

Mentoring Questions

Good Questions Should

- Generate curiosity in the listener
- Stimulate reflective conversation
- Provoke thought
- Surface underlying assumptions
- Invite creativity and new possibilities
- Generate energy and forward movement
- Channel attention and focus inquiry
- Evoke more questions

Tips for Good Questions

- Stay clear of solution-oriented questions. These are closed-ended questions disguised as advice.
- Avoid trying to find that one question that you believe will cause a cascade of revelation for the client. Let the process unfold naturally.
- Words are like water, they can dilute the question, so use as few words as possible.
- Become comfortable with a little silence.
- Avoid interpreting what the mentee is saying. Use their words to formulate your questions.
- Do not ask rhetorical questions like “*What were you thinking?*” These are simply statements filled with judgment.
- Do not lead the mentee. Guiding them to answer in a specific way does nothing to help them figure things out.
- You are allowed to interrupt the mentee. Sometimes they will ramble and lose focus. Find a way to bring them back to the question at hand.
- Interrupting too much also is troublesome. This includes talking over and talking for the mentee. Count to two before responding or asking a question.
- ‘Why’ questions can make a mentee defensive and feel as though they are being judged.

Examples of Good Questions

1. What does success look like to you?
2. Where do you see yourself in five years?
3. What do you hope to gain from our mentoring sessions?
4. What are the obstacles you're currently facing?
5. What are some things you can control?
6. If you could learn any new professional skill, what would it be?
7. Have you ever quit a job? If so, why?
8. Who do you talk to about challenges and successes at your job?
9. What's your dream job?
10. What was your educational experience like?
11. What led you to this career path?
12. What do you like to do outside of work?
13. Do you have any professional role models?
14. What do you consider your professional strengths?
15. In what parts of your job do your weaknesses hinder you?
16. How can I support you in overcoming your challenges?
17. What's something in your career for which you're grateful?
18. What accomplishments are you most proud of?
19. How do you track the progress of your goals?
20. In what areas of your career have you grown the most?
21. Do you have any habits that hinder your success?
22. When do your biases affect your decision-making?
23. How would you like to receive feedback?
24. What can I do to help you feel more confident in your career development?
25. How do you stay competitive in your industry?
26. How do you handle conflicts in the workplace?
27. In what areas would you most like support?
28. What changes do you want to make to our plan?
29. How can I improve as a mentor?
30. What else would you like to know?