

## Buddhism 4: Less is More

Does it seem after a few lengthy posts that this Buddhism stuff is complicated? Well, it isn't. Any worthwhile analysis of the nature of human experience is going to take a little time...if it doesn't then it is probably inaccurate, full of generalisations, deletions and distortions.

Why have I been banging on about it.? For four reasons:

1. I care about what we do, qualitative work and I want it to continue in the best tradition of valuing people and authentic insightful inquiry that it can.
2. I learned early on that most of my clients didn't appreciate consumer's subjective experience well. They had an impression of it that led to countless errors in practice. Their biases are produced partly by the fact that they work full-time on something most of us give minimal thought to, a brand, product or service. In other words, what was significant for my clients might easily be insignificant for his customers. That doesn't mean that a product has no importance; just that it is unlikely to be front of mind. Use yourself as an example: what do you have in your kitchen cupboard? Do you know? How accurate is your memory without going for a look?
3. I know that only 7 questions are needed for any penetrating qualitative inquiry and want you to have them. Most of the usual questions will not be either accurate, helpful or insightful. This is not because they are stupid questions: its because they lack context, especially the context of what is driving peoples' responses. Are they responding authentically or just because they are being paid and other people seem to have answers...so they make one up not to look stupid.
4. This issue of context is all important and leads me to a principle that has driven my work for many years:I think of it as **My core principle**

No perception, belief, attitude or action arises without a precedent or passes without leaving a trace. There is always a trail to be uncovered to explain how any phenomenon occurred. It is our job to investigate in a manner that follows these trails to their source. And to understand them in a way that illuminates the motives and reasons driving them.

There is a difference between the important steps in the trail and the tiny inconsequential ones. Your search for explanations should focus on the BIG question your client wants to answer, not the irrelevant details.

Once you have the Buddhist perspective on subjective experience on board, *it will enable you to practice differently*. You need only stay in contact with your participants, noticing what is happening and monitoring the way time is divided up, then have seven questions (your own will do fine, I'm going to give you mine) that cover just about anything you need to cover.

You will find the details of the 7 questions here:

<http://www.langmaidpractice.com/magnificent-7-questions-need/>