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## Media Release

# Mindful Listening – Help Clients Make the Best of Their One and Only Life

**Monday August 19, 2013.** Speaking at a recent financial adviser communication workshop Mr. Claudio O. Pannunzio President and Founder of US based i-Impact Group said every client interaction provides the perfect opportunity for advisers to test their ability to be fully engaged and listen mindfully.

“Listening is a vital skill for advisers and one of the core and most misunderstood characteristics about listening is that it is not a passive but, rather, a very active effort that requires intention and focus,” said Claudio Pannunzio.

“An old Zen proverb goes like this, *“When walking, walk. When eating, eat.”* In other words, be mindful and give your whole attention to the task you’re carrying out”.

The practice of listening should not be employed only in situations of high distress or uncertainty in the financial markets, but be the foundation of the client-adviser relationship.

In his workshop, Pannunzio stressed that clients depend on their advisers for guidance, reassurance and comfort that they will realize the goals and dreams of their one and only life.

“Because of the meaningful impact that decisions exert on the lives of clients, the same type of listening employed by a physician must be applied to client interaction. Mindful listening is not only the foundation of good communication, but also an activity that nourishes both the speaker and the listener,” added Pannunzio.

Listening is one of the hardest things for a human being to master. Many people experience unconscious barriers to good listening that prevent them from clearly recognizing when they are *not* listening.

Listening is a magnetic and creative force. When people listen to what they say, they experience a satisfying expansion, become highly creative and volunteer information.

“It is this creative force that actually enables ideas to spring within and come to life. One of the most valuable rewards of listening is the ability to learn something we might not know” said Pannunzio

“More important, conscientiously listening to clients conveys the unequivocal notion that the adviser cares about the client on a personal level and their lives. It enables the adviser to focus on the client and ask the right question at the end of a conversation to gather good intelligence on what they worry and care about, what motivates them

and, ultimately, become conscious of their core emotions and how these affect and drive their decisional process”.

Advisers that give genuine and undivided attention will induce clients to confide more deeply and open their hearts to offer precious personal information thus enabling the creation of a more effective financial or protection strategy that will fully reflect and take into account their emotions, desires and aspirations.

Mindful listening is the action of listening with a single purpose – without interruptions, allowing clients to fully express their fears, dreams and objectives.

Pannunzio continued, “As an empathetic listener you will also be able to learn the language and wording your clients employ when they talk about their issues. So, when the time comes for you to offer your advice, your ability to articulate it in their own language – referring to their examples, using their similes, etc. – will help build a much stronger intellectual and emotional bond with them.”

Mindful listening refers to making a conscious effort to listen with an active mind, void of any preconceived notions and ideas. It particularly entails not to just listen with your ears, but also with your eyes, to monitor your client’s body language and the emotions associated with it, while looking for congruency among words, posture, gestures and tone of voice.

It is worth underscoring that the ultimate goal of mindful listening is simply to listen – nothing more and nothing less.

Claudio Pannunzio concluded, “Almost half a century ago, author James Nathan Miller made an interesting observation, *“Conversation in the U.S. is a competitive exercise in which the first person to draw a breath is declared the listener”*.”

“Don’t let this quote be the accurate description of your approach to client communication. But, most important, master the art of mindful listening to enhance your professional image and make a difference in your life and those of your clients”.

**ENDS**

**Issued Joe Perri & Associates Pty Ltd**

Media enquiries:	Mr. Claudio Pannunzio
	i-Impact Group Inc <a href="http://www.i-impactgroup.com">www.i-impactgroup.com</a>
	Tel: +1 203 532 5881
	Mobile: +1 203 243 7679
	Email: <a href="mailto:Claudio@i-impactgroup.com">Claudio@i-impactgroup.com</a>