Positions and Interests

**Positions** are often voiced with passion. Positions are said as “this is my stand.”

When two or more people are positioning, they will often “dig in” on what appears to be drastically opposing sides.

Once a discussion or interaction gets stuck on positions, no deeper understanding or resolution occurs.

**Interests**, on the other hand, are the myriad of beliefs and values that underlie positions.

When interests are explored and communicated, similarities can be noticed and built upon to acknowledge or create some common ground.

**Here are some helpful questions in getting to the interests that underlie a position:**

* What’s important to you about ________?
* What would you need for ___________?
* What does that mean for you?
* What would ___________ look like?
* It seems like ___________, is that true?
* It sounds like ___________, is that true?
* Tell me more about ___________.
* I’ve heard you say some words that I’d like for you to describe a little more....What does ______ mean to you?
* What would you like me (or someone else?) to understand about that?
* How would you know that I (or someone else?) _________ understands?

These are just some... The idea is to get underneath of the position. Find out what is really important.

Flaxen Conway, February 1999