Beyond War Study Guide

Readings and Preparation

for

Session 3

Focus Questions

1. Which listening and communication tools and ideas do you find most practical? Which ones will you want to experiment with first?

2. Have you spent more time in dialogue or debate? Which one would you prefer?

3. Of the "Questions That Can Begin Constructive Dialogue about Building a World Beyond War" which do you find most intriguing? Which would you most like to be able to answer masterfully? Would you like your elected officials to be genuinely curious about these questions?

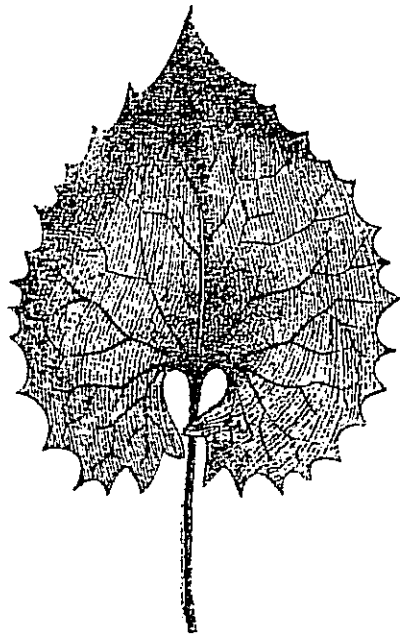
Focus Activities

1. Ask at least one person one of the "Questions that Can Begin Constructive Dialogue..." this week and employ the 95% Rule as you listen.

2. Listen to the CD that is included in your materials for Session 3 about the power of listening. Notice how you feel.

3. Remember, most of the "content" of ideas that will help to build a world beyond war is coming up in the readings of sessions 4 through 7.

NON SEQUITUR



I want to write about what a great and powerful thing listening is. And how we forget it. And how we don't listen to our children, or those we love. And least of all -- which is so important too -- to those we do not love. But we should. Because listening is a magnetic and strange thing, a creative force.

...this is the reason: When we are listened to, it creates us, makes us unfold and expand. Ideas actually begin to grow within us and come to life. You know how if a person laughs at your jokes you become funnier and funnier, and if he does not, every tiny little joke in you weakens up and dies. Well, that is the principle of it. It makes people happy and free when they are listened to. And if you are a listener, it is the secret ...of comforting people, of doing them good.

...We should all know this: that listening, not talking, is the gifted and great role, and the imaginative role...And so try listening. Listen to your wife, your husband, your father, your mother, your children, your friends; to those who love you and those who don't, to those who bore you, to your enemies. It will work a small miracle. And perhaps a great one.

Brenda Ueland 1892-1985
From *The Art of Listening*

Public sentiment is everything. With public sentiment nothing can fail; without it, nothing can succeed. Consequently, he who molds public sentiment goes deeper than he who enacts statutes or pronounces decisions. He makes statutes or decisions possible or impossible to be executed.

Abraham Lincoln
16th President of the United States

Reading List for Session 3

- Effective Conversations That Aid Positive Social Change
- Relationship and Content

Relationship

- Listening, Speaking and Conflict Resolution Skills
- Interior State
- Story
- Conflict Resolution Basics
- 95% Rule
- Active Listening Techniques
- When We Talk One-On-One...
- Differences Between Debate and Dialogue
- Behaviors That Support Dialogue
- Dialogue/Trialogue

Content

- Questions That Can Begin a Constructive Dialogue
- Framing and Reframing
- Top Twenty Recommendations from *U.S. in the World*
- Additional Resources for Effective Conversations & Dialogues
- Koranic Duels Ease Terror
- CD: Compassionate Listening

Optional Reading

- Strategic Questioning: Engaging People's Best Thinking

Effective Conversations That Aid Positive Social Change

Word of mouth" is one of the most effective ways to introduce and anchor new ideas in society. Everyone can participate in this important activity. Talking to one's family, friends and colleagues and actually making progress depends on understanding some basic skills as well as knowing how to "frame" content. This session provides information in both of those categories.

Many people in modern society believe that the way to convince others is a matter of having a sound argument. When presenting this argument doesn't work, we get stuck in judging others or ourselves. Actually, building relationships built on respect and trust is the most effective way to present a message. Often, it takes time to engage others with new ideas. Being in a rush only makes this process take *more* time. The fastest way to make progress in embedding new ideas is to go slow, building positive relationships and enjoying the process.

During this study series (and always) we invite you to experiment with the assertions we make and with the skills and tools we present. Regard the first few attempts to use them as experimental and interesting, avoid getting stuck in judging yourself or others on the results.

The overall goal of conversations that promote building a world beyond war should be the creation of a mutual learning experience that maintains or enhances your relationship with the other person. Within that relationship you would learn the underlying assumptions and values related to their views, and they would learn yours. You would then explore together the facts and views you both have related to the costs and dangers of war. You would share what you have come to understand about what peoples and nations can do instead of war. The tools presented in this session are useful in learning how to listen, how much to talk, and how to frame issues and facts when you speak.

Admittedly, not everyone is eager to embark on a "mutual learning experience" and would rather plan to "win" a "win/lose" conversation. Leadership may be found in a tenacious process of inviting the person to converse differently. That invitation can take the form of modeling by listening respectfully with genuine curiosity. This curiosity and consciousness of maintaining friendship can constitute an irresistible invitation.

It is important to retain your right to speak your truth and be authentic and in integrity with yourself. You can even respectfully and kindly--or humorously and affectionately--ask the person to please listen to you in response to your prior listening. Just don't forget that for someone to own "a new way of thinking" it must be accepted and claimed by the thinker. Very often, the most effective thing to do is to ask a good question and perhaps follow it up with new information. To know what question to ask and what information to share, one must invest in learning about the person's views. That is the rationale behind the "95% Rule" in this session's readings.

"How can you expect me to consider dialogue when I have been unable to even talk about this issue with those who disagree?" you may ask. The answer is that one can only get what one wants when one knows what that is. If we want dialogue, and we succeed in creating it even once, we will be motivated to improve our skills and succeed in ever more challenging circumstances. The opposite of a "quick fix" this approach is a path to a much more interesting and rewarding intellectual and heart-connected life. Much is at stake--this is a good time to prepare to be adventurous and tenacious in the pursuit of building better communities and a world beyond war.

Prepare to fail some and gradually succeed more and more often!

There are two essential components in communication:

Relationship and Content

For most effective communication,

- The ***relationship*** is characterized by respect, connection, and gratitude for the opportunity to communicate
- The ***content*** is presented in a way that relates to what is important and is coherent to the listener (***framed*** effectively)

Relationship

Listening, Speaking, and Conflict Resolution Skills

A list of things to remember:

Resist Not!

While listening, it is important to work to really take in the point of view and beliefs of the person with whom you are speaking. If you are having trouble doing this, see the page on Interior State. If you are in the middle of a conversation and you feel yourself becoming upset, it may be best to say "Please excuse me, I am being overtaken by my feelings about this and can't continue to talk about it now." (Please note the use of an "I" Statement, basic counseling theory.) Consider the contrast to "You are so infuriating that I want to punch you!" or body language and voice tone which conveys that emotion.

Talk About Your Emotions, Don't Emote

This idea which is fully developed in *Getting to Yes* by Roger Fisher and William Ury, has been proven effective in many situations. Say "I feel deeply sad when innocent men, women, and children die in Iraq. I want people everywhere to learn to resolve conflicts so that children don't see their families die around them."

Think About Communication on a Timeline

We live in a culture where we expect almost everything to happen very fast. But most people don't change their minds fast. In fact, some brain research shows that changing thinking takes time to change neural pathways in the brain. After one conversation, we mostly don't know what effect it has had on the other person, who also may not know for some time. That is why it is important to maintain a respectful relationship and converse thoughtfully over time.

George Lakoff's* Priority Advice

- Show respect
- Respond by Reframing
- Think and talk at the level of values
- Say what you believe

* From *Don't Think of an Elephant*, George Lakoff, 2004
This book, which has a partisan slant, contains nonetheless an excellent analysis of the language and thinking of the mainstream cultures in The United States today.

INTERIOR STATE

Choice about "Interior State" requires noticing in detail how one feels inside while listening.

A broad range of feelings is possible when a person is listening under stress. Which ones get in the way of really understanding what is being said?

QUALITIES OF AN INTERIOR STATE WHEN QUALITY LISTENING IS POSSIBLE:

An interior state which is:

PATIENT

GENUINELY INTERESTED

FEELING APPRECIATION FOR THE OPPORTUNITY TO HEAR

FREE OF FEAR

FREE OF HARSH JUDGMENT OF SELF OR OTHERS

RESPECTFUL

COMPASSIONATE

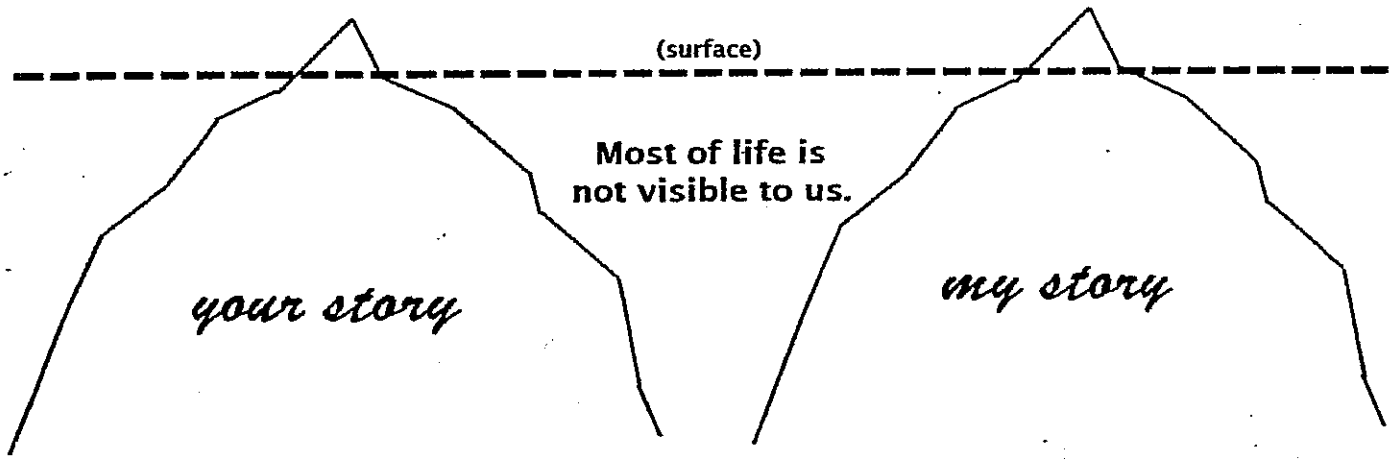
Attaining this state in stressful circumstances
is a skill that requires practice.

Gayle Landt, The Conflict Resolution Center, 1994.

Story

"An enemy is one whose story we haven't heard."
Gene Knudsen-Hoffman

Like icebergs, most aspects of ourselves are hidden from each other. We do not know one another's stories. Out of sight and below the surface is our humanity--powerful influences of culture, beliefs, customs, and personal and collective histories. These influences go very, very deep and affect how we view life,how we think, feel, what we do. Listening with empathy, as equals, to each other's stories is one of the great acts of love. It leads to healing.



Conflict Resolution Basics

1. Attack the problem, not the person.
   - Define the problem.
   - Explore each person's perception of the problem.
   - Seek to understand and respect each point of view without judging.
   - Use good communication skills, including:
     Active listening
     Summarizing what the other person has said
     Clarifying

2. Concentrate on interests, not positions.
   - The position is the outcome you are interested in getting.
   - The deeper interest is why you want that outcome.
   - Interests are usually related to our basic needs, such as *security, shelter, food, water, self-determination, dignity.* When we focus on interests instead of positions, we can start to find solutions.

3. Come up with options in which both sides can win—"win-win" options.

4. Cooperate together to solve the problem fairly.
   - A fair solution respects the interests of both sides.

"You can't assert yourself in the world
as if nobody was there.
Because this is not a clash of ideas.
There are people attached to these ideas.
If you want to live without violence,
you have to realize that
other people are as real as you are."

Clifford Geertz, anthropologist

The 95% Rule
is an oxygen mask
for a dis-eased
conversation...

the better the relationship
and the more quality
information both people
have, the more balanced
talking time can be.

LISTENING TOOL

95% Rule

The 95% Rule is an essential tool, useful to succeed in challenging communications and to improve previously unsatisfactory ones.

The rule responds to the reality that the more contrast there is in my view and yours, the more I must listen and the less I must talk, if my goal is to have you understand, respect, and move closer to my point of view.

If we disagree, my best course is to let you talk 95% of the time and I will talk 5% of the time that we have to converse. During my 5%, I will ask you *non rhetorical* questions--and there will be no element of "How can you be so stupid?" in my thinking, voice-tone, or manner.

My purpose in asking you questions will be to fully understand you and your point of view, to build a positive relationship with you, to model respectful listening, and to stimulate you to do your most productive and life-affirming thinking on the subject we discuss.

My best active listening will, hopefully, enable you to leave our conversation thinking in new ways, struggling to understand and incorporate new ideas that I have introduced, and looking forward to talking to me about the subject in the future. This approach is very different that intending to "win" in the conversation.

9-30-04

Active Listening Techniques

Statements that help the other person talk.

Statement	Purpose	To do this...	Examples
Encouraging	To convey interest. To encourage the other person to keep talking.	Don't agree or disagree. Use neutral words. Use varying voice intonations.	"Can you tell me more?"
Clarifying	To help you clarify what is. To get more information. To help the speaker see other points of view.	Ask questions. Restate wrong interpretation to force the speaker to explain further.	"When did that happen?"
Restating	To show you are listening and understand what is being said. To check your meaning and interpretation.	Restate basic ideas and facts.	"So you would like your parents to trust You more, is that right?"
Reflecting	To show that you understand how the person feels To help the person evaluate his or her own feelings after hearing them expressed by someone else.	Reflect the speaker's basic feelings	"You seem very upset."
Summarizing	To review progress. To pull together important ideas and facts. To establish a basis for further discussion.	Restate major ideas expressed including feelings.	"These seem to be the key ideas you've expressed..."
Validating	To acknowledge the worthiness of the other person.	Acknowledge the value of their issues and feelings. Show appreciation for their efforts and actions.	"I appreciate your willing-ness to resolve this matter."

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When we talk one-on-one,
what are we doing?

TRIALOGUE

DIALOGUE

CONVERSATION

ANNOUNCEMENT/LECTURE

DEBATE

ARGUMENT

THREATS

ASSASSINATION

WAR

The Differences between Debate and Dialogue

Debate	Dialogue
assumes there is a right answer--and that I have it	assumes that many people have pieces of the answer and that together, they can craft an solution
is combative: participants attempt to prove the other side wrong	is collaborative: participants work together toward common understanding
is about winning	is about exploring common ground
entails listening to find flaws and make counter arguments	entails listening to understand and find meaning and agreement
I defend my assumptions as truth	I reveal my assumptions for re-evaluation
I critique the other side's position	I re-examine all positions
I defend my own views against those of others	I admit that others' thinking can improve my own
I search for weakness in others' positions	I search for strength and value in other's positions
I seek a conclusion or vote that ratifies my position	I discover new options

From *The Magic of Dialogue* by Daniel Yankelovich

Behaviors That Support Dialogue

Suspension of judgment when listening and speaking. When we listen and suspend judgment, we open the door to expanded understanding. When we speak without judgment, we open the door for others to listen to us.

Respect for differences. Our respect is grounded in the belief that everyone has an essential contribution to make and is to be honored for the perspective which only they can bring.

Role and status suspension. Again, in dialogue, all participants and their contributions are absolutely essential to developing an integrated whole view. No one perspective is more important than any other. Dialogue is about power with, versus power over or power under.

Balancing inquiry and advocacy. In dialogue we *inquire* to discover and understand others' perspectives and ideas, and we *advocate* to offer our own for consideration. The intention is to bring forth and make visible assumptions and relationships, and to gain new insight and understanding.

We often tend to advocate to convince others of our positions. Therefore, a good place to start with this guideline is to practice bringing more inquiry into the conversation.

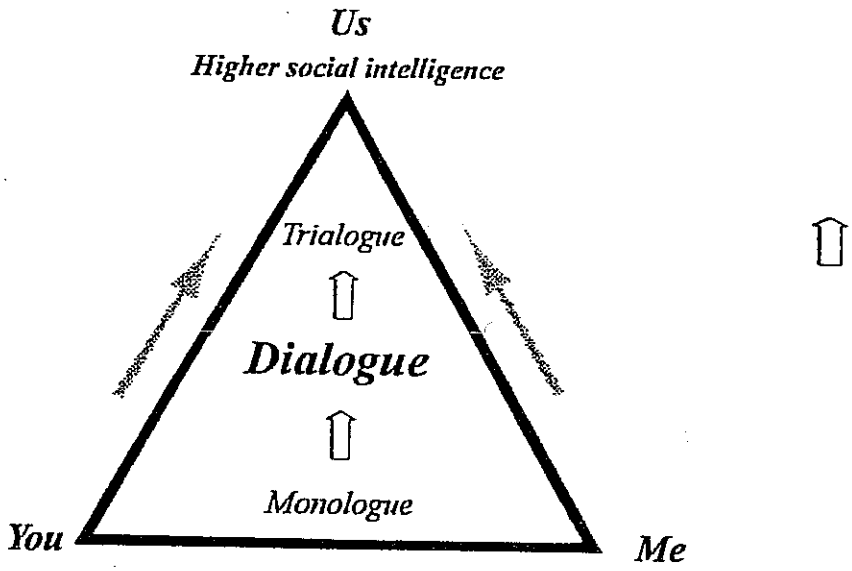
Focus on learning. Our intention is to learn from each other, to expand our view and understanding, not to evaluate and determine who has the "best" view.

When we are focused on learning, we tend to ask more questions, try new things. We are willing to disclose our thinking so that we can see both what is working for us and what we might want to change. We want to hear from all parties so that we can *gain the advantage of differing perspectives.*

Dialogue

"Dialogue is to love, what blood is to the body. When the flow of blood stops, the body dies.
When dialogue stops, love dies and resentment and hate are born.
But dialogue can restore a dead relationship.
Indeed, this is the miracle of dialogue: it can bring relationship into being, and it can bring into being once again a relationship that has died.
There is only one qualification to these claims for dialogue:
it must be mutual and proceed from both sides, and the parties to it must persist relentlessly."

Reuel L. Howe
The Miracle of Dialogue, 1963



Trialogue

Trialogue *is more than dialogue; you can feel the difference. It is the true meeting of persons in a field of goodwill, faithful and open to discovering each other's humanity and a higher social intelligence. It is an event that transcends language and finds, as it is entered into, expression in openness and love. It is a way to cooperation and community in diversity. It is fundamental to human development, and to survival itself.*

بعيداً عن المعتقدات والأعمال الصالحة والشارع هناك حقل ، أراكم هناك.
جلال الدين الرومي

מעבר לסוב ולרע. לצדק ולעוולה. ישנו מקום. שם נפגש.
ג'לאלודין רומי

"Out beyond ideas of rightdoing and wrongdoing, there is a field.
I'll meet you there."

Jelaluddin Rumi (1207-1273)

Content

Questions That Can Begin Constructive Dialogue About Building a World Beyond War

Question 1 : "In light of all of the costs of war,

* the cost in human lives
* the cost in alienation with foreign peoples and their governments
* the cost in distraction from all of the other things we need to do to build our country
* the actual dollar costs--and the ballooning federal deficit

and given the fact that our country seems to get involved in a war every ten or less years and then war incurs these terrible costs, what can people, community leaders and elected officials do, and what can the United States government do, to prevent wars from happening?"

Question 2 : "What kind of model should the United States present to the world in nonviolent conflict resolution, humanitarian aid, support for international law, and collaboration with other countries? For example, what changes, if any, would you advocate in the current structure of the United Nations to make it a more effective vehicle for peace and order in the world?"

Question 3 : "What do you think about the moratorium on nuclear weapons testing? Do you support the ratification of the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty?" What is the United States' and international criteria for choosing countries allowed to have nuclear weapons and who are the decision-makers who determine these criteria? Do you agree with this or any criteria, and who should decide it and act on it?

Question 4: "What do you think about preemptive war?"

Question 5 : "How do you think international arms sales affect the economy, stability, and prospects for order in the developed and developing world?"

Question 6: "Many people in the Arab world blame the United States for the plight of the Palestinians, with whom they identify. How best can the United States help the Israelis and Palestinians achieve agreement on coexistence, and do this in a way that builds respect with the Arab World as well as the people of Israel?"

If these questions are asked with an attitude of goodwill and genuine curiosity, and the questioner continues to listen with a high quality interior state, following with more respectful questions, then change is possible!

FRAMING and REFRAMING

"Framing" refers to how an issue is conceptualized. An example is "War on Terror." In fact, it doesn't make sense to wage war on a behavior calculated to create extreme fear by difficult-to-identify individuals and small groups--but people get so distracted by memories of video footage of the World Trade Towers burning that they don't think it through. That doesn't need to stop you.

One "reframe" sounds something like this:

"Have you ever really thought through the phrase "war on terror"? If you do, you may realize that it doesn't make sense. War as we have traditionally understood it has meant attacking an identifiable enemy in an identifiable place with identifiable infrastructure. Armies wear uniforms and defend specific territory.

What happened on September 11, 2001 wasn't anything like that. It could much better be described as a group of criminals who used United States infrastructure to attack the United States illegally. These unidentified people in our country used our airplanes to kill our citizens (and citizens from many other nations).

When Timothy McVeigh blew up the Federal Courthouse in Oklahoma City, no one went to his home town with bombs. That's because the United States has a criminal justice system. Most citizens understand how it works--and it did work in that McVeigh and Terry Nichols were arrested and they weren't able to attach any more innocent civilians. What is needed is an international legal system and sufficient cooperation and collaboration between governments and peoples to bring violent criminals--such as the September 11th hijackers-- to justice."

Another reframe:

"I want my country to strong--but also effective at reaching its goals and respected in the world. Many people talk about the war in Iraq being about Saddam Hussein and saving the Iraqi people from his oppression. But the way that America has approached the problem has killed tens of thousands of innocent men, women and children. The people who have lived are now experiencing a lot of the "oppression" that comes from daily violence and disruption of their transportation, security and other systems. The United States attacked the country with no effective plan about how to protect and care for the Iraqi people and keep the peace in their country after the attack. This makes me question the use of war to solve a problem like this. In fact, the Christian Ministerial Association of the region spoke out against a war before it started and said what would help the people would be measures to strengthen the middle class which they said would weaken Saddam's military. What do you think?"

Reframes can either directly address specific language such as "war on terror," or they can simply state values and interpret what is going on in light of these values.

Examples of Framing, from the book *U.S. in the World*, for Question 3 of "Questions That Can Build Constructive Dialogue..."

13E **"Proliferation is inevitable. ..."**

Basic advice: *Describe proliferation as a shared concern and show that progress is possible if nations work together. Emphasize effectiveness and teamwork; point to successes.*

"... **Global teamwork to limit the spread of nuclear, chemical, and biological weapons works.** ..."

"... **History shows that we can get results when we work with other nations** to enforce and, when necessary, strengthen the international laws and standards that discourage the spread of deadly weapons. For example, international agreements have succeeded in limiting the spread of nuclear weapons to a handful of nations, and these agreements have encouraged several nations—like Brazil and South Africa—to give up their plans for developing such weapons. International cooperation on chemical weapons has led to the destruction of millions of tons of chemical agents. Thanks to another cooperative agreement, the U.S. is helping Russia do a better job of monitoring and securing its nuclear weapons and materials; this joint program has also provided 40,000 weapons scientists in the former Soviet Union with funding for peaceful research, so they don't have to go looking for work in places like North Korea and Iran. There's much more to do, and in some areas we're moving too slowly. But we can **build on these successes to tackle today's weapons challenges,** if we muster the political will to do so. ..."

"... **Many nations share our concern about the spread of deadly weapons,** and history shows that we can get results when we work together to develop shared rules and enforcement mechanisms for dealing with this threat. Those **rules and mechanisms can and should be strengthened,** and the U.S. should play an important role in this process. But that's not all we can do. We should also **support impartial international institutions,** like the International Atomic Energy Agency, that go where individual nations can't go and exert pressure on behalf of the entire global community. **Getting serious about prevention** is critical too. We should play an active role in international diplomatic efforts to help resolve regional conflicts—like the Israeli–Palestinian conflict—that escalate tensions and create incentives for neighboring countries to develop deadly weapons. And we should increase our investment in proven, cooperative programs to help other countries do a better job of guarding their stockpiles of weapons and materials—so terrorists aren't able to acquire or steal them. It's hard, expensive work, but **when we use the full array of tools at our disposal, and share the burden with other nations, the odds are on our side.** We can do it. ..."

"... For just 1 percent of the current defense budget, we could secure all the nuclear bomb material in the world, taking it off the black market for good. **Getting more serious about measures to prevent proliferation would be a smart investment** in our own security. ..."

"... **Proliferation isn't just about "them"—it's also about us.** We can set a good example by significantly reducing the role of nuclear weapons in our own security policies. That would reduce the attractiveness and acceptability of these weapons in the eyes of other nations. ..."

13F "Verification doesn't work; it's easier than ever for the bad guys to hide their weapons. ..."

Basic advice: *Without overpromising, point to the history and prospects for success, if we treat this as a shared problem and do our part in solving it. Emphasize effectiveness, can-do, teamwork, team leadership.*

"... The prospects for effective international monitoring are better than ever, thanks to new technologies for inspection and a new, shared understanding of the risk of letting outlaw regimes or terrorist groups secretly develop or acquire deadly weapons. We know we need tougher international agreements that call for more intrusive inspections and more reliable enforcement. And we know that the U.S. needs to play a leading role in shaping and abiding by these agreements; **if we don't do our part, the global team can't function effectively. With stronger U.S. involvement, we could make real progress on this critical front.** What are we waiting for? ..."

"... The question is: **Are we doing all we can to shape and abide by the tough new inspection and enforcement provisions** that are needed to stop cheating in its tracks? Negotiations to strengthen the **international agreement on biological weapons** broke down because the U.S. refused to allow biological weapons inspections on its turf. This means that there are no inspections at all, and no rules governing the development of possible bioweapons like anthrax. **When the U.S. doesn't do its part, the force of international law is weakened** and others may be tempted to break the rules. ..."

"... For the past 50 years, **the U.S. has wisely taken the lead in shaping the international laws and verification procedures** that are designed to control the spread of deadly weapons. The rest of the world and the United States have benefited enormously from the enforcement of these laws. An international agreement banning chemical weapons has made possible the destruction of 2 million such weapons and 7 million metric tons of chemical agents. Now, international inspections are pressuring Iran to reveal more about its nuclear program. And inspections and verification in Iraq destroyed more deadly weapons than both Gulf wars. The system isn't perfect, but it has kept the problem down to a trickle rather than a flood. Let's **keep improving the system, so it works even better next time. ...**"

TOP 20 RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Start by signaling to your listeners what an issue is "about." Invoke big, cross-cutting ideas.
2. Put your proposals and arguments in the context of an interconnected world.
3. Explain why your proposals are smart/effective/pragmatic/realistic in the context of today's world.
4. Explain why your proposals are the right thing to do.
5. Provide context for problems; explain which actions (by whom) are most important to their solution.
6. Stress a "can-do" approach. Don't open with fear, guilt, or comments that overwhelm.
7. When appropriate, cite examples of other countries (and NGOs) that are working alongside the U.S.
8. Cite examples of what works and offer success stories.
9. Empower listeners by telling them what they can do; give yardsticks to evaluate policy/actions.
10. Determine in advance your 3 or 4 most important "gateway" messages.
11. Don't be afraid to repeat yourself.
12. In radio and television interviews, talk with your audience of citizens—not to the reporter.
13. Avoid jargon and acronyms.
14. Use analogies, metaphors, and comparisons from daily life.
15. Use numbers sparingly and put them in context.
16. Be sincere and honest at all times. And be yourself.
17. Use a reasonable, rational tone. Don't attack personally. Question assumptions, not motives or integrity.
18. Show both the benefits of approaches you propose and the costs of alternatives.
19. Don't repeat opponents' position, bad questions, or misconceptions. Bridge to your big ideas and frames.
20. Keep asking tough questions about communications choices and talking with peers about decisions.

YARDSTICKS TO HELP CITIZENS EVALUATE POLICIES & ACTIONS

Are we making the right choices to get results in an increasingly interconnected world?

- Are we looking at the big picture and taking a comprehensive approach?
- Are we using all the tools we have available—diplomatic, economic, cultural, military—and doing all we can to keep these tools effective?
- Are we learning from experience and doing what's been shown to work?

Are we building (and keeping) the kinds of teams and relationships with others that we need to solve problems effectively in today's world?

- Have we shown respect for the views and concerns of others, and cultivated the trust on which future collaborations can be based?
- Have we inspired others to get involved and do their share?
- Are we supporting/strengthening the international institutions that facilitate cooperation and can get the job done?

Are we taking the long view? Are we making the choices that will leave the world a better, safer place for our children and grandchildren?

- Are we making appropriate trade-offs between short-term and long-term interests?
- Are we acting now to head off problems that will threaten us in the long run?
- Are we considering and planning for the long-range consequences of our actions?
- When we must compromise, will the long-range benefits for us and the world outweigh the costs?

Are our policies and actions consistent with what America stands for?

- Are we setting a good example?
- Are we doing our best to practice what we preach and play fair as a member of the global community?
- Are we keeping our promises?

Additional Resources
for
Effective Conversations and Dialogue

BOOKS

Getting to Peace, William Ury

Getting to Yes, Roger Fisher and William Ury

Difficult Conversations, by Heen, Stone and Patton

Don't Think of an Elephant, by George Lakoff

On Dialogue, by David Bohm

U.S. in the World: Talking Global Issues with Americans, A Practical Guide
by a Task Force of 48 guided by Stephen Heintz and Walter Issacson

WEB SITES

www.diffcon.com (Difficult Conversations)

www.usintheworld.org

http://traubman.igc.org (Jewish Palestinian Living Room Dialogue Group)

Koranic duels ease terror

By James Brandon I Contributor to The Christian Science Monitor

SANAA, YEMEN - When Judge Hamoud al-Hitar announced that he and four other Islamic scholars would challenge Yemen's Al Qaeda prisoners to a theological contest, Western antiterrorism experts warned that this high-stakes gamble would end in disaster.

Nervous as he faced five captured, yet defiant, Al Qaeda members in a Sanaa prison, Judge Hitar was inclined to agree But banishing his doubts, the youthful cleric threw down the gauntlet, in the hope of bringing peace to his troubled homeland.

"If you can convince us that your ideas are justified by the Koran, then we will join you in your struggle," Hitar told the militants. "But if we succeed in convincing you of our ideas, then you must agree to renounce violence." The prisoners eagerly agreed.

Now, two years later, not only have those prisoners been released, but a relative peace reigns in Yemen. And the same Western experts who doubted this experiment are courting Hitar, eager to hear how his "theological dialogues" with captured Islamic militants have helped pacify this wild and mountainous country, previously seen by the US as a failed state, like Iraq and Afghanistan.

"Since December 2002, when the first round of the dialogues ended, there have been no terrorist attacks here, even though many people thought that Yemen would become terror's capital," says Hitar, eyes glinting shrewdly from beneath his emerald-green turban. "Three hundred and sixty-four young men have been released after going through the dialogues and none of these have left Yemen to fight anywhere else."

"Yemen's strategy has been unconventional certainly, but it has achieved results that we could never have hoped for," says one European diplomat, who did not want to be named. "Yemen has gone from being a potential enemy to becoming an indispensable ally in the war on terror."

To be sure, the prisoner-release program is not solely responsible for the absence of attacks in Yemen. The government has undertaken a range of measures to combat terrorism from closing down extreme madrassahs, the Islamic schools sometimes accused of breeding hate, to deporting foreign militants.

Eager to spread the news of his success, Hitar welcomes foreigners into his home, fussing over them and pouring endless cups of tea. But beyond the otherwise nondescript house, a sense of menace lurks. Two military jeeps are parked outside, and soldiers peer through the gathering dark at passing cars. The evening wind sweeps through the unpaved streets, lifting clouds of dust and whipping up men's jackets to expose belts hung with daggers, pistols, and mobile telephones.

Seated amid stacks of Korans and religious texts, Hitar explains that his system is simple. He invites militants to use the Koran to justify attacks on innocent civilians and when they cannot, he shows them numerous passages commanding Muslims not to attack civilians, to respect other religions, and fight only in self-defense.

For example, he quotes: "Whoever kills a soul, unless for asoul, or for corruption done in the land - it is as if he had slain all mankind entirely. And, whoever saves one, it is as if he had saved mankind entirely." He uses the passage to bolster his argument against bombing Western targets in Yemen - attacks he says defy the Koran. And, he says, the Koran says under no circumstances should women and children be killed.

If, after weeks of debate, the prisoners renounce violence they are released and offered vocational training courses and help to find jobs.

Hitar's belief that hardened militants trained by Osama bin Laden in Afghanistan could change their stripes was initially dismissed by US diplomats in Sanaa as dangerously naive, but the methods of the scholarly cleric have little in common with the other methods of fighting extremism. Instead of lecturing or threatening the battle-hardened militants, he listens to them.

"An important part of the dialogue is mutual respect," says Hitar. "Along with acknowledging freedom of expression, intellect and opinion, you must listen and show interest in what the other party is saying."

Only after winning the militants' trust does Hitar gradually begin to correct their beliefs. He says that most militants are ordinary people who have been led astray. Just as they were taught Al Qaeda's doctrines, he says, so too can they be taught more- moderate ideas. "If you study terrorism in the world, you will see that it has an intellectual theory behind it," says Hitar. "And any kind of intellectual idea can be defeated by intellect."

The program's success surprised even Hitar. For years Yemen was synonymous with violent Islamic extremism. The ancestral homeland of Mr. bin Laden, it provided two-thirds of recruits for his Afghan camps, and was notorious for kidnappings of foreigners and the bombing of the American warship USS Cole in 2000 that killed 17 sailors. Resisting US pressure, Yemen declined to meet violence with violence.

"It's only logical to tackle these people through their brains and heart," says Faris Sanabani, a former adviser to President Abdullah Saleh and editor-in-chief of the Yemen Observer, a weekly English-language newspaper. "If you beat these people up they become more stubborn. If you hit them, they will enjoy the pain and find something good in it - it is a part of their ideology. Instead, what we must do is erase what they have been taught and explain to them that terrorism will only harm Yemenis' jobs and prospects. Once they understand this they become fighters for freedom and democracy, and fighters for the true Islam," he says.

Some freed militants were so transformed that they led the army to hidden weapons

caches and offered the Yemeni security services advice on tackling Islamic militancy. A spectacular success came in 2002 when Abu Ali al Harithi, Al Qaeda's top commander in Yemen, was assassinated by a US air-strike following a tip-off from one of Hitar's reformed militants.

Yet despite the apparent success in Yemen, some US diplomats have criticized it for apparently letting Islamic militants off the hook with little guarantee that they won't revert to their old ways once released from prison.

Yemen, however, argues that holding and punishing all militants would create only further discontent, pointing out that the actual perpetrators of attacks have all been prosecuted, with the bombers of the USS Cole and the French oil tanker, the SS Limburg. All received death sentences.

"Yemeni goals are long-term political aims whereas the American agenda focuses on short-term prosecution of military or law enforcement objectives," wrote Charles Schmitz, a specialist in Yemeni affairs, in 2004 report for the Jamestown Foundation, an influential US think tank.

"These goals are not necessarily contradictory, with each government recognizing that compromises and accommodations must be made, but their ambiguities create tense moments."

Some members of the Yemeni government also hanker for a more iron-fisted approach, and Yemen remains on high alert for further attacks. Fighter planes regularly swoop low over the ancient mud-brick city of Sanaa to send a clear message to any would-be militants.

An additional cause of friction with the US is that while Yemen successfully discourages attacks within its borders on the grounds that tourism and trade will suffer, it has done little to tackle anti-Western sentiment or the corruption, poverty, and lack of opportunity that fuels Islamic militancy.

"Yemen still faces serious challenges, but despite the odd hiccup, we sometimes have to admit that Yemenis know Yemen best," says the European diplomat. "And if their system works, who are we to complain?"

As the relative success of Yemen's unusual approach becomes apparent, Hitar has been invited to speak to antiterrorism specialists at London's New Scotland Yard, as well as to French and German police, hoping to defuse growing militancy among Muslim immigrants.

US diplomats have also approached the cleric to see if his methods can be applied in Iraq, says Hitar. "Before the dialogues began, there was only one way to fight terrorism, and that was through force," he says. "Now there is another way: dialogue."

OPTIONAL

READING

FOR

SESSION 3

THE SYSTEMS THINKER
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STRATEGIC QUESTIONING: ENGAGING PEOPLE'S BEST THINKING

BY JUANITA BROWN, DAVID ISAACS, ERIC VOGT, AND NANCY MARGULIES

"Stop asking so many questions," many children hear at home. "Don't give me the question, give me the answer," many students hear at school. "I'm not interested in hearing what you don't know, I want to hear what you *do* know," many employees hear at work.

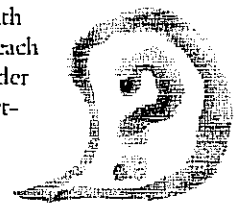
The injunction against discovering and asking questions is widespread in today's family, educational, and corporate cultures. That's unfortunate, because asking questions that matter is one of the primary ways that people have, starting in childhood, to engage their natural, self-organizing capacities for collaborative conversation, exploration, inquiry, and learning. In our own work with creating positive futures, we are discovering that the usefulness of our knowledge depends on the quality of the questions we ask. Clear, bold, and penetrating questions tend to open up the context for new learning and discovery, which is a key component of strategy innovation.

Strategic learning can occur, not only through formal planning activities, but also through webs of informal conversations and networks of relationships, both within an organization and among key stakeholders. Choosing to ask and explore "big questions"—questions that matter to the future of the organization—is a powerful force.

When people frame their strategic exploration as questions rather than as concerns or problems, a conversation begins where everyone can learn something new together, rather than having the normal stale debates. In effect, people begin looking at "the map of the territory" together. The questions encourage them to wonder "What is the map telling us?" rather than to push preconceived ideas of what they think it shows.

Why Don't We Ask Better Questions?

If asking good questions is so critical, why don't we spend more of our time and energy focused upon discovering and framing them? One reason may be that much of our Western culture is focused on knowing the "right answer" rather than discovering the "right question." Our educational system focuses more on memorization and static answers rather than on the art of seeking new possibilities through dynamic questioning. We are rarely taught how to ask powerful questions. Nor are we often taught why we should ask compelling questions in the first place. Quizzes, examinations, and aptitude tests all reinforce the value of correct answers, usually with only one correct answer for each question asked. Is it any wonder that most of us are uncomfortable with not knowing?



Perhaps our aversion to asking creative questions stems from our emphasis on finding quick fixes and our attachment to black/white, either/or thinking. Often the rapid pace of our lives and work doesn't provide us the opportunity to be in reflective conversations where creative questions and innovative solutions can be explored before reaching key decisions. This dilemma is further reinforced by organizational reward systems in which leaders feel they are paid for fixing problems rather than fostering breakthrough thinking. Between our deep attachment to the answer—any answer—and our anxiety about not knowing, we have inadvertently thwarted our collective capacity for deep creativity and fresh perspectives in the face of the unprecedented challenges we face, both in our own organizations and as a global human community.

The World's Best Industrial Research Lab

One of the best corporate examples of how a "big question"—a truly strategic question—can galvanize collective conversation, engagement, and action occurred at Hewlett-Packard. The director of Hewlett-Packard Laboratories wondered why HP Labs was not considered the best industrial research lab in the world. As he thought about it, he realized that he did not know what being the "World's Best Industrial Research Lab" (WBIRL) really meant.

One key staff member was charged with coordinating the effort. Instead of looking for "answers" outside the company, she encouraged the director to share his "big question" with all lab employees around the world. Instead of organizing a senior executive retreat to create a vision and then roll it out, she encouraged organizationwide webs of inquiry and conversation, asking people what WBIRL meant to them, what it would mean personally for their own jobs, and what it might take to get there. She invited the entire organization to join in exploring the question through informal, ongoing conversations; and she took advantage of more formal internal survey and communication infrastructures. When the lab director acknowledged his "not knowing"—an uncommon stance for a senior execu-

tive—an open field was created for multiple constituencies and perspectives to be heard.

The conversation continued for several months. The WBIRL leader developed a creative "reader's theater" piece which reflected 800 survey responses, detailing employee frustrations, dreams, insights, and hopes. Players spoke the key themes as "voices of the organization," with senior management listening. That made a difference to everyone's thinking by literally putting a variety of points of view on stage together. But it wasn't the only venue in which the "big question" was explored. Senior management met in strategic sessions, using approaches such as interactive graphics and "storytelling about the future" to see new opportunities that crossed functional boundaries. In these strategic conversations, they considered core technologies that might be needed for multiple future scenarios at HP Labs to unfold.

People throughout the labs, meanwhile, were initiating projects at all levels, resulting in significant improvement in key areas of the lab's work. Weekly Chalk Talks for engineers, "coffee talks," an Administrative Assistant Forum, and a Community Forum created opportunities for ongoing dialogue, listening, and learning. A WBIRL Grants Program provided small stipends for innovative ideas, enabling people to act at the corporate grassroots level, taking personal responsibility for work they believed in. In all of these efforts, the leader of the WBIRL project spent most of her time "helping the parts see the whole" and linking people with complementary ideas.

And yet, while productivity was improving rapidly, something was missing. During an informal conversation while planning for a "Celebration of Creativity" to acknowledge what had already been accomplished, one of the lab engineers spoke up. She wondered what was really different about HP that distinguished it from any other company that wanted to be the best in the world. She said, "What would get me out of bed in the morning would be to become the best *for* the world."

Suddenly a really "big question" had emerged. What would it mean for HP Labs to be the best both *in* and *for* the world? (See "What Makes a Powerful Question?")

A senior engineer created an image of what "for the world" meant to him. It was a well-known picture of the founders of HP looking into the backyard garage where the company began. He added a beautiful photo of Earth placed inside. This picture became the symbol of "HP for the World." A "town meeting" of 800 Palo Alto employees with live satellite hook-ups enabling a global conversation focused on the question, "What does 'HP for the World' mean to you?" The "HP For the World" image spread throughout the company—appearing in lobbies, featured in recruiting brochures, and offered as executive gifts. More than 50,000 posters were purchased by HP employees around

Stakeholders in any system already have within them the wisdom and creativity to confront even the most difficult challenges.

the world, stimulating a growing network of conversations about the meaning of the big question for the future of the company.

In the course of this exploration, people rediscovered that the company founders, Bill Hewlett and Dave Packard, had always maintained a commitment, as Packard put it, that "the Hewlett-Packard company should be managed first and foremost to make a commitment to society." Growing numbers of people throughout HP reconnected to that founding governing idea—stimulating investigations into breakthrough technologies for education, remote medical care for third-world nations, and global environmental issues.

As part of this effort, the same senior engineer who had created the "for the world" poster image was persuaded to pursue a 25-year-old dream: To create a mile-long educational diorama, placing human life in the context of evolutionary history. In 1997, this work—"A Walk Through Time: From Stardust to Us"—was featured at the annual State of the World Forum. There, the question of what it means to be *for* the world was posed to global leaders gathered from every continent. Public and private partnerships evolved from these conversations. Clearly, this is a powerful question that "travels well."

WHAT MAKES A POWERFUL QUESTION?

We've asked hundreds of people on several continents, "What makes a powerful question?" The following themes have emerged:

A Powerful Question

- Is simple and clear
- Is thought-provoking
- Generates energy
- Focuses inquiry
- Surfaces assumptions
- Opens new possibilities

Big Questions and Strategic Thinking

This approach to discovering and asking the "big questions"—strategic questions for which we truly do not have answers—is grounded in the assumption that stakeholders in any system already have within them the wisdom and creativity to confront even the most difficult challenges. Given the appropriate context and support, members of an organizational community can often sense where powerful strategic possibilities and opportunities for action may lie. Is it simply "luck" that enables us to stumble onto questions that really matter for strategic thinking? Or can we actually design processes that make it more likely for those questions to emerge? (See "How to Use Questions Effectively" on page 4.)

"Discovering strategic questions," says one colleague, a senior executive at a major multinational corporation,

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HOW TO USE QUESTIONS EFFECTIVELY

- Well-crafted questions attract energy and focus our attention on what really counts. Open-ended questions—the kind that don't have "yes" or "no" answers—are most effective.
- Good questions need not imply immediate action steps or problem solving. Instead, they invite inquiry and discovery rather than advocacy and advantage.
- You'll know you have a good question when it continues to surface new ideas and possibilities. Bounce possible questions off key people to see if they sustain interest and energy.

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"is like panning for gold. You have to care about finding it, you have to be curious, and you have to create an anticipation of discovering gold, even though none of us may know ahead of time where we'll find it. You head toward the general territory where you think the gold may be located, with your best tools, your experience, and your instincts."

To evoke strategic thinking based on discovering powerful questions, several activities may be useful. They may not apply to all situations and they may not always follow the same sequence, but they suggest ways that formal and informal processes can evolve together to support individuals as well as teams in discovering "gold" for themselves.

Assessing the Landscape. Get a feel for the larger context in which you are operating. Scan the horizon, as well as the contours of the current business and organizational landscape, related to the system or project you are working with. Like trackers in the mountains, look for obvious and subtle indicators that point to storms as well as to sunny skies. Allow your curiosity and imagination to take the lead as you begin to identify the many questions that the business landscape reveals. It will be tough, but important, to frame your findings as questions, rather than as concerns or problems. To help in framing those questions, ask yourself: "How does A relate to C and what questions does that suggest? If X were at play here, what would we be asking? What is the real question underneath all this data?"

Discovering Core Questions. Once you think you've posed most of the relevant questions (and there may be many of them), look for patterns. This is not a mechanical process, even though it can be disciplined and systematic. You are on a treasure hunt, seeking the core questions—usually three to five—which, if answered, would make the most difference to the future of your work. Cluster the questions and consider the relationships that appear among them. Notice what "pops up" in order to discover the "big questions" that the initial clusters reveal.

Creating Images of Possibility. Imagine what your situation would look like or be like if these "big questions" were answered. Creating vivid images of possibility is different from pie-in-the-sky visioning, especially if people with a variety of perspectives have participated in the earlier stages of the conversation. This part of the conversation can also provide clues for evolving creative strategies in response to the "big questions." It often reveals new territory and opportunities for action while remaining grounded in real life.

Evolving Workable Strategies. Workable strategies begin to emerge in response to compelling questions and to the images of possibility that these questions evoke. Of course, the cycle is never complete. Relevant business data, ongoing conversations with internal and external stakeholders, informal conversations among employees, and feedback from the environment enable you to continually assess the business landscape—revealing new questions.

Many organizations are stuck in a "problem-solving orientation" when it comes to strategy. They can't seem to shake the focus on fixing short-term problems or seeking immediate (but ineffective) solutions. Simply by moving their attention to a deliberate focus on essential questions, they can develop an inquiry-oriented approach to evolving organizational strategy (see "How Can I Frame Better Questions?"). In a knowledge economy, this approach provides an opportunity for developing the capability of strategic thinking in everyone, and for fostering sustainable business and social value.

HOW CAN I FRAME BETTER QUESTIONS?

Here are some questions you might ask yourself as you begin to explore the art and architecture of powerful questions. They are based on pioneering work with questions being done at the Public Conversations Project, an organization that helps create constructive dialogue on divisive public issues.

- Is this question relevant to the real life and real work of the people who will be exploring it?
- Is this a genuine question—a question to which I/we really don't know the answer?
- What "work" do I want this question to do? That is, what kind of conversation, meanings, and feelings do I imagine this question will evoke in those who will be exploring it?
- Is this question likely to invite fresh thinking/feeling? Is it familiar enough to be recognizable and relevant—and different enough to call forward a new response?
- What assumptions or beliefs are embedded in the way this question is constructed?
- Is this question likely to generate hope, imagination, engagement, creative action, and new possibilities, or is it likely to increase a focus on past problems and obstacles?
- Does this question leave room for new and different questions to be raised as the initial question is explored?

Adapted from Sally Ann Roth, Public Conversations Project, 1998

How Can Leaders Use Powerful Questions?

In today's turbulent times, engaging people's best thinking about complex

issues without easy answers represents one key to creating the futures we want. Leaders need to develop greater capacities for fostering "inquiring systems" in order to learn, adapt, and create new knowledge to meet emerging needs (see "Is Your Organization an Inquiring System?").

The leadership challenges of the next 20 years are likely to revolve around the art of catalyzing networks of people rather than solely managing hierarchies as in the past. The ability to bring diverse perspectives to bear on key issues both inside and outside the organization and to work with multiple partners and alliances will be a critical skill for effective leaders. We believe the following core capabilities, rarely taught in today's MBA or corporate leadership programs, will help define leadership excellence:

Engaging Strategic Questions. In a volatile and uncertain environment, one of the most credible stances leaders can take is to assist their organizations in discovering the right questions at the right time. A key leadership responsibility is creating infrastructures for dialogue and engagement that encourage others at all levels to develop insightful questions and to search for innovative paths forward. Leaders also need to consider reward systems that provide incentives for members to work across organizational boundaries to discover those challenging questions that create common focus and shared forward movement.

Convening and Hosting Learning Conversations. A core aspect of the leader's new work is creating opportunities for learning conversations around catalyzing questions. However, authentic conversation is less likely to occur in a climate of fear, mistrust, and hierarchical control. The human mind and heart must be fully engaged in authentic conversation for the deeper questions to be surfaced that support the emergence of new knowledge. Thus, the ability to facilitate working conversations that enhance trust and reduce fear is an important leadership capability.

Supporting Appreciative Inquiry. Opening spaces of possibility through discovering powerful questions may require a shift in leadership orientation from what is not working and how to fix it, to what is working and how to leverage it. Shifting the focus in this direction enables leaders to foster networks of conversation based on leveraging emerging possibilities rather than just on fixing past mistakes. Leaders who ask, "What's possible here and who cares?" will have a much easier time gaining the collaboration and best thinking of their constituents than those who ask, "What's wrong here, and who is to blame?" By asking appreciative questions, organizations have the opportunity to grow in new directions.

Fostering Shared Meaning. Leaders of organizations in the 21st century will discover that one of their unique contributions is to provide conceptual leadership—creating a context of meaning through stories, images, and metaphors within which groups can discover relevant questions as well as deepen or shift their thinking together. To tap into this pool of shared meaning, which is the ground from which both powerful questions and innovative solutions emerge, network leaders need to put time and attention into framing common language and developing shared images and metaphors.

Nurturing Communities of Practice. Many of the most provocative questions for an organization's future are first discovered on the front lines, in the middle of the action of everyday life. Key strategic questions that are critical for creating sustainable value are often lost because few of today's leaders have been trained to notice, honor, and utilize the social fabric of learning that occurs through the informal "Communities of Practice" that exist throughout an organization. A Community of Practice is made of up people who share a common interest and who work together to expand their individual and collective capacity to solve problems over time. Nurturing these informal learning networks and honoring the questions they care about, is another core aspect of the leaders new work.

Using Collaborative Technologies. Intranet and groupware technologies are now making it possible for widely dispersed work groups to participate

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IS YOUR ORGANIZATION AN INQUIRING SYSTEM?

Here are some questions for assessing your organization's capabilities:

- To what degree does the leadership in your organization foster an environment in which discovering the "big questions" is as much encouraged as coming up with workable solutions?
- Does your organization have rewards or incentives for members to work across functional boundaries to find those challenging questions that create common focus and forward movement for knowledge creation?
- Do your leadership development programs focus as much on the art and architecture of framing powerful questions as they do on techniques for problem-solving?
- Do your organization's strategic planning processes include structured ways to discover the "big questions" that, if answered, would have real strategic leverage?
- Are there collaborative technology tools that enable people on the front lines to ask each other questions related to their daily work (for example, customer service, equipment maintenance) and receive help with these questions from colleagues in other locations?
- Do senior leaders in your organization see the process of strategy evolution as one that engages multiple voices and perspectives in networks of conversation that contribute both to discovering the "big questions" as well as to finding innovative solutions within individual arenas of responsibility?

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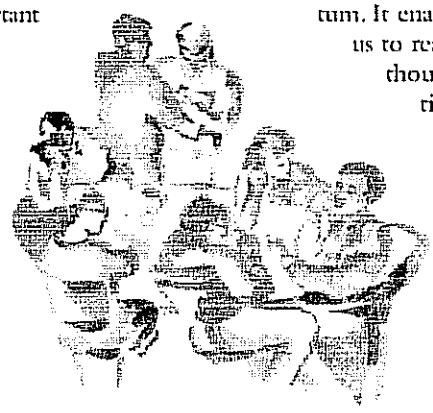
in learning conversations and team projects across time and space. As these tools become even more widely available, leaders will need to support widespread online conversations where members throughout the organization can contribute their own questions and best thinking to critical strategic issues. The Hewlett Packard case shows how important enabling technology infrastructures are for strategic innovation. Collaborative tools will be a critical factor in how well strategic questions travel both within the organization and among customers and other stakeholders who are key to success.



Co-Evolving the Future

It is quite easy to learn the basics of crafting powerful questions. However, once you have begun down this path, it's hard to turn back. As your questions broaden and deepen, so does your experience of life. There is no telling where a powerful question might lead you. Transformative conversations can result from posing a simple question such as: "What questions are we not asking ourselves about the situation in the Middle East?" Tantalizing possibilities emerge from the simple act of changing a preposition from "in" to "for" as in the HP example. Profound systemic change can emerge from creating a process for discovering and acting on the "big questions" within a business setting.

Where collaborative learning and breakthrough thinking are requirements for a sustainable business future, asking "questions that matter" and engaging diverse constituencies in learning conversations are a core process for survival. Because questions are inherently related to action, they are at the heart of an organization's capacity to mobilize the resources required to create a positive future.

Seeing the organization as a dynamic network of conversations through which the organization evolves its future encourages members at every level to search for questions related to their real work that can catalyze collective energy and momentum. It enables each one of us to realize that our thoughtful participation in discovering and exploring questions that matter—to our team, to our organization, and to the larger communities of which we are a part—we can make a difference to the whole. For it is only in this way that organizations will be able to cultivate both the knowledge required to thrive today and the wisdom needed to ensure a sustainable future. ◘

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We'd like to thank **Fran Peavey** for her pioneering work in making strategic questions part of our lexicon as well as for her creative contributions to the use of strategic questions for social change.

For Further Reading

Brown, Juanita, et al., *The World Cafe: A Resource Guide for Hosting Conversations That Matter* (Whole Systems Associates, 2002; available at www.pegasuscom.com)

Brown, Juanita, *The World Café: Living Knowledge Through Conversations That Matter* (Ph.D. dissertation, the Fielding Institute, available through Whole Systems Associates at 415-381-3368)

Goldberg, Marilee, *The Art of the Question* (John Wiley & Sons, 1997)

Peavey, Fran, "Strategic Questioning" in *By Life's Grace: Musings on the Essence of Social Change* (New Society Publishers, 1994). More information is available at www.crabgrass.org.

www.communispace.com provides a source of software and services to support creative work conversations and large-scale corporate communities.

www.interclass.com is a high-trust community of experienced practitioners in large organizations exploring innovations in learning and human performance.

www.theworldcafe.com is a resource for hosting conversations around questions that matter.

NEXT STEPS

- **Assess Your Organization's Capabilities:** Assess the degree to which your organization is an "inquiring system." How is the organization developing people and infrastructures in ways that support discovering and asking catalytic questions to foster new knowledge and help shape the future?
- **Read, Read, Read:** Begin with the resources listed at the end of this article. They will point you to more material about the power of "big questions" and the creation of knowledge through networks of conversations.
- **Surf the Net:** You can find lots of interesting perspectives on questions and questioning by experimenting with different combinations on your search engine. Some we've found particularly useful are: asking powerful questions; strategic questioning; and questions and breakthrough thinking. Experiment! You might be surprised by what you learn.

