

Powerful Coaching Questions

from The Coaching Habit by Michael Bungay Stanier

The first role of a mentor is to build a positive interpersonal relationship.

Time spent building the relationship is time well spent!

Build trust by showing your care for your mentees and by letting them set the direction for your discussions when there are topics on their mind. These powerful coaching questions will help:

What's on your mind?

A perfect start to a mentoring session!

Help your mentees clear their minds and put potential discussion topics on the table. This expansive question cedes control of the conversation to your mentee in a productive way.

And what else?

The first response isn't always the only important information.

Use this question at any point in your discussions to gently nudge your mentee to dig deeper.

This is especially useful right after "What's on your mind?"

Other forms of this question include: "oh?", "go on" and "say more."

What's the real challenge here for you?

This question asks mentees to prioritize their concerns while also centering the discussion on *their* needs.

Use this question to focus in on a particular topic when there are too many on the table.

What do you want?

Powerful, but use sparingly!

Ask this question when mentees are struggling to make a decision, or when you don't understand why they are making a particular choice.

How can I help?

Put your mentees in the driver's seat by asking them to articulate what they need from you.

Be prepared to offer a "menu" of ideas, though!