

EIGHT QUESTIONS TO ASK AT 1:1 MEETINGS

Act on it



01

WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

The question popularised by author and coach Michael Bungay Stanier* (What's on you mind?) opens the conversation with an opportunity for your team member to share what's top of mind.

This is the time to listen and watch carefully for clues on what else may be going on.

Ask questions to check in on work, home, and wellbeing.

Keep the focus on them.

* Check out Michael's book *The Coaching Habit* for his 7 essential coaching questions.



02

WHAT ELSE DO YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT TODAY?

Start with what matters most to your team member, then move on to items you want to cover.

Focus on listening to understand.

Ask questions to help the team member think through challenges, explore options and identify a way forward.

Catch yourself if your mind wanders or you are formulating a response while the person is talking.



03

WHAT'S YOUR GREATEST WIN SINCE WE LAST MET?

It can be tempting to jump straight into the challenges and problems your team member is encountering without pausing to reflect on learning and achievement.

Even if it's been a tough week, focusing your team member's attention on what's gone well or what has been completed helps them see they are making progress.

It's also an opportunity for you to draw their attention to learning, behaviours or performance you've observed. If you've seen them experiment, stick with a new habit (even when it was hard), demonstrate something they've learned, or make an impact they may not have noticed, let them know.

Share by explaining the context, what they did and the impact it had on you and/or others. Ask questions to understand their experience and point of view.

04

HOW ARE YOU PROGRESSING AGAINST YOUR GOALS?

It's important to check on progress against your team member's goals and link to team and organisational goals.

Too often we only talk about what's happened since we last met, rather than focusing on the goals we have set and how the team member is tracking.

Review progress against last meeting's actions and both short and long term goals/targets.

Ask about wins, challenges, options and solutions. Explore what's going well and where there may be barriers.

Avoid offering answers. Help them to come up with potential solutions and hone in on a way forward. Seek accountability for acting on it.



05

HOW CAN I HELP?

Stay in coaching mode as much as you can, so your team member is engaged and thinking about options and actions.

Questions starting with What and How help spark insight.

Offer help when needed - especially if a task is high risk, brand new, or outside your team member's experience.

Ask how you can best support them - the answer may surprise you.



06

I'D LOVE YOUR ADVICE ON...

1:1 meetings are a great opportunity to seek feedback to help you be a better leader.

Sometimes when leaders ask for feedback, people feel uncomfortable being honest.

Another way to elicit feedback is to ask for advice. You will often get a much richer response.

Share a specific situation you'd like some feedback on or a challenge you are experiencing and ask your team member for their advice.

Tap into their ideas or get their perspective. Ask questions to increase your understanding.



07

HOW'S YOUR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN GOING?

Foster a life-long learning culture in your team by checking in on how your team member is learning and growing.

This isn't just about formal learning (but by all means discuss conferences, events and development programs), it's also about on-the-job learning and skill development, experiences they would like to gain, and what else they need to grow.

Ask about their short-term and longer-term goals, their career aspirations as well as personal ambitions outside work.

Be sure to share your observations of their learning and development, particularly where they are investing effort and time, but may not yet be seeing the benefits,

Offer encouragement and support.

08

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

It's unlikely you'll get through all of these questions every catch up, but it's important to end on next steps.

Ask your team member to run through their actions and share and yours.

Ask questions to break down tasks or prompt more specific actions and timing.

Test their understanding so you are both clear on expectations, outcomes and timing. Reality check actions against workload.

Seek their commitment to act on these steps. What's the first thing they will do? When?

Keep a record.



1-TO-1 MEETING CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to co-create the agenda
for meetings with your team members

01

WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

Find out what's top of mind. Ask questions to check in on work, home and wellbeing.

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02

WHAT ELSE DO YOU WANT TO TALK ABOUT TODAY?

Start with what matters most to your team member, then move on to items you want to cover.

03

WHAT'S YOUR GREATEST WIN SINCE WE MET?

Celebrate effort, learning and achievement. Ask questions to spark reflection and insight. Link to team and organisational goals.

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04

HOW ARE YOU PROGRESSING AGAINST YOUR GOALS?

Review progress against last meeting's actions, short and long term goals/targets. Ask about wins, challenges, options and solutions.

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05

HOW CAN I HELP?

Ask coaching questions to generate ideas before offering advice. Find out how you and the team can better support them.

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06

I'D LOVE YOUR ADVICE ON...

Ask for advice rather than feedback; you'll get a much richer response. Tap into their ideas or get their view on a challenge you're facing.

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07

HOW'S YOUR PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN GOING?

Ask about formal and on-the-job learning and skill development, experiences they would like to gain, and what else they need to grow.

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08

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

Summarise actions - theirs and yours. Ask questions to break down tasks or prompt more specific actions and timing. Seek commitment.

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MEETING WEEKLY IS BEST ● RESCHEDULE (NEVER CANCEL) ● KEEP NOTES & REFER

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