

Four Themes on Curiosity and Certainty

Caring Curiosity

- has an attitude of genuine interest in the other person
- does not assume, but instead asks questions
- seeks clarification
- seeks new knowledge
- has benign intentions
- delights in learning

- *invites the other to feel special, important, understood*
- *opens up the relationship, helps the other to flourish*

safe

Hostile Curiosity

- is interested to the extent that new information will provide leverage
- asks questions to confirm assumptions
- seeks clarification for the purposes of entrapment
- seeks new knowledge for the purposes of tripping up the other person
- has intentions to overpower, control, or demean the other
- learns only as much as is deemed necessary

- *invites the other to feel cornered, trapped, accused*
- *closes down the relationship, overpowers the other*

unsafe

Temporary Certainty

- is pretty sure what happened, yet is open to other points of view
- is fairly confident, but still asks questions to expand the picture
- knows that absolute clarity is never fully attained
- seeks new knowledge to fill in the gaps
- has intentions to act, be effective, with sensitivity and caution
- is always open to revising conclusions

- *invites the other to participate, to collaborate*
- *values the knowledge of the other person*

Permanent Certainty

- assumes one knows what happened - "this is the way it is" - no questions
- assumes one has an "objective" point of view
- assumes utter clarity of perceptions
- does not see the need to seek new knowledge
- has intentions of imposing a particular point of view
- isn't interested in new learning other than to reinforce previous views

- *invites the other to keep silent, rebel, or write you off*
- *diminishes or wipes out the other person*