

# Empathy Based Listening



## **Breadcrumbs**

What if the keys to the most influential aspects of a conversation were highlighted like notes in a textbook? Moreover, what if tapping into these aspects would be akin to tapping into the trust and influence centers of your conversation partner. All of this is possible, and more importantly surrounds us everyday, we just aren't picking up on key conversational breadcrumbs. Quite literally everyone leaves a trail of verbal breadcrumbs providing a window into what is most important to them at that moment. By

tapping into these breadcrumbs you can unlock the power of Empathy Based Listening.

Pioneered by the same techniques Eric used rewriting the rules of interrogation, ones built on a foundation of listening and trust, these are techniques everyone can take to their daily conversations in order drastically improve communication. It is strong communication that builds empathy, and empathy that is the key to building trust.

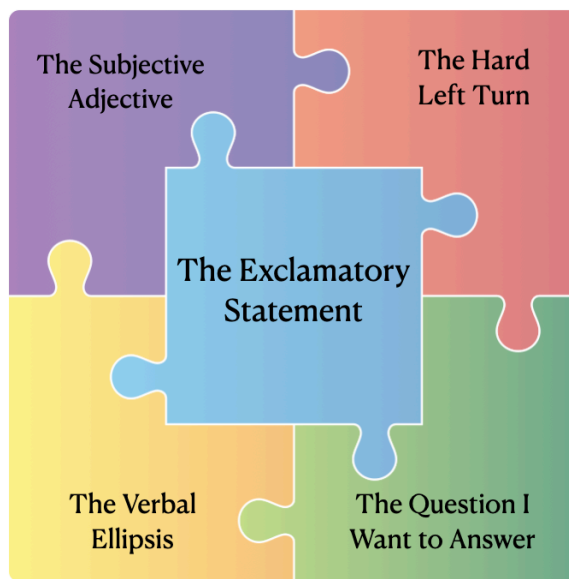
# Abstract

Do you care? Are you listening? If you heard those words in a conversation it would strike you, and immediately grab your attention. This is exactly what someone is saying when they leave you a conversational breadcrumb. It may not be those literal words, but by dropping a breadcrumb your partner is testing at what level your listening ... 25%, 50%, 90%? It is incumbent on you to recognize the breadcrumb, metaphorically pick it up and deliver it back to them in a manner that entices them to share more.

This white paper will dissect the many forms a breadcrumb can take, and how to effectively identify them in

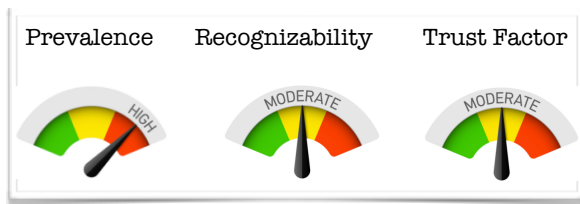
conversation. There are five categories of breadcrumbs that are key to recognize in a conversation. By recognizing these breadcrumbs you will be able to immediately dive into the thought process of your conversation partner and understand what they truly want to discuss. It's this process of understanding that endears them to trust you at a much deeper level.

What generally takes months or years to build can easily be accomplished in a few key interactions by effectively keying in on breadcrumbs, and using them to further explore a persons concerns, motivations and state of mind.



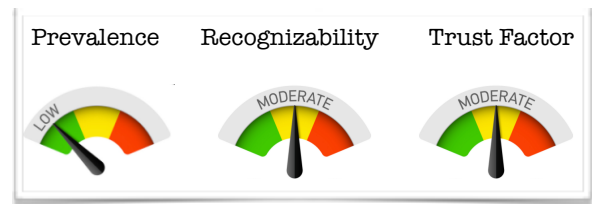
*The 5 Breadcrumbs of Empathy Based Listening.*

### **The Subjective Adjective**



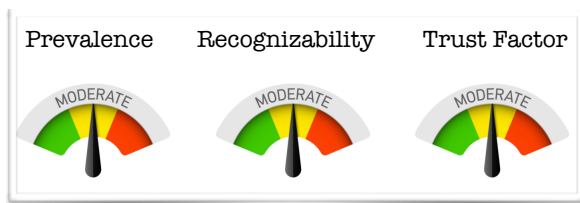
- The Basics: Words in conversations that give you a moment of pause, and leave you wondering exactly what the speaker meant. Pay attention to this and don't let the moment pass, ask them for more detail.
- Advanced Thinking: Don't assume you know what that statement means to the speaker; therefore give them the opportunity to explain.
- Examples: Weird, huge, unbelievable, crazy, odd, different, fine.

### **The Hard Left Turn**



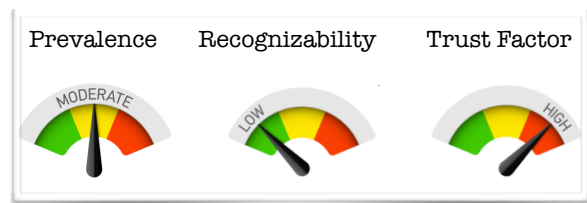
- The Basics: A change in conversation topic; often literally the speaker telling you this doesn't matter, but this does.
- Advanced Thinking: Your cue to pivot, the path wasn't where the speaker wanted to go. Take heed; get to a topic the speaker wants to address.
- Examples: Believe it or not most clients could care less; that's all well and good, but it still doesn't address the issue; we'll look at it, but I'm not sure it will matter.

### **The Verbal Ellipsis**



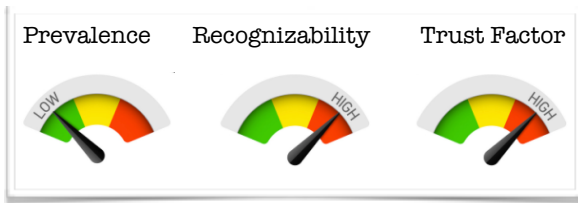
- The Basics: The verbal equivalent of an ellipsis; the "... " in a conversation indicating there's more the speaker wants to get into.
- Advanced Thinking: The speaker needs your permission to broach this. Take advantage of this and give it; inquire what they mean and gain trust.
- Examples: That's a story for another day ...; don't get me started ...; let's not go there ...

### **The Question I Want to Answer**



- The Basics: Specific question from the speaker, that demonstrates exactly what they want to talk about.
- Advanced Thinking: Trust isn't earned by answering, its earned by allowing the other person to talk. Follow up your brief answer with an inquiry to expand their thought process.
- Examples: Do other clients feel comfortable with this; when was the last time you were in retail; what's the hot product right now.

## The Exclamatory Statement



- The Basics: Immediate, ear catching statements, similar to that of a Subjective Adjective, but in statement form.
- Advanced Thinking: These are the easiest breadcrumbs to recognize and therefore the most impactful. If a speaker uses an Exclamatory

Statement they're "screaming" for your attention, and you need to give it if you want to gain any additional trust.

- Examples: Listen, here's the deal; I need you to know something; You may not believe me; Let me tell you something right now; Have I ever told you about; I don't care what they say;; I cannot believe I'm tell you this; Here is what I need you to know; Wait, wait let me finish; No, wait here's my point; You're not hearing me; I don't think you understand; I swear if I'm lying I'm dying.

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## Summary

Empathy Based Listening is the key to building trustful relationships, and ultimately wielding greater influence. To reach a level of listening that endears those you seek to influence permission to grant greater trust, you must discover and key in on conversational breadcrumbs. Five key breadcrumb categories are

present in all conversations. In this white paper, you've learned how to identify key breadcrumbs. This is the first step in trust building. The next and most critical step is effectively addressing breadcrumbs, a skill requiring thoughtful and deliberate delivery developed through impactful coaching.



*Eric Maddox is a world renowned speaker, author and interrogator. His efforts interrogating over 300 individuals directly led to the capture of Saddam Hussein in 2003. It is through this innovative process he pioneered the concepts of Empathy Based Listening and its powers in gaining trust. These practices have been widely successful in business, negotiations and personal ventures. He can be reached at [eric@ericmaddox.com](mailto:eric@ericmaddox.com) or [www.ericmaddox.com](http://www.ericmaddox.com).*