

Powerful Questions and Active Listening

written by CD | FEBRUARY 7, 2020



[PHOTO: FLICKR USER [MAGDALENA ROESELER](#)]

Powerful Questions will help when striving for more meaningful, effective and mindful one-on-one conversations, these basic tools that come in the form of questions to open or deepen a conversation. There are also some useful techniques to being an Active Listener which will allow the other person to feel more valued and encourage/enable them to more effectively communicate what's on their mind. These are core tools in a [Talent Whisperers](#) bag of tricks.

Some basic powerful question pointers

Active Listening

Receive

Appreciate

Summarize

Ask

Before you respond in a conversation, take a breath. Not an enormous, loud, obvious breath that screams out "I am trying a new technique for better listening!" No, just a normal, simple, ordinary breath. That's it. The whole technique, right there.

Mindful listening then is about being fully present when interacting with others.

Remember to allow others to finish their thoughts before starting (or even collecting) your own; notice non-verbal clues, whether they are tone of voice or body language; and encourage the speaker, through positive questions, eye contact, and focus.

Key points to remember with powerful questions

1. Pay Attention – be sure you're completely engaged in hearing what's being said. Maintain eye contact, be present but relaxed. Commit this time to this meeting regardless of what else may have happened or needs to happen on this day. Avoid distractions. Be fully present.
2. Withhold Judgement – don't start thinking about what's being said while it's being said – keep an open mind. Don't interrupt right away.
3. Create silent moments – either after they've said something or you've asked a question to create a void that you're hoping they will fill.
4. Mirror – reflect back what you believe you heard,
5. Clarify – ask clarifying questions to ensure you understand the full message (optometrist metaphor)
6. Listen for what isn't being said – Often this may prove to be the most important thing. What are they feeling? How are they saying it? What are they excited about vs eager to skip over? Are they avoiding eye contact, fidgeting, what their tone of voice, ...?
7. Bottom line – try to provide the tldr; / the executive summary
8. Share – introduce your ideas, thoughts, similar experiences, etc

Active listening techniques include

- [*Building trust and establishing rapport.*](#)
- *Demonstrating concern.*
- *Paraphrasing to show understanding.*
- *Nonverbal cues which show understanding such as nodding, eye contact, and leaning forward.*
- *Brief verbal affirmations like "I see," "I know," "Sure," "Thank you," or "I understand."*
- *Asking open-ended questions.*
- *Asking specific questions to seek clarification.*
- *Waiting to disclose your opinion.*
- *Disclosing similar experiences to show understanding.*

Powerful Question examples

- What do you want?
 - Can you tell me more?
 - Why does that matter to you?
 - What other ideas/thoughts/ feelings do you have about it?
 - How does this influence your choices at work?
 - What else?
 - What are the vectors in your life/job that matter (most)?

- Learning/mastering?
- Scope of responsibility?
- Business impact?
- Who you work with?
- Why does it matter?
- What is the biggest obstacle?
- What is your biggest fear?
- What would the 95 year old say to you about this looking back to where you are today?
- What's next for you?
- What will you do before we meet next?
 - What's the first, easiest step you can take?
 - Will you...?
 - How will I know?
- What happened since we last met?
 - What's good about what happened?
 - What could've been better?
 - What was the lesson?
 - Who else will benefit?
 - How can we ensure we retain what we learned?
- If you could change one thing, what it be?
- What do you NOT want me to ask you?

See Also:

Powerful Questions

- CTI (The Coaches Training Institute)
 - [Fundamentals – Powerful Questions](#)
 - [Fulfillment – Sample Powerful Questions](#)
 - [31 Powerful Questions for various applications](#)
- [Forbes: 16 Powerful Questions Coaches Ask Their Clients To Help Achieve Their Goals](#)
- [School of Coaching Mastery: 101 Incredible Coaching Questions](#)
- [SACAP – The 10 Most Powerful Questions a Coach Can Ask](#)
- [SAI – 5 Powerful Coaching Questions to Ask Your Clients Based on Your Coaching Niche](#)
- [SAI – 4 Coaching Questions to Ask Your Clients to Begin With](#)
- [The Art of Powerful Questions](#)
- [Active Listening and Effective Questioning](#)
- [What makes a Powerful Question?](#)

Active Listening

- [The Big 6: An Active Listening Skill Set](#)

- [Forbes – 10 Steps To Effective Listening](#)
- [HBR – Listening Is an Overlooked Leadership Tool](#)
- [Positive Psychology – Active Listening: The Art of Empathetic Conversation](#)
- [Psychology Today – A Simple and Powerful Technique for Better Listening](#)
- [Psychology Today – Mindful Listening](#)
- [FastCompany – 5 Ways To Improve Your Listening Skills](#)
- [Medium – ‘Active Listening’: the Key to Strong Workplace Relationships, Productivity, and Personal Empowerment](#)
- [Learn About Active Listening Skills With Examples](#)
- [How to Practice Active Listening](#)
- [Psych Central – Become a Better Listener: Active Listening](#)
- [Inc – 10 Ways to Immediately Improve Your Listening \(and Networking\) Skills](#)
- [Wikipedia – Active Listening](#)

Degrees of Active Listening



