



Group Decision Tip

E-mailed every two weeks to help groups make good decisions

Start with a question

In principle, when I enter into a discussion with a statement rather than a question I am presuming to already know all the answers. Over 90% of conflicts are due to misunderstanding, so when my opinion is based on presumption I am probably headed for conflict.

When I begin a discussion with a question I show respect for others; that I want to hear what they have to say. The longer I remain truly open-minded the greater the chances that my opinion is based on complete understanding.

Practical Tip: Even though you might have an opinion forming in your head, hold off expressing it and start with questions instead. Be genuinely open to changing your opinion based on new things you learn. Good questions start with "why," "how," and "what." Good questions are open ended. Examples: "Why do you think that? How has it worked well in the past? What do you think is the cause of the problem?"

When I start with a question I am less threatening to others, I am more likely to develop a well-informed opinion, and I increase prospects for avoiding conflict entirely.

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