

## Mouse-Face



**Goal(s):** The influence of experience, individual perception etc. on communication



**Duration:** 20 minutes



**Age group:** All ages



**Materials needed:** Three pictures: mouse, face and mouse-face



### Description:

- 1) Initially the trainer does not tell the group the name of the activity!!
- 2) The participants divide into two groups. One group gets to see the "face" (picture 1 below), while the other gets to see the "mouse" (picture 2 below). Both groups are unaware of what the other has seen.
- 3) The trainer(s) divide(s) the participants into pairs consisting of one person from the first group, and one person from the second group.
- 4) The trainer(s) show(s) each group the "mouse-face" (picture 3 below).
- 5) Each group now has to draw together the picture that they have seen together. They are not allowed to speak to each other however.
- 6) The trainer(s) check(s) on each of the pairs to see how they manage with the painting.

### Background explanations:

People are shaped differently: by their prior experience and observations, by their education, the surrounding culture, as well as their society etc. This individual background strongly influences how a person processes new experiences. Thus, two people who have experienced the same situation will tell different stories, sometimes even to such a point that the stories are contradictory. Prejudices for example strongly influence communication.



**Variations:** None



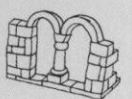
**Discussion points:** The trainer should encourage the participants to think about themselves: when did they experience a situation where a different underlying concept caused communication difficulties?



**Attentiveness:** None



**Source:** Dettel Beck: Auf dem Weg ins freundliche Klassenzimmer, Minden 1999, p. 89.



## Yes, but....



**Goal(s):** Practice refraining from immediate objection (preparation for “Active Listening”)



**Duration:** 30 minutes



**Age-group:** All ages (topics need to be adapted)



**Materials needed:** None



**Description:**

- 1) Two participants of the group volunteer to discuss a controversial topic given by the trainer(s).\*
- 2) One volunteer presents the topic as his/her opinion while the other listens.
- 3) The listener is not allowed to object or present his/her own opinion etc. but has to make the speaker feel like s/he is being heard and understood (around 5 minutes).
- 4) The trainer asks both how they experienced this exercise.

In discussion, we sometimes tend not to listen to each other. Usually, if one person is talking and is giving his/her opinion, the other is already preparing how to “counter strike”. The ultimate aim is to win the other over and to be right. This very unfortunate habit blocks good communication.



**Discussion points:** Was it difficult to be listener? If so, why was it difficult? What was it like for the person presenting the topic? How is it possible to differentiate between listening to the other without agreeing with what they are saying?



**Attentiveness:**

A useful activity to introduce active listening.

Remember: good listening does not mean agreeing!

The “I and You Messages” activity focuses on how to communicate disagreement.



**Source:** Adapted from an activity given in a training course with Georg Rössler, trainer for de-escalation, Jerusalem

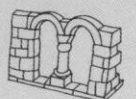
\* The sample situations *must* be very controversial. It *does not matter* if they are right or wrong. The more provocative – even absurd – they are, the more difficult it will be not to object immediately. It will be a good exercise to practice attentive listening and refrain from contradicting!

For teachers:

- "I think physical punishment is an effective and necessary disciplinary measure in schools."
- "I think smoking should be allowed in schools."
- "Teaching is only for women."

For students:

- "I think there should be more math-classes, even in the afternoon."
- "I think breaks are not necessary in school."
- "There should be no more summer camps."





## Active Listening



**Goal(s):** Develops listening and understanding skills



**Duration of activity:** 60 Minutes



**Age group:** All ages



**Materials needed:** None



**Description of activity and discussion points:**

- 1) Two trainers act out the following story to introduce “active listening” and clarify its aims:

*Stuck in between*

*“You are in despair. One of your best friends has an important appointment in Jerusalem. However, he is from the West Bank and thus has no permission to come to town. Normally, he sneaks around the checkpoint, and you meet him behind it to take him where he needs to go in Jerusalem in your car. This is still high risk and you are very afraid of being caught by the soldiers. This is still a better solution for him that taking a Ford however. Recently, even taxi drivers make sure that all their passengers have Jerusalem ID’s because they will be fined a lot of money and risk being sent to prison if they are caught carrying a passenger with a West Bank ID.*

*Despite being very afraid, you do not mind doing this favor for your friend because you are very fond of him. However, this time your friend’s appointment coincides with a family reunion that you have to attend and that you absolutely cannot cancel.*

*You do not know what to do. This is when you meet another good friend of yours and you decide to ask this friend for consultation...”*

The person telling the story is in strong need of resolving this impasse and support from her/his friend. Act the story out in the following two ways:

Version A: The friend does not listen at all what s/he is being told (no active listening).

Version B: The friend listens, is concerned and tries to give support in finding a solution (active listening).

- 2) Ask the participants what differences they noticed.
- 3) Give a brief explanation of active listening:  
“Active listening” means listening to someone else with empathy. The aim is to understand what the other person is trying to express. The feelings and motivations behind their behavior need to become clear to the listener. It does not mean that you have to agree with this opinion.
- 4) Encourage the participants practice active listening: Form groups

of three participants (A, B and C). One person from each group (A) talks about a problem, a conflict or an emotional experience s/he has had to person (B) of the same group. B should try to practice "active listening". The third member of the group (C) serves as an observer. The discussion should last about 10 minutes.

- 5) Group participants exchange their experiences of the activity.

Questions for B (listening):

- How did I manage with active listening?
- What did I find difficult?
- What could I have done better?

Questions for A (talking):

- What was helpful?
- What was I feeling during the conversation?
- What else could B have done?

Questions for C (observing):

- Describe the way A and B (but especially B) were sitting across from each other (body language)
- How did B manage with "active listening"?
- What worked well?
- What could be improved and how?

- 6) The activity is repeated until everyone has taken on the role of A, B and C.



**Discussion points:** The participants exchange their experiences of active listening with the whole group. What did they find difficult? How can active listening help in daily life? Does it need to be adapted and if so, how?



**Attentiveness:**

This advice may help B with "active listening":

- Repeat what you have heard in your own words. Start by saying : "If I understand you right, you mean..." for example. Ensure that your summary is correct by asking A.
- Give A enough room to express him/herself without interrupting him/her. Make sure that you talk less.
- Do not judge or interpret A's words



**Source:** Widely used. Original source unknown.



## I- and You-Messages



**Goal(s):** Practice effective communication



**Duration:** 15 minutes (explanations) 30-45 minutes (activity)



**Materials needed:** Flipcharts with theory,  
Situation slips, Form sheets



**Age groups:** Age 14 and above

The trainer must allow sufficient time with younger age groups (for younger students, compare "attentiveness").



### Description:

- 1) Read and understand M. Rosenberg's idea of communication.
- 2) Read out the two stories of the wolf and the giraffe (material sheet A).
- 3) Briefly explain the idea of I-and You-messages (material sheet B).
- 4) Give an example and ask the participants to give their input (material sheet C).
- 5) Form groups of two and give out situation slips (material sheet D). The participants should make use of Rosenberg's concept of non-violent communication:
  - What has happened?  
Give a factual observation without judging the situation.  
The sentence may start with "My experience of you and I in this situation was..."
  - What are my reactions?  
Describe the feelings and reactions you experienced: "I felt like this..."
  - What would I like my opposite to do?  
Express your wishes and needs without making a demand/giving an order: "I would like you to..."
- 6) After some time for discussion, each group should read out to the group both the situation they received, followed by the completed form sheet.
- 7) Conclude the activity by pointing out the four elements of good communication (see the "Clover" below).



### Discussion points:

In what way do I-messages influence the further development of the conflict?  
What is the effect of this language on the other person?  
How can I manage to remain genuine and not appear ridiculous?



### Attentiveness:

It is both useful and necessary to practice I-messages with students who are younger than 14. However, the trainer must be sure to explain the activity thoroughly and take sufficient time to make sure they understand. The "Yes, but..." activity is a very useful introduction to this exercise.

**Source:**

Marshal Rosenberg, trainer for non-violent communication, has developed his concept on a combination of a number of techniques, tools and ideas on communication and conflict transformation with the concept of non-violent transformation.

The exercise templates have been taken from Detlef Beck: Auf dem Weg ins freundliche Klassenzimmer. Minden, 1999, p. 85.

### Communication according to M. Rosenberg

Dr. Marshall B. Rosenberg, an American clinical psychologist, classifies communications into two basic kinds of conversations that can influence the course of a conflict in a destructive or constructive way. He talks about "Language of the Wolf" and "Language of the Giraffe".

The Language of the Wolf is a language of accusation and blame and contains a lot of "you's", sending many "you messages" to the other person. Usually, this leads to a counter reaction that sharpens the conflict. This significantly lowers the chances of resolving the conflict in a manner satisfactory to both sides. The "Language of the Giraffe" sends out different signals. A person talking in this language expresses how s/he is experiencing the conflict by using *I*-Messages. The chances of a transformation based on common ground rise through this approach.

The purpose of the exercise is not just "to be nice". Rather, it stresses the need for conscious conflict transformation skills. The exercise also focuses on how to be more effective. Blame and accusations will only serve to escalate the conflict, and not to calm the situation.

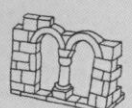
Accordingly, the characteristics of the two kind of languages are:

*I*-messages (Language of the Giraffe)...

- ...express observations.
- ...articulate feelings and leave the other person to take responsibility for her/his behaviour.
- ...promote the willingness for personal change.
- ...contain negative judgment of the other.
- ...do not hurt relationships.

*You*-messages (Language of the Wolf)...

- ...judge the other person (there is something wrong with the other person).
  - ...generalize by saying "one" or "we" instead of referring to oneself.
  - ...contain demands on what the other person should (must) or should (must) not do.
  - ...accuse/blame, insult, or threaten the other person.
- ...usually provokes a sharp counter-reaction thus serving to aggravate the conflict.





## Material sheet A: The story of the wolf and the giraffe

### The Wolf:

"I am the wolf. I am very often mad at myself and at others. If others tell me something, I feel under attack and I become defensive. After all, the other one started it all. They are responsible, not me. I did everything I could. Well, and then I start thinking that there got to be something wrong with these people. They are so stupid and unfriendly. In addition, that's what I tell these people, too – straight to their faces. Yet, they are mostly ignorant and don't even get it. They only start striking back when it is not my fault at all. So what can I do?

In other situations, I let myself down. This is when I get really mad at myself; I am embarrassed and I feel guilty and stupid. I say bad things about myself, such as "I'm really stupid! It's my fault. I could have paid more attention, or: No one likes me; no one loves me."

I like to use words that are insulting to others, or that put them and myself down.

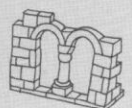
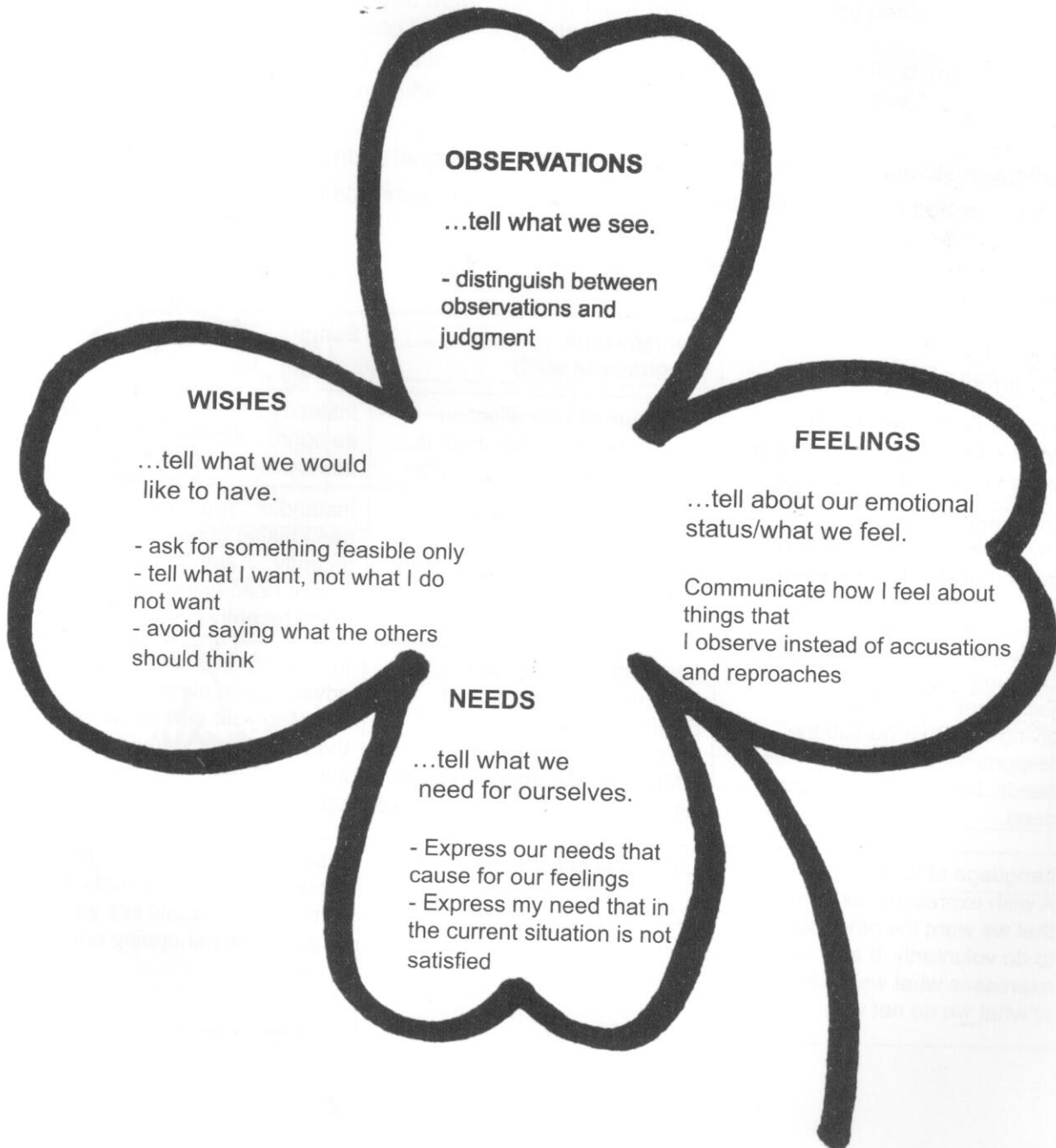
I don't think you can trust others, and that humans are bad by nature. No one ever tries to help me; they always try to exploit me or get something out of me for their own benefit. It would be wrong to say that the Wolf is only in others. This is not the case. Me, the Wolf, I am part of every person: me (the trainer points at her/himself), and you, and you, and you (trainer points at everyone else in the room)..."

### The Giraffe:

"I am the giraffe and I am also in everyone. Me, and you, and you, and you. I believe that everyone is likable and has inner values. I know that we have different interests, wishes and needs. At the same time, I am thinking that we should not try to get what we need at the expenses of others. Giraffes are able to understand what is going on in the heart of others no matter what they say. They pay just as much attention to themselves by listening. Giraffes are so clever that they manage not to hurt others with mean words, even if they are really mad at this person. I try to listen to my own heart. What is happening inside of me? What do I feel? What do I want? It is only at this point, that I do start to talk.

Otherwise, I try to guess what is going on in the heart of the others; what s/he might be feeling, or what they want, and then I try to talk about it. I like to use "put-ups" (words that are empowering and encouraging). I am part of every person, me (the trainer points at her/himself), and you, and you, and you (trainer points at everyone else in the room)..."

Material Sheet B: Four elements of good communication and "I messages" and "You messages" table






<b>I message (language of giraffe)</b>	<b>You message (language of wolf)</b>	<b>Sample</b>
Language of Observation What is the body language like? Is the voice loud or low?	Language of Classification Shows the other that there is something wrong with him/her	Instead of "If you shout at me so aggressively..." say "If you talk louder than I do ...."
Language of Feelings Expresses one's feelings and takes responsibility for them	Language of Accusations and Demands Tries to make the other feel guilty	Instead of "You haven't been taking good care of me recently..." say "I'm sad that you've been going out so much recently."
Language of Needs Expresses needs without giving the other person the responsibility of meeting these needs. Needs describe what I need.	Language of Judgment Judgments, analysis, and diagnosis of what the other person is doing. making it difficult for the other person to give to us what we wish to have	Instead of "You take advantage of me by just throwing your clothes all over the place" say "I would prefer it if you folded you clothes up."
Language of Wishes A wish expresses something that we want the other person to do voluntarily. It also clearly expresses what we wish instead of what we do not want.	Language of Demands	Instead of "I want to you feel more responsible towards the family" say "I would like you to go grocery shopping once a week."


Material Sheet C: Effects of the language of the giraffe and the language of the wolf

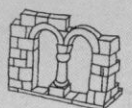
Example:

1. Jawad: "You idiot! Why don't you pay attention? Your broke my pen by acting hyper in the classroom. You are definitely going to pay for this."
2. Hamse: "Shut up! If you can't take proper care of your stuff, it's not my fault if your things fall down and break."
3. Jawad: "It upsets me if you bump into my desk when you know my pen's on it. Now it's broken and I'll get into big trouble with my mum."
4. Hamse: "I'm so sorry. I was in a rush and didn't pay attention. I can lend you my spare pen for now. If you like, we can go and talk to your mum together."

Which one of these statements is language of the wolf? Which one is the language of the giraffe? What is the effect of a wolf statement and of a giraffe statement? Write it down below.

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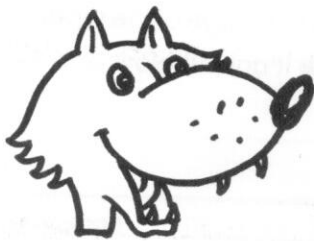
Material sheet D: Situation slips and guidelines for Rosenberg communication

Language of Wolf and Giraffe


Situation 1:

You have lent your new bike to your friend. While bringing it back to you, the tyre has a puncture. What do you say.....?

As wolf:

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As giraffe:

	<p>Step 1: What has happened (observation)?</p> <hr/> <p>Step 2: My feelings/what happens to me in this situation/how am I affected?</p> <hr/> <p>Step 3: My wishes, requests, needs</p> <hr/>
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Use the same template for the following situations:

*Situation 2:*

You have put great effort into preparing a meal you have never cooked before, but your family is very vocal about how bad it tastes. What do you say....?

*Situation 3:*

You try to help one of your students who is obviously having a severe problem. However, s/he tells you that you do not understand anyway. What do you say to this person....?

*Situation 4:*

A friend has given away the present you just gave him/her last week on her/his birthday. What do you say....?

*Situation 5:*

You are sitting in the classroom as a fellow student walks by and knocks your pencil case off the table. What do you say....?

*Situation 6:*

You happen to hear that someone you like has been telling others that your clothes are uncool. What do you say....?

*Situation 7:*

During the break, you are walking in the yard when you hear someone say: "Look, there's that stupid [says your name] again". What do you say....?



## Sender-Recipient



**Goal(s):** Understand how communication works



**Duration:** 45 minutes



**Age-group:** Age 14 and above (suitable for younger children when adapted)



**Materials needed:** Large sheets of papers, markers, flipchart with communication model



### Description:

- 1) Group the participants into pairs. Each pair receives an A3 size white sheet of paper and a marker.
- 2) One person draws a simple picture. The other must not see what their partner draws (5 minutes).
- 3) Have the partners sit back to back on two chairs. They are not allowed to look at each other or turn around.
- 4) The person who has drawn the picture now has to communicate to her/his partner what s/he has drawn. However, they are not allowed to say what the drawing is about (like a house, a ship, a car etc.). S/he has to describe her/his drawing. For example if the drawing is about a lake: "Draw a wavy line on top" to describe the surface of the water.
- 5) Have the participants compare their two drawings
- 6) Brainstorm with the whole group.
  - What made it difficult?
  - What made it easy?
  - What was helpful?
  - Write the points on the flipchart.
- 7) Taken this activity as a practical example of how to explain a communication model:

A sender (person who drew the picture) "codes" a message sent. A recipient (counterpart of the painter) "decodes" the message received to understand it (in this example, they transform the message into a drawing).

The message received might be correct or incorrect: something that participants discover when they compare the drawings at the end. In real life, it is sometimes very helpful to give feedback, which means repeating the message received in one's own words and asking if it is correct or not.

The content and the way the message is sent (open or hidden message) affect how easy or difficult it is to decode (a complex picture is more difficult to code and subsequently to decode than a simple sketch for example). This is when feedback becomes more important.

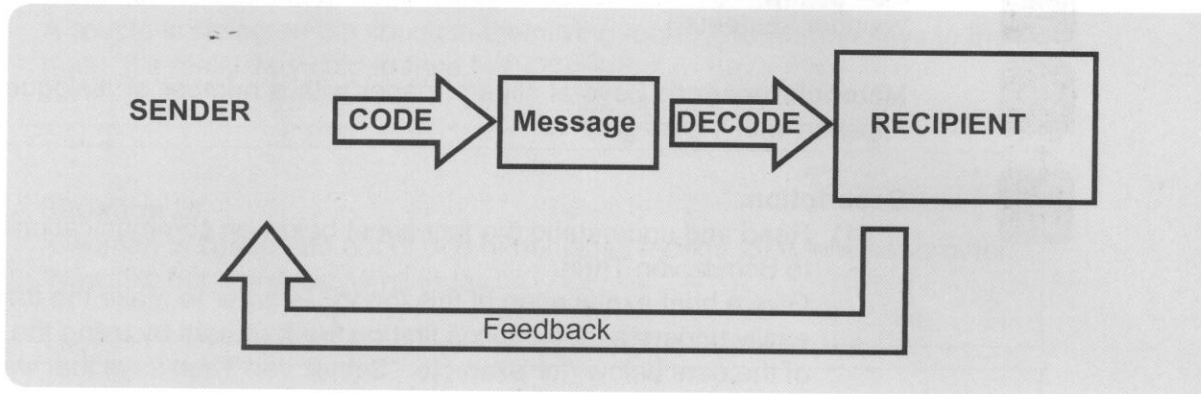


**Attentiveness:** This activity introduces the "4 Ears" exercise. It is possible to perform this activity with children under 14. The drawing activity

needs more explanation however, making use of the model. Insist on the importance of the fact that sending a certain message does not mean that the other will receive it the way it was meant (compare a common statement very often made: "But I have told you that...")



**Source:** Friedemann Schulz von Thun





## 4 Ears Exercise



**Goal(s):** Raise awareness about the different content within one message



**Duration:** 90 minutes



**Age group:** Age 14 and above (needs sufficient time and careful explanation for younger students!)



**Materials needed:** Several slips of paper with a number of dialogues on them  
Flipchart with 4 ears graphic



### Description:

- 1) Read and understand the fact sheet below on communication according to Schulz von Thun.  
Give a brief explanation of this theory. In order to make the theory more easily understandable focus first on the four ears by using the illustration of the ears below (for example: "Schulz von Thun says that we always listen to a message with four different kinds of ears").  
Now put four cardboard ears on the ground (appeal, relationship, factual, self-revealing) and give the following example:  
Read out the statement: "It is 10 to eight."  
Then move from ear to ear and give all possible analyses of the statement:  
Factual Ear-level: "It is 7:50."  
Appeal Ear-level: "Hurry up!"  
Self-revealing Ear-level: "I am impatient. I do not want to be late!"  
Relationship Ear-level: "It is only because of you that I am late."  
2) Form groups of two and give each group a situation slip (see below).  
3) Put four cardboard ears on the ground (appeal, relationship, factual, self-revealing).  
4) After having given each group some time, each one should act out the four aspects of communication to the entire group:  
- One person from each group stands next to the ear and explains the situation to the audience.  
- S/he then reads out the statement on the slip.  
- Their partner moves from ear to ear trying to put the content of the message into words.  
5) Participants will likely mention that the content of a message depends not only on the listener but also on how the message is sent. At this point, you may develop the explanation and talk about the four 'beaks'.



**Discussion points:** The trainer should allow some extra time to discuss the idea behind the four ears. Experience has shown that this concept is hard to understand.



**Attentiveness:** The 4 ear exercise connects to the Rosenberg activity to some

extent: the "self revealing ear" as an "I-message" and the "appeal ear" as a "You message"



**Source:** The original model was developed by Friedemann Schulz von Thun

**Situation 1:**

A couple is sitting on the couch in their living room. The woman says to the man: "It's really very cold in here."

**Situation 2:**

A woman is concerned about one of her close friends. She tells her brother: "Nawal is not doing very well today."

**Situation 3:**

A student is leaving home to play outside with friends. The mother asks: "When are you coming back?"

**Situation 4:**

A teacher is asking the class about an assignment they have to finish by the beginning of next week: "Have you already started your homework?"

**Situation 5:**

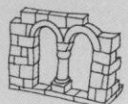
A man comes home from his friend Hisham's house. He tells his wife: "Hisham and his family have invited us over to their house for tea."

**Situation 6:**

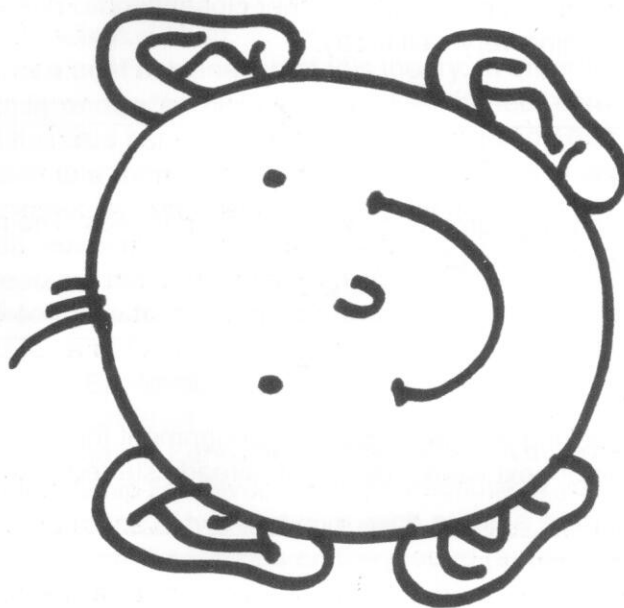
A son comes home rather late at night. As he comes in the door his mother asks him: "Where have you been at this time of night?!"

**Situation 7:**

Someone is wondering what time it is. The person asks a passer-by: "Do you know what time it is?"



## Four Ears Recipient: Which Ear is Listening?



### SELF-REVEALING EAR

What kind of person is s/he?

### RELATIONSHIP EAR

Who does s/he think s/he is talking to?  
What does s/he take me for?

### FACTUAL EAR

How are the facts understood?

### APPEAL EAR

What is s/he trying to tell me to do/feel/think?

Adapted from Friedemann Schulz von Thun

## Sample Situations:

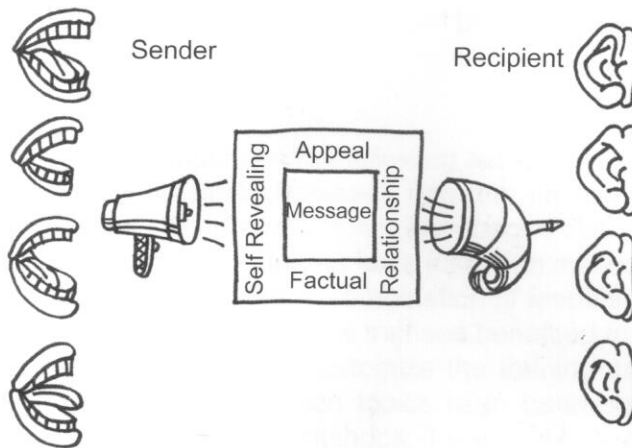
### The four levels of communication

according to Friedemann Schulz von Thun

The “communication quadrant” or “the four ears model”:

A message goes from a sender to a recipient (compare with “Sender-Recipient” activity). According to the German professor of psychology, Friedemann Schulz von Thun, such a message always contains four different aspects: factual information, a self-revealing aspect, a definition of relationship and an appeal. Schulz von Thun has visualized these four different

aspects or levels in a “communication quadrant”.



Whether we like it or not, each time we send a message, we communicate on all of these four levels. Equally, we always receive a message on these four levels. Usually, depending on the situation, one or the other aspect dominates the communication. Accordingly, we always talk with four “beaks” as a sender, or we listen with four ears as a recipient. Therefore, Schulz von Thun’s communication model is also referred to as “four ears model”.

The four levels of communication:

**Factual level:** What information does the message contain?

The informational or factual aspect deals with facts, dates and actual matters. Very concrete aspects are considered: is the information true or not? Is it relevant to the current situation or not? Is it sufficient or do I need more input?

The sender needs to communicate clearly the factual content of a message. The recipient opens the factual ear: what data does the message contain and what does this data mean?

**Self-revealing level:** This expresses the inner state of the sender.

Each time we say something we also reveal something about ourselves: It may be very explicit by sending an *I*-message, or hidden in the intonation of the voice.

While the sender reveals something about how s/he feels, the recipient listens with the self-revealing ear. What does my opposite tell me about her-/himself? What mood is s/he in?

**Relationship level:** This deals with the relationship between the sender and the recipient.

Each message also carries a hint about the relationship between the two people communicating. How does the sender open the “beak” (tone, wording, mimic)? The relationship ear – often very sensitive – listens: Is the manner in which they are talking to me acceptable? What is her/his attitude towards me?

**Appeal level:** Request to do something.

Usually, a message also contains a request, wish or appeal to the recipient. We want the other

