



Focused Levels

This is an summary of focused levels of the book "The Art of Focused Conversation", edited by R. Brian Stanfield.

1 Relationship Arrows

The self is a relation [four vertical bars], which, in relating itself to itself [first arrow], and willing itself to be itself [second arrow], grounds itself transparently in the power that posits it [third arrow].

Kierkegaard, *the sickness unto death*.

2 The objective Level in a nutshell

2.1 Focus of the questions

- + Data
- + the "facts" about a topic
- + external reality

2.2 What it does for the group

- + ensures that everyone deals with the same body of data and all the aspects.

2.3 Questions are in relation to

- + the senses: what is seen and heard and touched etc.

2.4 Key Questions

- + what objects do you see?
- + what words or phrases stand out?
- + what happened?

2.5 Traps and pitfalls

- + asking closed questions, or questions not specific enough
- + no clear focus
- + ignoring objective questions because "they are too trivial"

2.6 If the level is omitted

- + there will be no shared image of what the group is discussing
- + the various comments will seem disrelated



3 The reflective Level in a nutshell

3.1 Focus of the questions

- + Internal relationships to the data

3.2 What it does for the group

- + Reveals its initial responses

3.3 Questions are in relation to

- + Feeling
- + moods
- + emotional tones
- + memories or associations

3.4 Key Questions

- + what does it remind you of?
- + how does it make you feel?
- + where were you surprised?
- + where delighted?
- + where did you struggle?

3.5 Traps and pitfalls

- + limiting the discussion to an either/or survey of likes and dislikes

3.6 If the level is omitted

- + the world of intuition, memory and imagination is ignored



4 The interpretive Level in a nutshell

4.1 Focus of the questions

- + the life meaning of a topic

4.2 What it does for the group

- + draws out the significance from the data for the group

4.3 Questions are in relation to

- + layers of meaning, purpose, significance, implications, "story" and values
- + considering alternatives, options

4.4 Key Questions

- + what is happening here?
- + what is this all about?
- + what does this all mean for us?
- + how will this affect our work?
- + what are we learning from this?
- + what is the insight?

4.5 Traps and pitfalls

- + abusing the data by inserting pre-cooked meaning
- + intellectualizing
- + abstracting
- + judging responses as right or wrong

4.6 If the level is omitted

- + group gets no chance to make sense of the first two levels
- + no higher-order thinking goes into decision-making



5 The decisional Level in a nutshell

5.1 Focus of the questions

- + resolution
- + implications
- + new directions

5.2 What it does for the group

- + makes the conversation relevant for the future

5.3 Questions are in relation to

- + consensus
- + implementation
- + action

5.4 Key Questions

- + what is our response?
- + what decision is called for?
- + what are the next steps?

5.5 Traps and pitfalls

- + forcing a decision when group is not ready or avoiding pushing group for decision

5.6 If the level is omitted

- + the responses from the first three levels are not applied or tested in real life