

## Coaching Questions – Situational, Getting Unstuck

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Good coaching questions invite the coachee to clarify the situation, develop insight, explore further, expand options and acknowledge impact of the situation. They go beyond information gathering or investigation. Rather than offering advice in the form of a question; good coaching questions prompt the creation of solutions and deepen the conversation.

Here are examples of coaching questions in various situations where coaches/coachees get stuck and can't see an obvious solution. For ease, they are aligned to the stages of the Advocate Coaching Model:

### *Where are you currently?*

#### **Exploring impact and expanding insight...**

- How has this situation impacted you?
- Where is this situation going if nothing changes?
- What do you think the other person (in this scenario) needs from you? How could you find out?
- What pattern are you noticing here? Has this pattern shown up in other parts of your life/career?
- What would you call this situation that you're in? What would you rename it if you could?

#### **Reality testing current thinking...**

- What are the known facts associated to this situation? What else is true about this situation?
- What evidence is there that this is a problem? How often, how much, how intense?
- How reliable is the evidence?
- Who might confirm or deny what you're saying?
- How could you acquire good information on this?
- Where does this fit or not fit with other messages/evidence you have?
- How could you determine the extent this problem will matter in the future?

#### **Immediacy of reaction...**

- What would the other person (in this scenario) say about you if they were sitting here?
- Here's what I am thinking/wondering...
- I am noticing... and I wonder if others notice that too?
- Your reaction doesn't seem to match your words, what could explain the difference?
- If you made this same request of your boss, what would they say to you?

#### **Getting unstuck, acknowledging when the coaching conversation has stalled...**

- It seems we're stuck. Where should we go from here?
- What would say are our next steps?
- It feels we are going in circles. Can we talk about a time when things were working well? What was happening then? What has changed? What needs to happen to get us back to that point?
- This seems stressful for everyone; is it worth taking a break and coming back to this in the near future?
- I don't have the answer; maybe none of us do. How can we still continue to move forward together?

### *What are you looking to change?*

#### **Creating momentum...**

- What is your overall strategy here? What will be the benefit of achieving it?
- What change are you open to making?
- What could happen if you would change your thinking about this?
- Imagine that you could cope with this situation, what would you be doing?
- If you had a magic wand, what would be your ideal solution?

### *What is keeping you from moving to the future state?*

#### **Pinpointing where feeling stuck is happening...**

- The sound of your voice changed when you started talking about....what's different?
- What are you waiting to have happen before you know you're ready to take action?
- What are you doing or not doing that's enabling you to feel stuck?
- Can you describe a time when you felt the way you want to feel in this situation? What was happening? How did you create that feeling? How could you apply that to this situation?
- What place in your mind do these thoughts get stuck?
- If you gave a name to this feeling, what would you call it?

### *What is the first action you will take to close the gap?*

#### **Identifying resources...**

- What is the first small step you can take towards your goal?
- What partial or intermediate solutions are there? What's worth trying for a few weeks to see how it goes?
- What skills do you have that you can bring into play here?
- What additional training or other help might you need?
- Who else can offer useful help to you? What other resources are available?

#### **Exploring options...**

- What options might there be?
- What's the cost of doing nothing?
- What could you live with here?
- When have you encountered this sort of situation before? What did you do that worked?
- How do you typically make these types of decisions?
- When you've seen other people deal with this situation to a good outcome, what seems to work for them?
- What criteria should you use for determining a solution?

### *How and when would you like to share feedback with me on your progress?*

#### **Clarifying your role as a coach...**

- How can I be helpful to you?
- What do you see as my contribution here?
- Is there anything else you intended to tell me that you haven't so far?
- What have I done that has been helpful for you?