

Asking the Right Questions: a Training Tool

Think:	What do I want my question to accomplish?
Open-ended questions:	Why, how, tell me more...
Why questions:	3-5 times why principle (it will usually take asking 'why' about 3-5 times before you get the root issue a person is referring to. For example: when you ask someone why they are stressed/tired etc. the first answer they give is most likely not the real cause of their concern. If you are able to probe further 3-5 times you are more likely to get to the underlying issue and go from there.
Think:	How will this question be received?

Question Types

Explorative Questions:	have you thought of...?
Affective Questions:	how do you feel about...?
Reflective Questions:	why, what do you think...?
Probing Questions:	describe, elaborate, explain, clarify
Fresh Questions:	have we ever tried...?
Questions that create connections:	consequences
Analytical Questions:	cause, not symptoms. Why did this occur?
Clarifying Questions:	what did you/do you mean by that?

The Questioning Process

1. **Break the ice:** Casual questions, friendly tone
2. **Set the stage:** Let people know where you're coming from; the 'quest' in the question:
 - What do I want them thinking about?
 - What do I want to learn?
3. **Asking your questions:** Suspend own preconceptions
 - One question at a time
 - Silence is OK: it communicates that you expect a response and encourages reflection
4. **Listen to responses:** Listen to/hear what's not said.
 - Don't interrupt. No matter how well intentioned, it puts the focus back on you.
5. **Follow Up:** Asking questions isn't an academic process. It needs to lead to positive, meaningful change or will be perceived as insincere.

Material Based on the following source:

Marquardt, Michael. (2005). *Leading with Questions: How leaders find the right solutions by knowing what to ask.* Summary from pages 170 - 176 made by Louisa Raggatt. Jossey-Boss Publishers. USA; San Francisco.

louisa.raggatt@buv.com.au . Asking the Right Questions: a Training Tool . www.buv.com.au . pg 1