

POWERFUL QUESTIONS (What? So What? What next?)

The \$64,000 Questions

- What's the issue (the presenting problem)?
- What's your goal for this conversation about it?
- What's making it an issue now?
- Who/what is involved?/Who owns this issue?
- On a scale of 1-10, how important is this problem?
- On a scale of 1-10, how much energy do you have for it? (If either score <3 you can give up at this point!)
- What have you already tried to resolve it?
- What would be happening in an ideal world?
- How would you know the problem had been solved?
- What's standing in the way of the problem being solved now?
- What have you contributed to the problem?
- When you've had a problem like this before and solved it successfully, what did you do?
- Who and what else is helping towards the ideal outcome?
- What would you say to yourself at your most resourceful to solve this issue?
- What are your options for action?
- What criteria would you use to evaluate those options?
- Based on that, what's the best option now?
- What are you going to do? When will you do it?

For more powerful techniques, see overleaf....

Skills check. How good are you at:

- Building rapport
- Listening
- Asking open questions (who, what, when, where, how) – but being careful with “why” – sometimes people just don't know “why”
- Giving feedback
- Being assertive
- Saying “no”?
- Interrupting *appropriately*?
- Offering information v advice?
- Reflecting – key emotions, key agreements, key actions?
- Summarising the discussion (by section, as a whole)

The GROW Model

- **G**oal (What is it?)
- **R**eality (Where are you now?)
- **O**ptions (What are they?)
- **W**hat (First/next – and when?)
- The \$64,000 questions take you through this
- You will often find that you need to refine the “Goal” as you go through each stage of the model



Victim mentality (Someone else always at fault)

- **When they say:** “If only they’d change their way of thinking”, **ask:** “How can you change *your* way of thinking?”
- **When they say:** “I wish s/he would...”, **ask:** “How can you alter the way *you* respond to him/her?”
- **When they say:** “I can’t do this because they won’t let me”, **ask:** “In what ways are you giving other people the power to make choices for you?”
- **When they say:** “I can’t”, **ask:** “Can’t, or won’t?”

Encouraging people to be specific

- **Comparisons** **When they say:** “This is the worst situation I’ve ever had to deal with”, **ask:** “Worst in what way, specifically?” OR “Our management processes as they are, are better than any other organisation’s, **ask:** “How specifically are they better?”
- **Generalisations** **When they say:** “We always set unrealistic objectives for people’s performance” **ask:** “Always – do you really mean that?” OR **When they say:** “Everyone thinks appraisals are a waste of time” **ask:** “Does everyone think that? Who might disagree?”
- **Bald assertions** **When they say:** “I don’t like the way this organisation is headed”, **ask:** “Could you tell me specifically what you don’t like?”
- **Shoulds/musts** **When they say:** “I must have advance warning of changes in the plans”, **ask:** “What would having advance warning help you with?”
- **Can’ts** **When they say:** “I can’t hope to change the fact that I have to work long hours on faculty matters” **ask:** “What’s stopping you working a shorter day?”

Possibility questions

- So what could you do here?
- If there were no restrictions, what could happen?

Questions to pick up after “failure”

- What have you learnt from this episode?
- If this kind of thing happens again, what will you do?
- What could you take away as something valuable that you have learnt?
- A year from now, what will your perspective be on this situation?

Do you need to stop:

- Interrupting?
- Giving advice based on exactly what you would do – or have done in the past??
- Making assumptions?

Finally, if all else fails, ask:

- **What do you need to do to make sure that you don’t succeed here?**
- That’s a question that usually makes people laugh, but there is often a lot of learning that comes out of it.