

Listening Generously: Reflection-in-Action, Responding to Emotion, and Making Space

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“Generous Listening” – by Marilyn Nelson

A conversation can be a contest,
or a game of catch with invisible balloons.
They bounce between us, growing and shrinking,
sometimes floating like cloud medicine balls,
and sometimes bowling at us like round anvils.
You toss a phrase and understanding blooms
like an anemone of colored lights.
My mind fireworks with unasked questions.
Who is this miracle speaking to me?
And who is this miracle listening?
What amazingness are we creating?
Out of gray matter a star spark of thought
leaps between synapses into the air,
and pours through gray matter, into my heart:
how can I not listen generously?

Objective 1

- Practice reflection-in-action to help bring clarity to patient and to you
 - Analyze what they said
 - Create a differential for what they meant
 - Assess how to respond
 - Test your hypothesis

Objective 2

- Learn how to excavate for deeper meaning behind patient statements
 - Practice using empathic responses (NURSE) as a way to test your hypothesis

Objective 3

- Learn to navigate a conversation you're leading with the goal of engaging the other person
 - Using questions to navigate tricky areas
 - Offering invitations to discuss
 - Responding to open and closed answers

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or a game of catch with invisible balloons.



Improv and Good Communication

- Close Listening
- Perspective-taking
- Emotion Recognition
- Mirroring
- Spontaneity
- Presence





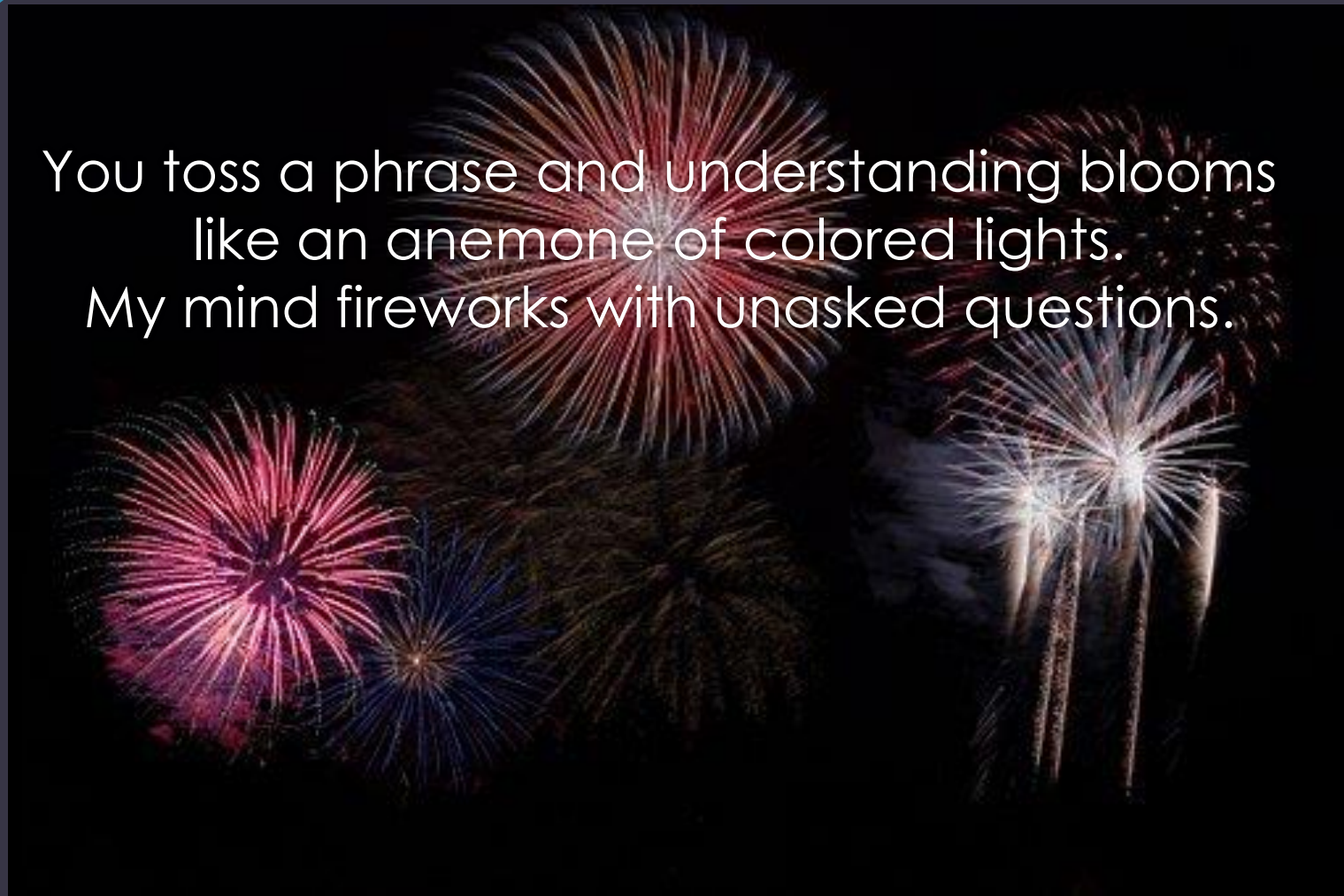
They bounce between us, growing
and shrinking,
sometimes floating like cloud
medicine balls,
and sometimes bowling at us like
round anvils.

All Rise

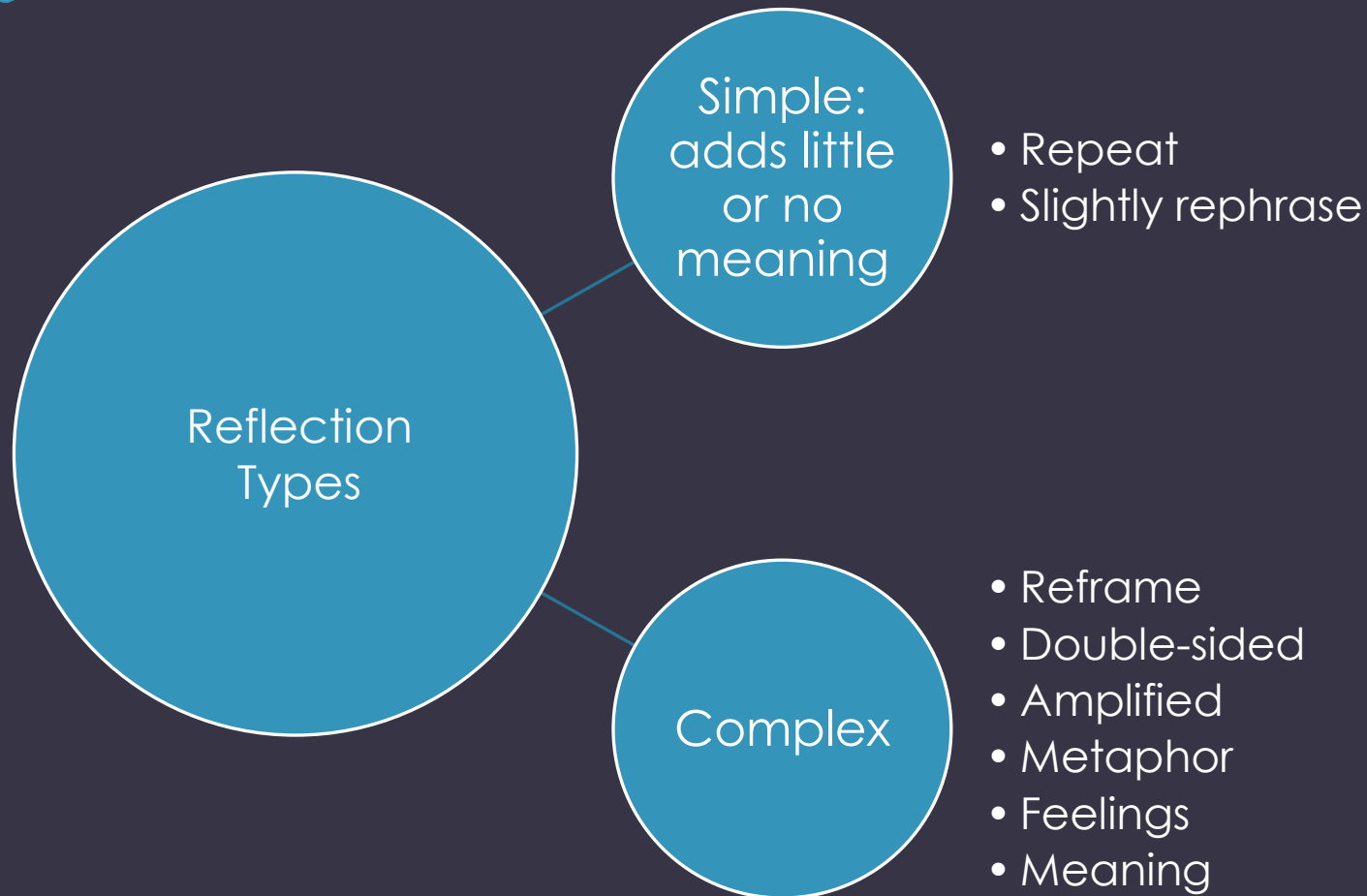
- Yes, And
- 1 Minute Life Story

Reflection in Action

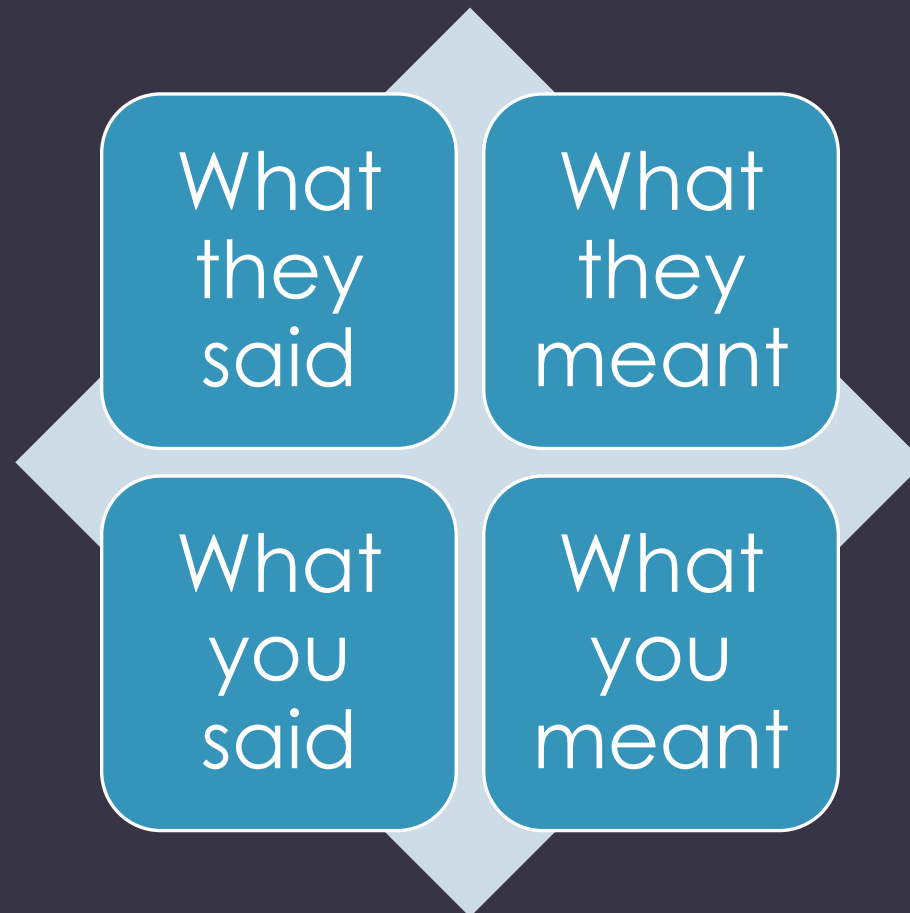
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Reflection in Action



Reflection in Action



Reflection Practice

- Talk about a time you experienced strong emotion (positive or negative)... **but don't explicitly describe how you felt**
- Your partner should listen closely, then offer a complex reflection

Perception

- Where are we and where are we going?
 - First: Understand
 - Second: Guide
- Test the Hypothesis:
 - This patient understands their illness accurately.

Perception Practice

- Partner up and practice perception questions for Robin
- What else might Robin mean when she asks about a feeding tube?

You're seeing Mary, a hospice patient with advanced dementia. Her daughter and primary caregiver, Robin, shares her frustration that Mary has been eating very little and refusing nutrition shakes. She wonders if Mary needs a pill to stimulate her appetite, or even a feeding tube.

Extend an Invitation



- “Is this an ok time to talk?”
- “Do you want to talk about time?”
- “Would it be helpful to hear what I’m seeing?”

Sharing Knowledge

- Keep it simple
- Just the facts
- Respect preferences for amount/type of knowledge shared

Sharing Knowledge – A Note on Context

Context preferences vary by culture and individual – HPM in America (and American communication in general) is often low context

High
Context

More indirect

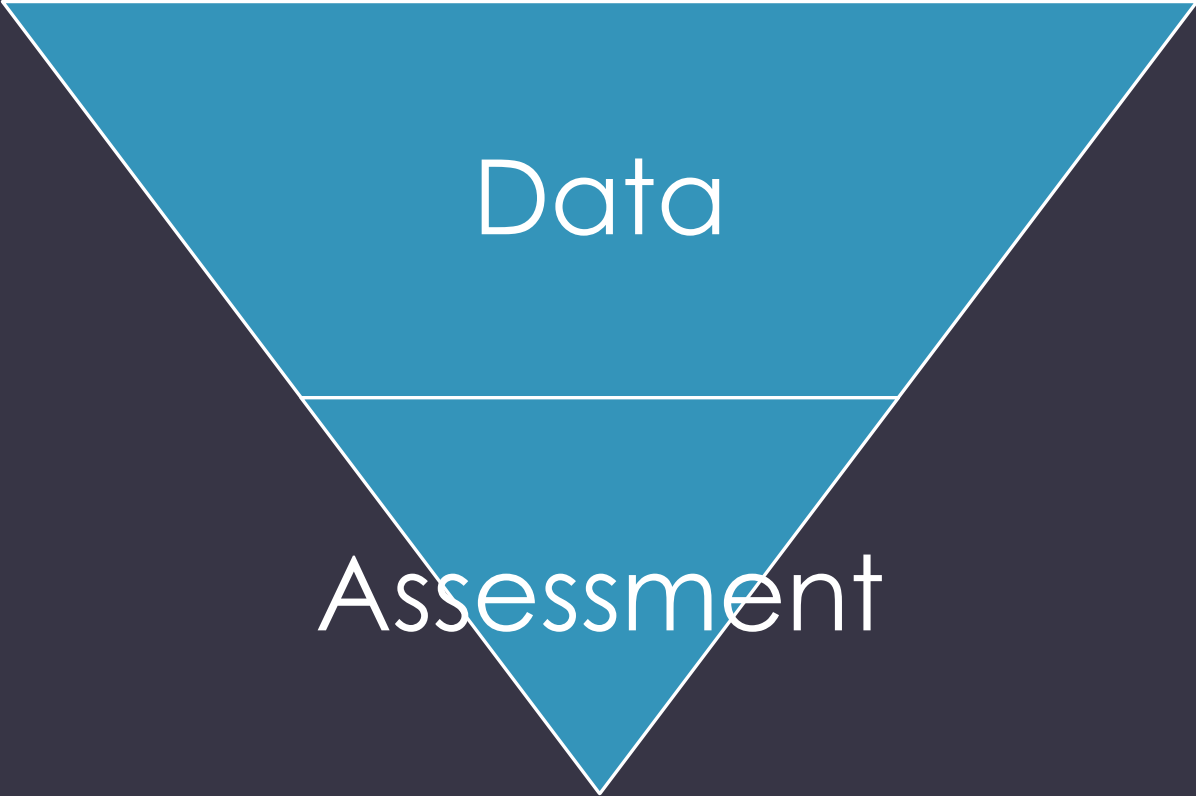
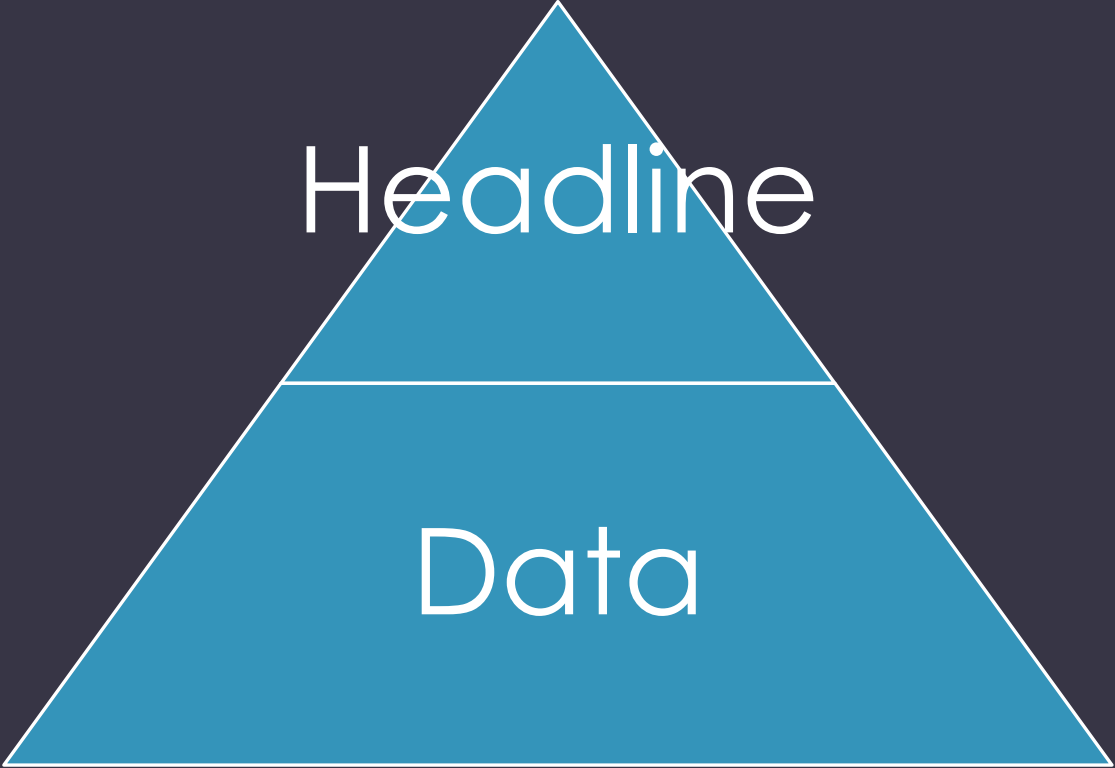
What's said
≠
What's meant

Low
Context

Very direct

What's said
=
What's meant

Using Headlines



Practice Your Invitation and Headline



- You're seeing Mary, a hospice patient with advanced dementia. Her daughter and primary caregiver, Robin, shares that Mary is still eating next to nothing and now sleeping 18-20 hours a day. You know this indicates Mary is getting closer to death. Robin still wonders about stimulants so that Mary can be awake more.
- How do you invite Robin to learn more? What's your headline?
 - How might you tailor your headline if Robin is a low-context vs high-context communicator?

Empathic Statements

Who is this
miracle speaking
to me?
And who is this
miracle listening?



What
amazingness
are we
creating?

Empathic Statements

- NURSE
 - Naming
 - Understanding
 - Respecting/Praising
 - Supporting
 - Exploring
- “I wish” statements



Empathic Statements

- Name: “I can see...”
- Understanding: “I imagine you must feel...”
- Respect: “You’ve done all we asked.”
- Support: “I want to help you feel...”
- Explore: “Tell me more about...”
- “I wish there were something else...”

These are great tools for testing your reflection-in-action hypothesis

Empathy Practice

- Break into groups of three
 - Roles: Patient, Clinician, Observer
- Practice responding to these statements and rotate roles
- What hypothesis are you testing with your empathic responses?

- “I don’t think I can handle this.”
- “You have no idea what this is like.”
- “I’m sick of being so tired all the time.”

Using Questions



Out of gray matter a star spark of thought
leaps between synapses into the air,
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Questions = Directions

- Offer conversational guidance
 - Patient is the one steering
- The questions you ask affect the answers you receive
 - What is your question saying?
 - What meaning could be implied by the asking?



Open and Closed

- Open-ended questions
 - “What’s going through your head right now?”
 - “What questions do you have?”

Open and Closed

- Close-ended questions
 - “Would you like to talk about what this means?”
 - “Do you have any questions?”

Open and Closed

- Closed answers make responding complex
- Hypothetical meanings include:
 - Stop
 - Proceed with Caution
 - Detour



Practice Questions (and Answers)

- Ask your partner a close-ended question and offer a response, then ask an open-ended question and offer a response
 - Asker, which answer was more difficult to reflect upon? Answerer, how did you feel answering the open vs closed question?
- One partner asks an open-ended question, the other gives a closed answer
 - How did you reflect-in-action to the closed answer? How did you test your hypothesis?

how can I not listen
generously?

