



The Question is the Answer: Get Results with Effective Questions



Everyone can ask great questions. Asking Effective Questions is a critical communication skill that requires **KSAs (Knowing, Selecting, & Asking)**:

- **Knowing** why you are asking a question, and **Knowing** what you want to learn;
- **Selecting** the type of question that matches what you need to know; and
- **Asking** questions skillfully to open conversation, provide more complete and usable information, and build relationships.



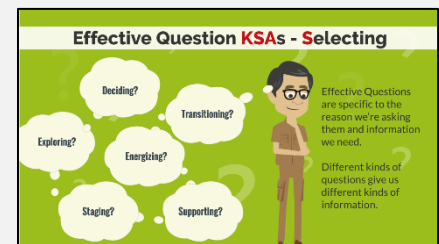
KNOW WHAT YOU WANT TO LEARN AND WHY YOU'RE ASKING:

- Ask questions to learn something you do not already know.
- Ask questions to reconsider previously held understandings.
- Ask questions to challenge assumptions.
- Ask questions to engage others.

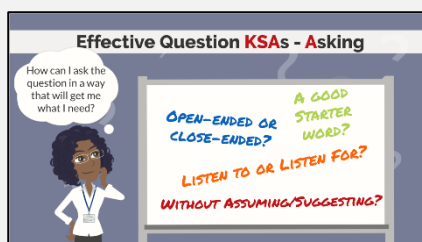
Effective Questions are specific to the reason you ask them and information you need. Different kinds of questions give you different kinds of information.

SELECT THE TYPE OF QUESTION YOU NEED TO KNOW:

- Ask **Exploring Questions** to get a general understanding or when you don't know what to ask. EXAMPLES: *"How is it going?" "What do you think is important for me to know?"*
- Ask **Supporting Questions** to learn how to help when you see someone struggling or seeking your support. EXAMPLES: *"How can I help?" "What do you need me to do?"*
- Ask **Staging Questions** to optimize conditions for a productive meeting, discussion, or clear plan for moving forward. EXAMPLES: *"What is important for us to cover?" "When is a good time to meet?"*
- Ask **Deciding Questions** to understand what decisions need to be made, or to understand when you are not able to move a decision forward. EXAMPLES: *"What else do we need to consider?" "Who else needs to be consulted?"*
- Ask **Transitioning Questions** to uncover something below the surface such as a root cause, or to shift the perspective. EXAMPLES: *"What might be making it hard for you?" "How did this used to work?"*
- Ask **Energizing Questions** to inject positivity or to focus on strengths or the future. EXAMPLES: *"What is working well?" "What are the strengths of this plan?" "Where would you like to be a year from now?"*



Conversations and discussions are filled with multiple types of questions that are a key element of active listening.



ASK THE QUESTION IN A WAY THAT GETS WHAT YOU NEED:

- Ask **Open-Ended Questions** to gain information.
- Ask **Close-Ended Questions** to act or make decisions.
- Use **Starter Questions** to gather information: Who, What, When, Where and How, and sometimes Why?
- Avoid **Loaded Questions** by converting questions that are based on assumptions or judgments into statements.