

# **Leadership Competency Tool:** *Powerful Questions*

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## Leadership competency definition: *Powerful Questions*

- **Asks open ended questions to create greater clarity, possibility, or new learning.**
- Asks questions that evoke discovery, insight, commitment, or action (e.g., those that challenge the other person's assumptions).
- Asks questions that reveal the information needed for maximum benefit to the development of the other person.

## Key teaching points

- Examples of *Powerful Questions*
- GROW formula



*Judge a man by his questions rather than by his answers.*

~ Voltaire

## Practice activity and integration: *Powerful Questions*

Focus on your HARD goal as we explore *Powerful Questions*—provocative queries that put a halt to evasion and confusion.


By asking the powerful question, the leader invites the employee to clarity, action, and discovery at a whole new level. They are generally open-ended questions that create greater possibility for expanded learning and fresh perspective. **Powerful questions are usually seven words or less.**



## Examples of *Powerful Questions*

<p><b><u>Anticipation</u></b>          What might happen?          What if it doesn't work out the way you wish?          What if that doesn't work?          And if that fails, what will you do?          What is your backup plan?</p>	<p><b><u>Assessment</u></b>          What do you make of it?          What do you think is best?          How does it look to you?          How do you feel about it?          What if it doesn't work?</p>	<p><b><u>Clarification</u></b>          What do you mean?          What does it feel like?          What seems to confuse you?          Can you say more?          What do you want?</p>
<p><b><u>Evaluation</u></b>          In what way?          Is this good, bad, or in between? In what way?          How does this fit with your plans/way of life/values?          What do you think that means?          What is your assessment?</p>	<p><b><u>Exploration</u></b>          May we explore that some more?          Would you like to brainstorm this idea?          What other angles can you think of?          What is just one more possibility?          What are your other options?</p>	<p><b><u>Example</u></b>          Will you give an example?          For instance?          Like what?          Such as?          What would it look like?</p>
<p><b><u>Elaboration</u></b>          Will you elaborate?          Will you tell me more about it?          What else?          Is there more?          What other ideas do you have about it?</p>	<p><b><u>Fun as Perspective</u></b>          What was fun about ...?          What was humorous about the situation?          How can you have it be fun?          How do you want it to be?          If you were to teach people how to have fun, what would you say?</p>	<p><b><u>For Instance</u></b>          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?          For instance?</p>
<p><b><u>History</u></b>          What caused it?          What led up to...?          What have you tried so far?          Can you remember how it happened?          What do you make of it all?</p>	<p><b><u>Implementation</u></b>          What is the action plan?          What will you have to do to get the job done?          What support do you need to accomplish...?          What will you do?          When will you do it?</p>	<p><b><u>Integration</u></b>          What will you take away from this?          How do you explain this to yourself?          What was the lesson?          How can you lock in the learning?          How would you pull all this together?</p>
<p><b><u>Learning</u></b>          If your life depended on taking action, what would you do?          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 had it to do over again, what would you do?</p>	<p><b><u>Options</u></b>          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?          What options can you create?</p>	<p><b><u>Outcomes</u></b>          What do you want?          What is your desired outcome?          If you got it, what would you have?          How will you know you have reached it?          What would it look like?</p>



<p><b>Perspective</b>  When you are ninety-five years old, what will you want to say about your life?  What would you think about this five years from now?  How does this relate to your life purpose?  In the bigger scheme of things, how important is this?  So what?</p>	<p><b>Planning</b>  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?  Now what?</p>	<p><b>Predictions</b>  How do you suppose it will all work out?  What will that get you?  Where will this lead?  What are the chances of success?  What is your prediction?</p>
<p><b>Resources</b>  What resources do you need to help 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?  What resources are available to you?</p>	<p><b>Starting the Session</b>  What's occurred since we last spoke?  What would you like to talk about?  What's new/the latest/the update?  How was your week?  How's life?</p>	<p><b>Substance</b>  What seems to be the trouble?  What seems to be the main obstacle?  What is stopping you?  What concerns you the most about...?  What do you want?</p>
<p><b>Summary</b>  What is your conclusion?  How is this working?  How would you describe this?  What do you think this all amounts to?  How would you summarize the effort so far?</p>	<p><b>Taking Action</b>  What action will you take? And after that?  What will you do? When?  Is this a time for action? What action?  Where do you go from here? When will you do that?  What are your next steps? By when?</p>	

*If one is leading, teaching, dealing with young people or engaged in any other activity that involves influencing, directing, guiding, helping or nurturing, the whole tone of the relationship is conditioned by one's faith in human possibilities. That is the generative element, the source of the current that gives life to the relationship.*

- John Gardner



# The GROW Formula

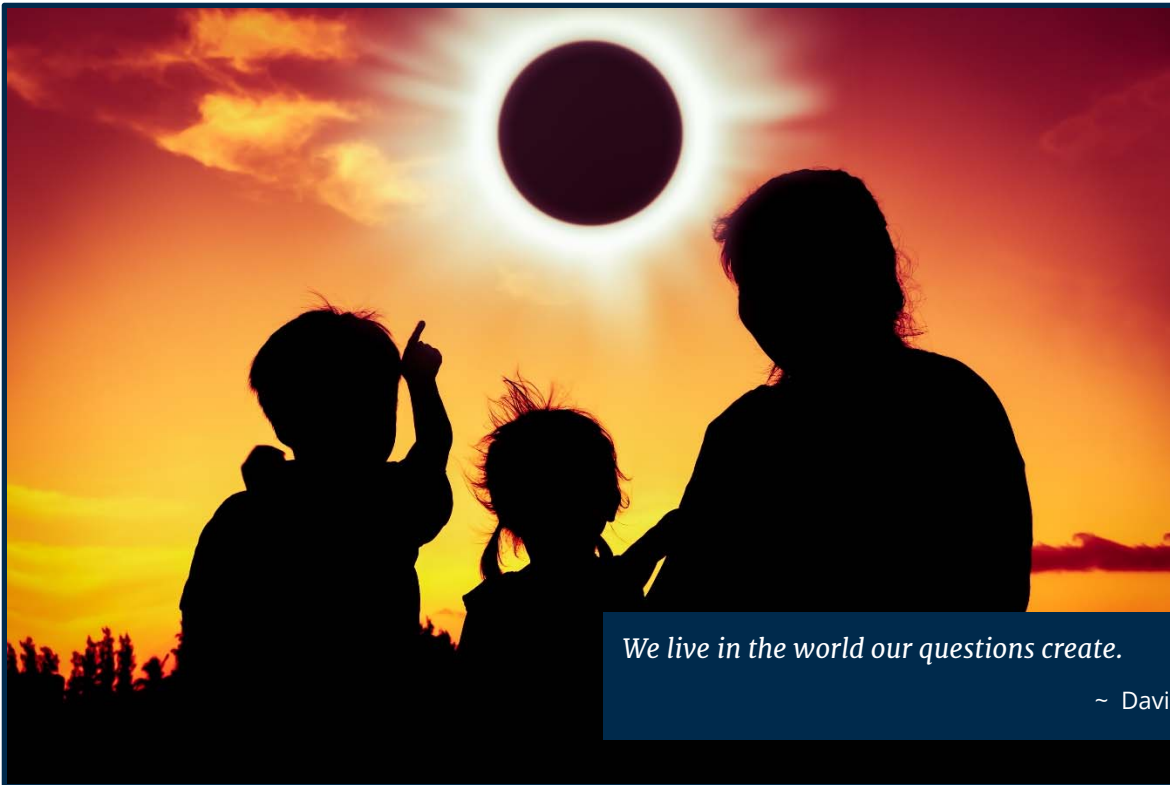
Adapted from *Coaching for Performance: GROWing People, Performance and Purpose*, by John Whitmore

A process for coaching-based conversations, the GROW model is a simple, yet powerful, framework for structuring a coaching conversation. A good way of thinking about the GROW model is to think about how you'd plan a journey. First, you decide where you are going (the goal) and establish where you currently are (your current reality). Then, you explore various routes (the options) to your destination. In the final step, establishing the will, you ensure that you're committed to making the journey.



<b>Goal (10%)</b>	
What do you want to achieve? What is important to you right now? What would you like to get from the next 30 minutes? What areas do you want to work on?	What do you want to achieve as a result of this session? Describe your perfect world. What will make you feel this time has been well spent?
<b>Reality (10%)</b>	
Where are you now in relation to your goal? On a scale of 1- 10, where are you? What has contributed to your success so far? What skills/knowledge/attributes do you have?	What progress have you made so far? What is working well right now? What is required of you?
<b>Options (70%)</b>	
What are your options? How have you tackled this/ a similar situation before? What could you do differently? If anything was possible what would you do?	What would your best friend /mother suggest? Give me 5 options. Who do you know who has encountered a similar situation? What else?
<b>Willing (10%)</b>	
Which options work best for you? What one small step are you going to take now? What actions will you take? When are you going to start? Who will help you?	How will you know you have been successful? How will you ensure that you do it? On a scale of 1 -10 how committed /motivated are you to doing it?





*We live in the world our questions create.*

~ David Cooperrider

