



What is Catalytic Thinking?

If you are working to create a more humane, healthy, equitable world, you deserve to have approaches that actually change things.

Real systemic change isn't about changing a government policy or two. True systems change is about changing the way things are - the whole situation, the whole field.

That requires that we FIRST change how we're THINKING about the situation.

Because only when we change the way we see things do things really change.



Catalytic Thinking:

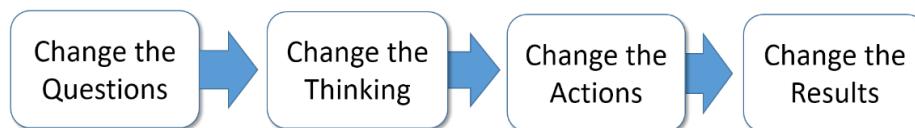
Catalytic Thinking is a systems-change framework rooted in QUESTIONS that gently, yet firmly, shift mindsets (and thereby actions and results)...

- From reacting to what's wrong, **to creating what is possible**
- From suspecting the worst in each other **to bringing out the best in each other**
- From going it alone **to the power of Collective Enoughness, sharing and building upon each other's strengths**

Why questions:

Catalytic Thinking focuses on the questions social change efforts are answering. That is because everything we do in life – including all the systems we are seeking to change – are the answers to questions. “*What will accomplish X?*” or “*What will keep people from Y?*”

When we change the questions we are answering, everything downstream shifts as well. Hence our tagline: **Change the questions, change the world.**



To determine which questions would lead to the best results, we applied science to the design of the questions. Brain science. Math and physics (the sciences of possibility and causality). Economics. As a result, the questions of Catalytic Thinking are disruptive, and yet they feel safe and inclusive.

Which questions:

There are three sets of questions in the Catalytic Thinking framework - 3 legs of the stool upon which systems change rests. People, Purpose, and Resources.

While asking any one of these questions is powerful on its own, ***the catalytic effect can only happen when we ask all the questions, addressing all 3 key aspects to any change effort.*** That is because, like that 3-legged stool, if only one of those 3 functions is strong, the effort will wobble and likely collapse.

Questions about People:

- Who will be affected by what we are considering? What would it take for them to lead / make decisions about the direction we take? (*Radical inclusion / who gets to decide?*)
- What are we listening for? For all those people who will be affected, what do they aspire to? What strengths do they have to build upon? What are their core values? (*Shifting thinking from problem-focused to possibility focused*)

Questions about Purpose:

- What is the best possible ultimate result of what we are considering doing – the highest potential outcome? (*Creating what is possible vs. reacting to what is wrong*)
- What conditions need to be in place for that high potential outcome to be reality? (*Causality-driven strategy*)
- What actions will create those conditions? (*Causality-driven vs. idea-driven actions*)

Questions about Resources:

- What needs to be in place internally, within our group, in order to take those actions? (*Internal conditions for success*)
- What strengths do we have to build upon? Who in our community already has / is doing what we need? (*Asset-based / Collective Enoughness: Together we have everything we need*)



The results:

The only path to creating a future different from our past is to change the assumptions and beliefs that led to our present state.

When we ask questions rooted in possibility (vs. reactivity), radical connection and inclusion (vs. suspicion and exclusion), and enoughness (vs. scarcity), those assumptions change.

And when we change the way we see things, things change.

For more information about Catalytic Thinking,
head to <http://creatingthefuture.org/>