

GENTLY GETTING TO THE POINT

The following introductory phrases will help to soften any direct question:

Is it possible that	How did you happen to
Would you say that	Has there been any opportunity to
What prompted your decision to	To what do you attribute that

- QUALIFYING WORDS OR PHRASES

These qualifiers help to remove the blunt edge from a direct question because they introduce the concept of degree. In other words, they give the implication that the situation under discussion may have been unfavorable only to a degree rather than wholly bad.

The following qualifying words and phrases are most effective in softening direct question:

Might	Somewhat
Perhaps	Fairly
To some extent	A little bit
Quite	Or not so much so

- HELP THE PERSON TO “SAVE FACE”

Direct questions can frequently be phrased in such a way that they give the person an out. This permits him to “save face” and gives him the feeling that his response has not seriously damaged his cause.

