

## Leading with Powerful Questions

One of the many unique qualities of a coaching conversation is *not* having the answers. Rather than being drawn into uncertainty, a coaching lens allows leaders to lean into learning through questions. This approach feels especially poignant right now. There is much we don't know at this unprecedented moment in history. How might we all navigate the important conversations ahead?

*When uncertainty arises, try reframing the conversation with a powerful question...*

1. What is important right now?
2. What do you think?
3. What are we noticing?
4. What do we know?
5. What has changed for us?
6. What is most challenging?
7. Where would we start?
8. What is working?
9. What is possible?
10. What are our options?
11. What do we want and need?
12. What could we do differently?
13. How might we experiment?
14. What haven't we tried yet?
15. How can we find out more?
16. What can we learn here?
17. What is getting in the way?
18. How do we define success at this point?
19. What does that look like? Describe that.
20. Where do we go from here?
21. What's next? Tell me more.
22. How can I support you?

### COACH TIPS

**Stay curious.** Curiosity can be key to understanding another person's perspective or concerns. Rather than trying to solve the problem or apply your experience, attempt to understand what the other person thinks, sees, and feels.

**Ask questions.** Keep the questions open ended to encourage deeper, creative responses and avoid yes or no answers. Keeping questions concise can also help avoid leading with your own opinion.

**Listen actively.** Listen to understand rather than to respond. Acknowledge and reflect back what you hear. Get confirmation to determine if you've heard someone correctly.

**Validate emotions.** We all have them. Don't assume you know how another person feels. Their experience is unique and recognizing their feelings can serve to support them and inform choices. Naming our emotions creates awareness and offers context for moving forward.

**Create space.** It's tempting to listen and move on to the next agenda item. When possible, give an idea, concern, or emotion a little breathing room (5, 10, 30 seconds). Does something new surface?

**Find closure.** Acknowledge the contributions and concerns. Summarize if appropriate. (It can be as simple as "thank you".) Close the conversation and open a channel for follow-up.