

35 Coaching Questions That Create Breakthroughs

Transform Your Leadership Through Powerful Questions

Based on "The Heart in Leadership Answer" by Guy Melton

The Power of Questions in Leadership

Great leaders don't have all the answers—they ask the right questions. These 35 questions, organized by common leadership situations, will help you unlock potential, build trust, and create breakthrough moments with your team. Each question is designed to shift perspective, deepen understanding, and inspire action.

How to Use These Questions Effectively

- ✓ Ask with genuine curiosity, not to prove a point
- ✓ Listen to understand, not to respond
- ✓ Create silence after asking—let them think
- ✓ Follow up with "Tell me more about that..."
- ✓ Focus on one question at a time
- ✓ Document insights for future conversations
- ✓ Use their answers to guide your leadership approach

When Addressing Performance Challenges

1. "When you're performing at your best in this role, what does that look like?"
2. "What's different between those exceptional moments and the times when things feel difficult?"
3. "If you could change one thing that would make the biggest difference in your performance, what would it be?"
4. "What obstacles are getting in the way of you doing your best work?"
5. "How can I better support your success?"

During Development Conversations

6. "Where do you see yourself in three years, and what excites you most about that vision?"
7. "What skills would you like to develop that would make the biggest impact on your career?"
8. "What parts of your job energize you the most?"
9. "If you were sitting on my side of the desk, what would you do?"
10. "What would success look like for you this year?"

Key Insight: Development happens when people discover their own answers, not when they're told what to

When Navigating Conflict or Resistance

11. "What's your perspective on this situation?"
12. "What would need to happen for this to feel resolved for you?"
13. "Help me understand what's most important to you here."
14. "What are we not talking about that we should be?"
15. "If we could start fresh, what would you do differently?"

Key Insight: Conflict often stems from feeling unheard. Questions create space for understanding.

For Building Motivation & Engagement

16. "What would make you excited to come to work on Monday morning?"
17. "When have you felt most proud of your work here?"
18. "What's one thing we could stop doing that would make your job easier?"
19. "What strengths do you have that we're not fully utilizing?"
20. "How do you prefer to be recognized for good work?"

Key Insight: You can't motivate people, but you can remove what's demotivating them.

During Times of Change

- 21. "What concerns you most about this change?"
- 22. "What opportunities do you see in this new direction?"
- 23. "What would help you feel more confident about this transition?"
- 24. "What's worked well for you in past changes?"
- 25. "How can we make this change work better for everyone?"

Key Insight: People don't resist change; they resist being changed without input.

For Building Future Leaders

- 26. "What kind of leader do you want to become?"
- 27. "What leadership skills do you see in others that you'd like to develop?"
- 28. "If you were leading this team, what would you do differently?"
- 29. "What leadership challenges interest you most?"
- 30. "Who has been your best manager, and what made them great?"

Key Insight: Build leaders who can think differently than you, not just execute your playbook.

When Learning from Setbacks

31. "What can we learn from this experience?"
32. "Knowing what you know now, what would you do differently?"
33. "What systems could we put in place to prevent this in the future?"
34. "What hidden opportunity might be in this setback?"
35. "How can we use this experience to become stronger?"

Key Insight: Failure becomes advantage when we systematically extract its lessons.

Remember: The quality of your leadership is determined by the quality of your questions.

These questions embody the B.A.S.I.C.S. principles:

Belief in people's potential • **A**uthenticity in connection • **S**ervice over self-interest
Initiative in understanding • **C**uriosity that drives growth • **S**ystems for success

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Leading with heart means being curious about people's potential, not just their performance.