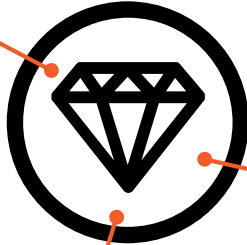


CLARIFYING QUESTIONS

Benefit the questioner

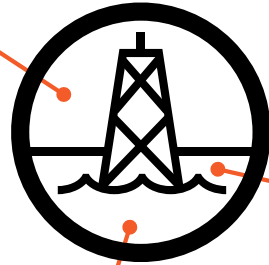


Bring out details

Provide **brief, factual** answers

PROBING QUESTIONS

Benefit the presenter



Bring out **deeper thinking**

Provide opportunities to **think in a new way**

? CLARIFYING QUESTIONS

Characteristics:

- ✓ Gather more information
- ✓ Answered quickly and succinctly
- ✓ Simple questions of fact
- ✓ Provide nuts and bolts
- ✓ Help participants understand situation
- ✓ Presenter does not have to think deeply
- ✓ Allows speaker to be more specific and focused

Possible clarifying stems include:

- *“Which, Who, What When...specifically?”*

NOTE: “Why” tends to elicit a defensive response.

??? PROBING QUESTIONS

Characteristics:

- ✓ Help the presenter think more deeply about the issue at hand
- ✓ Usually does not have a “right” answer
- ✓ Are general and widely useful
- ✓ Do not place blame on anyone
- ✓ Move thinking from reaction to reflection
- ✓ Analyze what worked, didn’t work, or might work

Possible probing stems include:

- *“What’s another way you might...?”*
- *“What would stakeholders say?”*
- *“What would have to change in order for...?”*
- *“What was your intention when...?”*
- *“What do you fear? Want? Get? Assume? Expect?”*
- *“If you had a magic wand, what would you change?”*

NOTE: Careful not to input your suggestions!

PeerSphere

Expanding Questions Suggestions

Reflecting on past situations

- When you reflect on your experience what were the biggest lessons you learned?
- What have you noticed that keeps re-occurring
- In an ideal world, what would you want to do/say/think/feel about this situation?
- What would need to change to enable you to do/say/think/feel this?
- Who has overcome this and might be able to support you with this?
- How has your thinking changed so far?
- What did you take from this situation that you could use elsewhere?
- What did you try that worked/did not work?
- What did you notice about when things were going well/not well?
- How can you transfer that knowledge/learning to a new project?
- How close was the result that you achieved to the goal that you wanted to achieve?
- How clear were you on what was wanted/expected as an outcome?
- What was your goal with this project?
- How clear were you on what success would look like?
- How might you be able to test your perspective on this and compare it with others'?

Options / way forward

- Who else would have a useful perspective?
- What have you done so far that's worked?
- If you could, what would you do?
- What could be the next step that you take to resolve this?
- What would someone who handles this type of issue really well do?
- If you were able to give yourself some advice about what to do next, what might that be?
- What advice would you give someone else in this situation?
- Has there ever been another time in your career when you faced similar circumstances – if so, what did you do?
- What do you think is stopping you from taking action? How could you overcome it?
- What would/could you do differently next time?
- What resources/support would you put in place to make this easier?

Approach	Possible Probing Questions
Hypothetical	How would you perceive this situation from the perspective of a 10-year old?
Best case scenario	What is your ideal outcome?
Worst case scenario	Is there something in this situation that raises some fear in you?
Magical	If you had a magic wand, what would you change?
Fresh start	If you could erase or rewind everything and start over, how would you do it?
Future projection	What does this situation look like a year from today? What did you do to get there?
Here and now	If the person were here now, what would you say?
Strength-based	How can you use your skills and strengths in this situation?
Past strategies	Have you overcome a similar situation in the past? What did you do?
Integrating	You say you are totally confused, but if you were actually very clear about the situation, what would you need to do next?
Context	What if this situation was not happening at work, but at home?
From elsewhere	If you were a fly on the ceiling, what would strike you as really unusual?
Think small	What would be your first small step forward?
Options	What (else) could you try to help this situation?
Non-options	What are your non-negotiables?
Intuition	In your heart, what do you feel is right?
Perspective	How do you think students see this situation?
Assumptions	What assumptions are informing your perspectives?
Connections	What do you think the connection is between _____ and _____?
Data	What evidence exists that...?
Resources	If time, money, etc. were not an issue...?
Decision making	What was your decision making process?
WW?D	What would (insert appropriate role model here) do?
Problem	What do you think is the underlying dilemma in this situation?
Focus	If this problem were really an opportunity for change, where might that perspective lead you?

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Sometimes there is a fine line between a question that pushes the presenter to one particular conclusion and a good probing question. Check to see if your question can have multiple responses. If so, it's more likely to be a probing question than a clarifying question (which can be answered with a "yes" or "no," or only has one or two correct responses).

There is no way to guarantee that **any particular** probing question will be a good one, **or to discard a probing question as "too simple."** The **quality of the question** is determined by its impact on the receiver. **However**, by carefully crafting a probing question, we can increase the likelihood that it will serve its purpose.

The following questions and/or question stems may be useful **in your work**:

- *Why do you think this is the case?*
- *What would you have to change in order for...?*
- *What do you feel is right in your heart?*
- *What do you wish...?*
- *What's another way you might...?*
- *How was... different from...?*
- *When have you done/experienced something like this before? What happened then?*
- *How did you decide/determine/conclude...?*
- *What is your hunch about...?*
- *What was your intention when...?*
- *What do you assume to be true about...?*
- *What is the connection between... and ...?*
- *What if the opposite were true? Then what?*
- *Why is this a dilemma for you?*
- *How might your assumptions about... have influenced how you are thinking about...?*
- *What evidence exists that...?*
- *Is there something in this situation that raises some fear in you?*
- *What was your decision making process?*
- *If you were _____, how would you see this situation?*
- *What if time, money, etc. were not an issue?*
- *Who (else) could help you with this? How? Why?*
- *What is your biggest fear in this situation?*
- *What is the best outcome in this situation?*