



'DESIGNING IMPACTFUL QUESTIONS' EXERCISE
Questions Analysis & Debriefing Points

	Question	Great (√)	Poor (√)	Questions Analysis & Debriefing Points
1	Why do you think your boss is promoting him instead of you?		√	<p>'Why' questions, although they are open questions, tend to project an accusative tone and may make the client feel defensive.</p> <p>Convert this into a better open question: Eg. What may be the reasons for your boss' decision to promote him?</p>
2	Doesn't your company have policies that cover this kind of thing?		√	<p>This is a closed question (yes/no question).</p> <p>Convert this into an open question: Eg. What policies does your company have that address this kind of situation?</p>
3	What reasons could you come up with for the promotion decision?	√		<p>This is an open question, and it is a good question because it encourages the client to process the situation objectively and provide useful information that could serve as a basis to take the conversation forward.</p>
4	The job market is great right now. Couldn't you just find another job where they really value what you have to offer?		√	<p>This is a leading question. The coach is providing an answer disguised as a question – ie. 'Find another job'.</p> <p>As a coach, we want to encourage the answers to come from the client. Because clients know what they want best, and they assume greater ownership over those action steps that come from themselves.</p>
5	Share with me your understanding of what it would take to be promoted.	√		<p>This is an open question, and it is a good question because it encourages the client to provide relevant information and constructive perspectives that could serve as a basis to take the conversation forward.</p>

6	You mentioned that you were about to escalate the matter to senior management. Tell me more about that.	√	<p>This is the only question that invites the client to share how she feels (ie. her emotions).</p> <p>It is an open question, and it is a good question because in such challenging situations, it is important to offer the client an outlet for her emotions.</p> <p>People’s emotions return to equilibrium after they have an opportunity to talk about their frustrations. They tend to think more clearly and are more ready to move forward after that. As a coach, we can make room for people to express and process their emotions. However, coaches should stay neutral and not ‘fan the flames’ and encourage negative emotions.</p> <p>Another point is that the words in this question are different from the client’s actual words. The client said – “I was about to confront my boss and challenge him on this...”</p> <p>The coach should repeat back to the client using the client’s own words and expressions, instead of paraphrasing too much: Eg. ‘You mentioned that you were about to confront your boss and challenge him on this...’</p>
7	Have you thought about just asking for a promotion?	√	<p>This is a closed question (yes/no question), and it is also a leading question. The coach is offering an answer disguised as a question – ie. ‘Ask for a promotion’.</p> <p>Convert this into an open question: Eg. How could you find out more about what it takes to secure a promotion?</p>

8	What is something good that could come out of this situation?	√		<p>This is an open question, and it is a good question because it helps to reframe the situation from a negative to a positive one. This question also encourages the client to reflect and to look forward into the future with positive hope.</p> <p>However, the coach may want to ask this question later in the conversation so as to allow the client to vent her emotions first. If the client is hurting, and the coach tries to move the conversation forward too quickly, the client may not have sufficient time to process and offload his negative thoughts and emotions.</p>
9	What steps would you like to take to move forward from this situation?	√		<p>After processing the situation with the above questions, the coach can ask open, forward-looking and action-oriented questions like (9) and (10) to support the client to move forward from the situation.</p>
10	What will help you get greater clarity on the situation?	√		

4 Key Principles to Creating Powerful Questions:

- Allow **emotions** to be expressed.
- Help the coachee to discover what is within his/her **control** and what is not.
- Lead the coachee to have a **positive** outlook by exploring the resources (eg. strengths, time, advantage, financial, network, etc.) and the options available.
- Motivate the coachee to take action towards a better **future** and not to regret the past.