

Overview

Some people are naturally gifted at asking thought-provoking questions. Others may need examples to help generate ideas.

When to Use Thought-Provoking Questions

Thought-provoking questions can be used in any conversation – in Forum, in business and in life. These insightful types of questions indicate that you are actively listening to the other person. Coaches and mentors are particularly skilled at asking these types of questions to help people find new perspectives and discover blind spots.

When coaching a Presenter to prepare for a Forum presentation/exploration, try to use several thought-provoking questions to help them discover the core issue and/or new insights.

During a presentation, thought-provoking questions may be used to help the presenter gain new insights. Note that sometimes these questions are rhetorical, i.e., the presenter doesn't have an answer at the moment, but they will think about it later on their own.

Examples

The questions below are examples to be used when someone is discussing an issue, challenge or situation. DO NOT use all of them. Select a handful of questions that are most appropriate for the situation.

- Tell me a story about a time when you were enthusiastic about this situation or a component of it.
- If you could break all the rules of and laws of reality, what could you do to resolve this?
- Who is your favorite role model in this topical area? What do you think this person would do to address the issue?
- Are you being honest with yourself about the situation? Who would disagree with you? What would they not agree with and why?
- Is this issue significant enough to merit time and effort in solving it? Why or why not?
- What would you really like to do to resolve this?
- Is there another way to look at this problem?
- What is the biggest obstacle or concern related to this issue? If that object were magically removed, what would you do? (E.g., if money were no object, what would you do?)
- What is at risk to you, personally, in dealing with this situation? What level of risk is acceptable to you?
- What is the worst-case scenario and the best-case scenario you can imagine as an outcome?
- Think of someone else who is close to the situation. What do you think their perspective would be if they were asked?



- What does the situation say about you?
- Do you have a pattern of this type of situation in your life? If so, describe the pattern.
- How much of the situation do you have control over? Can you separate the elements you can control and the elements you can't? Let's talk through them.
- When you wake up in the middle of the night and think about this situation, what emotions do you feel?
- Imagine fifty years into the future from today... How do you think you will view this situation?