The Arts

The Art of Questioning

The Art of Active Listening

The Art of Questioning

Four Main Types of Questions are:

- Leading
- Open-Ended
- Closed-Ended
- Reflective

Leading Questions

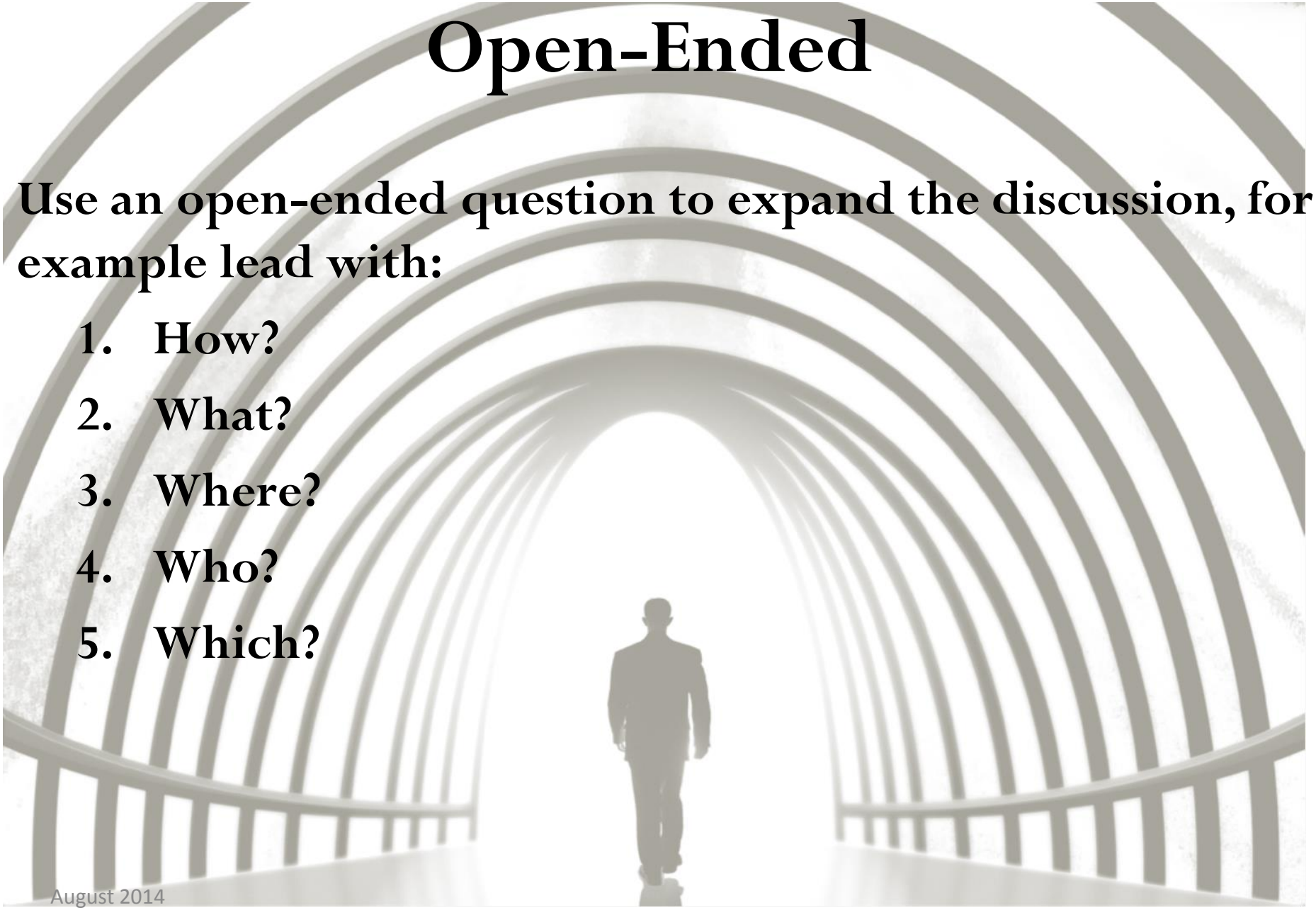
Examples:

1. Would you like to talk about it?
2. What happened then?
3. Could you tell me more?

Open-Ended

Use an open-ended question to expand the discussion, for example lead with:

1. **How?**
2. **What?**
3. **Where?**
4. **Who?**
5. **Which?**



Closed-Ended

Use a closed-ended question to prompt for specifics, for example lead with:

1. Is?
2. Are?
3. Do?
4. Did?
5. Can?
6. Could?
7. Would?

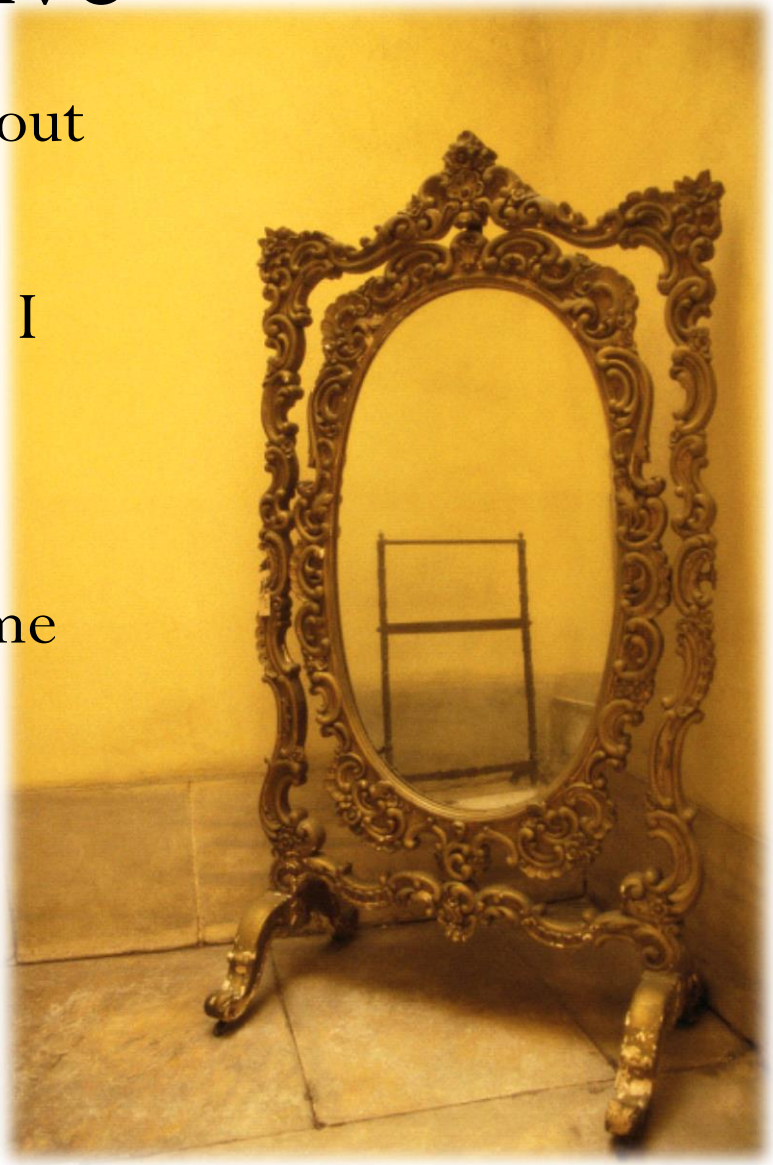
Reflective

Can help people understand more about what they said, for example:

> Someone tells you, 'I am worried I will not remember…….'

The reflective question is:

> 'It sounds like you would like some help remembering?'



The Art of Active Listening

Active listening is all about building rapport, understanding, and trust.

Are you a good listener?

Active Listening Skills

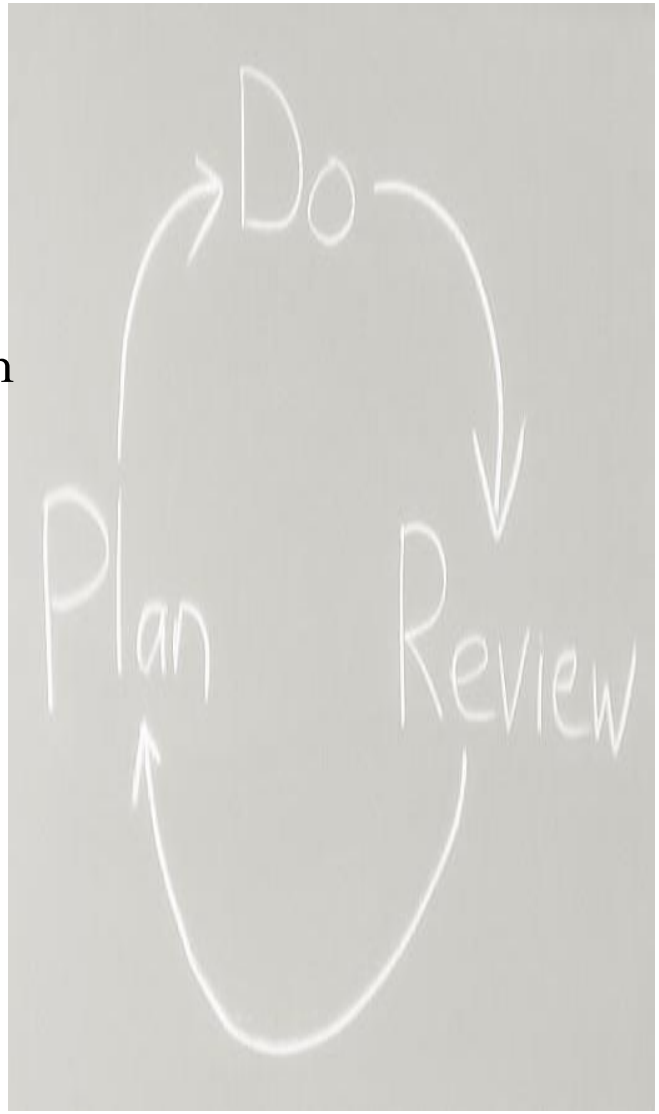
- Restating
- Summarizing
- Minimal Encouragers
- Reflecting
- Giving Feedback
- Emotion Labeling
- Probing
- Validation
- Effective Pause
- Silence
- 'I' Messages
- Redirecting
- Consequences

Active Listening Skills

Restating

To show you are listening, repeat every so often what you think the person said, not by parroting, but by paraphrasing what you heard in your own words. For example,

- 'Let me see if I am clear about this…'



Summarizing

Bring together the facts and pieces of the problem to check understanding. For example,

- 'So it sounds to me as if…' or
- 'Is that it?'

Active Listening Skills

Minimal Encouragers

Use brief, positive prompts to keep the conversation going and show you are listening. For example,

- 'umm-hmmm'
- 'Oh?'
- 'I understand,'
- 'Then?'
- 'And?'

Reflecting

Instead of just repeating, reflect the speaker's words in terms of feelings.

For example,

- 'This seems really important to you…'

Active Listening Skills

Giving Feedback

Let the person know what your initial thoughts are on the situation. Share pertinent information, observations, insights, and experiences. Then listen carefully to confirm.

Emotion Labeling

Putting feelings into words will often help a person to see things more objectively. To help the person begin, use 'door openers'.

For example,

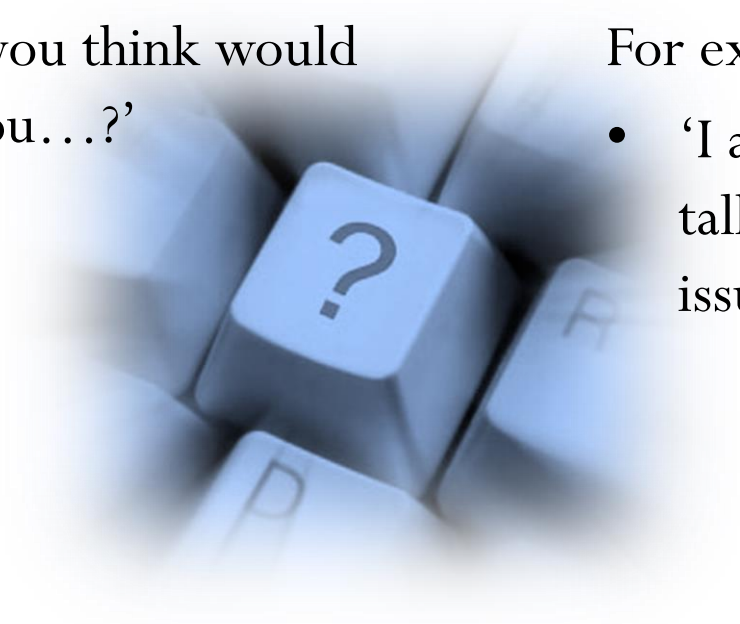
- 'I am sensing that you are feeling frustrated'
- 'I am sensing that you are feeling worried…'
- 'I am sensing that you are feeling anxious…'

Active Listening Skills

Probing

Ask questions to draw the person out and get deeper and more meaningful information. For example:

•'What do you think would happen if you…?'



Validation

Acknowledge the individual's problems, issues, and feelings. Listen openly and with empathy and respond in an interested way.

For example,

- 'I appreciate your willingness to talk about such a difficult issue…'

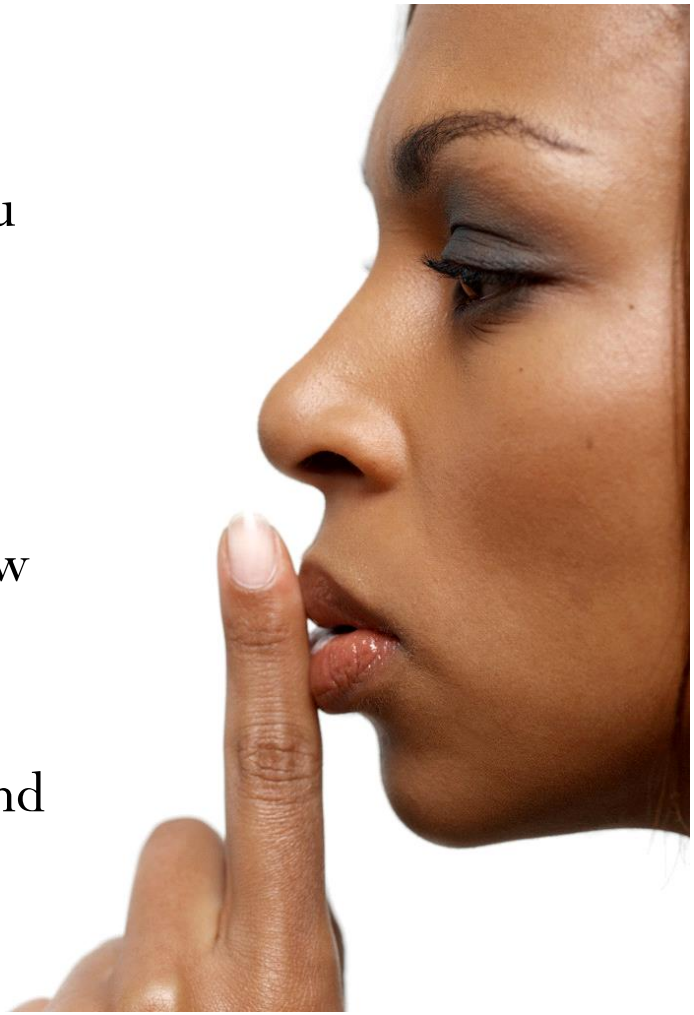
Active Listening Skills

Effective Pause

Deliberately pause at key points for emphasis. This will tell the person you are saying something that is very important to them.

Silence

Allow for comfortable silences to slow down the exchange. Give a person time to think as well as talk. Silence can also be very helpful in diffusing and unproductive interaction.



Active Listening Skills

'I' Message

By using 'I' in your statements, you focus on the problem not the person. An I-message lets the person know what you feel and why. For example:

•'I know you have a lot to say, but I need to…'

Redirecting

If someone is showing signs of being overly aggressive, agitated, or angry, this is the time to shift the discussion to another topic.

Active Listening Skills

Consequences

Part of the feedback may involve talking about the possible consequences of inaction. Take your cues from what the person is saying.

For example:

- 'What happened the last time you stopped taking the medicine your doctor prescribed?'

Communication Blockers

These roadblocks to communication can stop communication dead in its tracks.

- 'Why' questions. They tend to make people defensive.
- Quick reassurance, saying things like, 'Do not worry about that.'
- Advising, 'I think the best thing for you is …'
- Digging for information and forcing someone to talk about something they would rather not talk about.
- Patronizing, 'You poor thing, I know just how you feel.'
- Preaching, 'You should…' or 'You should not…'
- Interrupting, shows you are not interested in what someone is saying.

Five Simple Conversation Courtesies

- ‘Excuse me…’
- ‘Pardon me…’
- ‘One moment please…’
- ‘Let’s talk about solutions.’
- ‘May I suggest something?’

- Questions?
- Comments?

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