

Asking Honest, Open Questions

“The best single mark of an honest, open question is that the questioner could not possibly know the answer to it...Ask questions aimed at helping the focus person rather than at satisfying your curiosity. Ask questions that are brief and to the point rather than leading them with background considerations and rationale—which make the question into a speech. Ask questions that go to the person as well as the problem, e.g., question about feelings as well as facts. Trust your intuition in asking questions, even if your instinct seems off the wall.

--Parker J. Palmer

Examples of Honest, Open Questions

How do past experiences inform your current situation?

What image comes to mind as you think about this situation?

How are you feeling as you relate this story?

What color would this situation be?

What would the opposite be...?

How would this be different if...?

Will you say more about (a particular word, phrase, image)...

Is there another aspect...?

What advice might a wise friend give. . .?

What metaphor describes what you are feeling or experiencing?

What led you to say what you just said?

How might that choice play out in your life?