

## Leading Others Module 4 • Facilitating Discussion

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### **Character: Attentiveness**

Attentiveness means devoting close attention to others' thoughts, interests, and desires. When you as a leader are attentive to people, they are much more likely to attend to what you have to say.

The first behavior of attentiveness is listening. A good listener hears what a person says, and also is able to deduce what someone is thinking but not necessarily saying.

Read Proverbs 18:13 and James 1:19. From your experience, what consequences might you experience when you speak too quickly? When someone else is speaking, what tends to distract you from what the person is truly saying? What discipline or habit would help make you a more attentive listener?

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### **Competency: Facilitating Discussion**

#### **Pre Assessment**

Rate yourself in the following proficiencies.

10 being an expert, 1 being totally unfamiliar

- Value the power that questions have to produce transformation in the lives of participants \_\_\_\_
- Ask a series of questions that follow a progressive thought pattern \_\_\_\_
- Ask questions in a way that generates the engagement of everyone in the group \_\_\_\_
- Ask follow up questions that deepen the insights of the group \_\_\_\_
- Be comfortable with silence, giving the group time to process their thoughts \_\_\_\_

## The Power of Good Questions

In order to facilitate a discussion, you need to utilize good questions. Questions have the power to impact the development, innovation, and engagement of the people we lead. In the Gospels, Jesus asks over 300 questions! As leaders we need to learn to ask good questions.

## The Key to Good Questions

The best questions find the sweet spot between someone's curiosity and knowledge. When we use questions to prepare the learner's mind with curiosity, we create leaders whose minds are fertile for discovery and insight!

- First start with questions that stir people's thinking around a specific topic. These questions surface initial thoughts, current wisdom, past experience, and feelings. Ask for observations, insights, and opinions.
- Next, ask questions to help people think on a deeper, more analytical level. Ask to help people evaluate, break down, segment, and verbalize concepts in their own words.
- Last, ask questions to challenge people to put what they are discussing into practice. Ask for an application, or how to transfer lessons learned to someone else. What are questions that fit at all three levels? "Leading Others Training Guide" by Mac Lake, pages 89-92 for great sample questions.

## Asking Well

- **Ask Simply.** Leading by asking compound questions confuses people and leads to poor quality answers. What is an example of a simple yet thought provoking question?
- **Ask Genuinely.** We are often tempted to use questions to steer the conversation in the direction we want it to go. Do you ever ask questions that you don't want to know what the other person is thinking?
- **Ask Thoughtfully.** Ask questions that don't have immediately obvious answers. How do you engage people in reflection, analysis, or evaluation?
- **Ask Patiently.** Silence is a great tool in discussion. It shows that people are thinking and processing. How comfortable are you with silence?

- **Ask Ready.** Be ready to follow up a great answer, and turn it into a great discussion. Asking for someone's story, their point of view, or even their ideas can enhance the discussion.