



Transforming Your Challenging Conversations

UNDERSTANDING & TRANSFORMING: LEADING QUESTIONS WEBINAR #6

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Leading Question Spotting Awareness Exercise

Is it a Leading Question? Not a Leading Question? A different behavior?

#	Sentence	Behavior
1	Wouldn't you say that time is more important than money?	
2	We're all in agreement now, are we not?	
3	Now that I've implemented all your changes, do you think the final document looks okay?	
4	Did you honestly think you could just apologize to me, and suddenly everything would be okay again?	
5	Do you think we should ask the marketing team for their ideas first?	
6	You were just joking, right?	
7	Can't you get a better result using the original formula?	
8	Do you think you're the only person in this family who's making sacrifices?	
9	Do you REALLY think that's wise?	
10	You don't really believe that.	

Leading Questions Strategy Practice: Transforming Leading Questions

Goal: This exercise lets you experience the stress and difficulty created when leading questions are used. It teaches you how to respond to LQ and transform your own LQs into clearer communication.

A Leading Question is an opinion in question form, implicitly seeking agreement rather than new information. Leading questions introduce a contradiction because they do two different things at the same time: They give the speaker's opinion and a response to the question. This also creates ambiguity for the listener because it's not clear whether the person is asking them for an honest response, or just want them to agree.

The most obvious sign of a leading question is that it often starts with a negative contraction like *aren't*, *don't*, *isn't*, *can't*, *won't*, *wouldn't*, or *shouldn't*: For example, "Don't you think we should ask first." Or "Shouldn't we talk to John before we set up a big meeting?"

Sometimes negative contractions come near the end of sentences, in little mini-questions like "Isn't it?" or "Aren't you?" So, someone might say, "This is a beautiful painting, isn't it?" or "You're coming to the party, aren't you?"

Alternatively, they might simply end their sentence with "Right?" or "Yes?" as in "The agenda is set, yes?" or "You don't agree with him, right?"

Occasionally you'll hear a question that would be perfectly neutral and yellow-light, if only it didn't have the word *really*, *truly*, or *honestly* in it, with an accentuated voice tone. For example, "Do you want to come the party?" is a straightforward personal question. But once we add the word *really* it becomes leading: "Do you REALLY want to come to the party?" In the same way, just one word makes the difference between "Do you believe what he said?"—a simple narrow question—and "Do you HONESTLY believe what he said?"—a leading question.

Step 1: Think of a situation when you used a leading question.

Step 2: Come up with a Leading Question

For example, "Don't you think these SAVI webinars are a good idea?"

Step 3: Transform your Leading Question into an opinion only.

For example, "I think creating a series of SAVI webinars for the public are a good idea."

Step 4: Transform your Leading Question into an opinion with a Broad or Narrow Question.

For example, "I think creating a series of SAVI webinars for the public are a good idea. What do you think of that idea?" (Broad Question) or Do you think that's a good idea or not? (Narrow Question)

Step 5: Narrow or Broad Question Only

For example, "What are your thoughts about creating a series of SAVI webinars for the public?" (Broad Question only) or "Do you think creating a series of SAVI webinars for the public is a good idea?" (Narrow Question only)

Step 6: Decide which approach would get you the information or response you want and why.

When a Question is Not Just a Question!

Goal: The type of question asked has an impact both on the asker and on the receiver of the question. This exercise lets you experience how various types of questions affect conversations so that you can choose questions that are more likely to take you where you want to go.

Questions are leadership behaviors — they focus the attention of the listener(s) in a particular direction and strongly influence the answerer's behavior. When questions are not answered, or "dropped," the incomplete interchange signals that something important may be happening.

1. Righteous questions

Righteous questions sound like questions, but actually function as statements. Instead of soliciting information, they telegraph blame, righteous indignation, or outrage in question form. The feeling in the voice tone becomes the focus for the listener, rather than the content of the question.

Examples: *"Do you think I really like working late every night????!! Why don't you think about me??!!"*

2. Leading questions

A Leading question is an opinion in question form. The speaker's opinion is couched in a grammatical form that makes it sound as though the listener's opinion is being solicited. Leading questions imply the "right" answer (usually "Yes" or "No"), and seek agreement rather than new information.

Examples: *"Don't you think this new brochure looks great?" "You don't really mean that, do you?" "Wouldn't you feel the same way?"*

3. Narrow questions

Narrow questions include direct requests for real information and specific facts, as well as questions that solicit a yes/no or either/or answer. Narrow questions are good vehicles for collecting data. They direct the answerer away from higher-order, creative, abstract, or general thinking, and toward memory, preferences, and the specific data being requested.

Examples: *What's the deadline for this article? How do I get to the other office from here?*

4. Broad questions

Broad questions solicit others' ideas, opinions, assessments, conclusions, judgments, hypotheses, and speculations. They invite a broad range of answers and allow the answerer to use various types of higher-order cognitive processes.

Examples: *What's your thinking on this idea? What do you think we should do about getting back to the client? What are the next steps for your teams' using SAVI?*

5. Feeling questions

These are Broad or Narrow questions that focus on deeply personal issues and generally involve taking a risk for both the asker and the answerer. These questions ask the other person to look toward their feeling self and to share their feelings, impulses, or other emotionally meaningful information about their inner world.

Examples: *Are you angry with me? How do you feel about not getting the promotion/about me leaving/about me becoming your new boss?*

Questions Impact Exercise

Goal of the exercise: To explore the impact of each type of SAVI question, both as asker and answerer.

Key concepts: Questions differ in the direction in which they 'point' the information exchange. Being aware of this allows speakers to be more deliberate in choosing what questions they want to introduce.

Partner exercise: Pair up by twos

Step 1: Each think of some minor thing you would like to change about yourself.

Keep it comfortable (that is, not too deep), but real.

Step 2: Decide who will be the questioner and who will be the answerer for the first round.

Answerer: Tell your partner about the change you'd like to make.

Step 3: Questioner: ask six rounds of questions, one round for each kind of question. Ask at least three questions in each round, leaving a pause at the end of the round for both you and your partner to make a note in the space given below. *(Note: Obviously, the answerer may pass any question that feels uncomfortable.)*

Round 1: Righteous questions — Answerer gives answers.

Round 2: Leading questions — Answerer gives answers.

Round 3: Narrow questions — Answerer gives answers.

Round 4: Broad questions — Answerer gives answers.

Round 5: Feeling questions — Answerer gives answers.

Both: Pay close attention to your reactions, both thoughts and feelings, as the different types of questions are asked. Record your reactions in the space below. Which questions elicited original thoughts, data, turbulence, one-up/one-down relationship, etc.?

Step 4: Switch roles for a second round of questions and answers (repeat steps 2 and 3).

<u>Question type</u>	<u>Reactions – thoughts and feelings</u>	
	<u>As Answerer</u>	<u>As Asker</u>
Righteous		
Leading		
Narrow		
Broad		
Feeling		

Webinar Series Developers

Anita Simon, Amy Yeager, Cunera Van Hal, and Ben Benjamin developed this webinar series. Anita Simon is the co-creator of SAVI along with Yvonne Agazarian. Ben and Amy are certified SAVI trainers in the United States and worked together for 10 years. Cunera is a certified SAVI Trainer and teaches SAVI in the Netherlands.

Your presenters today are Ben Benjamin and Keith Espenshade

Ben Benjamin PhD has been teaching and training communications skills since 1982. He had his first SAVI experience in 1998. With his enthusiasm, he went on to help develop the SAVI Training Program and certification track with Anita Simon, Claudia Byram and Fran Carter. He became the first Certified SAVI Trainer in 2002. He co-authored *Conversation Transformations* with Anita Simon and Amy Yeager in 2012. Ben is now a Senior Certified SAVI Trainer. He has developed, implemented, and taught SAVI trainings across health care, corporate, educational, and non-profit organizational settings both nationally and internationally and uses SAVI in his executive coaching practice.

The Reverend Keith Espenshade has supervised the Clinical Pastoral Education program at Penn Medicine Lancaster General Hospital since 1998. Keith's education includes a B.A. from Messiah College and a M.Div. from Trinity Evangelical Divinity School. He is an ordained Mennonite pastor. Since 2007, Keith has been involved SAVI®, which informs his teaching and pastoral care. He is a certified SAVI® Trainer and Master Coder.

How to Continue Your Learning About Leading Questions

- Leading question awareness quiz:
CTSAVI.com/LQquiz
- SAVI Coding Challenge:
CTSAVI.com/coding
- Attend a live or online SAVI® training:
CTSAVI.com/open
- Practice the Strategy
- *Conversation Transformation* (Chapter 6)
- Online exercises:
CTSAVI.com/LQexercises