

Listed below are six different types of processing questions that can be used to generate higher levels of thinking. It is important to understand when and where to use each:

1. **Refocusing Questions.** Refocus questions are needed if employees are not doing enough in-depth thinking, or if they are getting off the subject. To refocus employee responses, leaders may need to reacquaint them with what was said, and then restate the core question. It is important to provide specific examples when refocusing employees back onto a particular subject, idea, or concept.
2. **Clarifying Questions.** Clarification is needed if responses are unclear, or if the leader feels that more appropriate language could be used to express the responder's comment, opinion, or idea. Applying clarifying questions is an excellent way to build vocabulary. Appropriate clarification questions help employees define words and bring meaning to their ideas. Most miscommunication and misunderstanding is caused by not clarifying words, thoughts, concepts, or ideas accurately and appropriately.
3. **Verifying Questions.** Verifying questions provide opportunities to cite or give evidence for ideas or specific information. Responses tend to be based on personal experiences. When verifying information, it is important to state what authorities or experts say is true, and to use a principle or generalization to support the information.
4. **Redirecting Questions.** Redirecting questions are designed to enhance personal interactions. They should be asked as often as possible within topical discussions and investigative meetings, gatherings, or sessions. Redirecting questions gain a variety of responses from different employees. Two ways to redirect thinking about something is to ask: "What is another (way...thing...idea) we can bring to light to discuss about this?" And, "Will someone else offer another idea or insight on this topic?"
5. **Narrowing the Focus Questions.** Narrow the focus questions are used to limit the content of what is discussed or talked about. They are based on the "content characteristics" or the concepts or ideas the leader plans to address, question, and discuss.
6. **Supporting Questions.** Supporting questions should be asked in order to mentally link relationships between or among evidence and statements of inference, such as cause/effect and/or prediction. Supporting questions also provide opportunities to state reasons for groupings, labels, sequences, and classifications.

CONSIDER RAISING QUESTIONS BASED ON WHAT YOU'VE OBSERVED (SAMPLE OBSERVATIONS BELOW)

- Paid and elected leaders seem to lack spiritual grounding.
- Staff members seem to enjoy each other yet I'm not sure if they trust each other.
- Reporting (rather than dreaming, discerning, or learning) seems to consume meetings.
- The strategic plan isn't used to guide agendas, next steps, & communication.
- Leader struggles from lack of clarity about roles, norms, and next steps.
- Two people monopolize meeting time. Most people remain silent and seem disengaged.
- The group rarely laughs. They don't look for and celebrate the bright spots in ministry.

MAKE NOTE OF YOUR WONDERINGS. IS THERE A QUESTION WORTH RAISING (SAMPLES BELOW)?

- Is Basecamp working for leaders? What changes need to be made to be more useful?
- How might your "calendar" conversations become more efficient?
- Who tends to the strategic plan? How is it guiding next steps? Could it be simplified?
- Do staff members feel that team members have their back?
- Is it safe for staff members to speak their mind? Hold each other accountable?
- Based on your job descriptions and goals, are you spending time on the right things?
- How are the changes in elected leadership impacting your work?
- What do you need from lay leaders to do your best work? What do they need from you?
- Do you have a plan for chipping away at the things that aren't working for you?

