

## Coaching questions collated by Andrew Gibbons

1. What would you like to have achieved by the end of this session?  
*I ask this (or a version of it) at the beginning of EVERY coaching session. This way both the client and I are clear on what we're working on - which keeps us on track, and makes sure the client feels like they are getting great value from the coaching!*
2. What's MISSING in your life right now?  
*This question is deceptively simple - and powerful. We are all so busy these days, keeping it all together... This question often points to unmet needs - and can become a powerful lesson, as we help our clients learn to take responsibility for meeting their own needs...*  
TIP: I also love the questions, "What would you like MORE of in your life?" followed by "What would you like LESS of?"
3. If you could change just ONE thing right now, what would it be?  
*Use when a client feels overwhelmed, or is unable to pick a topic or get focused.*
4. How SPECIFICALLY will you know you've completed that action/goal?  
*It may sound like a dull question, but a lack of clarity is the MAIN reason people don't complete their actions (and goals!). Instead help your clients learn to get specific! Because when we're super clear it's easier to get started on actions, see our progress (which feels great) and know when to celebrate!*
5. What's the FIRST (or easiest) step you could take?  
*Use when dealing with big goals, when a client feels overwhelmed or is getting drowned in details or worrying about the amount of work their goal entails.*  
TIP: I usually add "within the next week/month" or "tomorrow" depending on the goal/client.
6. What do you NOT want me to ask you?  
*Your clients answer to this questions points to an area they are avoiding. Bringing this into the light and tackling it is almost always a powerful moment in our coaching relationship.*  
TIP: Ask this playfully!
7. How does that serve you?  
*As well as looking straight at self-sabotaging behaviour, this question can also be a great lead-in to looking at why they might be sabotaging themselves. People often sabotage when they haven't fully acknowledged the scary parts of changing, or the benefits of NOT changing.*  
TIP: Another question to ask is "What is the benefit of staying just as/where you are?"
8. How will you CELEBRATE that?  
*I don't just ask this about big goals, but also after a challenging action is completed. Celebration is often missed, skipped or rushed over as we move onto the next thing. But without acknowledgement our lives can easily become "one darned thing after another".*
9. What's wrong with how you are RIGHT NOW? And where are you ALREADY Awesome?  
*I ask this when clients get fixated on things being better/different at some point in the future (when they've achieved X/Y) instead of valuing themselves as they are, NOW.*  
TIP: Ask this question gently and earnestly. If you like you can add what you see as their coach, "Because I see a beautiful woman inside and out who cares deeply about X and Y."
10. What was your biggest win of the session today?  
*I ask this at the end of EVERY coaching session. IT helps the client think about the benefits of coaching, to see where they are learning and growing - and what matters to them. As well as getting to know what matters most to my clients, this question has also helped me really understand why people come to coaching as I see themes across clients over the years.*

## GROW Coaching Model Questions: Goal Setting

Here are 15 coaching questions you can use during the Goal Setting phase – the first step of the GROW coaching model:

1. What is the aim of this discussion?
2. What would need to happen for you to walk away feeling that this time was well spent?
3. If I could grant you a wish for this session, what would it be?
4. What would you like to happen that is not happening now, or what would you like not to happen that is happening now?
5. What outcome would you like from this session/discussion/interaction?
6. Can we do that in the time we have available?
7. What do you want to achieve long term?
8. What does success look like?
9. How much personal control or influence do you have over your goal?
10. What would be a milestone on the way?
11. When do you want to achieve it by?
12. Is that realistic?
13. Is that positive, challenging, attainable?
14. Will that be of real value to you?
15. How will you measure it?

## GROW Coaching Model Questions: Reality

Here are some coaching questions you can use during the second GROW coaching model step – Reality.

1. What is happening now? What, where, when, who, how much, how often. Be precise if possible.
2. How do you know that this is accurate?
3. How have you verified, or would you verify, that that is so?
4. What other factors are relevant?
5. Who is involved (directly and indirectly)?
6. What is their perception?
7. When things are going badly on this issue, what happens to you?
8. What happens to the others directly involved?
9. What is the effect on others?
10. What have you done about this so far?
11. What results did that produce?
12. What is missing in the situation?
13. What do you have that you're not using?
14. What is holding you back?
15. What is really going on (intuition)?

## GROW Coaching Model Questions: Options

Here are some example GROW coaching questions for the Option phase to inspire you:

1. What could you do to change the situation?
2. Tell me what possibilities for action you see. Do not worry about whether they are realistic at this stage.
3. What approach/actions have you seen used, or used yourself, in similar circumstances?
4. What else could you do?
5. What if...? Time, power, money, etc.
6. Who might be able to help?
7. Would you like another suggestion from me?
8. Which options do you like the most?
9. What are the benefits and costs of each?
10. Which options are of interest to you?
11. Would you like to choose an option to act on?

## GROW Coaching Model Questions: Will

The last step of the GROW coaching model is Will. Here are some example coaching questions to inspire you:

1. What option or options do you choose?
2. To what extent does this meet all your objectives?
3. What are your criteria and measurements for success?
4. When precisely are you going to start and finish each action step?
5. What could arise to hinder you in taking these steps?
6. What personal resistance do you have, if any, to taking these steps?
7. What will you do to eliminate these external and internal factors?
8. Who needs to know what your plans are?
9. What support do you need and from whom?
10. What will you do to obtain that support and when?
11. What could I do to support you?
12. What commitment on a 1-to-10 scale do you have to taking these agreed actions?
13. What prevents this from being a 10?
14. What could you do or alter to raise this commitment closer to 10?
15. Is there anything else you want to talk about now or are we finished?

Source: Jeroen de Flander

### 1. Where are we going?

The first question deals with the “big picture”. The executive outlines where the larger organization is going in terms of vision, goals and priorities. The executive then asks the direct reports where they think the larger organization should be going. By involving direct reports in this ongoing dialogue, executives can build alignment and commitment to the larger organizational vision.

It is important to note that the Six-Question approach does not assume that the executive will agree with every direct report on every issue. This will not (and should not) be the case. Leadership is not a “popularity contest”. Sometimes direct reports (like all humans) may have bad ideas. In some cases the executive may choose to say, “In this case, I disagree.” It is important that executives focus on understanding disagreements and respecting differences of opinion. It is also important that executives need to only “win the big ones” and that they can “let go” on minor issues that may be more important to their direct reports than to them.

### 2. Where are you going?

Question two deals with the direct reports’ vision, goals and priorities for their part of the organization. Direct reports discuss where their part of the organization is going. Executives give their view on where they think this part of the organization should be going. By the end of this discussion two types of alignment should have been achieved: 1) the vision, goals and priorities of the direct reports’ parts of the organization should be aligned with the executives’ vision of the larger organization and 2) the individual goals and priorities of executives and direct reports should be aligned.

### 3. What is going well?

One key element of effective coaching is providing positive recognition for achievement. Executives begin this part of the dialogue with an assessment of what the direct reports and their organizations are doing well. Then executives ask their direct reports a question that is seldom asked, “What do you think that you and your part of the organization are doing well?” By asking this question executives may learn about “good news” that may have otherwise been missed.

In the past five years, I have asked hundreds of executives the question, “Do you feel as busy or busier today than you have felt in your entire life?” About 80% of the executives that I have asked have said yes. A major reason that executives fail to give deserved recognition to direct reports is not maliciousness; it is ignorance. Many executives are so busy that they don’t know all the good things that the people who report to them are doing. Direct reports may feel under-appreciated because executives don’t recognize their achievements.

In many cases, the executives would recognize these achievements if they only understood what they were! By asking, "What are you doing well?" executives have a great opportunity to understand positive aspects of performance that they could have otherwise missed. This process has been shown to consistently improve direct reports' feedback on the item, "Provides positive recognition for achievement."

#### 4. What are key suggestions for improvement?

Executives begin this part of the dialogue by giving direct reports constructive suggestions for the future. These suggestions should be limited to key "opportunities for improvement". The average human cannot remember eight unrelated words on a piece of paper! Giving too many suggestions is almost as bad as giving none. Direct reports should listen to the suggestions with a focus on understanding, not judging what is being said. Executives should come across as "trying to help" not "playing God".

Next, executives should ask another (seldom-asked) great coaching question, "If you were your own coach, what suggestions would you have for yourself?" By listening to their direct reports, executives may learn that their original coaching suggestions need to be modified. Executives may end up saying, "Now that I have heard your ideas, let me change my suggestions. I think the areas that you are discussing are more important than the ones that I mentioned."

#### 5. How can I help?

As you have gathered from this article, a key to effective coaching is asking the right questions. One of the greatest coaching questions an executive can ask is, "How can I help?" Executives can begin by listening to their direct reports' suggestions on how they can become more helpful. They can also participate in the dialogue by suggesting approaches and then asking, "Do you feel this approach will help you become more effective?"

In some cases executives who receive poor feedback as coaches attack the problem by simply spending more time coaching. This can do more harm than good. The key to improvement is not to do more coaching. The key is to provide coaching to the right people on the right topics. In some cases less coaching in some areas may be what is needed! By asking executives can make the most effective use of their limited time.

#### 6. What suggestions do you have for me?

Extensive research on the impact of direct report feedback and follow-up on leadership effectiveness has shown a clear, undeniable pattern. Leaders that ask for suggestions from their direct reports – focus on improving 1-2 key behaviors – and follow-up on a quarterly basis – are almost always seen as dramatically increasing in leadership effectiveness. By asking, "What suggestions do you have for me?" executives change the dynamics of the coaching process. Traditional coaching is sometimes thought of as a one-way monologue that focuses on, "Let me tell you what you can do to improve." The Six-Question approach creates a two-way dialogue that focuses on, "Let's try to help each other." Direct reports are much more willing to be coached by executives, if the executives are willing to be coached by them!

Source: Marshall Goldsmith

1. I'm curious; may I ask you a few questions?
2. What's great about your life this week?
3. How have you grown this week?
4. What did you accomplish this week?
5. Who did you serve?
6. What did you learn?
7. Who else will benefit?
8. What are you grateful for?
9. Who's grateful for you?
10. Is this what you want to be coached on or are you just sharing?
11. What could you be happy about if you chose to be?
12. Are you using this to grow or are you beating yourself up?
13. Does this story empower you or disempower you?
14. How can you turn this around and have better results next time?

15. On a scale of 1 – 10 how honest have you been about this, with others?
16. Do you mind if I offer an observation?
17. Is this the problem or the solution?
18. How would you like it to be?
19. What's in the way?
20. What's stopping you?
21. What does this mean to you?
22. Are you focused on what's wrong or what's right?
23. Is that a story or the truth?
24. How can you find out?
25. Do you want this for its own sake or are you trying to avoid something else?
26. Is this giving you energy or draining your energy?
27. What will really make the biggest difference here?
28. Is this a limitation or is it a strength?
29. What's the benefit of this problem?
30. Who else is this hurting?
31. What does your intuition tell you about this?
32. Do you have a gut feeling about this?
33. Have you solved problems like this before?
34. What rules do you have that are getting in the way?
35. How long have you been thinking about this?
36. Have you ever experienced something like this before?
37. If you changed your belief about this, what would be possible?
38. Is this a decision or a pipe dream?
39. Which of your core values does this goal express?
40. Is this goal pulling you forward or are you struggling to reach it?
41. Will this choice move you forward or keep you stuck?
42. What's the first step you need to take to reach your goal?
43. What's the worst that can happen, and can you handle that?
44. What's the downside of your dream?
45. What's stopping you from taking action?
46. Who wouldn't like it if you succeeded?
47. What will you have to give up in order to make room for your goals?
48. How would your life be transformed if you changed this right now?
49. If you don't change this, what will it cost you in the long run?
50. What's the most resourceful choice here?
51. How can you improve this, so it adds value forever?
52. How can you solve this problem so it never comes back?
53. Are you acting on faith or fear?
54. If you weren't scared, what would you do?
55. Are you standing in your power or pleasing someone else?
56. What are you pretending not to know?
57. How could you have this conversation so it empowers everyone concerned?
58. What might make the difference that could change everything?
59. If you approached this with courage, how could your life change?
60. Are you procrastinating or is there a reason to delay?
61. What's the emotional cost vs. the financial cost?
62. Which step could you take that would make the biggest difference, right now?
63. How can you get your needs fully met?
64. If your life were exclusively oriented around your values, what would that be like?
65. How would you describe the difference between a need and a value?
66. If you achieve this goal, will it bring lasting fulfillment or temporary pleasure?
67. Have you thought about the impact you'll have by creating this?
68. How can you learn from this problem so it never happens again?
69. How can you create more value with less effort?
70. What are you willing to do to improve this situation?
71. What are you willing to stop doing to improve this situation?
72. How can you enjoy the process of solving this problem?
73. Do you mind if I ask a very personal question?

74. What are you willing to commit to here?
75. Do you need to work harder or delegate this?
76. If this weakness were also a strength, what would that be?
77. How can you use this so it becomes a benefit?
78. Have you decided to take action or are you just hoping you will?
79. Are you angry or are you hurt?
80. Who can help you with this?
81. Does your current habitat fully support who you're becoming?
82. What do you need in order to succeed here?
83. What plan do you need in order to achieve your new goals?
84. Are your personal standards high enough to reach your goals?
85. What will your impact be 100 years from now?
86. Who do you need to become in order to succeed here?
87. What are you responsible for here?
88. Instead of either/or, how could you use both?
89. Are you approaching this from your head or from your heart?
90. Is this an assumption or have you checked to be sure?
91. How can you learn what you need to know about this?
92. Is this the best outcome you can imagine or is there something greater?
93. Do you have a detailed strategy to get there?
94. How will you transform your life with this new knowledge?
95. What does this accomplishment mean to you?
96. Why does it matter?
97. Who did you have to become to achieve it?
98. What did you learn in the process?
99. Who else will benefit?
100. What's next for you?
101. How have you changed the world for generations to come?

Source: Julia Stewart

## 70 Awesome Coaching Questions for Managers Using the GROW Model

### GOALS

Here are 10 questions designed to help someone gain clarity on their goal(s):

1. What do you want to achieve from this coaching session?
2. What goal do you want to achieve?
3. What would you like to happen with \_\_\_\_\_?
4. What do you really want?
5. What would you like to accomplish?
6. What result are you trying to achieve?
7. What outcome would be ideal?
8. What do you want to change?
9. Why are you hoping to achieve this goal?
10. What would the benefits be if you achieved this goal?

### CURRENT REALITY

Here are 20 questions designed to clarify the current reality:

1. What is happening now (what, who, when, and how often)? What is the affect or result?
2. Have you already taken any steps towards your goal?
3. How would you describe what you did?
4. Where are you now in relation to your goal?
5. On a scale of one to ten where are you?
6. What has contributed to your success so far?

7. What progress have you made so far?
8. What is working well right now?
9. What is required of you?
10. Why haven't you reached that goal already?
11. What do you think is stopping you?
12. What do you think was really happening?
13. Do you know other people who have achieved that goal?
14. What did you learn from \_\_\_\_\_?
15. What have you already tried?
16. How could you turn this around this time?
17. What could you do better this time?
18. If you asked \_\_\_\_\_, what would they say about you?
19. On a scale of one to ten how severe/serious/urgent is the situation?
20. If someone said/did that to you, what would you think/feel/do?

## OPTIONS

Here are 20 questions to help the employee explore options and/or generate solutions:

1. What are your options?
2. What do you think you need to do next?
3. What could be your first step?
4. What do you think you need to do to get a better result (or closer to your goal)?
5. What else could you do?
6. Who else might be able to help?
7. What would happen if you did nothing?
8. What has worked for you already? How could you do more of that?
9. What would happen if you did that?
10. What is the hardest/most challenging part of that for you?
11. What advice would you give to a friend about that?
12. What would you gain/lose by doing/saying that?
13. If someone did/said that to you what do you think would happen?
14. What's the best/worst thing about that option?
15. Which option do you feel ready to act on?
16. How have you tackled this/a similar situation before?
17. What could you do differently?
18. Who do you know who has encountered a similar situation?
19. If anything was possible, what would you do?
20. What else?

## WILL OR WAY FORWARD

Here are 20 questions to help probe for and achieve commitment:

1. How are going to go about it?
2. What do you think you need to do right now?
3. Tell me how you're going to do that.
4. How will you know when you have done it?
5. Is there anything else you can do?
6. On a scale of one to ten, what is the likelihood of your plan succeeding?
7. What would it take to make it a ten?
8. What obstacles are getting in the way of success?
9. What roadblocks do you expect or require planning?
10. What resources can help you?
11. Is there anything missing?
12. What one small step will you take now?
13. When are you going to start?
14. How will you know you have been successful?
15. What support do you need to get that done?

16. What will happen (or, what is the cost) of you NOT doing this?
17. What do you need from me/others to help you achieve this?
18. What are three actions you can take that would make sense this week?
19. On a scale of one to ten, how committed/motivated are you to doing it?
20. What would it take to make it a ten?

Source: Insight strategies

1. What would need to happen for you to walk away feeling that this was a success?
2. If you were the bravest version of yourself today, what would you be doing?
3. What one thing could you do today that would take you nearer to your goal?
4. What could we be doing less of that would help us move forward with the current goals?
5. If I could do one thing to help you right now, what would it be?
6. If you knew you couldn't fail, what would you do now?
7. What did you learn from this?
8. What would you do differently next time?
9. What would we need to change for this to become an opportunity, rather than a challenge?
10. Which of your strengths become a limitation when you exercise it too much?
11. Who do you need to add to the team to make this a success?
12. Does this goal scare you or excite you?
13. When was the last time you were out of your comfort zone, and how did that make you feel?
14. What's the worst thing that can happen if you try and fail?
15. Have you ever achieved anything like this before?
16. Do you know of anyone who has achieved something similar?
17. What do you have that can help you to achieve this goal, and what else do you need to guarantee success?
18. On a scale of 1-10 how confident are you of achieving this goal?
19. What's stopping you from achieving this goal?
20. How do you think you will feel if when you achieve this?
21. What will really make the biggest difference between success and failure?
22. What does your intuition tell you about this goal?
23. If this was your own business what would you do now?
24. What would it take for you to feel 99% comfortable about achieving this goal?
25. If you were advising someone else on how to achieve this, what would you tell them to do?
26. How committed do you feel to this goal?
27. What luck do you feel you need in order to be successful?
28. What's the one thing that will stop this from being successful?
29. If you could change one thing about the goal what would it be?

Source: Inc.com

Identifying goals or challenges to be addressed

1. What is the real challenge for you?
2. What areas do you want to strengthen, improve, or develop?
3. What are the three most important things you would like to accomplish right now?

Gaining Insight – Digging Deeper into an Issue, Need or Goal

1. Tell me more about this issue, goal, need.
2. How is this issue affecting you/others?
3. In what situations do you need to use this skill/knowledge?
4. What tells you that you are lacking in this skill/knowledge?
5. What would the ideal outcome be?
6. How does this support your/the team's larger objective?
7. Why is this issue/goal important?
8. What are the consequences of not reaching the goal?
9. What are the consequences of not changing?

## 10. Why is this change important?

### Identifying Options/Solutions

1. What have you tried so far?
2. How is this similar to or different from the way you have approached this in the past?
3. What worked, what didn't, what did you learn?
4. What do you believe you need to do differently?
5. What if you asked for exactly what you want?
6. What can you do to expand your thinking?
7. What would you do if time was not an issue?
8. What are some options to consider?
9. And what else?
10. What are the pros and cons of each option?
11. What resources do you have/need?

### Gaining Commitment, Encouraging Action and Creating Accountability

1. What specifically are you going to do next?
2. When are you going to do it?
3. What strengths will you draw on to help you?
4. How can you get the help/resources you need?
5. What do you need to ensure you move forward?
6. How can I best support you and hold you accountable for the results you want to achieve?

Source: Lucy Bendaly

### Understanding how the emotion arose

- 1 What is your definition of being "stuck?"
- 2 Why do you believe you are stuck?
- 3 What is standing between you and your goals?
- 4 Are you stuck because you lack certain skills or knowledge or because you know what to do but haven't been applying what you know?

### Struggling to formulate answers

1. If you knew that nothing you said would be considered wrong, what answer would you give?
2. If you were pretending to know, what would the answer be?
3. Have you run out of answers, or have you run out of easy answers?
4. What research can you do to find the answer to this problem?
5. What advice would you give your best friend if they were in this situation?
6. Five years from now looking back on this moment, what would the best decision be?
7. Is it possible for you to figure out an answer by our next session?

### Identifying hope

1. Who do you know personally who has overcome the challenge that you are currently having?
2. Who have you heard of who has overcome the challenge that you are currently having?
3. What resources do you already have that can help you make forward progress?
4. Have you ever overcome this obstacle in the past? How did you do it then?
5. Have you ever solved a similar problem to this? What learning from that can you apply to this situation?
6. What, if anything, gives you hope that you can overcome this challenge?

### Clarifying goals

1. Are you pursuing a goal that you authentically want, or is it what others expect of you?
2. Are you crystal clear on what you want?
3. What would you pursue if you knew you couldn't fail?

### Nudging them out of their comfort zone

1. If you were more willing to step out of your comfort zone, what opportunities would arise for you?
2. Are there any decisions that you have been avoiding making?
3. Would taking a risk help you get unstuck?
4. Is your desire to get unstuck greater than your fear of coming out of your comfort zone? If not, what could be done to get your desire to increase to that point?
5. What behaviors, if any, are undermining your progress?

### Untapped Opportunities

1. What is a solution that you have heard of but have yet to try for yourself?
2. What skills do you have that you aren't currently utilizing?
3. How can you redefine this situation in a way that emphasizes your personal power?
4. What is something that you are passionate about? How can you use that passion to help you achieve your goals?

### Action-oriented Questions

1. What would you do in this situation if you knew that no one would judge you?
2. What is your gut telling you to do?
3. What is the simplest step that you can take in the right direction?
4. What action that takes one hour or less to complete could move you in the direction of achieving your goals?
5. What action would you take if you valued yourself more?
6. What action would you take if you trusted yourself more?

Source: ICF

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