



RESOURCE B

QUESTIONS, QUESTIONS, AND MORE QUESTIONS

Although there is no definitive list of great questions to ask when coaching, useful questions are the backbone of successful coaching. Many participants in our workshops have requested that we include in this book as many questions as possible. Here is an extended list. Also see Chapter Three, “The Coaching Framework,” which includes many useful questions to guide you through a coaching conversation, and Chapter Six, “Coaching in the Nonprofit Workplace,” which provides questions for specific workplace situations. We encourage you to create your own list, too. (Special thanks to Carter McNamara of Authenticity Consulting, LLC, for contributing to this list of questions.)

QUESTIONS FOR THE COACHING FRAMEWORK

To Clarify the Focus

- What do you want or need to focus on?
- What do you want or need to get out of this conversation?
- What’s going on right now that’s important for us to talk about?
- What should we be talking about that will help this situation?
- What’s going on right now?
- What are you currently experiencing?
- How does what you are saying relate to this issue?
- What is this conversation really about?

I've heard you mention different things. Which one do you want to work on right now?

What is the bottom line here?

What's most important out of everything you are saying?

How is this issue important?

Where do you feel stuck?

What is the intent of what you're saying?

What are you hoping to achieve?

What do you really want from this situation?

What do you mean by that? What are you really saying?

What impact do you desire?

What's most important out of everything you are saying?

What's the real point?

What's the bottom line?

How can I be of most use to you in this conversation?

To Identify the Goal

Where are you now in relation to what you need to achieve?

What is currently happening that you want to change?

What other perspectives could there be?

How would someone else see this situation?

What do you need to do to shift your perspective?

What could you not be seeing yet?

What is the desired end goal?

What does success look like?

What are you hoping to achieve?

Where are you really heading with this?

What will it look like when you . . . ?

If you could set a goal around this, what would it be?

What is the end result that you are trying to get to?

Have you experienced anything like this before? What did you do? How did it work out?

To Develop Solutions

Where must you start with this situation?

Which option seems best right now?

What are the options? What else?

Which option seems to be more relevant?

Which option seems to be less obvious but might actually work out?

How can you break that into manageable chunks?

How do you see the path to where you want to go?

What needs to shift for something different to happen?

What have you not yet tried that might help?

What are other ways to get there?

What must happen in order to get that/there/it?

What support or resources do you need?

What are the obstacles in the path? How will you move beyond them?

If you meet this goal, how will it benefit you, us, our organization?

What other paths could you take?

If everything were available to you, what's possible for this situation?

Where are you coming from as you look at this situation?

What's your greatest wish about this situation?

What would you choose to do about this if anything were possible?

What is driving your choice?

How are you making this decision?

What other factors come into play as you choose to act the way you do?

What other way is there?

What if there were another way? Would you take it?

What if you came from outside the box? Where would that be from?
Where are you now in relation to what you need to achieve?
What stands between you and the future?
What are you allowing to hinder the situation that must now be changed?
What do you need to get going on to move this along?
If you get to the other side of this, what will you gain?
What have you not yet tried that would help in this situation?
What must happen in order to get that/there/it?
What options can we look at? Which option looks best?
What if you could . . . ?
How would it look if you tried that?
What do you need to shift for something different to happen?
What are we missing here?
How can you break that into manageable chunks?

To Create Accountability

What can you do before the next meeting?
What are you going to do?
Who will do that action?
By when will you do this?
What will it look like when it's done?
How will we know it's done?
What else might you need as you move forward?
What's next?
What steps are necessary to move the program forward?
What steps will you or the team assume responsibility for?
What is the best way to bridge the current disparity?
Who else needs to be involved to ensure the project's success?
What obstacles to success need to be eliminated? What will you do first/next?

What will be distinctly different from prior attempts?
How will you know it's working/succeeding?
What will we see you doing differently?
What support do you need to make this happen/to succeed?
When's a good time to get back together on this?
What, if anything, may we have left out?
What's one thing you can do right away?
What's the most strategic thing to do next?
How sure do you feel that this is going to work?
How confident are you feeling about your next steps?

QUESTIONS FOR SPECIFIC AREAS OF FOCUS

Information and Knowledge

What other information do you need or want?
Have you got all the information you need?
How well versed are you in this situation?
How familiar are you with what needs to happen?
What do you need to know?
Where can you get more information?
What information do you feel you still need?
How much do you know about this?
What data do you think are still needed?
How can we leverage what you know to help us here?
How aware are you of this situation?
What do you need to do with what you have learned so far?
What does all this information tell us?

Capacity, Proficiency, and Standards

What will help you become even more proficient with this task?

What skills do you bring to the table related to this?
How can we use your gifts to benefit this situation?
What strengths can you leverage in this situation?
How much capacity do you have to do this task?
What other training or books might be helpful?
What role can you play?
What's the scope of your ability?
How much room do you have to work on this?
How proficient do you feel you are given what we are dealing with?
How adept do you feel?
What else do you need to learn?
How ready do you feel to run with this yourself?
What do you need to learn in order to accomplish this?
What practice will you need?
What are your personal measures for this project?
What is most important to the clients?
What criteria do you need to take into consideration?
How do your benchmarks compare with other agencies?
How will we get everyone's full effort to maintain or exceed these levels?
How will performance be measured?

Relationships and Associations

What do you want in this relationship?
What will make this relationship work very well?
What value do you bring and do they bring to this relationship?
How well are things going between you and them?
What does *together* really look like?
Who else do you need to know or include in this?
What do you need from this other person?

Whom do you relate to easily and whom do you not?
What causes you to get on well with one group or another?
What is going well with your team?
How would the other person describe this same issue to you?
What is your role in this issue?
What would a successful relationship look like?
What have you not said to this person?

Leadership

What leadership strengths are you using here?
What's your normal approach when leading in this situation?
How do you feel taking the lead?
How do you like to lead?
What support do you need as the leader?
What can you do to empower others as much as possible?
What's most important to you as you lead on this?
What expectations do you need to set?
What voice should you speak in?
How available are you to others, given the situation?
How ready are you to deliver that message?
How are you sharing leadership on this project?
How much control makes sense for you to take or for you to give?
How will you guide others while standing back?
How can you give direction and coach at the same time?
Is this a matter of leading differently?
Which leaders do you admire?
How will you guide others while standing back?
How can you give direction and coach at the same time?
What's your normal approach when leading in this situation?

How do you feel taking the lead?
How do you like to lead?
What support do you need as the leader?
How are you sharing leadership on this project?
Is this a matter of leading differently?

Talents and Strengths

What part of your job description most excites you?
What work activities do you most look forward to?
What do you love about your work?
If you could work on anything here, what would it be?
What interests you most about this project?
When is a time that you were really successful at this?
What is a job you have loved? What made you love it?
When have you met or exceeded a goal like this?
When have you taken the lead on something?
When have you taken the initiative on something? What was that like?
How do you convince people to see things your way?
How do you go about solving difficult problems?
If you could spend tomorrow doing anything you wanted, what would it be?
When does time pass quickly for you? What are you working on when that happens?
What would you most like to contribute here?
What are some things you've been recognized for in the past?

Ownership, Motivation, Readiness, and Confidence

How confident do you feel about this task?
How motivated do you feel about this task?
How familiar are you with this situation?
You've done something similar before. What did you do that worked?

What will it take for you to own the whole thing?
What does this truly mean to you?
What do you want in this situation?
How would this need to look to be really valuable for you?
How can we refocus on the mission here?
What do you actually feel you want to accomplish here?
What does it really mean to achieve?
What are you tolerating that makes you less enthusiastic about this work?
How can you build on how well you did this before?
What do you want to achieve in this situation?
What would make you feel fully ready to go?
When will you be ready?
What will help you gain full commitment to the project?
How optimistic are you about the outcome?
How confident do you feel about doing this?
What possibilities are you most excited about?
What's holding you back now?
What's your uncertainty about?
How would you like to be more involved?
What would help you enjoy your work?
What's preventing this from happening?
What is really going on here?
How much support do you think you'll need, or how much can you do on your own?
What do you need?
Where are we going with this?
What do you need to know before you start this task?
What's most important for you to think through first?
Where will you start?

What do you understand the goal to be? How should it look on the other side?

What's your comfort level with doing this assignment?

How will you fit this assignment into your already busy schedule?

What's next?

What might get in the way?

Behavior, Self-Discovery, and Self-Management

What's new for you?

What's different, based on what you've learned?

What lies between where you are and where you are aiming to be?

What's your current feeling about this?

What's the unspoken truth for you?

What's possible for you?

What result does your attitude and behavior get you?

How can you balance how much you speak and how much you listen?

What do your people really want from you?

How important is it to get along with people, as well as get results?

How can you leverage your strengths to support you here?

What does it mean to really . . . ?

How do you think others perceive you?

What is working and what is not concerning your behavior?

What is working about how you are handling this and what is not?

How does speaking to others that way work for them?

How can you enhance your conversations to work for everyone?

What tone of voice might work for others?

How does your impact align with your intent?

What do you need to work on to be an even better coworker?

What is one thing you can work on that will help you grow this year?

Support, Structure, and Tools

What would make the biggest impact and help to ensure your success?

What resources are you missing that would make a difference?

What help will you need in making those contacts?

What will help you succeed?

What do you need to proceed?

How can you enroll others to help you out?

How are you doing with the equipment/technology program?

What other equipment do you need?

Do you have all the tools you need?

Whom do you need to support you?

What can you do to make sure the system supports your work?

What do you need to proceed smoothly?

How well are those templates working for you?

What other templates would make your job easier?

How does your work space support or hinder your getting the work done?

What arrangements do you need to make to get what you need to get the job done?

How does the current environment support you?

What obstacles seem to be in your way?

Planning and Time

What is your plan?

What is the timeline?

How did you come up with this plan?

Why have you ordered things this way?

How is this plan supporting the rest of your work?

How can you fit this project in with all the other work you have?

What timing makes most sense?

How will you schedule this?
What do you need to set up to help you succeed?
What else needs attention before you get going?
What else is taking up your time?
How much preparation will this need?
What preparation have you done or do you need to do?
What is your forecast?

Vision and Strategy

What do you see working here?
What is your highest vision of this?
What do you see as the best outcome?
How do you want to see this unfold?
What do you want in this situation?
What do you need to make this happen?
How do you see your strategy aligning with that of the organization?
How can we improve our strategy?
What possible strategies can you think of to meet this challenge?
What will make it most effective?
What is the next level for you?
If you could design a response with no constraints whatsoever, what would it be?
What is your or your team's vision that can be aligned with that of the organization?

Disagreement, Confusion, or Misalignment

What is your theory about how this can work?
What leads you to conclude that?
What assumptions might be getting in your way?
Where did this come from?

What do you really mean by that?
What are you really saying?
How would your proposal affect this?
What does that look like?
What do we know for a fact?
What do you think about what I just said?
What can you add to what I just said?
How do you see it differently?
What data do you have for that?
What causes you to say that?
What is the significance of that?
How does this relate to your other concerns?
Where does your reasoning go next?
Can you help us understand your thinking here?
How did you arrive at this view?

Awareness and Understanding

What is your perception of the current situation?
What do you see as the biggest challenge?
What will it take to address the challenge?
What do you know?
How well do you understand this?
What do you make of this information?
How familiar are you with this?
What's your biggest question about this?
What don't we know yet?
What's still up in the air?
What are our performance strengths?
Where are the needs around information, skills, attitudes, or behaviors?

Where do you see the opportunity in this?
What opportunity might we want to take advantage of?

Differences Between People

What should I know about you?
What do you want to know about me?
How are we the same?
How can I best work with you?
How are we different?
What similarities do we have?
What is important for me to pay attention to when working with you?
What makes you who you are?
What is it that you never want to hear me say again?
What is it that I should never say or do again when I'm with you?
What is important that I honor about your heritage?
How does where you come from influence how you think and what you do?
What is sacred in your eyes?
How do you see it differently than others do?
What questions do you not want me to ask?
What bothers you about people like me?

Improvement

What did you originally set out to achieve?
What did you want the most?
How well do you think you're doing?
What's the evidence to support what you're saying?
How well do you feel you've done in the eyes of our clients?
How well did you understand the goals and expectations?
How could we have done a better job with goals and expectations?

What support did you receive that worked or didn't work to help you progress?
What else can be achieved here?
What do we need to do if this doesn't work?
What do we need to make sure of?
What is in the best interest of the clients?
What is in everyone's best interest here?
How are you really going to change the outcome?
How quickly can we expect real change?
How would you describe path A, a path that leads to success, and path B, if success isn't reached?
Given the constraints of the organization and the work we need done, how much improvement can we expect?
What does this mean?
What do you think is fair in this situation?
What do you see as an alternative to success?
What do you see as inevitable?
Where does not succeeding leave us?
Where should we go with this?
What does this all mean or add up to?

Challenging Situations

How do you think you are achieving the required results?
What's your greatest wish about this situation?
What do you need more of?
How do you see it differently?
What leads you to that conclusion?
What information is that based on?
What causes you to say that?
What is the significance of that?
How does this relate to your other concerns?

Where does your reasoning go next?
What assumptions are you making about the other person or people?
What other factors come into play here?
What if there was another way, would you take it?
What are the options? What else?
Which option seems to be more relevant?
If this moment could be different, how would you design it?
What is really going on between us in this conversation?
What if there were other alternatives?
The way you are thinking about this situation, what effect is this having on you?
What have you not yet asked for?
What do you want here more than anything?
What must you request?
What action must you take, even if things don't go your way?
What do you feel about all of this?
What's driving your passion?
What impact are you having on other people?
What impact do you want to have?
How do your emotional outbursts affect you or others?
How can you better manage your response to disappointment?
How did you arrive at this view?
What causes you to be more emotional when you speak about a particular issue?
What's easy, and what do you have more of a hard time with?

Back-Pocket Questions

What's important for us to focus on?
What do you really want?
What do you mean by that?
Where should we go with this?

What are you aiming for?

What's the bottom line?

What options are you looking at?

Which option do you know you can go for?

What have you not yet tried that might work?

What else? What else?

What's next then?

What support will you need?

