

SURFACE TO SOUL

Live Well | Lead Well | Coach Well

Craft Powerful Coaching Questions

One of a coach's greatest tools is powerful questions. Powerful questions are usually open-ended, leaving room for contemplation and reflection, instead of being limited to yes or no or specific choices. Powerful questions promote the exploration of new possibilities and stimulate creativity. They place the individual or group in a place of responsibility. They empower individuals and groups to consider what is right for them.

Listen for the questions you and your team and/or organization are asking discern if they are they limiting or powerful? Here are a few powerful questions for consideration that tend to move people beyond limiting beliefs:

- How could you make better use of your personal strengths?
- How could you make better use of the strengths of your team and/or organization?
- What kind of leader would you be if you were driven by passion?
- Which of your roles could someone else be doing, and probably better than you?
- What's the worst thing that could happen if you did less?

POWERFUL QUESTIONS . . .

- **Are directly connected to deep listening**, enabling the coach to craft the most effective questions. Often, the most powerful questions are created in the moment which required deep, engaged listening
- **Are brief**. They get right to the point, and one point only.
- **Are free of any hidden agenda**. They are not leading or suggestive.
- **Move people further along the path of discovery**.
- **Are usually open-ended**, promoting further conversation. For the most part, yes/no questions usually result in a yes/no response, which force an end to the conversation and enable either/or thinking.
- **Promote both/and thinking**, opening up the coachee to a fuller range of possibilities.
- **Are clarifying**. They help clarify and slow down automatic responses and thinking. They help coachees push the pause button -- and discern what they really want.
- **Are perspective-shifting**. Powerful questions invite us to walk across to the other side of the room and look at the same thing from a different angle or perspective.
- **Benefit the people we are coaching**. Remember that the coach is not the expert, and does not have to figure anything out or come up with solutions. Therefore, our questions must be designed to help the coachee discover and develop their own perspective and wisdom about the situation.
- **Help people gain perspective and understanding**. What's the truth about this situation? Who do you remind yourself of? What keeps you up at night? Is there anything else that would be important for me to know?
- **Evoke discovery**. What do you really, really want? What's perfect about this? What is the gift of this? What additional information do you need? How much is this costing you? Who can help you with this?
- **Promote clarity and learning**. What if things are as bad as you say they are? Where are you sabotaging yourself? What's the cost of not changing? What's next? What's past this issue?
- **Call for action**. What's possible today? How soon can you resolve this? Who do you know that's going through this? What does success look like? What's the first step? When will you take this step?

POWERFUL QUESTIONING

Powerful questions frame conversations that get what really matters. Powerful questioning involves asking coachees insightful questions based on their most recent responses. These questions often address people's core assumptions and what may prevent them from moving forward in positive ways.



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