



BRIDGEWAY
PARTNERS

10 Questions That Catalyze Systems Change

The Power Of Asking The Right Questions

Questions are powerful catalysts for systems change precisely because they open up new possibilities. In contrast to tips for change or recommended solutions that shut down initiative and innovation, questions stimulate

- ✓ self-reflection
- ✓ personal responsibility
- ✓ collective curiosity

instead of organizational reactivity and resistance.

The 10 Questions

Use these ten questions to help you and the other key stakeholders in your community or organization begin to think differently about a chronic, complex problem you face:

- 1 What are some of the key variables connected with the problem, and how have they been changing over time?
- 2 Why have we been unable to solve this problem despite our best efforts? In particular, what are some of the underlying policies, processes, power dynamics, and perceptions that perpetuate the issue?
- 3 If we know the solution, why haven't we implemented it?
- 4 How might we be partly responsible, albeit unwittingly, for the problem? Which of our own intentions, beliefs, and behaviors do we need to re-examine?
- 5 Who are the other stakeholders and how might they see the issue?
- 6 How can we bring these stakeholders together to address the issue?
- 7 What might be unintended consequences of people's proposed solutions?
- 8 What might we have to give up for the whole to succeed?
- 9 What character strengths such as humility, curiosity, commitment, courage, patience, and persistence do I need to build in order to lead this change?
- 10 When and how will I get the rest and renewal I need to sustain this effort?

The next time you and your team are about to enter into yet another discussion about how to solve a seemingly intractable problem, hand out a copy of these questions to everyone on the team. Start by answering these 10 questions individually and then do it collectively. You are very likely to move forward with *renewed clarity, energy, and commitment.*

THANK YOU! *David Stroh & Marilyn Paul*