

Promoting Learning

by Dr. Marvin Marshall

REFLECTION AND SELF-EVALUATION – Part 2 (Continued from last issue)

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Inquiry precedes advocacy.

REFLECTION AND EVALUATIVE QUESTIONS

As important as reflection is in learning new information, the practice is equally as important for self-growth. *When applied to oneself, reflection is referred to as self-evaluation.* This practice engenders self-correction—the most effective route to improvement and growth.

Asking evaluative questions such as, “What can you do to accomplish that?” and “What would you do if you knew you could not fail?” are designed to provoke deep and reflective thinking. When you use these kinds of questions, you are directing the other person’s thinking in a positive way. The answers can be a gift to the person asking questions because is a quick way to obtain and understand the other person’s perception and viewpoint, crucial in a student teacher relationship and so many other settings.

In addition, asking these kinds of *evaluative questions* empowers the other person because the ideas that people support most are ones they come up with themselves; the answers that are most important to people are their own. *Ownership is a critical component for self-evaluation and change.*

The following questions are extremely successful *for changing behavior*:

- What do you *want*?
- What are you *choosing to do*?
- If what you are choosing is not getting you what you want, then what is your *plan*?
- What are your *procedures* to implement the plan?

Here are additional questions for specific purposes:

For Getting on Task

- Does what you are doing help you get your work done?
- If you would like to get your work done, what would be your first step?
- What do you like to do that you can apply to this task?

For Commitment

- In the realm of *all things possible*, could you have kept your commitment?
- What are you going to do to make it happen?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rank your commitment to it?

For Improving Quality

- How does that look to you?
- What would you like to have improved even more?
- If there were no limitations on what you did, what would allow you to do it even better?

For Complaining

- How long are you going to continue this?
- Is what you are doing helping you get what you want?
- What do you notice about the experience you are having?

For Starting Conversations

- What was most pleasing for you today?
- What bothered you the most today?
- What was your biggest challenge today? How did you deal with it?
- If the situation came up again, what would you do?

The quality of the answers depends on the quality of the questions. Here are some ineffective questions which increase stress because of the responses they engender. Notice how reactive and counterproductive they are to changing behavior.

- What's the problem?
- What's your problem?
- Why are you doing this?
- Who did that?
- Why did you do that?
- Don't you know better than that?

The key point to remember is that the quality of thinking and the quality of answers depends upon the quality of the questions.

(Continued next month)

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