

Asking good questions is about seeking information to help you understand.
Your questions should never make others feel diminished in any way.
Even if you don't agree, appreciate someone else's ideas.
Asking questions is a crucial ingredient for a good discussion.
Do not be judgmental!

*"While you judge me by my outward appearance I am silently doing the same to you,
even though there's a ninety-percent chance that in both cases our assumptions are wrong."*

Don't make assumptions or offer opinions.

*"Spirituality is not adopting more beliefs and assumptions but uncovering the best in you."
"I suppose it is tempting, if the only tool you have is a hammer, to treat everything as if it were a nail."
"Your assumptions are your windows on the world. Scrub them off every once in a while,
or the light won't come in."*

Don't formulate your response while you are listening because then you are not listening.
Avoid questions that begin with "why." Why questions often cause defensive responses and hinder trust.

Don't posture yourself as the expert and expect authentic relationships.

Examples of questions

- How can I best support you? What does support look like?
- I think I heard.....Is that correct?
- I wonder if...
- What do you think about...?
- How does "that" (insert what you heard) make you feel?
- What do you think it would take to change (insert what you heard)?
- That's an interesting thought. How would "that" (insert what you heard) work?
- So what you are saying is ... (insert what you heard)
- Can you describe in more detail WHY this is important to you?
- What triggered or caused you to see this as a problem?
- How can I best support you? What does that look like?
- I'm glad you were willing to talk about this issue, thank you for that. Now what?
- I was not aware that you felt that way, thank you for telling me.
- I know you've been working on (insert what you heard); how has that been going?
- Since we last talked what has gone well?
- What could be done differently that might have made the results even better?
- What keeps you busy during the week vs. How was work this week?
- "What would you be doing if you could be doing what you want?"

Affirming Statements

Affirming statements are words of encouragement that increase a person's belief in themselves and their abilities. The point is to appropriately and consistently appreciate someone's strengths and efforts.

Examples of affirming statements:

- *You do such a good job at....*
- *That was a difficult goal to meet. Good job!*
- *I like the way that you...*
- *Thanks for caring so much.*

Importance of Listening

Listening is key to effective communication.

Create a permissive environment.

Hear what isn't being said.

1. Listen with compassion that shows how much you care.
"I am sorry you are struggling with..."
"I imagine that is painful to be part of every day."
2. Reflect back what you have heard.
"Just to be sure I am hearing you I believe I heard you say...is that right?"
3. Listening is asking clarifying questions.
"How did that make you feel?"
"Share with me a little bit more about..."
"I am not sure I understand what you are saying."
"Help me understand "this" better?"
"So what happened next?"