

# SEVEN ESSENTIAL COACHING QUESTIONS

Based on *The Coaching Habit* by Michael Bungay Stanier

## QUESTION 1:

**WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?**

This question easily opens up the conversation and immediately makes it meaningful, without being too broad or too narrow.

**Potential Follow-Up Question:**

Where should we start?

**Potential Follow-Up Question:**

What would the challenge here be for you?

## QUESTION 2:

**AND WHAT ELSE?**

This question helps consider more options that can lead to better decisions, as it is not binary (yes/no answer) and it doesn't immediately provide disguised advice.

**Potential Follow-Up Question:**

Is there anything else?

## QUESTION 3:

**WHAT'S THE REAL CHALLENGE HERE FOR YOU?**

This question helps maintain focus on the core issue, rather than the first problem that comes to mind, enabling the person to find the solution independently.

## POTENTIAL FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS DEPENDING ON THE SITUATION AT HAND:

Too many problems:

If you had to pick, which one would be the biggest challenge for you?

The issues are about people or projects:

I think I understand some of what's going on about... How are these leading to your biggest challenge?

The problem is too abstract:

I have a sense of the overall challenge. What's the specific challenge here for you?

**QUESTION 4:****WHAT DO YOU WANT?**

Avoid questions that start with “Why...?” and reframe them so that they start with “What...?” to avoid over-dependence or overwhelm. After asking, listen actively, looking for the need hidden behind their want.

**QUESTION 5:****HOW CAN I HELP?**

This question helps your report make a clear and direct request, keeps you from assuming the best way to help, and encourages you to remain curious.

**Potential Follow-Up Question  
If They Ask for Advice:**

I have some ideas, but before I share them with you, what are your first thoughts?

**QUESTION 6:****IF YOU'RE SAYING YES TO THIS, WHAT ARE YOU SAYING NO TO?**

The first part of this question asks people to be clear and committed.

**Follow-Up:**

What would being fully committed to this idea look like?

The second part of the question addresses both a "No" of omission and a "No" of commission. The first refers to the options automatically eliminated by saying "yes." The second refers to what must be done to make the "yes" happen.

**Follow-Up:**

What work would you need to abandon or postpone?

**Follow-Up:**

What expectations do you need to manage?

**QUESTION 7:****WHAT WAS MOST USEFUL FOR YOU?**

This question encourages reflection and learning, making it personal for the report and a way for you to obtain feedback.

**Potential Follow-Up Question:**

What was the key insight?

**Potential Follow-Up Question:**

What's important to capture?