

**DC** BI

**DELTA CONTROLS**  
Business Institute



just one more question please....

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Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow.  
 The important thing is not to stop questioning.  
**Albert Einstein**

You can tell if someone is clever by their answers.  
 You tell if someone is wise by their questions.

## Let's Get Going

### **Why This Topic?**

### **Workshop Objective**

To improve the workshop participant's questioning attitudes and skills so that they can understand people and situations better with the result that they can expand knowledge and skills, make sounder decisions and increase their influence.

### **Some of the concepts that we will discuss:**

- The value of asking good questions in all aspects of our lives
- How questions impact our competence
- Why we do not ask or stop asking questions
- How questions play into effective communication
- Types of questions
- Questions for different situations

### **Your Workshop Outcome**

What do you want to get out of our time together?

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### **How to get the most from our time together**

- Focus – limit distractions
- Engage with others; this will be an interactive sharing of ideas
- Move from ideas to action

**Dates drive action – no dates, no action**

## **Introductions**

- Name, Company & Location
  - The Best Questions I Have Been Asked  
Thinking back over your life, what are some of the best questions that you have ever been asked by others? Perhaps some were life changing.
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## Opening Concepts

### **Some Views on Questions**

- Good questioning attitudes and skills are vital for gaining the knowledge for success
- Questions help us to understand others
- Questions help us to gain from the experience of others
- Questions help us to solve problems
- Questions unlock and open doors that otherwise remain closed
- Questions are the most effective way of connecting with people
- Questions cultivate humility
- Questions help you engage others in conversation
- Questions allow us to build better ideas
- Questions give us different perspectives
- You only get answers to the questions that you ask

Questions and Competence

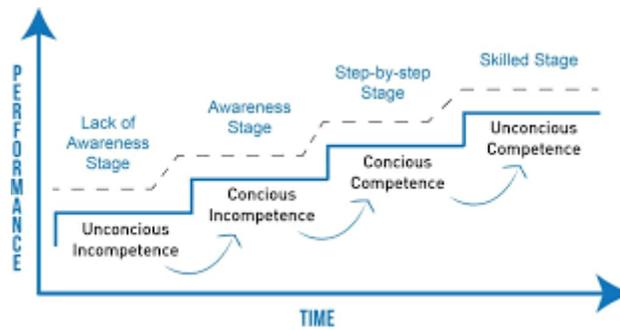
**Levels of competence:**

**Unconscious incompetence:** You do not know what you do not know

**Conscious incompetence:** You know what you do not know

**Conscious competence:** You know what to do and how to do it

**Unconscious competence:** You know and apply the skills without thinking about it  
(it has become “natural” to you)



It's not that I am so smart, but I stay with the questions much longer.

**Albert Einstein**

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**Gaining Competence:**

The Enemy May Be.....

\_\_\_\_\_ : a person's sense of self-esteem or self-importance

\_\_\_\_\_ : freedom from pride or arrogance; the quality or state of not thinking you are better than other people

### **Questions to Ask Yourself**

- Do I think more like a soldier or a scout? (soldier = defensive; scout = explorer)
- Do I want to understand or just be right?
- Do I seek opposing views?
- Do I enjoy the pleasant surprise of discovering I am wrong?

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### **Becoming More Curious**

curiosity – eager to know or learn something

Curious people:

- Seek to understand
- Are rapid and eager learners
- Expand their knowledge well beyond what it required

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## **Why and When Do We Begin Asking Less Questions?**

**Education:** In school, we were rewarded for having the right answer, not for asking the challenging questions

It is a miracle that curiosity survives formal education.

**Albert Einstein**

**Experience:** We have more as we get older

**Ego**

The **Insecurity** of admitting “I don’t know”

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## **A Desire to Talk More Than Listen**

What is your ratio of talking to listening? \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_

## **Why Talk Less and Listen More?**

- Knowledge is power
- You gain versus give information (no free consulting)
- You establish better relationships
- When you do speak, more people will listen

Look at questions as keys on a key ring

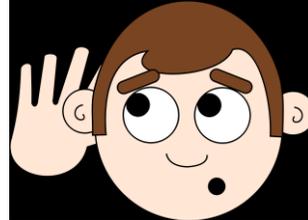
Questions unlock doors

The bigger your key ring and the more keys you have, the more doors you can unlock

**John C Maxwell**

## Overcoming the Barriers of Listening

- Minimize distractions
- Prioritize listening over speaking
- Reduce outside noise
- Practice reflecting instead of deflecting
- Ask questions
- Listen fully before giving advice



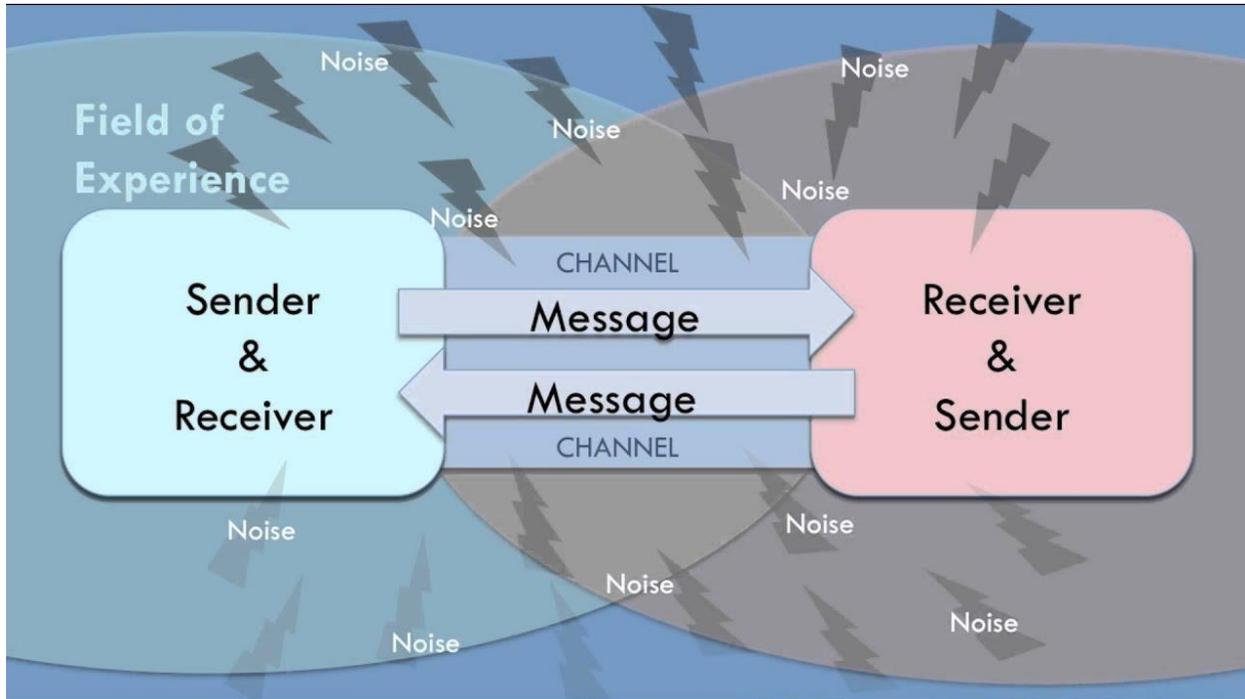
**Listening is not a “passive activity”,  
it is the most active thing that you do in a conversation**

## Are Pauses OK?

- Pauses are very necessary in good communication patterns
- Pauses after a question are essential
- Pauses leave time for thinking and a response



## Communication Flow



## Effective Communication Depends on Several Keys

- Clarity of the message or question
- Using the most appropriate medium
- Blocking out “noise”

**Communication is not effective unless the receiver understands the sender’s message.**

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### **A Quick Review**

- The value of asking good questions in all aspects of our lives
- How questions impact our competence
- Why we do not ask or stop asking questions
- How questions play into effective communication

### **Key Take-Aways So Far**

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## Diving Into Questions

### Types of Questions

#### **Notes:**

There are several “types” of questions. No one type is better than another. However, becoming adept at the different types of questions can help you ask better questions, gain more information, and improve your “flow” by varying the types of questions that you ask.

#### **Closed Ended Questions:**

The “closed ended question” is one that can be answered with a “yes” or “no” response or a very short response with very little additional information. This type of question is very useful when you need quick directions, etc.

#### **Examples:**

- *Do you want to go to lunch together?*
- *What time is the meeting?*
- *Did you drive or bike to work this morning?*

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**Open Ended Questions:**

The “open ended question” is used to solicit more information, clarify something, gain insight, etc. It is the most effective type of question for gaining information and insight.

Examples:

- *What is on the agenda at the meeting this afternoon?*
- *Who will be in the meeting this afternoon?*
- *Why are we meeting?*
- *Where is the meeting taking place?*

Open ended questions usually begin with:

- Who
- What
- Where
- When
- Why
- How
- Tell me about.....
- Can you tell me more about.....?

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**Note of Caution:**



Apart from a technique that we will discuss relative to problem solving, you should use “why” sparingly if it will put the person in the position of having to defend something.

**Reflective Questions**

This type of question is great for gaining clarity, consensus, and agreement (or not). It is often used to confirm what you have already heard.

Examples:

- *I thought I heard you say that you preferred Chinese for lunch. Did I hear that right?*
- *If I heard you correctly, you said that you had several projects coming up in the next thirty days...did I hear that correctly?*
- *I thought you said that you were going on vacation next week...is that right?*

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**Directive Questions**

This type of question has fallen into disuse over time, but it can be very powerful when used correctly to combine a reflection and a direction.

Examples:

- *So, if you are interested in barbeque for lunch, how about we try that new BBQ restaurant on the corner?*
- *If I heard you correctly, you have several fast-track projects coming up and if that is the case, we should begin working on them immediately, right?*

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### **Follow-up Questions**

After launching a conversation with a question or inserting a question into a conversation, after you have listened to the response, try asking another “follow-up” question to gain additional information and insight.

The “follow-up” question should have some “linkage to” or “flow from” the response that you got from your previous question(s).

Examples:

- Initial question: *What is on the agenda for the meeting this afternoon?*
- Follow-up question: *Which of the topics on the agenda are the most important to you and why?*

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## Questions for Connecting

### **Connecting**

The potential of feeling understood and united through human connection is one of the most rewarding elements in life.

It has the power to deepen the moment and the bond between people, inspire change and build trust.

Connecting with others is essential in many aspects of life. One of the core ways to “connect” is to ask questions that are meaningful and allow the other person to tell us more about who they are, what they do, why they do it, etc.....

### **Emotional Intelligence & Questions**

**Social Awareness** is your ability to accurately pick up on emotions in other people and understand their emotions.

By picking up on the emotions of others, it helps you to understand them. Not only what they are saying, but what they are thinking and feeling even if you don’t think or feel the same.

**Relationship Building** is your ability to utilize the awareness of your emotions and the emotions of others to impact your interactions and your relationships.

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### **Improve Your Connecting Speed**

Avoid trite questions like “*What do you think of the weather?*” “*How about that football game last night?*” (the one that they may or may not have watched and if they didn’t, you’ll tell them all about it even if they don’t care).

Use open-ended questions that provoke conversation:

- *What did you and your family do this weekend?*
- *Where are you going on your next vacation?*
- *How did you become an architect?*
- *What do you like the best about your job?*
- *Regarding the pandemic, what has been your biggest challenge?*



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You will find this hard to believe:

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### Questions for Discovery

#### **Discovery**

Discoveries involve finding or gaining knowledge about something that was previously unknown or unseen.

When you are using questions for discovery, you want to make sure that your questions are not “leading the witness”.

## **Past Experiences & Perspectives**

Learning about people's past experiences can help us discover their perspective on topics, issues, decisions, etc.

*Tell me about \_\_\_\_\_?*

This can be a great way to lead into a discovery question about someone's past experiences.

Followed by....*Can you tell me more about \_\_\_\_\_?*

It is also an opportunity for you to ask them to reflect on the past.

*So, if you had it to do over again, what would you do?*

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## **Current Situation & Perspectives**

Discovery questions can also be used to find where someone is currently and their perspective on things today.

*What is your opinion on \_\_\_\_\_?*

*What are you currently doing about \_\_\_\_\_?*

*Why are you doing it that way?*

*What results are you getting from that approach?*

*Are these the results/outcomes that you desire?*

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## **Future Situation & Desired Outcomes**

Moving through the past and the current naturally leads to the future.

*So, given that the results that you have been getting from your current approach are not meeting your desired outcomes, what do you plan on doing to change this?*

*How willing are you to consider other options?*

*What are you willing to do to get the outcomes that you want?*

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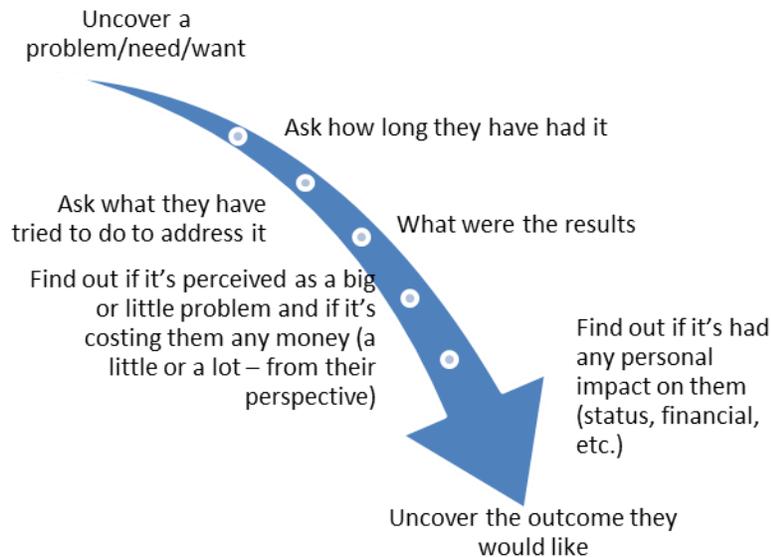
## Questions for Problem Exploration & Solution Finding

There are two areas of the subject of problem solving that we are going to explore.

- Finding the depth and the problem and the willingness to change
- Finding the “root cause” of a problem

## **Going Deep**

When we hear someone express that they have a problem, we often assume that it is significant. This is sometimes driven by our view of the issue without understanding the other party’s perspective relative to the problem. So, this is the time to dig deeper.



Following the above progression leads from the discovery of a “problem” to what someone is willing to do to solve it.

*So, did I hear you correctly when you said that you have a supply chain problem?*

*How long have you had this problem?*

*What have you tried so far to fix the problem?*

*How has that worked out so far?*

*Everyone today has problems and challenges, but some are more important and impactful than others. If 1 represents low importance or impact and 5 represents high importance or impact where does this issue land on that scale and why?*

*What is it costing not to solve this problem?*

*Is that a lot or a little money in your world?*

*What is the personal impact of this problem not being solved on you?*

*What is your ideal outcome? What are you willing to do to get that outcome?*

We can spend time and money solving problems that do not merit it while, at the same time, not addressing problems and issues that do. So can our clients.

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## **Finding the Root Cause of a Problem**

Six Sigma is a set of techniques and tools for process improvement. It was introduced by American engineer Bill Smith while working at Motorola in 1986.

Often when a problem is identified, the first “cause” of the problem is addressed to solve the problem Six Sigma developed a methodology to find the root cause of problems so that the problem could truly be solved.

Root cause: A root cause is defined as **a factor that caused a nonconformance and should be permanently eliminated through process improvement**. The root cause is the core issue—the highest-level cause—that sets in motion the entire cause-and-effect reaction that ultimately leads to the problem(s).

The method of finding the root cause? Asking “why” at least **five times**.

While you will often find issues to address along the way, you will not effectively solve the big problem until you find and address the root cause of the problem.

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Questions for Influencing Others

Influence  Manipulation

**Influence**

The capacity to have an effect on the character, development, or behavior of someone or something

**Persuade**

Cause (someone) to do something through reasoning or argument

Oft times, the concept of influencing or persuading is looked at through the lens of making your case, building a better argument, etc. in lieu of helping people shift their thinking from one concept to another.

The basis for influence and persuasion is usually effective connection and good discovery (both discussed previously). Making a solid connection builds trust. Good discovery helps you understand where a person is on a topic, how they got there, how entrenched their feelings are and their willingness to explore other options.

A healthy perspective for approaching this type of questioning is a belief that the other person may not know all of the options that are available.

*What's your view on \_\_\_\_\_?*

*What else did you consider?*

*How did you come to that view?*

*If there were different ways to approach this, would you be open to considering them?*

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## **Fuel Versus Friction**

When trying to influence or persuade someone, when we encounter resistance, we often respond by putting on more “fuel”. This may look like making a stronger case or in the context of sales and marketing, making the product more attractive, increasing advertising, lowering the price. These are “fuel” approaches.

What we often overlook is the “friction” aspects of someone making a change. What is holding them back?

Change involves disruption to the status quo. It usually involves an element of time. And an element of risk. If the benefits of the change do not offset the disruption, risk and time involved, the change is seen as a negative.

We need to uncover the “friction”.

*You seem to agree that this decision makes sense, but something seems to be holding you back from moving forward. Will you please share with me what that is?*

*It seems to me like you may feel that going this direction is a bit risky. Do I have that right?*

*I am sensing that you feel that this would be a good direction for your company, but it might impact you personally. Can that be the case?*

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## Core Questions for Selling

Sales professionals need to become adept at all types of questioning skills. However, there are some core or fundamental questions that they need to make sure that they have answers to as they pursue opportunities.

These are:

**Who** decides? Who will be making the decision on what is being recommended?

*Who all will be involve in making a decision like this and what will be their roles in the decision-making?*

**How** will the decision be made?

*What is the decision process for a decision like this?*

*What are the steps?*

*How long does it take?*

*What are the decision criteria that will be considered?*

**Where** will the decision be made?

*So, is this a decision that will be made locally, or will it have to go to corporate?*

**What** will they potentially buy? (remember your deep dive)

*It seems like you are looking for a seamless approach to this project and you are wanting to go with a company that can provide it. Do I have that right?*

**Why** will they buy it? What is their motivation?

*Given the problems that you have had on past projects, it sounds like you are ready to take a significant change in direction.*

**How** will they fund it or pay for it?

*So, has this project been budgeted yet?*

*What is the budget on the project?*

*What is the source of funding for the project?*

*Have the funds for this project been approved?*

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### **Opportunity Evaluation Questions**

Since all opportunities are not created equally, throughout the sales process, a sales professional needs to be asking themselves several questions as well.

*Is this project “real”?*

*Why is it worth my and my company’s time and energy?*

*Why do we have a realistic chance of winning the project?*

*What will we need to do to win this project?*

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## Questions for Negotiation

Effective negotiation is a combination of information gathering and behavior influencing.

The content of the information gathered often determines one's ability to negotiate effectively. And this information is gathered throughout the conversations.

Negotiation is not something that happens at "the end". It happens throughout the engagement.

We often focus on what we want from the negotiation and do not adequately consider what the other party wants from the negotiation. Like the sales example above, we need to discover the outcomes they want, what they are willing to do or not do to obtain those outcomes and what they are willing to pay or risk to get those outcomes.

Good negotiating questions include questions for:

- Connecting
- Discovery
- Perspectives – past, current and future
- Influence building

Here is one very effective negotiating technique.

They say: *The price is too high.*

You say: *The price is too high?*

Then be quiet and they will usually provide you with more information about why they made their initial statement. Wait.....

They say: *You'll have to lower your price to get this job.*

You say: *How can I do that?*

Then let them tell you how they see you doing that.

They say: *We need delivery sooner.*

You say: \_\_\_\_\_ ?

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### Questions for Employee Relations

We have a tendency not to ask the “hard” questions of employees. One of the reasons for this is that we do not want to bring up something that can become an “issue”. The reality is that it may already be an “issue” and without exploring it, we do not make it go away, we just take away our opportunity to address it.

We often ask the “hard” questions in the exit interview after someone has made the decision to leave. Too late for us to do anything about it.

However, when we ask the hard questions, we must be willing to act on the information that we receive.

There are numerous reasons that people leave positions and companies, however some of the top ones include:

- No longer challenged
- Not growing
- Undercompensated for the job and expected results
- A poor relationship with their manager

So, what questions can you ask to uncover where they are in their thinking?

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## Questions for Interviewing

### Doing Deep Dive Interviews

**Core question:** How do find out who they really are before they show up for work?

Most interviews waste too much time on:

- Small talk
- The history of the Company, benefits, etc.
- What they did in their last job – without connecting it to keys to success for the position you are interviewing them for
- Why they left – they will have a satisfactory answer on why they left each past company, so don't waste the time

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Use your time together wisely.

### Asking Experiential Questions

- Ask for their experiences by using “diving deep” questions
- **Remember the Titanic** – it’s what is below the surface that matters
- **Remember the “5 why’s”** – it takes five to get to the root cause, issue, etc.
  - *Can you give me an example of when you\_\_\_\_\_?*
  - *Can you tell me more?*
  - *Why did that happen?*
  - *What did you do about it?*

Go with questions that have the candidate describe **real-life situations** versus a “theory”.

**Competency:** Sales

**Experience Desired:** Experience being part of a selling team. Personal sales experience a plus. Sales team leadership a bonus.

**Bad question:** Have you ever been part of a selling team?

**Good questions:** When you ask the questions below, you want to get to specific examples of each situation – tell me about when that happened (ask for specific examples not generic ones)

- What is your experience being a part of a selling team?
- What was your role on the team?
- Tell me how you carried out your role.
- How many teammates did you have?
- What were their roles?
- How did you interface with them?
- Who was the team leader?
- Let’s talk about a recent opportunity that you participated in
  - Describe the opportunity
  - Who found it?
  - Who qualified it?
  - How did you know it was a qualified opportunity?
  - What was your role in the development of the concept?
  - What team tensions developed on your most recent project as it was being put together?
  - How did you deal with them?
  - What was your role in presenting it to the Client?
  - What was your role in gaining a decision from the Client?
  - What did they decide?
  - What was the basis of their decision?

Get the drift? Lots of questions with **SPECIFIC** examples.

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## Other Examples

- *Walk me through the most recent project you completed*
- *Explain the steps that you took to change the accounting system*
- *Tell me about the most recent experience you had in solving a difficult problem for a client*
- *Tell me about your most recent experience handling a difficult client*

## Questions for Starting Tough Conversations

Having a “tough conversation” with anyone is never easy. But very necessary for relationships to continue and develop. However, remember: relationship precedes you giving advice.

So, what is a way to launch a “tough conversation”?

It might sound like:

*If I knew something holding you back in your career, would you want me to tell you about it?*

*If I saw something limiting our relationship, would you want me to tell you about it?*

*If I saw you making a bad choice from my perspective, would you like me to tell you?*

*If I saw that you were going to step on a career landmine, would you want to know?*

Usually there are different views on tough issues. What you are asking is for permission to share yours with the other person.

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## Avoiding Diversions

Sometimes when you are asking questions, especially hard ones, the other person will try to divert the conversation away from your question.

Frequently, this comes in the form of the “What about?”

You say: *What’s your view on \_\_\_\_\_?*

They say: *Yeah, but what about \_\_\_\_\_?*

Make a decision. Are you going to allow the redirection or stick with your initial question?

You say in response: *Yeah, that’s something else we can discuss, but how about my question about \_\_\_\_\_?*

## Just One More Question Please

One more technique before we go.

Frequently, asking one more question, especially when the discussion or formal conversation is over will provide you with significantly greater insight. Do not miss the opportunity to ask it.

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## Summary

Here are the topics we've covered today:

- The value of asking good questions in all aspects of our lives
- How questions impact our competence
- Why we do not ask or stop asking questions
- How questions play into effective communication
- Types of questions
- Questions for different situations

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## Key Action Items

So, what is your plan to improve your questioning?

Meet with my supervisor to review my key learnings and goals from this workshop.

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## Sources for Going Deeper

- Hidden Brain Podcast Work 2.0 The Obstacles You Don't See at [hiddenbrain.org](http://hiddenbrain.org)
- Never Split the Difference by Chris Voss
- Emotional Intelligence 2.0 by Travis Bradberry & Jean Greaves
- Good Leaders Ask Great Questions by John C Maxwell
- Ego is the Enemy by Ryan Holiday