

Reach Out to ask a difficult but critical question: *Why?*

Questioning the status quo can create conflict. Yet, asking the question "Why" in a constructive manner can lead to new ideas reinforcing our core values and building upon our strategic initiatives.

Conflict can indeed be productive. This [paper entitled Creating an Infrastructure of Good Conflict](#) provides suggestions on how we can utilize conflict to our advantage.

Like most large organizations, universities can benefit from change. Change can provide new and better paths to reach our goals, strengthen our academic offerings, and offer new initiatives that further align with our vision. The impact of change may not show positive results in the short term, but in time can prove its value.

We sometimes overlook opportunities to improve the way we do our work. We are comfortable with the way it is and see no need to make changes.

New staff and faculty are in a position to observe and to provide a different perspective unburdened by the inertia of the past. Those of us who have been here longer may have overlooked what newer arrivals see. But all of us should be encouraged to take the "risk" of questioning *why* things are done a certain way especially when we see new ways to get work done in a more efficient and productive manner. Disruptive thinking, mostly defined as asking "why" and "is there another way", is a thought process that at times takes us outside of our comfort zone, yet is critical for the greater success of the organization.

I am sometimes approached by staff and/or faculty who have ideas that are disruptive yet potentially beneficial to Bentley. Our values allow us to feel empowered to reach out to the appropriate individuals to present ideas even if we believe that our suggestions will not ultimately be adopted. If the ideas are not welcomed at the time, a compromise is to pilot the idea for a limited period, a less risky commitment.

During uncertain times, it is not easy to express our disruptive thinking. But if done in a constructive manner, we can overcome the fear of risk to our professional security.

What existing plans can be accomplished in better ways with different processes? Can the potential benefits of change outweigh the potential risks? How can we question the status quo in a constructive and collaborative manner? Below are some steps to consider:

- Be clear on what it is you want changed;
- Make sure you have comprehensive information on the benefits and potential risks of the change. In other words, do your homework/research;
- Share your idea with colleagues and get their thoughts;
- Have a specific implementation plan including success metrics;
- Present your idea to the appropriate individuals.

Wishing you all success. All my best, Eliane