

This excerpt is from a compassionate listening training packet from:

https://sherrymccreedy.weebly.com/uploads/1/3/8/9/13896697/compassionate_listening-training-packet-intro2.pdf

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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?
- 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.

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