

Some Examples:

- *Can you say more?*
- *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?*
- *Could you say more about that?*
- *If this situation were fully resolved, how would things be better for you?*
- *How has your life been shaped by these events?*
- *Can you tell us about the situation that concerns you?*
- *Disputes often reach the levels they do because of deep, unmet needs. What deep, unmet needs do you see at work in this situation?*
- *What is in your heart right now? If you were a wise fly on the wall, what do you think might work?*
- *What is the source of your courage?*
- *Can you tell us what life experiences led you to feel this way?*
- *What are you yearning for?*
- *What do you most cherish about this relationship?*

Characteristics of Deepening Questions:²

- **Create motion** – instead of “Why don’t you move to Seattle?” DQ: “What type of place would you like to move to” or “What is the meaning of this move in your life?”
- **Open up options** – instead of “Why don’t you move to Seattle”, DQ: “What are some places that you feel a connection to”
- **Evoke ultimate concerns, high points and deepest values** -
- **Avoid “why”** - why questions create defense and resistance. “How”, “What” and “Is” are good places to start instead. Why don’t you find a way to help the community on this issue?” vs. “What action might you take to help the community on this issue?”
- **Are empowering** - “What would you like to do to help your community?” (for example to high school kids) Assume that they want to help. Assume the goodness in people
- **Ask the unaskable** - “Are there any ways that you might be contributing to this conflict?” “What are you both prepared to do for the sake of your grandchildren?”
- **Are simple.** Asking more than one question at a time is confusing...keep your questions simple and one at a time.
- **Are respectful.** When we use inquiry we convey trust in the person that they are smart enough, courageous enough, to find their own solutions. This is change from the inside out.

Remember...Inquiry is often not needed: Take your cue from the speaker and stay out of the way as much as you can. Most often, Less is More. For the most part Compassionate Listening is practiced by offering loving presence, heartfelt connection and spaciousness. Questions are needed much less often than we tend to imagine. We are often silent, fully present while holding space for the speaker, perhaps offering a touch. We may offer a reflective response (facts-feelings-values/qualities). Most essentially, we anchor in the heart.

² In part synthesized from Fran Peavey, **Strategic Questioning: An Experiment in Communication of the Second Kind.** Available from crabgrass@igc.org