

FROM EXPERT TO LEADER

25 COACHING QUESTIONS THAT BUILD THINKING, OWNERSHIP & ACCOUNTABILITY

*"Strong leadership
isn't about always
having the answers.
It's about building
the capability
and confidence
in others".*

Many managers are promoted because they are the experts. What changes when you become a leader is your value is no longer measured by how many problems you personally solve. It's measured by how effectively you can develop others. The next time someone brings you a challenge, resist the urge to immediately solve it. Instead, try one of these questions below.



BEFORE YOU ANSWER...

- ✓ Am I about to build capability or dependency?
- ✓ Is this something the team member could own with support?
- ✓ Am I answering because it's genuinely needed, or because it's quicker?
- ✓ What would happen if I asked ONE question instead of giving one answer?



WHEN SOMEONE BRINGS YOU A PROBLEM

- 1 What have you already considered?
- 2 What options do you see?
- 3 How do you want to handle it?
- 4 What do you think is the best way forward?
- 5 What information might help you decide?



TO BUILD OWNERSHIP

- 6 What outcome are you aiming for?
- 7 What would success look like?
- 8 What parts of this are within your control?
- 9 What are you prepared to own?
- 10 If you're saying yes to this, what are you saying no to?



TO STRENGTHEN DECISION MAKING

- 11 What assumptions might you be treating as facts?
- 12 What risks do you see?
- 13 What's the impact if we do nothing?
- 14 Whose other perspective should we consider?
- 15 If you had to decide today, what would you choose?



TO ENCOURAGE LEARNING AND REFLECTION

- 16 What have you learned from this?
- 17 What would you do differently next time?
- 18 What worked well that we should repeat?
- 19 What's one insight you're taking away?
- 20 What support would help you continue to grow?



WHEN SOMEONE LACKS CONFIDENCE

- 21 What's making this feel difficult right now?
- 22 What experience could you draw on here?
- 23 Where have you successfully navigated something like this before?
- 24 What would you advise someone else to do in this situation?
- 25 What's one small step you could take?



WHEN LEADERS SHOULD GIVE DIRECTION

Leaders should provide direction when:



There are significant safety, legal, or compliance risks.



The person is new and needs instruction



Urgent decisions are required.



Expectations or boundaries need to be clarified.



A clear decision has already been made.



SHOULD I COACH OR TELL?

IF THIS IS TRUE...	CONSIDER...
Team has capability but lacks confidence	Coach
Team is inexperienced or new	Teach
Team says, 'can I just quickly check...?'	Coach
Safety or compliance is at risk	Direct
Repeated issue, challenge or question	Coach



The goal isn't to ask questions endlessly. The goal is to pause and decide if asking 1-2 questions will help develop capable people who can think and act with confidence.

