



Career Development | 10 Minute Tools

Asking Better Questions



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Asking great questions is a skill.

Questions are key to deepening our understanding, gaining new insight and challenging assumptions which might hold us back at work.

Reference: *The Art of Asking Questions* by Tom Pohlmann and Neethi Mary Thomas





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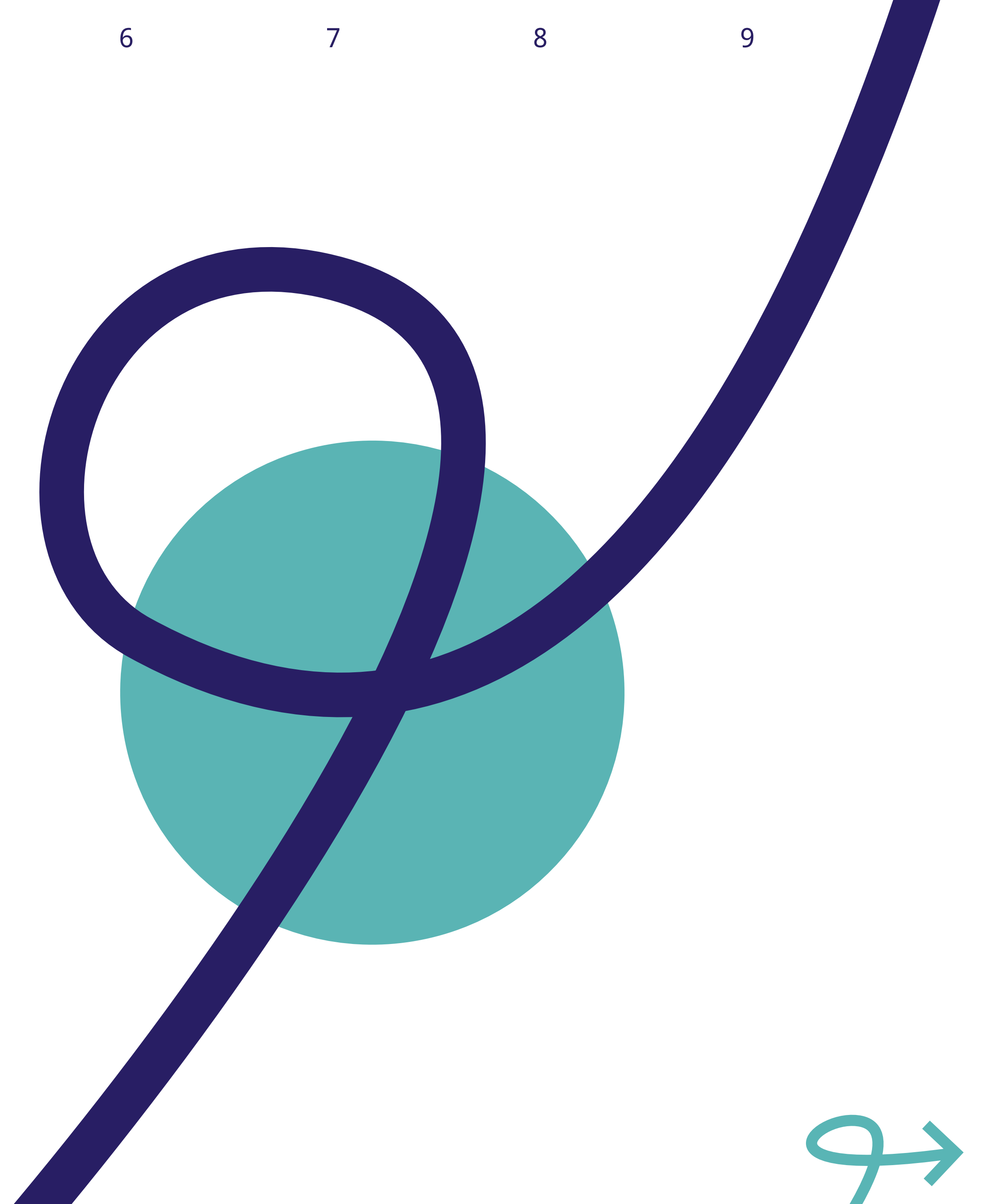
Types of Questions

ADJOINING

- ▶ Explore connections
- ▶ They sound like: 'What's that impact on team xxx' and 'If we took the approach of company xxx, how would we approach this differently?'

Adjoining questions help us to:

- ▶ Broaden our understanding
- ▶ Explore related aspects





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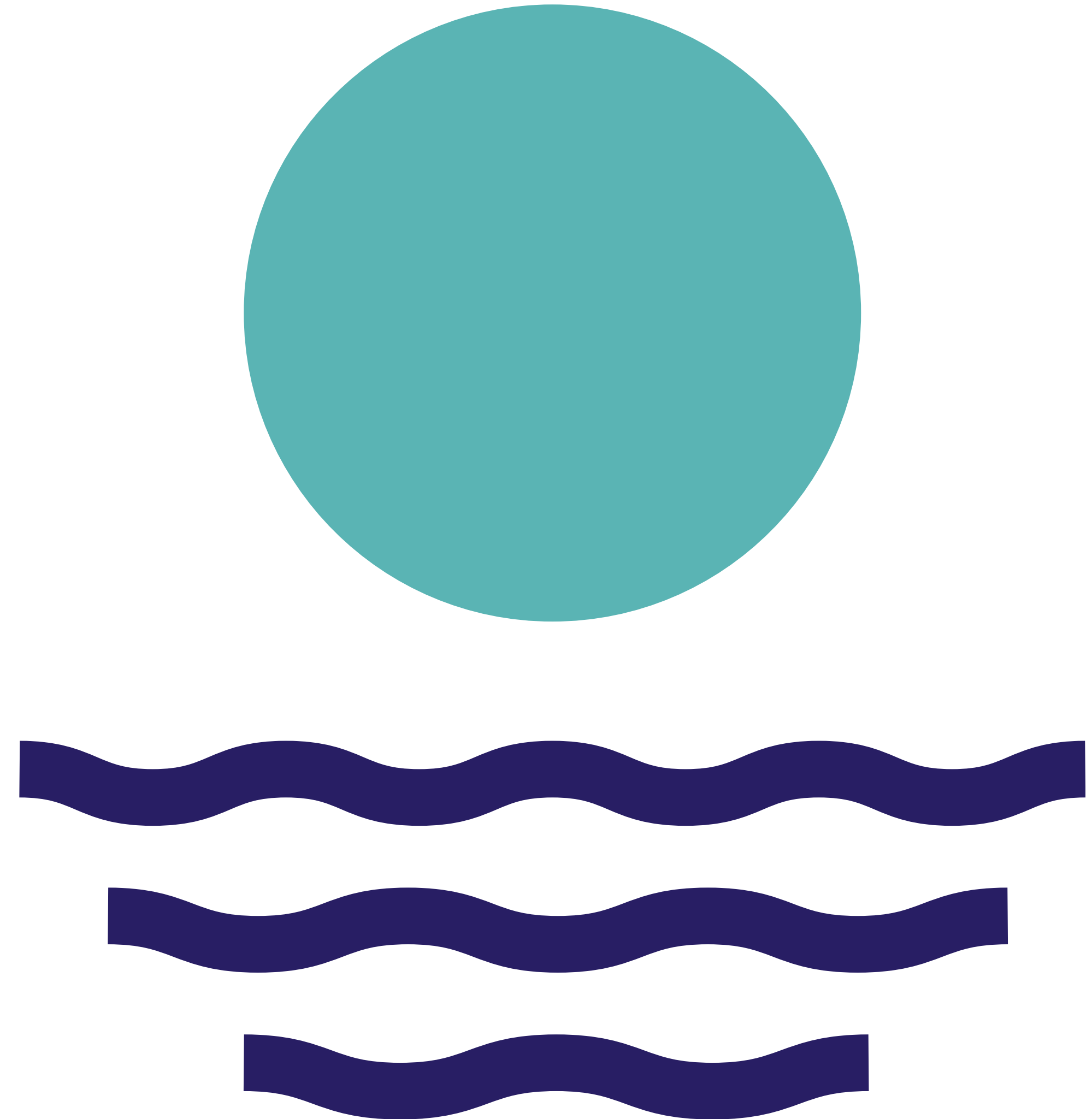
Types of Questions

ELEVATING

- ▶ Help you zoom out
- ▶ They sound like: 'What is the problem we are trying to solve?' and 'What is the outcome we are all looking to achieve?'

Elevating questions help us to:

- ▶ See the bigger picture
- ▶ Connect the dots





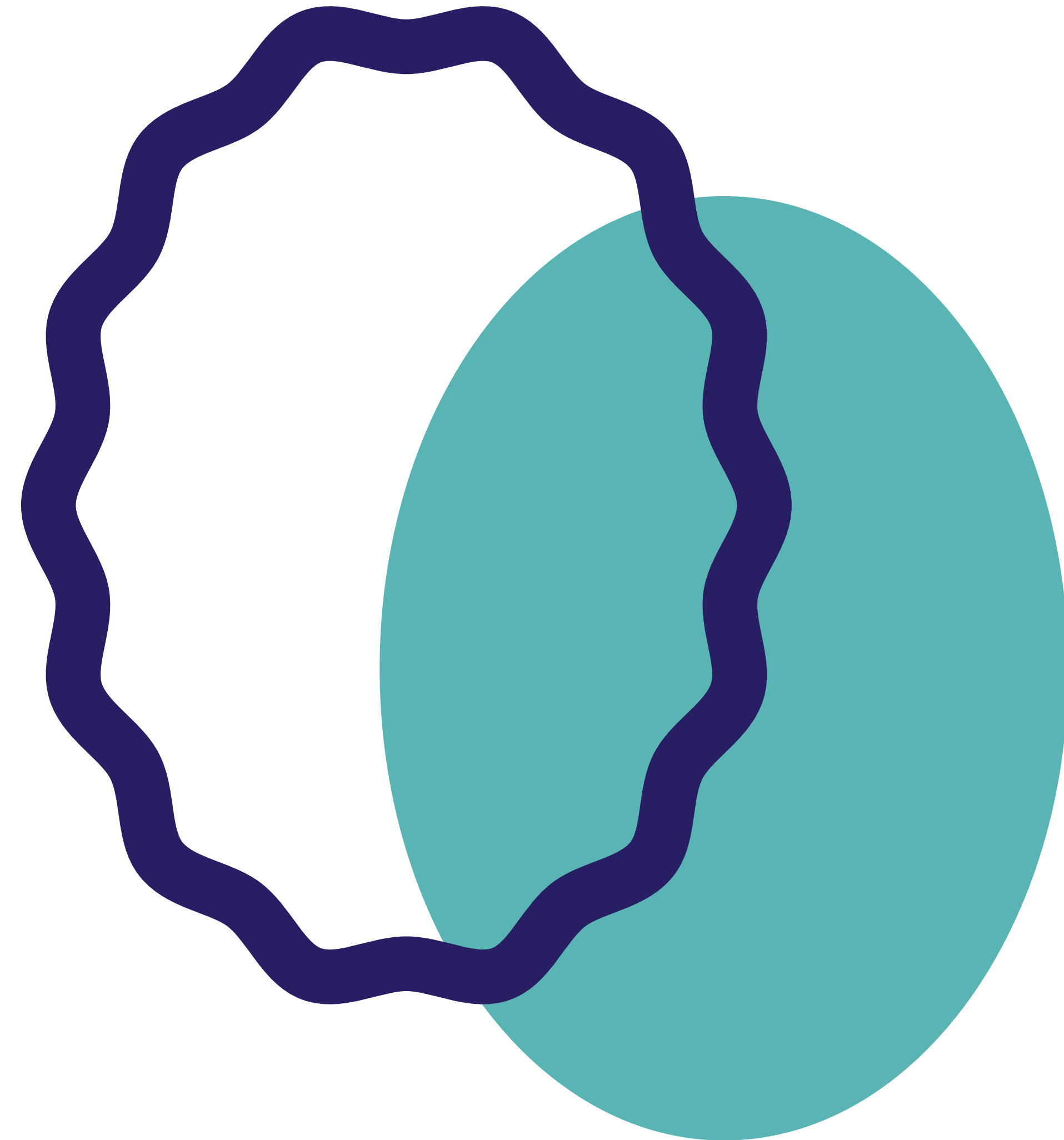
Types of Questions

CLARIFYING

- ▶ Help understand what's being said
- ▶ They sound like: 'Can you tell me more?' and 'What is your perspective on this?'

Clarifying questions help us to:

- ▶ Better understand
- ▶ Uncover intent





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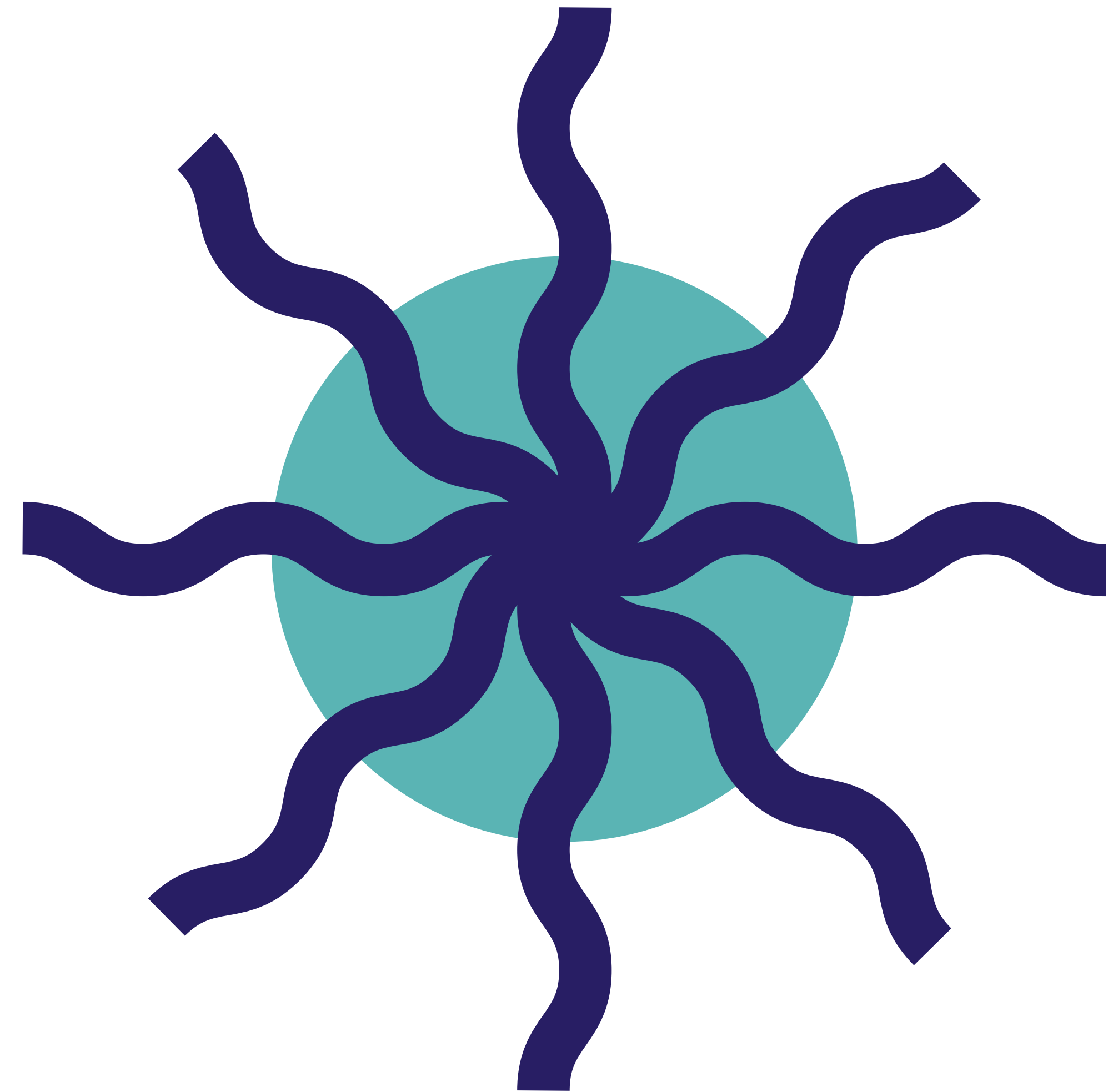
Types of Questions

FUNNELING

- ▶ Help you to dive deeper
- ▶ They sound like: 'Who do you speak to understand the issue?' and 'How did you get to that conclusion?'

Funneling questions help us to:

- ▶ Dive deeper
- ▶ Challenge assumptions





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Putting theory into practice

These questions all have value at different times. Reflect on the meetings you are in. How many questions are asked and what types of question are they?

Doing this as a tally is the easiest way to get some quick insight. It's an interesting exercise, but the real value is in reflecting on the results in the context of what the team is trying to achieve.

For example, if you're trying to understand an issue so you can provide a clear update to stakeholders, then Clarifying and Funnelling questions are great.

But if you're trying to generate new ideas and create opportunities, they are likely to limit the conversation. Adjoining or Elevating questions would be much better for that.





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Think about your own natural style.
Which types of questions do you ask the most and the least?

Getting someone to observe you over the course of a week could give you some useful information to reflect on.

Try out a different style. If you are a 'Funneller' try to consciously use an Elevating question style in your meetings and see how it feels to you and also the impact it has on the discussion.





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Types of Questions

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Observe someone you think has a great questioning style, what do they do well?

2

Create a question tally in a team meeting to see what types of questions are used.

3

Ask someone to observe your question style and give you feedback.

4

Try out a different question style and see how it feels and affects discussions.





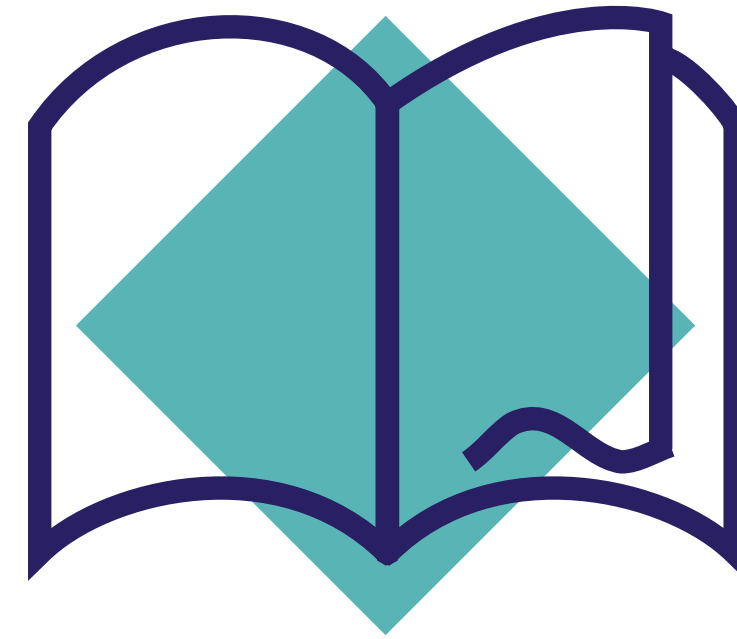
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The Surprising Power of Questions, Alison Wood Brooks & Leslie K. John



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The Tim Ferriss Show Episode #330: How to Ask Better Questions



