The Brilliance of your SoundWave - Sample Report

My Brilliance 3 Voices are Correct, Challenge and Critique

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1 Your SoundWave

The need to communicate with others is perhaps the defining feature of what it is to be human.

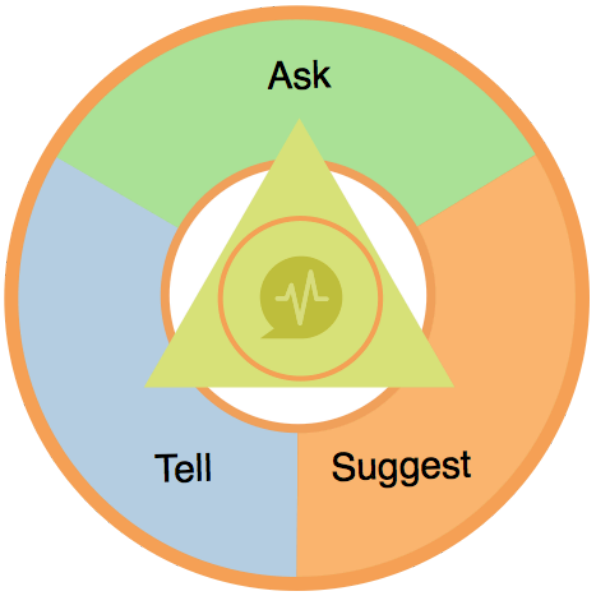
Deep within our genetic make-up is the capacity to learn to speak the language of our culture or cultures quickly, skilfully and unselfconsciously. If human beings posses a superpower then it is surely this, the amazing ability to form relationships and create cultures through talk.

Language is critical to human social interaction. Little that is meaningful to our economy or society gets done without it. At SoundWave, we specialise in understanding the relationship between what we say and how we say it and the effects on others thoughts, feelings and actions.

We have identified nine 'voices' which make up your own SoundWave profile. Each of these represent ways of talking that are common to us all and whilst we do use them all, most of us have a preference for some 'voices' more than others, as you will see.

In this report we will identify your three most preferred SoundWave voices, but before that we begin with a simple framework.

At its highest level, we tend to frame our communication in one of three broad styles, asking, telling and suggesting.



2 Ask Tell Suggest

Asking illustrates the brilliance of inquisitiveness. It involves posing questions to others. These can range from asking how someone is, to raising detailed questions about complex issues. Questions can also be open, closed, leading or rhetorical. They all play crucial roles in our dialogue with others.

Telling illustrates the brilliance of shaping. It involves setting out expectations, instructions, corrections and rules. To tell someone what to do and/or how to do it is the use of your expertise and experience in directing the thoughts, feelings and actions of others.

Suggesting illustrates the brilliance of influencing. It involves making your point, persuading others, describing situations and offering advice. Suggesting is an intermediate point between asking and telling, requiring both involving and proposing. We use it all of the time.

Ultimately, skilful use of these three broad styles depends on using the appropriate blend in practice, as you flex from situation to situation.

When asking, we might seek the following outcomes in others.

When I ASK skilfully		
Others Think	**Others Feel**	**Others Act**
Solutions; possibilities	Engaged	In line with their own thinking

Similarly with telling ...

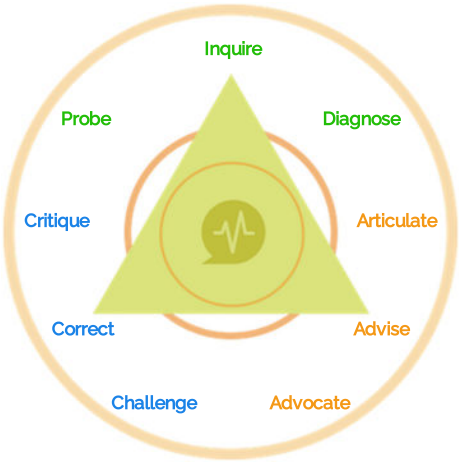
When I TELL skilfully		
Others Think	**Others Feel**	**Others Act**
With clarity	Respected	In line with their expectations

... and with suggesting

When I SUGGEST skilfully		
Others Think	**Others Feel**	**Others Act**
Broadly	Involved	Participatively

3 The SoundWave Voices

Each cluster of ask, tell and suggest consists of three SoundWave voices as follows:



And each has a particular brilliance when used in relationship with other people.

The brilliance of your SoundWave voices		
THE VOICES	THE BRILLIANCE OF ...	
ASK	TO INQUIRE	...giving attention
	TO DIAGNOSE	...defining problems
	TO PROBE	...unearthing truths
TELL	TO CORRECT	...managing boundaries
	TO CRITIQUE	...dissection
	TO CHALLENGE	...disruption
SUGGEST	TO ADVISE	...gifting answers
	TO ADVOCATE	...the appeal to the heart and the head
	TO ARTICULATE	...the telling of the story

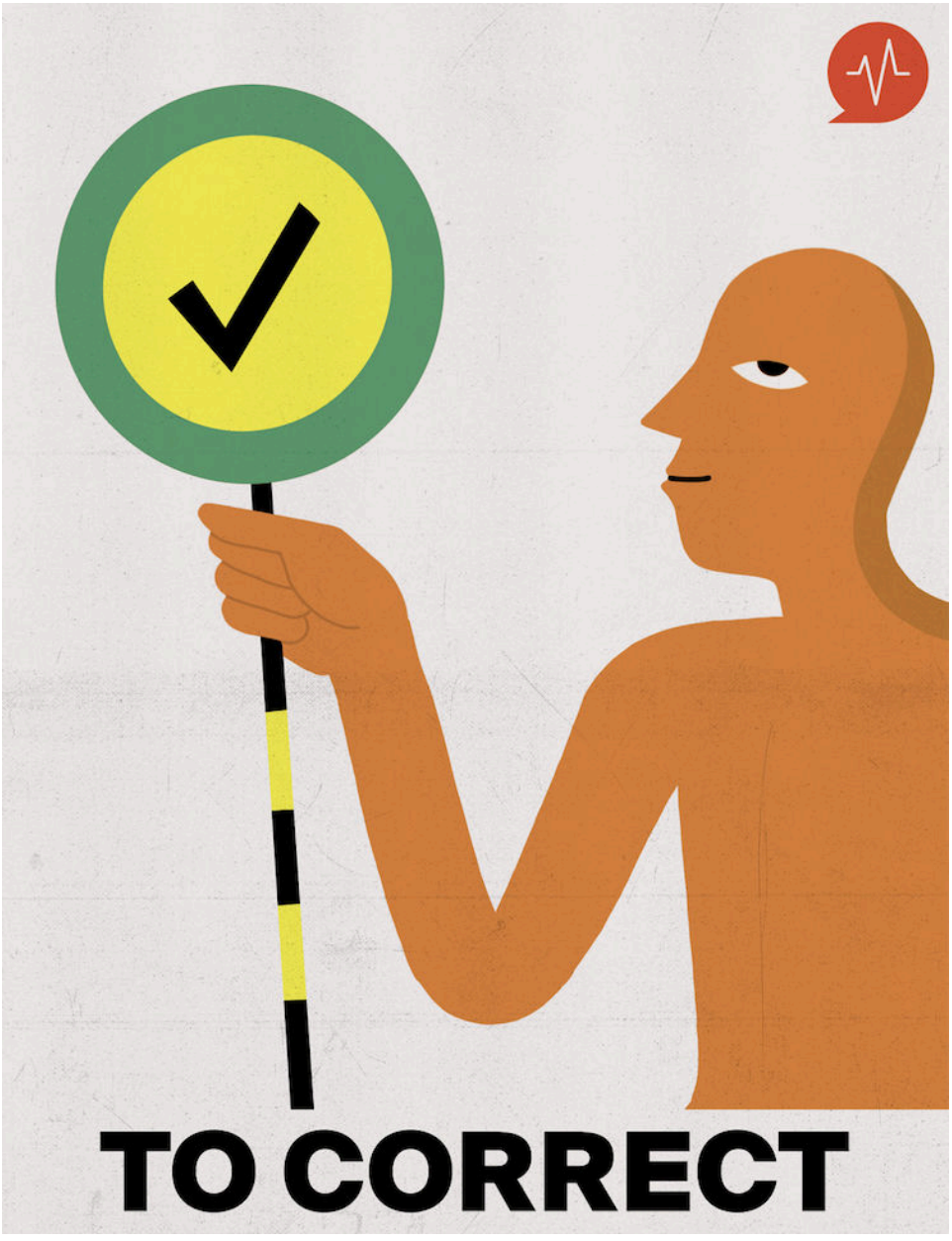
4 Your first voice: Correct

Your first SoundWave voice is: to correct - the managing of boundaries.

Remember, we each possess all the SoundWave voices to a greater or lesser degree, but often we have a preference for some over others. In some cases our voices remain under-developed.

But the particular power of the 'Correcter' is to be the standard-bearer, the one who keeps everyone on track!

To correct, to be the manager of boundaries, is to be clear and direct with people about the standards, expectations and rules for which they are responsible and for which they need to react or meet. It is also to be able to help others to adjust their thoughts or actions by delivering respectful 'correctional conversations' which drive compliance and improvement. Its power goes way beyond the simple barking of instructions!



Skilfully, correctors create a reputation as totems of standards. This is the voice that keeps the wheels on the track. It encourages the adoption of personal and process disciplines - indispensable for the smooth running of operations or the timely delivery of projects.

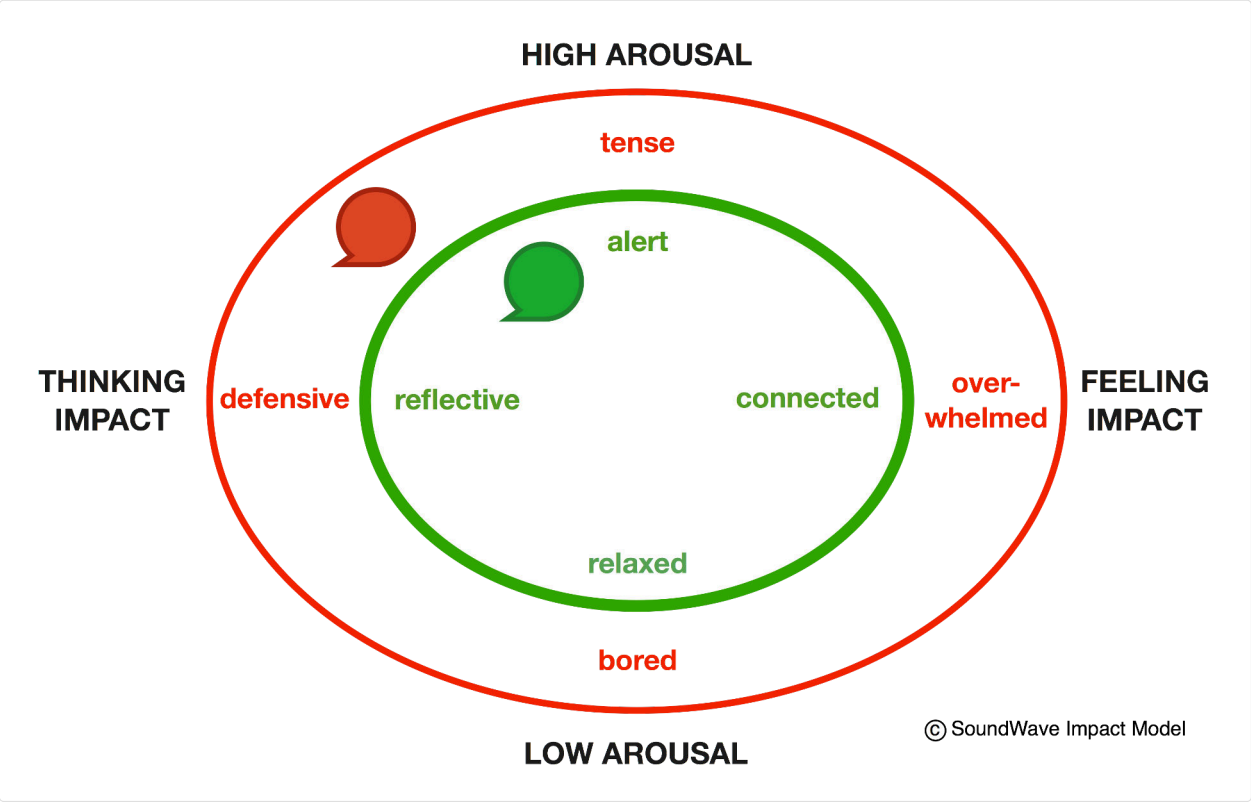
At one level, this 'managing of boundaries' is all around us so it's easy to miss the full impact of its brilliance. Just watch the way in which skilled teachers illustrate preferred methods in science or math or the way that any employee might 'correct' the wayward individual inattentive to the health and safety requirements of their environment.

As an arch corrector, you might be alert to the gaps in standards and expectations and skilled in helping people to bridge these.

You might find that you're a natural instructor. You spot the occasions when things are not being done as they should be and you are articulate and clear in explaining to others what needs to be done and how.

Perhaps you're a leader whose primary concern to get things done properly and to the quality expected. This leads you to direct the thinking and actions of others using well established methods and practices.

When you correct skilfully, people feel clear and informed about the course they should take and confident of your faith in them (see the green circle on the impact model below).



Beware of over-using your 'correct' voice ... When you over-use this voice, your listeners might experience you as punishing them. This risks causing them to retreat or rebel displaying defensive behaviour and is displeasurable (see the red circle in the impact model above).

And be aware of under-using it ... A failure to correct when correction is needed amounts to a lost opportunity to establish discipline and standards.

When it comes to the physical qualities of 'correct', we notice that it has its own rhythm. Characteristically, we tend to correct clearly, coolly, firmly and briefly. When is comes to the voice 'to correct', less tends to be more.

This overall lower tone of voice and manner, grabs the listeners attention making them alert to the correctional voice. This really is quite brilliant!

Listening well to the nature of the issue or problem enables the correction to be well targeted and presented whilst allowing for some necessary sensitivity on the part of the person doing the correction.

To fully exploit the brilliance of correct, it's important to frame the discussion as part of a process of improvement rather than as an admonishment.

Remember, with this voice of correct you are the manager of boundaries, the cornerstone of improvement.

5 Your second voice: Challenge

Your second SoundWave voice is: to challenge - the brilliance of the disruptor.

Remember, we each possess all the SoundWave voices to a greater or lesser degree, but often we have a preference for some over others. In some cases our voices remain under-developed.

But as a 'challenger' you can be a real agent of change!

To challenge, to disrupt, is to get others to think and act differently about what they are doing or proposing to do. It is to be dissatisfied because of a belief or sense that better ways can be found to get things done. It is a stimulus to change. Its power goes way beyond simply opposing.

Skilful challengers create a reputation for bringing about change. The direct and sometimes contentious style of challenge gets people to 'sit up and pay attention'. This quality of contesting, combined with a degree of impatience, is clearly heard and most often responded to following the inevitable 'freeze' response of the receiver. The disguised question, 'why are we doing this?' is a common and effective style of challenge.

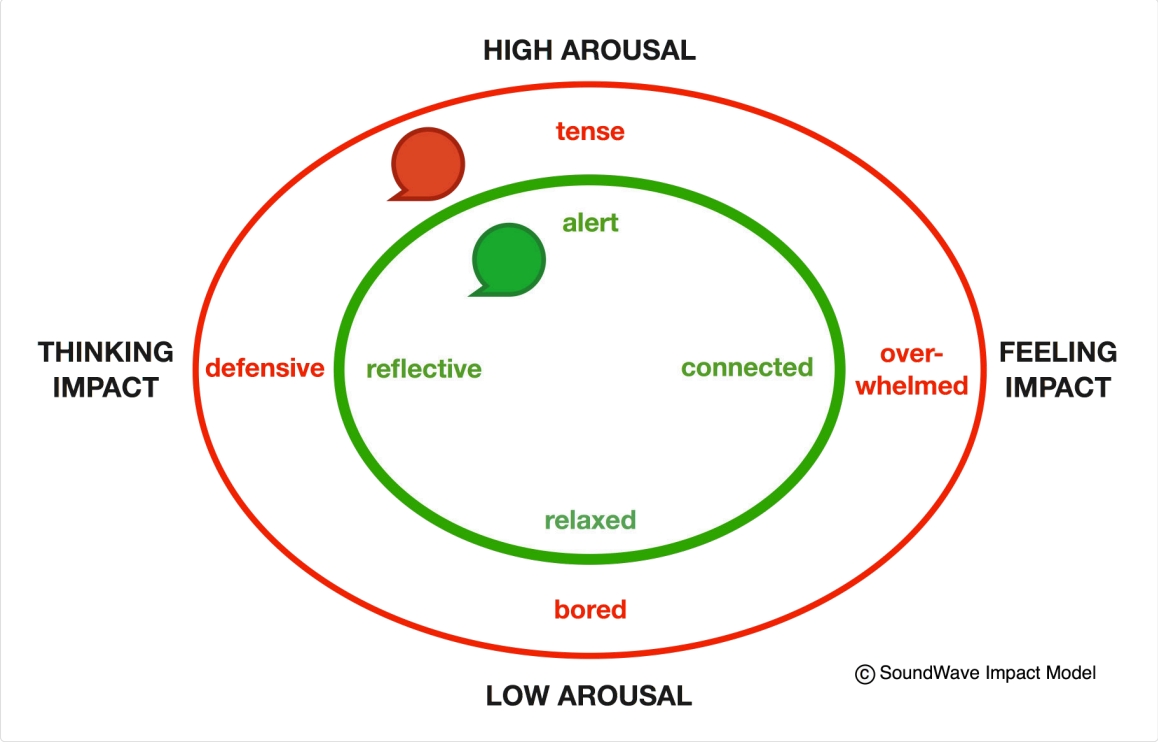
At one level, challenge is all around us. We tune in to it fast; the argument in the playground, the disagreement at work. We notice it because it often stops us in our tracks and compels us to re-think.

As an arch challenger, you might be a skilful catalyst or change agent, adept at identifying the inconsistencies or contradictions in peoples' thoughts and actions and prepared to risk disagreement by voicing these.

You might find that you're a natural protagonist. You tend to notice the way in which safe and conservative patterns of thought and action take hold which you seek to drive out.

Perhaps you're a leader whose listening combined with 'challenge' is always seeking to move people to the edge of their comfort zone enabling them to achieve things they were previously unaware that they could do.

When you challenge skilfully, people become alert, almost vigilant in fact, and are driven to reflect on their thoughts and actions (see green circle on the impact model below).



Beware of over-using your 'challenge' voice … When you over-use this voice, your listeners might experience it as an attack. The effect on others' state of mind is to risk creating tension and defensiveness, causing displeasure (see the red circle in the impact model above).

And beware of under-using it … A failure to challenge when challenge is needed amounts to a lost opportunity for change.

When it comes to the physical qualities of 'challenge', we notice that it has its own rhythm. Characteristically, we tend to challenge in a direct and sometimes forceful way, addressing the object of our challenge with pointed and forthright gestures.

This louder, faster tone of voice commands attention, driving people to listen and reflect in the moment. It is the sabre-toothed tiger in the jungle of our conversation, ready at any moment to pounce. This really is

quite brilliant!

Listening well is particularly critical to the quality of challenge. Good challenge requires alertness to the inconsistencies or contradictions in others - you need to have heard and understood exactly what others are saying.

To fully exploit the brilliance of challenge, it is important to choose your moment well. Challenge works best when its use is combined with more involving voices such as inquiry or articulation.

Remember, with this voice of challenge, you are the disruptor, the agent of change.

6 Your third voice: Critique

Your third SoundWave voice is: to critique - the brilliance of dissection.

Remember, we each possess all the SoundWave voices to a greater or lesser degree, but often we have a preference for some over others. In some cases our voices remain under-developed.

But to have the sharpness to 'Critique' as a particular brilliance - its amazing!

To critique, the brilliance of dissection, is to take an idea, practice or event and to draw it apart, to separate, against given assumptions, preferences or hypothesis, the good and the bad, the workable from the unworkable, the intelligent form the dull. It is an evaluation that signals caution, given identified risk, and initiative given identified opportunity. Its power goes way beyond the simple statement of what's wrong!

Skilfully, critiquers create a reputation, as sound in judgement. This is the voice that creates the pathway for taking decisions. It is the voice that makes it possible to synthesise ideas, practices and events into new perspectives.

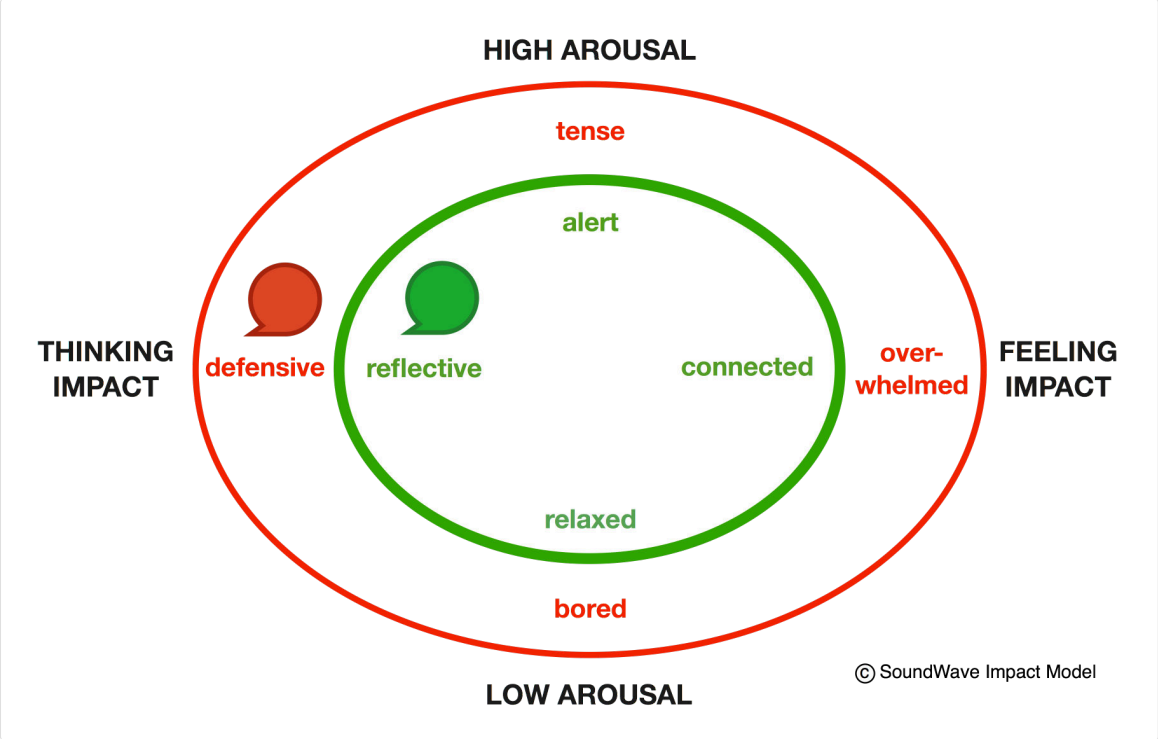
At one level, this 'brilliance of dissection' is all around us so it's easy to miss the full impact of its brilliance. Read a good film review, for instance, and you will see how the structure of a film is taken apart and then laid out again in a more novel formulation. Listen to a sports pundit dissect the performance of your team making clear its strengths and limitations along the way.

As an arch critiquer, you might be attuned to noticing the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats in people and situations. You have an aptitude for drawing them to the attention of others.

You might find you're a natural commentator. You notice flaws and opportunities that others may not grasp and are skilled at pointing these out.

Perhaps you're a leader whose primary concern to expose limitations and risks in order to provide a safe direction forward and to invite initiative given opportunities identified.

When you critique skilfully, people become enlightened and reflective, able to create alternative courses of action (see the green circle on the impact model below).



Beware of over-using your 'critique' voice … When you over-use this voice, your listeners might experience you as criticising them. This is likely to damage their self-esteem and cause defensiveness (see the red circle in the impact model above).

And beware of under-using it … A failure to critique when critique is needed amounts to a lost opportunity to arrive at sound judgements.

When it comes to the physical qualities of 'critique', we notice that it has its own rhythm. Characteristically, we tend to critique with rationality, cooly and calmly.

This overall slower and softer tone of voice and manner invites the listener's attention, tuning them in to the ebb and flow of the dissection as new possibilities are created. This really is quite brilliant!

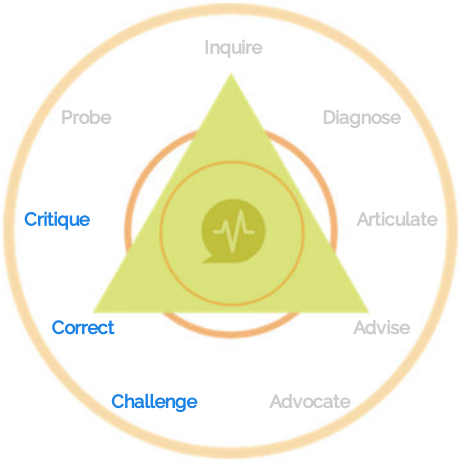
Listening well to the nature of the issue or problem enables the critique to be balanced in its assessment of what is going on. This balance is not the proverbial 'good news, bad news sandwich', but a skilfully worked synthesis.

To fully exploit the brilliance of critique, it's important to frame the discussion as a process of reaching a solid understanding of the person or situation.

Remember, with this voice of critique you are the dissector, the place for sound judgement.

7 Bringing It All Together

This report has identified your top three SoundWave voices and so you have begun your journey in identifying the brilliance that you posses in communicating with people.



To more deeply understand the full brilliance of your SoundWave and to become more skilful still in your powers of communication you might like to learn about the answers to the following questions

- How impactful would I be if I could leverage the full strength of all nine voices?
- How effective am I as a listener and how do I improve my listening skills?
- What really happens if I over-use or under-use any of these voices?
- What situations and roles call most for which voices?
- How do I respond with fluency to the different demands that different situations place on me?

We run workshops and offer coaching support around the world.

We have a track record in improving the contribution and performance of professionals, managers and leaders.

Contact us at www.soundwave.global