

Open to Outcome: A Five Question Processing Model

Workshop Presented by Dr. Chris Cavert

Resource: Micah Jacobson & Mari Ruddy (2015). *Open to Outcome: A Practical Guide for Facilitating & Teaching Experiential Reflection*, 2nd ed. Oklahoma City, OK: Wood 'N' Barnes Publishing. (Purchase your copy at www.training-wheels.com)

Open to Outcome is a questioning model that helps create powerful group dialogue to provide dynamic learning experiences. The five question model takes the essential elements of classic learning cycle processing and presents them in a way that can be quickly understood, used, and taught to a wide variety of skill levels.

These five questions can be used in many different group discussion settings: after a group activity of any kind; after a meeting where learning *about* the meeting is important; a manager/director providing feedback to an employee; during group work with a counseling purpose; after a sporting event; or any other time when “looking back” is important for change and growth.

The Five Questions

1. Did you notice....? [Or, What did you notice during....?] (Closed Question)

“Did you notice...?” is an attempt to get participants to look back at a specific observation made by the facilitator. This first question requires the facilitator to fill in the blank by carefully observing the group for powerful moments and learning opportunities.

2. Why did that happen? (Open-ended Question)

This question helps to uncover the meaning behind the observation made – the meaning the participants have in relation to the observation. This step helps to build understanding and empathy for particular actions or behaviors. NOTE: The facilitator can add thoughts after the group has exhausted their understanding.

3. Does this happen in _____ (e.g., life/school/camp)? (Closed Question – Yes/No)

This question invites the participants to generalize the experience, asking them to look at it in broader terms and see if there is a connection between the experience itself and what happens in their lives. This is how we transfer present learning’s into future experiences.

4. Who? What? Where? When? Why? Or, Give an example. (Open-ended Question)

This question is used to follow up on the answers to Question 3. Depending on the answers, you can start this follow-up with one of the (traditional) “5 Ws”. You could also simply state, “Please provide us with an example of when this happened to you.”

5. What will you do now? (Open-ended Question)

This question is at the heart of the Open to Outcome model. In other words, how open are you to using new information to influence your future experiences? Fundamentally, the final question of any experiential exercise is, “How will you be different, or the same, in the future as a result of this experience?”