

### **Listening Exercises:**

(This exercise will also give you the chance to practice with the digital recorder)

Listening is one of the most important skills to develop as an oral historian/interviewer. Pair up with a colleague (different to your interviewee this afternoon) and each of you choose one exercise from the list below with which you wished to be interviewed about by your colleague.

Then both spend 5 minutes jotting down some topics/questions for each other, set up the recorder for this exercise and go! Interviews need only be 5 minutes each. (No need to go through all the introduction formalities, just record the exercise and familiarise yourself with the equipment and listening practice.)

#### **Small Silences:**

Ask your narrator to tell you about his/her best friend. At the end of each narration phase let six to ten seconds of silence elapse before you ask a question. What role does silence play in the interview? How did your narrator respond? How did you feel? Remember to keep eye contact and smile during the silent periods.

#### **Joyous Stories:**

Ask your narrator to tell you about a joyous event in his/her life. Note how the narrator tells the story and how you listen to the story. What did you feel while she/he was narrating? Were there moments when you felt particularly close or distant from your narrator? Did you impact the direction of the interview or content of the story? How? What questions did you ask? Had the narrator told the story before? How could you tell?

#### **This is what I think you said to me:**

Do an interview about an emotional experience that was important to the narrator. After they've completed a thought and paused, you say, "This is what I think you said to me. Is this right?" Let the narrator correct what you thought they said. Do this until you both agree that you heard what she/he meant. Do this for each thought unit.

How did your impression of what the person said change when you repeated it back to them? How did it change when they corrected what you heard? What were the nuanced differences in what you originally heard and what the final version was? Is there a difference between listening and being understood? What is it?

#### **Other Listening Exercise Topics:**

What's the most important thing in your life right now?

Has your life gone the way you expected it would? What would you change?

**Discuss with each other how it went!**