

Powerful Questions



CONNECTED EC
THRIVING LEADERS. CONNECTED TEAMS. POSITIVE CULTURES.

OPEN AND CURIOUS QUESTIONS

There is a difference between questions designed to draw out specific answers and curious, open-ended questions that evoke personal exploration. These sorts of questions, by contrast, take the other person on a journey. They are explorative.

Information gathering is a form of closed questioning in which the questioner is looking for facts, while curiosity begins with the question, “I wonder.” Curious questions invite deep thinking and exploration. Information gathering, by contrast, ends once the person responds to the question asked. Questioning like this also implies that there’s a right answer and a wrong answer.

Notice the differences in responses that could be elicited by the following types of questions:

Information Gathering

- What topics will you include in the report?
- How much exercise do you need each week?
- What training options are available?

Curious Questions

- What’s important about the report to you?
- What is “being fit” to you?
- What do you want to know that you don’t know today?

Closed questions can also be yes/no questions. They leave no room for exploration.

Closed Questions

- Is this an effective course of action?
- Did you learn what you’d intended?
- Looks like you’re going to have to choose either option a or b?

Open Questions

- What makes this an effective strategy for you?
- What did you learn?
- What’s another choice you might make up besides the two in front of you?

POWERFUL QUESTIONS

Powerful questions are not only open-ended and curious, but they elicit resonance:

Powerful Questions

- What do you want? What do you really want?
- What would make it 10 times more exciting?
- What would thrill you?
- Where could you dream even bigger?
- What would really stretch you
- How is this vision connected to what matters most to you?

These sorts of **powerful** questions take the limits off of the person being questioned. They can help your team members see outside and beyond the common, everyday way of seeing things. They evoke resonance.

Dissonance, by contrast, is just the opposite of resonance. It has a lifeless quality. When we're mentoring around someone's career, and it feels like there's not aliveness in the conversation, it indicates that we're likely exploring in the wrong direction. We're likely moving into the terrain of the mentees saboteur, the part of them that is stuck in old beliefs, rules, and judgments.

IDEAS FOR POWERFUL QUESTIONS

1. CLARIFY

- Passion

- What are you passionate about?
- When do you feel most expanded?
- Where do you feel most connected?
- When are you fearless?

- Purpose

- What's the purpose that this puts you in touch with?
- What is an image, metaphor, or symbol that captures who you are when you are living your life purpose?
- What game could you play that is big enough for who really are and what you stand for?

- Meaning

- What are you here to contribute?
- What matters most to you?
- Who do you want/need to be?
- What is your dream?
- What do you long for?

2. ENVISION

- What would it look like?
- How do you want it to be?
- Where do you see it 1, 2, or 5 years from now?
- What's the effect/impact you want to make?

3. BUILD RESONANCE

- Who do you become as a result of doing this?
- How is this vision connected to your core?
- What values does it honor?
- On a scale of 1-10, how much will you be honoring your values?
- What does it look and/or feel like when you honor that value

4. THRILL

- What would thrill you?
- Where could you dream even bigger?
- What will really stretch you into your BIG life?
- How could you make it ten times more:
 - o Luxurious
 - o Fabulous
 - o Fun
 - o Rich
 - o Truly YOU!
- What would move this from being a 10-dream to a 20-dream...totally off the scale as you know it?
- What would be so exciting that it pulls you out of bed in the morning like a magnet?
- Where could you be radical, here?