

The Ladder of Inference Questioning Strategies

Actions:

- Can you identify the belief you hold *or habit you practice** that led to that behavior?
- What might be the consequences--intended and unintended--of acting out this belief *or habit*?
- What's possible if you act from this belief *or out of this habit*? What might be possible if you weren't holding this belief *or replaced this habit with a new one*?

Beliefs:

- Which experiences might have led you to hold that belief *or turn to that habit*?
- Which assumptions (or conclusions) might be holding up that belief *or reinforcing that habit*?
- If this is the belief you hold, how will that affect the actions you take?
- Are there any other beliefs you might hold *or habits you might use* based on the meaning you've made and the assumptions you've drawn?

Conclusions:

- I hear that you've drawn a conclusion about [belief / *habit*]. Can you identify the assumptions on which that's built?
- How do you think your culture and background have led you to the conclusion you've drawn?

Assumptions:

- Can you name the assumptions you're making?
- Can you identify any of the roots of that assumption? Where do you think it came from? Which experiences?
- Are there any other assumptions you might be able to come to based on this meaning?

Meaning:

- I'm hearing that you made meaning about [an experience you had / something you heard / something you saw]. Can you tell me about the meaning you made?
- Which elements of the meaning that you made are informed by your cultural or personal background?
- How do you think your cultural and personal background affected the meaning that you made [of that experience / what you heard / saw]?
- I hear that those specific data points caught your attention. What was the meaning that you made of them?
- I hear that you saw X, and the meaning you made was [paraphrase]. Does that seem accurate?
- Is there any other meaning you could make from this data?

Data:

- I hear that you saw / heard / experienced X. I want to make sure I heard this right--you're saying you saw / heard / experienced [paraphrase].
- Can you identify the data that you selected from the entire experience? If you imagine that your mind is a video camera recording everything, can you name the specific data points that you latched on to?

**Italics are added content to focus on instructional habits in addition to beliefs.*