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Powerful Peer Coaching Questions

Alternatives

- What are the possibilities?
- If you had your choice, what would you do?
- What are possible solutions?
- What if you do and what if you don't?

Appraisal

- What do you make of it all?
- What do you think? (is best?)
- How does it look to you?
- How do you feel about it?

Background

- What led up to _____?
- What have you tried so far?
- What do you make of it all?

Clarification

- What do you mean?
- What does it look/sound/feel like?
- What seems to confuse you?

Description

- What was it like?
- What happened?
- Then what?

Evaluation

- In what way?
- How does this fit with your plans/way of life/values?
- What do you think?

Exploration

- Would you like to brainstorm this idea?
- What are other angles you can think of?
- What is just one more possibility?

Example

- For instance?
- Like what?
- Such as?

Extension

- What else?
- What other ideas have you thought of?

Failures/Preparation for

- What if it doesn't work out the way you wish?
- And if that fails, what will you do?
- How do you want it to be?

Fun, Lighten Up

- What was fun about _____?
- What was humorous about the situation?
- How can you find a way to have it be fun?
- How do you want it to be?

Hypothetical

- If you could do it over again, what would you do differently?
- If it were you, what would you have done?
- How else could a person handle this?
- If you could do anything you wanted, what would you do?

Identification of issues

- What seems to be the trouble?
- What seems to be the main obstacle?
- What is stopping you?
- What concerns you the most about _?

Implementation

- What will you have to do to get the job done?
- What support do you need to accomplish _?
- What will you do?
- By when will you do it?

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Involvement

- What was your part in this?
- How do you fit into the picture?
- What were you responsible for?

Information

- What information do you need before you decide?
- What do you know about it now?
- How do you suppose you can find out more about it?
- What kind of picture do you have right now?

Integration

- How do you explain this to yourself?
- What was the lesson/learning?
- How can you lock it (the learning) in?
- How would you pull all this together?

New Start

- If you had free choice in the matter, what would you do?
- If the same thing came up again, what would you do?
- If we could wipe the slate clean, what would you do?
- If you could do it over again, what would you do?
- How do you fit into the picture?

Opening

- What would you like to focus on today?
- What would you like coaching on today?
- What would you like to explore today?

Planning Outcomes

- What do you want?
- What is your desired outcome?
- If you got it, what would you have?
- How will you know you have received/reached it?

Perspective

- What would you like to be doing five years from now?
- In the bigger scheme of things, how important is this?
- What do you plan to do about it?
- What is your game plan?
- What kind of plan do you need to create?
- How do you suppose you could improve the situation?

Predictions

- How do you suppose it will work out?
- What will that get you?
- Where will this lead?
- What are the chances of success?

Relation

- If you do this, how will it affect _____?
- What impact will that have on balance/values?
- How does this affect the whole picture?
- What else do you need to take into consideration?

Taking Action

- What action will you take? And after that?
- What will you do? When?
- Where do you go from here? When will you do that?
- What are your next steps? By when?

Summary

- How is this working? How is this going?
- How would you describe this?
- What do you think this all amounts to?
- How would you summarize the work/effort so far?

This list of powerful questions is courtesy of the Coaches Training Institute. For information on their various training programs, visit www.coactive.com.

Peer Coach Facilitator Play by Play

Your role as Mentor Coach

- See yourself as the “guide on the side” versus the “sage on the stage”
- Bring in a high amount of positive energy and keep the flow lively and on time
- Pay attention to all of your group – notice their energy, ensure all members get equal airtime, that they follow the peer coaching method, that their input is succinct
- Your group will expect you to manage the group and process in a diplomatic way

New to This?

- Recruit a timekeeper to keep you on track
- Post the peer coaching steps on a flipchart (if in person) or email in advance (if virtual)
- Focus on your group members rather than trying to participate in the peer coaching questions and mentoring
- Be prepared

Preparing to Facilitate a Peer Coaching Session

STEP ONE	
HEADLINE: Members share a specific challenge and opportunity.	<i>Each group member provides a '1 minute' headline to outline their issue.</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Remind the group to give you the top-line on their peer coaching challenge• Use the 'headline' sign to gently move a member to be succinct• Write the coaching topics on a flipchart so it's easy to refer to• Time permitting, you may be able to do more than one topic depending on the complexity• It's more important to do a thorough coaching on one topic than rushing through two topics• Allow about 20 minutes on average for a peer coaching topic	

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STEP TWO

SELECT: Group members prioritize the challenges/opportunities they would like to bring to the group.

Group votes to decide which person's topic/issue will be selected. Consider:

- Time sensitivity
- Complexity of challenge (is it too broad/too early to discuss?)
- Readiness of the individual to participate
- Shared opportunity (e.g. if someone hasn't had a turn yet)

- Note if any of the topics have the same theme – sometimes handling one topic, will also serve another group member with the same challenge
- First ask if the situations have a timeline or heightened importance to the group member
- Ask if any of the group members have not had a chance to be peer coached
- Ask the group if any of the topics are particularly interesting or would be helpful to do (NOTE: only allow a minute or so for input)

STEP THREE

SHARE: The selected group member shares their challenge/opportunity in more detail.

The selected group member is given 5 minutes to share the key elements of the situation.

- Ask the member to share information about what they have tried, key players, what has worked, where they feel stuck, etc.
- Ask the member what specific aspect of the challenge/opportunity they would like to be coached on

STEP FOUR

COACH: Other group members engage in coaching questions to deepen their understanding of the member's situation.

Group members ask coaching questions (no advice or suggestions) to uncover root issues.

Tips for questions:

- Allow some context questions but the focus is on helping the person being coached to explore their challenge by asking diverse questions (i.e. What outcome do you want? What are you worried about? What do you think should be your next step?)
- Listen for leading questions, longer questions tend to be leading
- Open ended questions
- Listen for solutions disguised as questions ("Have you tried X?" versus "What have you tried?")
- Encourage the group to reword any questions that are leading or are solution-based to a "coaching question"

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- When the energy goes down or questions become repetitive quickly confirm that there are not more questions and move to **Step Five**

Coaching the person:

- Listen for signs that the coachee is starting to explore their situation (i.e. "Hmm, that's a good question!", "I hadn't thought about that.")
- Look for shifting body language that may identify that there's a place for more exploration questions
- Save your questions until the end and ask only if 1) your question wasn't asked by the group and 2) you feel there was a line of questioning that was missed

STEP FIVE

CONFIRM: Confirm with the member in the coaching seat where they would specifically like support.

After 10 minutes of questions, check in with the selected member to see what, if anything, has shifted for them and where they would like some mentoring support from their peers.

- Often, the original issue can shift once questions are asked
- If you are unclear, ask the member "Where do you want your group's help today?"

STEP SIX

MENTOR: Group members may now share experiences, observations, and insights to provide support to help.

During this stage, the member is no longer allowed to speak or react instead, they are encouraged to take notes and listen. The group can now provide feedback to help the individual build their action plan. The key is that members should speak from personal experience and not "finger wag" by listing off a variety of "should dos." Use the language, "in my experience." Providing support and encouragement is also welcomed at this stage.

- The coachee is encouraged not to speak but instead used a pen and paper to take notes
- Remind the group to keep their mentoring succinct so that the coachee can get as many ideas as possible to take away (use the "bottom line" hand signal)
- The longer the suggestion, the more likely it's being "sold" to the coachee
- If the coachee wants to comment or ask a question, ask them to do so after the session is done
- Don't allow any group members to comment on the advice being given – the person being coached is completely capable of deciding how to handle their situation
- Once the energy lulls, confirm that all mentoring ideas have been shared and move to the next stage

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STEP SEVEN

REFLECT: The member being coached can now share their feedback and reactions to the experience.

The member being coached can now share their feedback and reactions to the process.

- The member is sharing specific comments on the overall effectiveness of the experience
- Asking "What was your experience on the hot-seat?" directs the member to comment on what it was like being coached versus giving a critique of the suggestions received
- Thank the group for their participation
- Generally (not individually) give recognition if you heard a good question, diverse perspectives and saw that the process was followed

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Progress Check-In

Reflect on your progress since your peer coaching session...

Based on my previous commitments, I completed or made progress on...	
What I'm most proud of:	What I've learned from my actions:
Things I need to do next to make progress against my goals:	What I want to get out of this session:

My Commitments

Before the next session, I will:

Activity	Initiated	Completed
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

PLAYBOOK: SESSION TWO

Session Length: 80 – 95 minutes

5 minutes

- Leader welcomes group.

10 minutes

- Group provides updates on one success and one learning since the last meeting.

45-60 minutes, Peer Coaching

- Select 2 to 3 challenges based on time available.

10 minutes, Session Debrief

- What worked in our peer coaching session?
- What coaching skills would you like to work on for next time?
- How might you use this coaching structure with your teams?

10 minutes, Wrap Up

- Discuss next session pre-work.
- Each person share one key commitment to be completed by next session.