

For my triad, my members are Christina and Jacqui. As the speaker, I realized that the more I talked, the more open I had felt with expressing my emotions and retelling of my personal experiences to my group members. I had felt like my words meant something to my group members which had most likely triggered similar stories or feelings for them. One can say that this is the prime advantage of being in a small group rather than a large one as the pressure of having to hold on to our false selves and impress our peers is not there. In more direct terms, it is easier to be vulnerable with one another since we all are doing the same thing versus optional sharing with a large group of people. The most challenging aspect of being the speaker was pushing myself to talk more than I normally would with a group of people whom I am not particularly close to. This is because I feel more guarded towards people the more I do not know them.

However, I have been getting to know my triad members over the course and over the past recent weeks. I would say that my overall progress as a speaker had risen as I now do not easily run out of things to say when talking to a group of cordial acquaintances as I usually did. I have learned that sometimes, I need to flesh out my thoughts and emotions more for them so that they can understand them, instead of providing the bare bones so to speak, as I normally am a quiet individual. In pertinence to my role as a speaker, I have learned how to be more open and vulnerable with new people. This will definitely help me when I am getting to know new congregates in the future during my ministry.

As the listener, I had maintained consistent eye contact and had said verbal cues to reassure the speaker that I am listening to them and that I am not being distracted by other things. My growth area as a listener is my body posture as I naturally now lean forward to listen rather than leaning back. For me personally, I find this posture to be the most appropriate body

language when listening to others. While the speaker was talking, there were times where I was aware of my internal monologue, however for the vast majority of the time, I was focusing on the words, stories, and experiences of the speaker. Additionally, there were times when the speaker would describe what she was feeling during a personal experience such as a death of a distant relative which triggered my past experiences and my feelings regarding a similar incident. This had helped me to empathize with the speaker when she was sharing her story.

Moreover, the most challenging aspect was to multitask such as writing notes and listening at the same time. This is because when I have to write down notes manually in my notebook, my head is down and I lose my eye contact with the speaker temporarily. If I type my notes on the computer, I still am not truly making eye contact as I am focusing on seeing what I am typing as well as having to mute myself because of the typing noises from the keyboard. My strategy to this conundrum was to simply write what I needed to write down in my notebook in concise bullet points instead of complete sentences. The overall progress of my listening skills have improved considerably as now the skills come to me more naturally than forced. I learned to utilize the nonverbal cues to convey to the speaker that I am paying attention to her. I implemented this not only for the triad members, but also for my church friends and family members as well.

In terms of my role as a listener, I have learned to utilize verbal cues as well as nonverbal cues coming from the speaker to gain insight on what is truly being communicated. I also discovered how to read between the lines. This means not everything the speaker is saying matches with their body language. For an example, the speaker can say that she was feeling one way, when their vocal tone and body language really suggests the opposite feeling. This

knowledge can really be useful when having to counsel my congregates in the future as a future senior pastor.

As an observer, I noticed that everyone has their own habits or quirks as well as the overall general habits which are shared by many people. One example of a general quirk is when the speaker is looking up. This means that he or she is contemplating whether they want to share a certain experience or not or it could mean that he or she is in intense thought. More specifically, I had noticed that when Jacque is listening intently, she clasps her hands together and brings her whole-body posture forward so that she can be more engaged. Additionally, because I did not have to focus on what to say and how to listen while being watched, I was able to focus more on how people acted as well as more easily identify nonverbal cues. The challenge was keeping myself from joining in the conversation when I wanted to speak to reaffirm what a triad member was saying or simply because the discussed topic was particularly intriguing to me. For an example one of the topics was dealing with a loss of a beloved pet, and as a previous dog owner, I was immediately tempted to share my own experience, but had inevitably restrained myself from unnecessary interjections.

This will undeniably help me with my future ministry as I have to learn how to observe the interactions of others when I am not speaking. It is crucial to understand who is particularly close to who, and who does not get along with who. I can then push people out of their comfort zones to get close to one another if the situation allows for it. Or it can help me to guide others on how to be a better speaker and listener after observing their strengths and weaknesses.

The overall grade of my triad members who are Christina and Jacqui are a solid A as they have offered me their full support verbally and nonverbally when I am expressing my thoughts, feelings, stories, beliefs, and so forth during the ten hours of our triad discussions.