

Questioning Assumptions

Purpose:

To avoid making mistakes based on false or incomplete information.

Assumptions are invisible chains to the past that block freedom of choice and action for the future. To make an *assumption* is to presume or believe something to be true without first asking questions to determine if it really is. It's all too easy to overlook assumptions or defend them without question. Until we bring them to light, assumptions can sabotage our efforts to achieve our goals and deepest desires. Once we are able to bring these blind spots to light, we gain new insights and creative possibilities that allow us to move forward in more positive ways. How do you detect your own assumptions so they don't trip you up? First is the willingness to discover them. The habit of asking skillful questions, both of ourselves and others, is our best tool for uncovering blind spots and moving beyond them to discover valuable information, perspectives, and possibilities.

Practice:

Think of a situation in which you are stuck, frustrated, or want a change. Use these assumption-busting questions to help you take a disciplined approach to unearth assumptions that might be blocking your success. For best results, consider each question thoroughly and write down your responses. Often, the act of writing stimulates deeper reflection and discoveries.

- ☞ What assumptions am I making about myself, for example, my capabilities and commitments?
- ☞ What assumptions am I making about others, for example, their capabilities and commitments?
- ☞ What am I assuming, based on previous experiences, that may not be true *now*?
- ☞ What am I assuming about available resources?
- ☞ What limitations am I assuming to be so—and what surprises might I find?
- ☞ What am I assuming about external circumstances?
- ☞ What am I assuming about what's impossible—or possible?