



FREE COACHING GUIDE

5 Coaching Questions for Better Conversations

Help someone think more clearly,
without rushing to give advice.

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When someone brings you a problem, it can be tempting to offer a solution. These questions help them explore what matters, consider options and choose their own next step.

First, ask: “Would it help to talk this through, or would you prefer my suggestions?” Use the questions when they want space to think. Choose what fits, rather than treating the list as a script.

1

“What would you like to get clearer about?”

Find a useful focus before exploring the details. The person may need to make a decision, understand a difficulty or work out where to begin.

In a conversation

“I have too much to do.”

“What would you like to get clearer about?”

“Which things actually need my attention this week.”

Try this: If the answer is broad, ask: “What would make this conversation useful for you?”

2

“What feels most important about this to you?”

Explore why the issue matters to them. Avoid assuming that their priorities are the same as yours.

In a conversation

“I am unsure whether to apply for the role.”

“What feels most important about this to you?”

“Having enough time for my family, as well as interesting work.”

Try this: Use their words in your response: “You mentioned time for your family. Tell me more about that.”

Explore before you suggest

Ask one question at a time. Listen to the answer before deciding what to ask next.

3

“What have you already tried, and what did you learn?”

Help them reflect on experience. Something that did not work may still reveal what helps, what gets in the way or what to change.

In a conversation

“I keep putting off the report.”

“What have you already tried, and what did you learn?”

“Blocking out an afternoon did not work. I kept answering messages.”

Try this: If they have not tried anything yet, ask: “What has helped you with something similar before?”

4

“What other options could you consider?”

Create room for alternatives before settling on a solution. Let them generate ideas without evaluating every one immediately.

In a conversation

“I suppose I just need to work later.”

“What other options could you consider?”

“I could clarify the deadline, reduce the scope or ask for support.”

Try this: Leave a pause. If they are stuck, ask permission before offering an idea: “Would you like a suggestion?”

5

“What is one next step you’re willing to take?”

Turn the conversation into a manageable action they choose. A useful next step can be gathering information or taking time to reflect.

In a conversation

“I need to know what is actually expected.”

“What is one next step you’re willing to take?”

“I will ask my manager which part of the report is the priority.”

Try this: If useful, follow with: “When will you do that?” and “What might get in the way?”
Avoid pushing for a commitment.

Try two questions today

You do not need to use all five. Start with a willing partner and an everyday topic, such as organising a task, choosing between options or learning a new skill.

1. Agree how you will help

Ask whether they would like you to listen and ask questions. Allow about five minutes, and let them choose what to discuss.

2. Follow their answers

Try two questions from this guide. Pause after each one. Briefly reflect back what you heard and check that you understood.

3. Close with their choice

Ask what they are taking from the conversation. If they want to act, invite them to choose a next step.

Reflect afterwards

What did I learn by listening rather than suggesting?

Where did I steer the conversation towards my own answer?

Which question helped them, and what would I change next time?

Keep in mind

Respect their choice not to answer. A useful conversation might lead to clarity rather than an immediate action. These questions are a starting point; developing coaching skills takes further learning, practice and feedback.

Take the next step

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