

Inquiry as "Self-Discovery"

"An important task of strategic questioning is to create an environment where people can see the solutions that are within themselves.

You listen deeply into the moving heart of the person opposite you.

A strategic questioner listens for the latent solutions hidden in every problem.

...this involves a special type of listening.

You are not passively listening.

You are creating an actions path with your attention

--Fran Peavey, *By Life's Grace: Musings on the Essence of Social Change*

Listeners use inquiry in a healing way. Questions have embedded meaning which can help people move from a static space by offering a broader perspective, giving a sense of hope and purpose, and calling upon the best in people. They can imply the possibility for positive outcomes by guiding people to recall past success, explore possibility, strengthen motivation, and clear distorted perceptions. Inquiry can be used to catch a seminal moment and can deepen the speaker's understanding. They can be used to bring to the surface unmet needs and illuminated values.

Be aware of the impact that certain kinds of questions will have on the speaker because questions can interrupt the positive flow of the exchange. When you ask a question, be clear on the intention of the question before asking it. Take your cue from the speaker.

Questions should

- ❖ Increase understanding and empathy
- ❖ Help the speaker deepen his/her experience
- ❖ Help the speaker, not you, the listener

Questions are NOT for

- ❖ Satisfying the listener's curiosity
- ❖ Showing off your knowledge
- ❖ Expressing critique/challenging
- ❖ Offering opinions

Inquiry as co-creative activity:

- ❖ How has this situation affected your life?
- ❖ What was that like for you
- ❖ What is the source of your courage?
- ❖ What life experiences have helped you in this situation?
- ❖ If this situation were fully resolved, how would things be better for you

