

Squiggly Careers PodSheet

How to ask better questions at work



What stops us from asking good questions:

- Fearing that you should already know the answer
- Fearing that your question will be a hindrance or will come across as awkward

Reframe these fears into positive prompts:

- "Asking a question shows that I'm interested in learning"
- "Asking questions leads to better outcomes"

Why questioning is a skill worth investing in

- It helps uncover new insights.** People around you are a great source of learning. Asking questions is a way to relationship-build whilst learning.
- It demonstrates vulnerability and curiosity.** Asking questions is a practical way to increase the trust that people have in us.
- It improves our emotional intelligence.** It's a virtuous cycle that helps you develop empathy and build better connections.

What stops you asking questions?

4 Ideas for Action

- 1 Increase the quantity and quality of your questions**
What's your question tally in a conversation?
What are the quality of your open questions?
- 2 Try out these different styles of questions below:**
 - Mirroring questions** - This is where you mirror a question asked to you. It helps to build rapport in a conversation.
 - Adjoining questions** - These "What else/Who else?" types of questions help you think broadly and explore connections.
 - Elevating questions** - These questions help you take a step back and re-group. "What is the problem we are trying to solve?"
 - Deep-diving questions** - These questions help you to better understand any details. "Can you give me an example?"
 - Curious-style questions** - This is where you ask questions to shift thinking. "How might we do things differently?"
- 3 Have the confidence to ask one question at a time.**
When we ask all of our questions at once, we stop someone being able to fully think through their response. When we ask a single question and pause, we increase the attention given to each query, increasing the quality of the conversation.
- 4 Watch, listen and learn from others.**
Reflect on what you might be able to watch (e.g. Prime Minister's Questions) or listen to (Emma Barnett interviewing on Women's Hour or Elizabeth Day on the How to Fail podcast), to create a great learning environment. What can you learn from other people's approaches and styles of asking questions?

Coach Yourself Questions

- 1 What types of questions do you hear the most at work?**
- 2 Which questioning techniques do you want to try out?**

Recommended resources



Quiet by Susan Cain

Provides tools for introverts to take full advantage of their strengths.



The art of asking the right questions

Video from Big Think, uploaded on YouTube



How to Fail Podcast

Every week, a new guest is interviewed by host Elizabeth Day

Amazing if