

Coaching in Everyday Conversations

Identify the Opportunity:

Not all conversations are an opportunity to coach. How clearly can you spot the “green flags” that encourage you to move forward? Your colleagues, peers, friends, and family members may be presenting you with opportunities to lead co-creatively. What signals do they send?

Below are some good indicators that you are facing a coaching opportunity.

- **I’m feeling frustrated because...**
- **I can’t seem to get through to....**
- **I don’t know how to deal with...**
- **I’m not very good at...**
- **What should I do?**
- **I'm confused about...**
- **I don't understand why...**

Ask Powerful Questions:

The most effective type of question to use in collaborative conversations is a simple and direct open-ended question. Open ended questions might begin with **Who, What, When, Where or How**. When might you use these questions in your conversations?

- **Who** will you ask to help you with this?
- **What** do you need to reach this goal/make this happen?
- **What** would be most helpful to you right now?
- **What** would you like to have happen next?
- **What** new skills or knowledge do you need to make this happen?
- **What** about this work do you value?
- **What** is the one thing holding you back?
- **When** is the best time to make these changes?
- **Where** do you feel stuck?
- **How** do you want to proceed from here?

Why Not “Why”?

Rarely is it useful to use a “why” question in coaching because it can have an accusatory tone. Also, “Why” may shift the focus of your conversation on the problem at hand *rather than solutions*. Example: Why is it so hard to get past this? Vs. What will help you get past this? We suggest you train yourself away from using “why” questions. As you gain experience, you may find the perfect timing for an occasional “why” question.