

## **2023 Coaching Skills: Powerful Questions—Follow-up Notes**

Questions are at the very heart of coaching because coaching is an inquiry-based technology. They are the coach's sharpest and most used tool. Here is a relatively long list of thoughts and considerations related to questions:

1. When we ask questions, it mostly prevents us from giving advice. That is, "When we are asking, we are not telling."
2. The realization that we do not know the answer to these questions keeps us in the moment
3. Questions are only half the equation; listening is the other half
4. There can be humility in the process of asking, and this is directly related to one aspect of coaching presence
5. Occasionally, we ask a closed question, typically for expedient clarification
6. Powerful questions are not always safe and comfortable questions; there is an intimacy that can go with them, and this is one reason we need to establish trust and safety
7. When you are silent, listening, and noticing, you are doing something, not nothing
8. Ask questions out of a place of curiosity, but not to fulfill your curiosity
9. The exploration portion of the session-- which is most of the session, is free-form and improvisational. Coaching can be structured, but that is not the same thing as rigid.
10. There is a difference between important (the matters we address in coaching) and serious, which is a tone. Coaching can be serious, but just as often, it is fun and playful.
11. Make big talk, not small talk
12. There are some standard coaching questions, such as "What else?" and "Tell me more" (which serves as a question), that are great to keep handy. If you are ever at a complete loss for where to go next, "What would be helpful now?" is good.
13. Think of the exploration part of the coaching as an "interview." Do not get hung up on feeling obligated to give the client insight or help them arrive at a particular strategy. Just explore. This should feel light and liberating to you. Occasionally, you can come up for air and just check in about the agenda. "We've been exploring these themes for about 10 minutes now. I am just curious how you are feeling about our progress toward your agenda. Should we continue in this way, or would you prefer some other avenue?"

14. There is no RIGHT question. There are many questions, some of which will land well, and some will just be ho-hum. That is okay.

15. When the client is brought up short and is silent in reflection, or when they say, “That is a good question,” or “I have never thought of that,” or “Hmm,” then you know you have landed a powerful question.