The Complete Question Bank

Questions to ask the people you lead

These are questions to ask the person sitting across from you, organized by the stages of the framework and by the kinds of conversations leaders most often face. They are starting points, not scripts, so change the words until they sound like you. Choose one or two, never all of them, and let the person's answer guide what comes next. The best follow-up question is often the simplest one… "Tell me more about that."

LISTEN FIRST… OPENING THE CONVERSATION

- Before we talk about anything I have prepared, what is most important for us to talk about today?
- How are you doing… really?
- What has been on your mind since we last talked?
- What has been going well for you lately, and what has felt heavy?
- Tell me more about that. What has been the hardest part?
- What is something you wish I knew about your work right now?

AFFIRM GENUINELY… HELPING THEM SEE THEIR STRENGTHS

- What part of your work feels most natural to you right now?
- What are you proud of from the last few months?
- When did you feel most like yourself at work recently?
- What do people tend to come to you for?
- What strength do you wish you had more room to use?

ADDRESS WITH GRACE… NAMING WHAT MATTERS

- I want to talk about something specific I have noticed, because I think it matters for you and for the team. Can we talk about it?
- How do you see what happened?
- What do you understand the expectation to be?
- What is getting in the way of meeting this expectation?
- What support would help, and what part of this is yours to own?
- What would it look like if this were going really well a month from now?

LISTEN AGAIN… AFTER THE CONCERN IS NAMED

- How are you receiving what I just shared?
- What questions do you have?
- Is there anything I may be missing?
- Where do you see this differently than I do?
- What do you believe needs to happen next?

CLOSE WITH INTENTION… SHARED COMMITMENTS

- Let us make sure we both leave with the same understanding. What are you committing to, and what am I committing to?
- What does successful follow-through look like to you?
- When should we check back in on this?
- What do you need from me before we meet again?

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- What is one thing you want to carry forward from today?

COACHING

- What part of your work feels most natural to you right now?
- Where are you stepping in when someone else could learn to take ownership?
- What have you tried so far, and what did you learn from it?
- If you were coaching someone else through this, what would you tell them?
- What is one small step you could take this week?

PERFORMANCE

- What is getting in the way of meeting this expectation?
- What support would help, and what part of this is yours to own?
- What would need to be true for you to feel confident about this part of your role?
- How will we both know that things have improved?

CONFLICT

- What do you think the other person would say is happening?
- What would working well together look like a month from now?
- What do you appreciate about the way they work, even when it frustrates you?
- What is one thing you could do differently that might change the dynamic?
- What do you need from me, and what do you not need from me, as you work through this?

ENGAGEMENT

- What gives you energy at work, and what quietly drains you?
- What would make you more excited to come to work?
- When was the last time you felt really valued here?
- What is one thing we could stop doing that would make your work better?
- Is there anything that has you thinking about whether this is still the right place for you?

DEVELOPMENT

- Where do you see yourself growing over the next year?
- What strength do you wish you had more room to use?
- What skill, if you built it, would open the most doors for you?
- What kind of work would you like to be doing two or three years from now?
- What opportunity would stretch you without overwhelming you?

TRANSITIONS

- What feels uncertain about this change, and what feels possible?
- What do you need from me as you move into what comes next?
- What are you ready to let go of, and what do you want to keep?
- Who else could help you through this transition?

QUARTERLY THEMES

- **Discover.** What do you want me to understand about how you work best?
- **Discover.** What are you hoping for this year, in your work and in your growth?
- **Develop.** Where have you made progress since we set your goals, and where do you feel stuck?

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- **Develop.** What responsibility are you ready to own more fully?
- **Deepen.** What is getting harder, and what is getting easier?
- **Deepen.** Where would you like more independence, and where would you like more support?
- **Distinguish.** What set this year apart for you?
- **Distinguish.** What growth are you most proud of, and what do you want to carry into next year?

THE ANNUAL EVALUATION

- As you look back on this year, what are you most proud of, and what was hardest?
- What do you believe were your most important contributions?
- Where did you grow the most, and where do you still want to grow?
- What did I do this year that helped you, and what could I do better?
- What would make next year your best year here?

WHEN YOU DO NOT KNOW WHAT TO SAY

- I do not have the answer yet. I will find out and come back to you by a specific date.
- I can see this matters to you. Can you help me understand more?
- Would it help to take a few minutes before we continue?
- What would be most helpful to you right now?
- Is this something you would like support with beyond what I can offer?

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