

The Inquiry/Advocacy Model

How do you balance inquiry and advocacy?

- Step back.
- Target your inquiry by asking questions to clarify what the other person believes.
- Examine the other person's mental maps.
- Suspend your own assumptions.
- Learn before you try to influence.
- Advocate your opinions through carefully chosen questions and statements.

The Rewards

- Building rapport
- Building business relationships
- Extending your influence

Inquiry

- What is the simplest way to move a conversation toward dialogue? Ask a Question!
- Whenever your conversation tends toward a discussion, where positions harden and frustration flares, turn the conversation around by asking questions.
- As a conversation moves forward, continue to ask questions that relate directly and obviously to what the other person has been saying.

Tips for improved inquiry:

What to do

- Gently walk others through their thinking process and find out from which data they are operating.
- Use unaggressive language. Ask questions in a way that does not provoke defensiveness or "lead the witness."
- Draw out their reasoning. Find out as much as you can about why they are saying what they're saying.
- Explain your reasons for inquiring, and how your inquiry relates to your own concerns, hopes and needs.
- Test what others say by asking for broader contexts or examples.
- Listen for new understanding that may emerge.
- Check your understanding of what others say.

What to say

- "What leads you to conclude that?"
- "What data do you have for that?"
- "What causes you to say that?"

- "Instead of "What do you mean?" or "What's your proof?" say "Can you help me understand your thinking here?"
- "What is the significance of that?" "How does this relate to your other concerns?" "Where does your reasoning go next?"
- "I'm asking you about your assumptions here because..."
- "How would your proposal affect...?" "Is this similar to...?"
- "Can you describe an example...?"
- "Am I correct that you're saying...?"

Four key skills of inquiry

Probing

- ◇ Ask open-ended questions to solicit the other person's opinion and encourage dialogue.
- ◇ Begin questions with such words as:
 - "Tell me about . . ."
 - "Explain to me . . ."
 - "Walk me through the steps of . . ."

Confirming

- ◇ Restate or paraphrase what you heard the other person say.
- ◇ Use such statements as:
 - "So, from your point of view ..."
 - "Let me see if I've got this right . . ."

Acknowledging /Showing Empathy

- ◇ Validate the other person's thoughts and feelings.
- ◇ Defuse the situation with such comments as:
 - "I can see why you're frustrated"
 - "I know this is really important to you"

Encouraging

- ◇ Match and pace to establish rapport.
- ◇ Use direct eye contact, attentive body language and such comments as:
 - "I see"
 - "Uh-huh"

Tips for improved advocacy:

What to do

- State your assumptions, and describe the data that led to them.
- Explain your assumptions.
- Make your reasoning more explicit.
- Explain the context of your point of view.

- Give examples of what you propose. As you speak, try to picture the other person's perspective on what you are saying.
- Encourage others to explore your model, your assumptions and your data. Refrain from defensiveness when your ideas are questioned.
- Reveal where you are least clear in your thinking.
- Even when advocating: listen, stay open and encourage others to provide different views.

What to say

- "Here's what I think, and here's how I got there."
- "I assumed that..."
- "I came to this conclusion because..."
- "To get a clear picture of what I'm talking about, imagine that you're the customer who will be affected..."
- "What do you think about what I just said?" or "Do you see any flaws in my reasoning?" or "What can you add?"
- "Here's one aspect which you might help me think through..."
- "Do you see it differently?"

Four key skills of advocacy

Using clear language

Explain what you want and what you don't want.

Be direct and honest by providing:

Examples to illustrate your point

Facts and data in a non-emotional way

Using "I" language

Be accountable for your thoughts and feelings.

Avoid hiding behind the "royal we," and use such expressions as:

"I want . . ."

"I need . . ."

Calling for questions

Allow for clarification and refining.

Demonstrate your flexibility and openness with such statements as:

"Am I making sense?"

"Did I provide enough information?"

Building

Share where you agree and where you don't agree with the other person's ideas.

Link your opinions and ideas to those stated by the other person by using such transitions as the following:

"I agree with your point about meeting more often and I'd like to add that we may need to cut the length of those meetings."

"I think David raised a good point, and I'd also suggest . . ."