

Probing

- Asking additional questions
- We do this in order to get to the root of what an individual is saying to us
- At the root is typically a **value** or **belief**



2 minutes

Reflection

- What are some probing questions you heard the interviewer ask?
- What values or beliefs did you pull out of the roleplay conversation?
- What probing questions would you have asked?

Some cautionary traps

CAUTIONARY TRAPS

Deflecting

**Shifting topics when we
are uncomfortable.**

CAUTIONARY TRAPS

Deflecting

Shifting topics when we are uncomfortable.

&

Advising

Telling the person we are listening to what we think they should be doing.

Key takeaways:

- 1 Effective listening is hard – and we are not as good at it as we think
- 2 Effective listening is a skill, and we can grow in it through reflecting, asking questions, and probing
- 3 We do so to understand the interests of the person we are talking to, so we know how to tailor our message

Team '18

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Debrief

Which techniques come easily to you?

Which technique do you respond most well to?

Is there a listening technique you want to try out
and grow in?

Next session



EFFECTIVE CONVERSATIONS

Part 2: Know your why

Alexis Conavay [OFA Organizing Project Manager](#)

June 6th at 8 p.m. ET/7 p.m. CT



Thank you for joining today's webinar.

Please fill out the survey below and give us
your feedback on today's training.

bit.ly/effectiveconvos

Thank you!