

TOOL

# 50 Coaching Questions

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## Transformational Coaching Stems

### Purpose

This tool provides a range of coaching questions you can draw on to support transformational conversations. It's designed to help you respond in the moment—whether you're clarifying, deepening reflection, or moving toward action.

### How to Use It

Here are some important considerations regarding coaching sentence stems:

- **The categories are fluid.** A clarifying question can also be a question that coaches a way of being, and it can be a cathartic question.
- **How you classify the question has a lot to do with the coach's intention when using it.** That means that you can use these questions for different purposes. So don't get stuck on how sentence stems are classified.
- **You must make these questions sound like you**—you have permission to modify them (in fact you probably should) so that they feel authentic. It's unsettling when someone sounds like they're reciting a script in a coaching conversation, so modify.
- **Your tone of voice, pitch, pace, volume, and nonverbal communication** are just as important in how your question is received as the words that you say.

## All-Purpose Questions

<i>Active Listening Stems</i>	<i>Clarifying Stems</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• So...</li> <li>• In other words...</li> <li>• What I'm hearing, then... Is that correct?</li> <li>• What I hear you saying is... Am I missing anything?</li> <li>• I'm hearing many things...</li> <li>• As I listen to you, I'm hearing... Is there anything else you feel I should know?</li> <li>• I'm curious to hear more about...</li> <li>• What would be most useful for us to talk about right now?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let me see if I understand...</li> <li>• I'd be interested in hearing more about...</li> <li>• It would help me understand if you'd give me an example of...</li> <li>• So, are you saying/suggesting...?</li> <li>• Tell me what you mean when you...</li> <li>• Tell me how that idea is like (or different from)...</li> <li>• To what extent is...?</li> <li>• I'm curious to know more about...</li> <li>• I'm intrigued by...</li> <li>• I'm interested in...</li> <li>• I wonder...</li> </ul>

\* The labels for these categories—cathartic, catalytic, supportive, informative, prescriptive, and confrontational—are from the work of John Heron.

# 50 Coaching Questions

Facilitative Coaching Stems		
Cathartic Stems	Catalytic Stems	Supportive Stems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I'm noticing that you're experiencing some feelings. Would it be OK to explore those for a few minutes?</li> <li>• What's coming up for you right now? Would you like to talk about your feelings?</li> <li>• Wow. I imagine I'd have strong emotions. What are you feeling?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tell me about a previous time when you... How did you deal with that?</li> <li>• I hear you're really struggling with... How do you intend to start?</li> <li>• It sounds like you're unsatisfied with... What would you do differently next time?</li> <li>• You've just talked about five different things you want to work on this week. The last thing you mentioned is... How important is this to you?</li> <li>• How do you want your students (or a particular student) to remember you?</li> <li>• How do you want to remember this time or situation in fifteen years?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I noticed how when you...the students really... (To identify something that worked and why it worked)</li> <li>• It sounds like you have a number of ideas to try out! It'll be exciting to see which works best for you!</li> <li>• What did you do to make the lesson so successful?</li> <li>• I'm interested in learning (or hearing) more about...</li> <li>• Your commitment is really inspiring to me.</li> <li>• It sounds like you handled that in a very confident way.</li> <li>• You did a great job when you...</li> <li>• I'm confident that you'll be successful.</li> </ul>

Directive Coaching Stems		
Informative Stems	Prescriptive Stems	Confrontational (Interrupting) Stems
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There's a useful book on that topic by...</li> <li>• An effective strategy to teach __ is...</li> <li>• You can contact __ for that resource...</li> <li>• __ is very effective at teaching that skill; maybe you could observe him.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I would like you to discuss this issue with your supervisor.</li> <li>• You need to know that the school's policy is...</li> <li>• Have you talked to __ about that yet? Last week you said you planned on doing so.</li> <li>• Would it be ok if I share some advice that I think might help you? You're welcome to take it or leave it, of course.</li> <li>• I'd like to suggest...</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Would you be willing to explore your reasoning (or assumptions) about this?</li> <li>• I'd like to ask you about... Is that okay?</li> <li>• What's another way you might...?</li> <li>• What would it look like if...? Is there any other way to see this situation?</li> <li>• What do you think would happen if...?</li> <li>• What sort of an effect do you think... would have?</li> <li>• I'm noticing (some aspect of your behavior)...What do you think is going on?</li> <li>• What criteria do you use to...?</li> <li>• Who do you want to be in this situation?</li> <li>• How do you want others to see you in this situation?</li> </ul>

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