1:1 Question Guide
Representative, not exhausitve

**Questions are open-ended, following TED approach:
"Tell me..., Explain to me..., Describe for me...".**

Robbins
NextGen

Direct Reports	Peers & Cross-Functional Partners	External Stakeholders
Goal: understand team dynamics, motivation, blockers, and opportunities.	**Goal: assess alignment, collaboration, and organizational friction points.**	**Goal: gain outside-in perspective, reputational insight, and unmet expectations.**
1. Tell me what success looks like for you - how do you define a great week or quarter?	1. Tell me what success looks like for your function - and how it connects to mine.	1. Tell me how you would describe working with this company - in 1 or 2 sentences.
2. Explain to me what's working really well in your team right now.	2. Explain to me what you wish my team understood better about yours.	2. Explain to me what stands out about us - positively or negatively.
3. Describe for me the biggest challenge you face that slows you down.	3. Describe how our two areas typically collaborate - what works, what doesn't.	3. Describe for me what a great partnership or relationship looks like in your eyes.
4. Tell me about a recent win you're proud of - what made it possible?	4. Tell me about an example where collaboration across teams is really good.	4. Tell me what you wish we understood better about your business or priorities.
5. Explain to me what frustrates you most about how we currently work.	5. Explain what tends to slow things down between functions.	5. Explain where we deliver the most value to you - and where we fall short.
6. Describe for me what you think this team could do to have a bigger impact.	6. Describe what "great partnership" looks like from your perspective.	6. Describe how communication typically works between your team and ours.
7. Tell me what kind of leadership or support helps you do your best work.	7. Tell me how communication flows between departments - what could improve?	7. Tell me about a recent experience with us that left a strong impression - good or bad.
8. Explain how decisions typically get made here - formally or informally.	8. Explain where you see duplication or gaps across our teams.	8. Explain how we compare to others you work with in the same space.
9. Describe what would make this team an even better place to work.	9. Describe how you'd like to see us working together 3–6 months from now.	9. Describe what "trust" means to you for us - and how we could strengthen it.
10. Tell me who in the organization you rely on most and why that relationship works.	10. Tell me about the informal influencers here. Who others listen to when it matters.	10. Tell me what success for you looks like in this partnership over the next year.
Leader's tip: Listen for systems issues (process, communication, clarity) more than personal complaints.	*Leader's tip: You're mapping politics and process — but also trust, style, and rhythm.*	*Leader's tip: This is reputation research disguised as empathy. Notice tone, not just words.*

Great questions are tools for trust. Use them to listen deeply, not to check boxes.

Module 3. Phase 2. *0 - 30 days*

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Representative, not exhausitve

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Boss	Board
Goal: understand expectations, alignment, operating style, and success criteria.	**Goal: understand strategic expectations, risk appetite, long-term direction, and how they evaluate leadership.**

Boss

1. Tell me what success looks like for you in the next 6–12 months — and how my role contributes to that.
2. Explain to me the biggest priorities on your agenda right now — what's keeping you up at night?
3. Describe for me how you prefer to be updated — cadence, format, and level of detail.
4. Tell me what you believe this team must accomplish early to build credibility.
5. Explain to me where you see the greatest risks or blind spots in our area.
6. Describe a leader you've worked with who operated in a way you really appreciated — what stood out?
7. Tell me about a time when someone in my role had the biggest impact — what made it work?
8. Explain how you typically approach tough trade-offs — speed vs. quality, alignment vs. autonomy.
9. Describe what great partnership between us looks like three months from now.
10. Tell me where you believe I'll have the quickest opportunity to create meaningful value.

Leader's tip: Listen for preferences, pressure points, and the unspoken success criteria your boss will judge you on.

Board

1. Tell me how you see the company's long-term direction — what are the non-negotiables?
2. Explain to me the 2–3 strategic priorities you believe must be protected at all costs.
3. Describe what you believe this leadership team needs most from someone in my role.
4. Tell me where you think we're strongest competitively — and where you feel we must improve.
5. Explain your perspective on risk — what types of risk the Board is comfortable with, and what types concern you.
6. Describe for me how you evaluate executive performance — what signals matter most?
7. Tell me what you've observed in the culture that you think is either a strength or a barrier.
8. Explain the communication style you prefer from senior leaders — frequency, format, transparency.
9. Describe what success in my first year would look like from the Board's perspective.
10. Tell me any advice you'd give someone stepping into this role at this point in the company's evolution.

Leader's tip: Boards think in horizons (12–36 months). Listen for concerns about direction, leadership confidence, and risk posture.

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Module 3. Phase 2. *0 - 30 days*