

99 Questions a Coaching Supervisor Might Ask

Opening up the conversation

1. Tell me what has happened since our last meeting?
2. What would you like to talk through with me today?
3. Tell me a little bit about what is going on in
4. I'm curious; may I ask you a few questions about ...?
5. You seem to be struggling with Am I right? Tell me about what is going on.
6. You seemed to really enjoy Am I right? Tell me what you enjoyed so much ...
7. Do you want help in solving this issue, or do you just need to vent?
8. _____ went really well. Why do you think it went so well? How can we make sure we can repeat/spread this success in the future?

Helping someone really understand the issue/problem – positive or negative:

9. Tell me more about
10. Why do you think this happened?
11. Why do you think s/he (you) reacted that way?
12. What do you think caused this to happen? Why do you think that?
13. What do you think (the other person) would say if s/he were asked for her perspective?
14. How can you learn what you need to know about this to come up with a solution/different way to address it?
15. Why does _____ matter?
16. How do you know that this is accurate/true/what really happened/what s/he really meant or thought?
17. Tell me what you have you tried so far?
18. What are the main obstacles you face?
19. How do you think that made the other person feel? Any clues from their behavior?
20. What is most significant to you in what you just told me?
21. How can I help you learn from this situation?
22. Let me say this back to you to make sure I understand this correctly

Generating ideas/solutions (often good to use a whiteboard – something about standing up and making it visual often stimulates creativity):

23. Tell me what you are thinking of doing? Do you think that is the only/best option?
24. What are some other ideas besides the ones you've already thought of?
25. Imagine you are (other person/client/customer). What ideas do you think s/he might have for handling this?
26. What do you think might be a possible first step in dealing with this?

27. I know this seems like a big/scary/impossible problem. If you weren't nervous about what people would think, what would you do?
28. If resources (money/time/staff) were not an issue, how might you handle this?
29. If you had more control, how might you handle this?
30. What resources do you need (wish you had) to address this?
31. If you were me, what would you do in this situation?
32. If someone you really liked told you that they had this problem, what advice would you give him/her?
33. What does your intuition tell you about this?
34. Who else will benefit?
35. Have you solved problems like this before? If you have, anything you learned from those situations that we could apply here?
36. What might you start doing, stop doing, or do differently, to improve this situation?
37. Who else could you talk to who could help you come up with ideas on how to solve/deal with this?
38. Why do you assume _____? Is there a way you could check on your assumption?
39. Is this the best outcome you can imagine or is there something that would be even better, you just don't see how you would do it?
40. If you ran the world, what would you do? Now what are the downsides to that approach or why won't it work?
41. Would you like some suggestions from me?
42. How can I help you in this situation?
43. What suggestions do you have for me on ways I could help?

Helping someone select a course of action:

44. So we've come up with _____ ideas, which ones seem the best ones to explore further or try? Why?
45. You have lots of ideas here. Are there any that we should not pursue? Why?
46. Which of the options you've identified appeals to you the most? Why?
47. You've said that option _____ seems the best one to you, but you seem reluctant to pursue it. Why? What is worrying you?
48. What additional information or input do you need to choose among these options?
49. I would like you to decide which option to pursue, but you seem a little stuck. Would it help if I gave you my thoughts on which options might be best to include/exclude/pursue, or would you rather figure this out on your own?
50. Ok, you seem stuck in choosing an option. How about I pick one and then you tell me why that option is the wrong one until you feel like we've picked one that either is the best or the least bad one. That way you can do a gut check on each one.

51. Sometimes there just isn't a right answer for problems. So if you don't feel strongly positive about any of these, are there any that you feel strongly negative about, so at least we can narrow them down.
52. Would it be helpful to you if we did a quick pro/con list for each option?
53. Do you have a gut feeling about this?
54. Instead of either/or, could you use both or elements from each?
55. How will you know if you are successful?
56. What will the end product be?
57. What would wild success be?
58. Who else should you talk to before deciding?
59. Who else would feel better if they had input on this decision or on how you approach this?

Moving to Action and Making a Plan:

60. So you have decided to do X. Tell me how you plan to accomplish X?
61. What barriers do you see to accomplishing X? How can you either avoid or mitigate those barriers so they are less of a problem?
62. You seem to know what to do. What's stopping you from taking action?
63. Are you procrastinating or is there a good reason to delay?
64. What are you worried about that we haven't talked about yet?
65. Do you need to work harder or can you delegate all or part of this?
66. What support do you need from me or others to make this happen?
67. You seem to be getting a little stuck in taking action. How about if the next step is for you to draft a plan to make this happen, then come back to me and we can discuss details.
68. Sometimes when I get stuck on how to make something, I just make a list in any order of what needs to be done. Then I rewrite it to show the logical order. Shall we try doing that to get you closer to a plan of action?
69. Sometimes I find writing things down makes things clearer. So why don't you try to draft what your goal/end product/process will be either now or you can do that by yourself and bring it back to me for some input?

Growth/Development/Motivation Questions

70. What went really well this (period)?
71. What did you really enjoy this (period)?
72. What did you not enjoy or what did not go well this (period)?
73. What do you wish went differently this (period)?
74. What did you learn this (period)?
75. What did you accomplish this (period)?
76. Anything or anyone you are particularly grateful for this (period)?

77. Anyone who you think might be particularly pleased or happy about something you did?
78. What's next for you?
79. What else would you like to try?
80. Do you see any tasks/projects/roles that you would like to try?
81. What do you want to be doing that you aren't currently doing?
82. What areas do you want to strengthen, improve, or develop?
83. What is most important to you in your career or life? (What does a successful career or life look like?)
84. What are the three most important things you would like to accomplish right now?
85. What is your action plan to achieve those goals?
86. What do you need that's preventing you from reaching those goals?
87. How can I best support you to achieve these goals?
88. How can I best manage you and hold you accountable for the results you are looking to achieve?
89. How can I hold you accountable in a way that will sound supportive and won't come across as negative or micromanaging?
- 90. How do you want me to approach you if you don't follow through with the commitments you make?**

Helping people get over mistakes or failures

91. If a friend of yours made the same mistake you did, what would you tell him/her?
92. What did you learn from this mistake?
93. How can you have better results next time?
94. What's getting in the way of you moving past this mistake?
95. I have yet to meet a person who is perfect. So stand up. {Stand up yourself} Now do what I do: Raise your hands high, and say loudly "I failed! I goofed, I screwed up, I made a mistake!" Then sit down and repeat after me "OK, I'm over it. I am moving on."

Getting feedback yourself

96. Is there anything I might have done that contributed to this problem?
97. Is there a better way I could have handled ____?
98. I'm not sure I handled _____ the best way. Do you have any advice for me?
99. Just like you, I am always trying to get better. Any suggestions for me on things I should do differently? Are there things I should do more of or less of?