LISTEN | Don't take the bait

5 minutes

Welcome. This is David Richman from the Eaton Vance Advisor Institute. As you know, collaboration with existing clients and prospective clients is essential for healthy and productive relationships. Yet, it’s often a challenging balancing act to create and maintain a collaborative relationship where you successfully encourage the active input of existing and prospective clients without compromising your status as an expert in your field. Someone engaging your services might say early on in a conversation, “Hey, you're the expert, just tell us what to do.” While there might be sincerity in that request, there are all sorts of dangers associated in just telling someone what to do or what we call in this case taking the bait. It’s important to recognize that when someone is seeking guidance from an advisor whose expertise far exceeds their own, they still want to feel that their opinions are being heard. If someone senses you're not respecting them or understanding them then it’s unlikely that they're going to want to work with you.

An advisor I had the pleasure to work with many years ago, shared with me how she’s always collaborating consciously, or as we like to say today, with great intentionality. She accepts people for who they are rather than imposing what she believes to be the right course of action for them. Now, it’s not that this advisor doesn’t have an opinion to offer; quite the contrary. Rather, she sees her role as discovering what is most important to these people and then finding ways to advocate for that set of issues. Her observation is that when advisors try to modify the client’s perception or the prospective client’s perception of what they want or need, it likely becomes a barrier to establishing a true collaborative atmosphere.

So, to avoid taking the bait, consider these two strategies. First, strategy one, practice active listening. The most effective collaborators that we know happen to be the best listeners; isn't that interesting? They listen with intentional intensity. They're quite conscious of the activity because they work on these listening skills all the time. Strategy two, use powerful phrases to set the tone upfront. Effective collaborators realize words matter. They tend to try to set a collaborative tone literally right out at the gate so that they rarely hear a prospective client or an existing client say, “You're the expert. Just tell me what to do.” Here are some of my favorite phrases that they use: “I welcome your comments and your questions.” “If I present any information that’s not clear to you, please let me know.” “If I ask any questions and you're not certain why I'm asking, please ask me to explain.” “I view our relationship as a partnership.” Here’s another one: “What would have to happen from your advantage point in order for our work together to be considered a complete success?” As you begin using a few of these in your discussions, you’ll gain confidence in your ability to create positive emotions that inspire action and as you bring greater intentionality to the phrases that you use. In some way, to become an effective collaborator, make sure your prospective clients and your existing clients feel like their opinions are being heard by practicing active listening and setting collaborative tone right out of the gate.

If you would like to learn more about how to become an effective collaborator, we encourage you to fully explore the tools and the resources available on eatonvance.com/ChasingPositivity. Eaton Vance is committed to helping you build stronger and deeper relationships with your clients, your team members and your prospective clients. Until next time, wishing you all the best.

Disclosure

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What's next?

If you're interested in digging deeper into this topic, you can go to the next resource. If not, we recommend continuing to the next subtopic.

Getting started

LISTEN | An approach to learning the ***3 Dynamics*** 6 minutes

WATCH | Why the ***3 Dynamics*** matter 5 minutes

LEARN | A road map to master the ***3 Dynamics*** 5 minutes

LEARN | Prepare for success 3 minutes

Communicating empathically

LISTEN | Practice leaving yourself behind 8 minutes

LEARN | Lead with genuine interest 5 minutes

LEARN | Three strategies to understand purpose 5 minutes

PLAN | Become more empathic 15 minutes

Collaborating consciously

LISTEN | Put away the black robe	5 minutes	→
LISTEN | Beware of painting with a broad brush	5 minutes	→
LISTEN | Don't take the bait	5 minutes	→
WATCH | Why intentionality matters	6 minutes	→
LEARN | Engage clients based on their coping style	5 minutes	→
PLAN | Become a better collaborator	15 minutes	→

Inspiring action

LISTEN | A proven approach to increase engagement	10 minutes	→
LISTEN | Align by deploying the joining technique	11 minutes	→
LEARN | Words and phrases to inspire action	5 minutes	→
PLAN | Inspire action in others	15 minutes	→

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