Center for Leadership & Educational Equity

Good Questions

Adapted from an Iowa Peace Institute message.

"A sudden, bold and unexpected question doth many times surprise a person and lay them open." — Francis Bacon, early 17th century British philosopher

Asking a good question can be valuable in and of itself, irrespective of the answer. It communicates your respect for the other person. It is an expression of a deep belief in individuals' capacity for making decisions about their own situations. The fullest commitment to a decision comes if you have made it yourself, with the help of supportive comments and good questions to pen up your thinking.

What will help us learn to phrase questions so that they don't express judgment and they help people involved in disputes gain greater clarity about their own situations? Let's think about why we ask questions — to get information or to help someone make a decision.

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