

Probe

Ways of strengthening this voice:

1. Probing is above all a way of feeling your way forward through the unknown. Turn your attention towards those issues, matters or areas of discussion which seem unclear and aim your questions to uncovering more about them.
2. Recognise that discovery tends to be an interactive process, issues become progressively clearer. So don't ask isolated questions, but pursue lines of inquiry, focusing and re-focusing your questions to bring more and more information to light.
3. Don't give up too soon on your probing in the face of silence or other forms of resistance. Use silence yourself after asking a question to encourage others to fill the void. Persevere: good questions often get lost in the hurly-burly of discussions, especially in larger groups. Use your probing voice to lend weight to unanswered questions.
4. Do not undermine probing by moving too quickly into another mode, such as advocacy, advice or critique. Probing is a vital voice in its own right, serving the purpose of gathering and refining information.
5. If you feel uncomfortable about asking a probing question, or are concerned that it might come across as inappropriately intrusive, then explain *why* you are asking. You can legitimate probing by explaining how it relates to bigger issues.
6. Listen to good radio interviews by skilled journalists. How is it that they follow the 'scent' of an issue in interview, especially with politicians?