Paul Duba
Point-B Coaching
pduba@point-be.net
609-575-3545

As leaders, we know that difficult problems require us to step up as facilitators rather than directors. These are challenges that are named by various authors and theorists as adaptive work, collaborations, system disruptors, and paradigm shifts. Of the many ways we support a team in taking collective action (teamwork), leaders are often faced with their own disruption. The desire to engage in problem solving can be strong, even though we know that the collective response to adaptive work is better served by us staying in a "process solving" space. One tool that leaders can use in such situations is to be "curious for the group" by asking questions that help a team surface different views and ideas, explore the whole system, and create an "adaptive space" for transformative work. This kind of leadership makes possible the work that teams need to consider alternative perspectives, reframe their assumptions about what is possible, and incubate innovation. Instead of solving the problem, such leadership enables the problem to solve us.

Questions that are curious. Avoid questions that have a yes/no answer. These tend to frame the process in a way that is at best limiting and at worst, leads respondents to guess what *you* want them to say. As a process solver, you *do not need to know the answer to the questions you ask.* Your group will be well served by a presence of equanimity in your questioning. Most yes/no questions can be rephrased, e.g., "Does anybody have any ideas?" becomes "What are some ideas people have." With this kind of leadership, your job is to access the brilliance of the whole group, and let go of needing to know where the solution will come from.

Threads for questions that serve a team. These are areas to consider as threads of questioning that result in a group surfacing their collective assets as brilliant problem solving stakeholders.

1) Clarifying goals
2) Surfacing values
3) Determining resources
4) Hearing from divergent perspectives
5) Getting the whole system into the open
6) Creating summative understanding
7) Generating ideas
8) Determining next steps
9) Experimenting with solutions
10) Learning from experiments
11) Celebrating success, even small ones
12) Knowing we are done

Finding the courage to ask questions. The questions below are acts of leadership. As such, situations that don't have a designated leader require someone (anyone) to step into the space. Recognizing that it is hard to hold "process solving" as a priority while also problem solving, it may be worth proposing to a group, "I'd like to help us by asking questions that support our process." However, a group is served when anyone gets curious enough to question what we know and how we know it. Our ability to engage in learning about a problem—and about our collective relationship to the problem—is supported by courageous questions.

- What's a good way to summarize this problem?

- How is this relevant to our sense of purpose?

- What do we know? What else do we know?

- What's our goal? How can we make our goal clearer?

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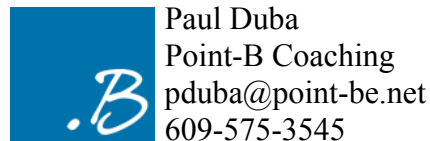
- Who wants to summarize what we know?

- What's a way to say that so that everyone understands?

- What are our resources? How do we define our resources?

- Who haven't we heard from? Who else?

- How do we incorporate this new information into our understanding of the problem?

- How would you describe your perspective?

- What are other perspectives people have on this problem?

- What are some ideas people have?

- Where does your curiosity take you?

- What more information do people have to add to the conversation?

- What are we missing? What else?

- What are assumptions that we can challenge here?

- Who has something to add?

- Who needs more information to stay with the direction we're going?

- Who wants to hold their attention on this smaller piece/bigger piece of the picture?

- What is more information we need to understand the whole system of the problem?

- Who has an idea for what to do next? Any other ideas?

- Who wants to summarize what we're about to try?

- What's a next step we can take?

- What can we learn from what just happened?

- What's changed about the way we understand the problem

- What is something that we haven't tried?

- What are we doing that is working? Isn't working?

- How do we want to recognize this breakthrough?

- How can use this new information?

- What are we able to say we know that we didn't know before?

- How can we celebrate this progress?

- How do we decide we're done?

- What can we tell others about what we've learned?