



The 6 Types of Questions

Adapted from Dialogues with Socrates
from Brian Weller
Master Facilitation Skills in Business

These 6 types of questions form the basis of deep enquiry and critical thinking. They are especially useful when people need to think creatively and out-of-the box.

Conceptual Clarification Questions

- Please explain why you are saying this?
 - Can you elaborate, what exactly does this mean?
 - How does this relate to what we've been talking about?
 - What do we already know about this?
 - Can you give me an example of this?
 - Please paraphrase this for me?
-

Probing Assumptions

- You seem to be assuming... is that so?
 - How did you choose these assumptions?
 - What else could we assume?
 - How did you arrive at this assumption?
 - Please explain why you think this?
 - Can you verify or disprove this assumption?
 - What would happen if this assumption were true?
-

Probing Rationales, Reasons and Evidence

- How do you know this?
 - Why do you think this is happening?
 - Where can you give me an example of this?
 - What do you think causes this?
 - How can we be sure of what you are saying?
 - How might this be refuted?
 - What evidence is there to support what you're saying?
 - On what authority are you basing your argument?
 - Why? (Keep on asking this... you'll never get past a few times!)
-

Questioning Viewpoints and Perspectives

- What alternative ways of looking at this are there?
 - How could you look at this another way?
 - Another way of looking at this is... , does this seem reasonable?
 - Why is this important or necessary to you?
 - Who benefits from this?
 - What's the difference between this ... and... ?
 - What if you compared... and... ?
 - Why is this better than... ?
 - How are... and... similar?
 - What are the strengths and weaknesses of this view?
 - What would... say about this?
-

Probing Implications and Perspectives

- Then what would happen?
 - What are some of the implications of this perspective?
 - Please tell me what your view implies?
 - How does... fit with what we've learned before?
 - How does this effect... ?
 - Why is... important?
 - How could... be used to... ?
 - This is an interesting perspective. If we adopt it who might support it or oppose it?
-

Questions About the Question

- What does this really mean?
- What's the underlying purpose of this question?
- Why is this important to you?
- Why do you think (John) asked this question?