



FEEL THE UNDERCURRENTS

Definition: An undercurrent is a type of water current that moves below the surface.

Within our communication it is a sense that there might be something under the surface that is not being said. We might feel it as an internal pull that tells us that others behavior and speech are just not in sync. By ignoring the undercurrents – or just not even noticing them to begin with, we end up not feeling fully connected with the other person. It will typically feel like a lack of ease or flow between us; like there is something in the way.

This undercurrent of tension typically comes from small almost imperceptible movements that we may not even be consciously aware of. We can learn to hone our observation and sensing skills to help us strengthen our ability to listen underneath words.

1. Check it out

When feeling undercurrents, and the relationship is an important one to us, it is always a good idea to check in with the other person and refrain from making assumptions about what might be going on. It can sound like this:

- I am feeling some tension between us, do you also feel it?
- Do we need to talk?
- Is there something bothering you?
- Is there something I may have done to hurt you?

2. Develop your observation and sensory antenna:

- Listen with your ears to hear shifts and nuances in tone and tempo.
- Listen with eyes for facial expressions and body language. Notice if they tap their feet, clench their fist, if their eyes cloud over, or they blink back tears, etc.
- Listen with your felt sense to notice what is going on inside of your own body. What sensations do you feel in your body, i.e. tingling, warmth, coolness, tightness, etc.?

3. Create more space for your Internal Noticing

- Take three deep breaths, just breathe naturally, but keep your focus on your ribs expanding and contracting.
- Shake your arms and hands vigorously and then bring them to rest.
- Close your eyes and notice what is you are aware of right now.
- Let your attention roam and notice where it lands in your body.
- What stands out in your awareness.

4. WAIT: Why am I talking?

It is easier to notice, hear, and feel undercurrents when you are not talking. Choose to slow down, become present, let others talk, and listen for what they care about: their intuitions, fears, values, and hopes. Wonder what they are feeling in this moment.

Silence and presence allow you to notice more, it is an underestimated source of power that allows you to notice, hear, and feel the undercurrents. When you help to make the invisible *visible*, you can help others excavate the truth that may be lying just underneath the surface. This allows the speaker to gain even more refinement about what is going on for them and bring them into sync with themselves – and with you.