

Four Parts of Speech

"The only real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes but in having new eyes." -Proust

What is this?

Speaking is the primary, and most influential medium of action in the human universe. In business, in school, among parents and children and between lovers. Our claim is that the 4 parts of speech, Framing, Advocating, Illustrating, and inquiring, represent the very atoms of human action. If we can cultivate the silent listening, triple loop awareness to our own actions, and to a team's current dynamics, we can arrange and rearrange the interweaving of these atoms as we speak. Peacefully harnessing the human equivalent of technological, unilateral nuclear power.

Bill Torbert - Action Inquiry.

Part 1: Framing

Framing is about shaping a shared reality. You have your perspectives and assumptions on what you say. Others have theirs.

Framing a conversation is a dance to see what reality emerges in the intersection of your different perspectives.

Think of how you can describe the context that surrounds what you are saying. When we have a conversation, we assume a lot of things. In the back of our mind, we take certain things for granted. We do not always express where our viewpoint is coming from.

Because of this, we can find ourselves in the situation where the other person is assuming something, and we are assuming something else. This may create a clash in the discussion. This is typically because part of the frame is missing.

Start expressing your assumptions and better frame your thought process. It will help you reach a shared understanding faster.

Part 2: Advocating

Advocating is about communicating your position or making a proposal, whilst keeping your mind and heart open for other perspectives, as co-creation always beats a single "truth".

If you have a clear position or opinion, state it so others can understand where you are going with this, without having to guess what you actually have in the back of your mind.

Part 3: Illustrating

Illustrating is about dressing your words in a beautiful dress, picture, or scenery. Talking to the beauty of the human brain.

We humans are better at relating to stories than opinions. The goal here is to give people a relevant case, situation or story they can relate to. The more attached you are to it, the more you will be able to make it come alive.

Part 4 : Inquiring

Inquiring is about exploring perspectives together. invite the collective intelligence.

The inquiry is an invitation to others to bounce back on what you just said and continue the joint exploration. To get more perspectives. To co-create richer solutions, or experiments. To start to move together.

If part 1-3 is the prelude, this is the symphony.