Good Listening Requires Good Questioning:

Closed questions

A closed question can be answered with either a single word or a short phrase.

- What time is our meeting on Thursday?
- Are you happy with your school?

Closed questions have the following characteristics:

- They give you facts.
- They are easy to answer.
- They are quick to answer.
- They keep control of the conversation with the questioner.

Often they start with words like:

- Do
- Would
- Are
- Will
- If

This makes closed questions useful in the following situations:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Usage</th>
<th>Example</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As opening questions in a conversation, as it makes it easy for the</td>
<td>It's great weather, isn't it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other person to answer, and doesn't force them to reveal too much</td>
<td>Where do you live?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>about themselves.</td>
<td>What time is it?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For testing their understanding (asking yes/no questions). This is</td>
<td>So, you want to move into our apartment, with your own bedroom and</td>
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<tr>
<td>also a great way to break into a long ramble.</td>
<td>bathroom -- true?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For setting up a desired positive or negative frame of mind in them</td>
<td>Are you happy with your current supplier?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(asking successive questions with obvious answers either yes or no).</td>
<td>Do they give you all that you need?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Would you like to find a better supplier?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For achieving closure of a persuasion (seeking yes to the big</td>
<td>If I can deliver this tomorrow, will you sign for it now?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>question).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: http://changingminds.org/techniques/questioning/open_closed_questions.htm
**Open questions**

An open question is likely to receive a long answer.

Open questions have the following characteristics:
- They ask the respondent to *think* and reflect.
- They will give you *opinions* and *feelings*.
- They hand control of the conversation to the *respondent*.
- They come from place of *curiosity* rather than judgment.
- It may take the responder a minute to come up with an answer.

Open questions often begin with
- *What*
- *Why*
- *How*
- *Describe*
- *Why is that so important to you?*
- *How do you know that is true?*
- *Could you give me an example?*
- *What exactly do you mean by ….?*
- *Could you tell me more about …?*
- *How does that make you feel?*
- *What are the pros and cons?*
- *What makes you say that?*

This makes open questions useful in the following situations:

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<tr>
<td>As a follow-on from closed questions, to develop a conversation and</td>
<td><em>What did you do on you holidays?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>develop up someone who is rather quiet.</td>
<td><em>How do you keep focused on your work?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To find out more about a person, their wants, needs, problems, and</td>
<td><em>What's keeping you awake these days?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>so on. To dig deeper into</td>
<td><em>Why is that so important to you?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To get people to realize the extent of their problems.</td>
<td><em>I wonder what would happen if your customers complained even more?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><em>Rob Jones used to go out late. What happened to him?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To get them to feel good about you by asking after their health or</td>
<td><em>How have you been after your operation?</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>otherwise demonstrating human concern about them.</td>
<td><em>You're looking down. What's up?</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source: http://changingminds.org/techniques/questioning/open_closed_questions.htm*
**Probing Questions**

**Clarification:**
What exactly did you mean by 'XXX'?  
What, specifically, will you do next week?  
Could you tell me more about YY?

**Purpose:**
Why did you say that?  
What were you thinking about when you said XX?

**Examples:**
Sorry, I don't understand. Could you help by giving an example?  
Could you give me an example of when you did XXX?  
Tell me about a time when you ___.

**Extension:**
Could you tell me more about that, please?  
And what happened after that?  
Then...

**Evaluation:**
How good would you say it is?  
How do you know it is worthless?  
What are the pros and cons of this situation?

**Emotional:**
And how did you feel about that?

**Relevance:**
How is that relevant to the main question?

**Completeness and accuracy:**
Is that all? Is there anything you have missed out?  
How do you know that is true?  
How does that compare with what you said before?

*Source: http://changingminds.org/techniques/questioning/probing_questions.htm*