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"Unleashing your Inner Champ"

Toolkit Tips



Questions-3 Tips to Ask Better Questions To Get the information you really want and need

Have you been frustrated or confused at the end of a conversation, wondering about the meaning about what was said, and wondering what was left, unsaid?

1. Why Questions are Important

First, if we don't ask enough questions, then we don't have thorough information. We wonder what is really going on and we start to guess. Even worse, we start to second guess ourselves. We start to let our imagination run, and it's usually not creating the most positive thoughts. We become frustrated, and disappointed. Or, we are too optimistic and because we didn't ask enough questions and get sufficient information, we think things are better than they really are.

Neither of these is a productive scenario. Do you see, now, why asking more, and effective questions is critical? Questions allow you to get answers to the questions you ask. So, ASK: Always Seek Knowledge

Benefits of Questions:

- Help Connect with others-people love talking about themselves
- Cultivate humility-people get to learn more about us
- Give us different perspectives

2. Prepare Yourself to ask better questions

Recognize that asking questions does not mean you are nosy, instead, it shows you care. This represents a change in mind-set/attitude about asking questions.

Asking ourselves questions is a great starting point. For example:

- Why am I asking questions? In other words, what am I and the person I'm communicating with going to do with this information? In other words, what's the end goal?
- **What value am I adding?** Consider the examples mentioned previously regarding multiple aspects of life: family, organization or team at work?
- So that I could have my sons elaborate on how they were feeling, I learned to not say "How was your day?" and instead ask an **open-ended** question like "What was the best/worst part of your day?" That required more detail, and provoked a two-way conversation.



Toolkit Tips Continued...

3 Tips to ask better questions to get the info you need

- In organizations, I learned to ask what the members hoped to achieve for themselves personally and professionally by participating in their assigned areas. This provided evidence that I cared about them, and wanted to help them not only give, but also receive.
- At work, when I see the team diligently working to step it up and demonstrate commitment, I take the time to ask “what can I do to make your life simpler?” Then, I follow up, and we discuss the status of projects. This is proof to the team and individuals that I want to help, and put the actions behind the words.

I learned when I hosted a TV show many years ago, that my ability to help others feel comfortable, determined their willingness and ability to relax, and share. When we had honest conversations, and revealed true emotions like laughter, or even tears, then I knew the mission was accomplished.

I learned that they were evaluating me and seeking answers to these questions:

- Does she care for me?
- Can she help me?
- Can I trust her?

3. How can I become a better listener?

Multitasking while someone is talking with is a lesson in what *not* to do to be a better listener. We can't read an article or watch TV at the dinner table while listening to our children or spouse. Reading emails while conducting a meeting, is not listening.

Body language is the starting point to show others we are listening. Specifically, looking them in the eye, uncrossing our arms and giving undivided attention, are critical. If the conversation is on the phone, it's by allowing ourselves to use tonality to convey to our listeners that we are, in fact, engaged.

Below are levels of listening and explanations of each:

- **Level 1- Internal-** whatever the person is telling us, we are solely focused on how it affects us personally. The old radio station WIIFM (what's in it for me)
- **Level 2- Focused** - We are focused on how the information they person is telling us affects them. This level shows empathy, and the people we're engaged with appreciate the focus we are putting on them.
- **Level 3 - Global-** We are focused not only on how the information affects the person(s) we are with, but we are in tuned to the environment around us and how this impacts all others in the environment. The Level 3 listener “reads the room” and adjusts accordingly. This stretches beyond the words and encompasses the emotions of those involved. This level, the ideal state, is servanthood. When we are servants, we are connected, allowing more, and more effective questions.



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People want, more than anything else, to be heard, and understood. Quality questions create a quality life. Successful people ask better questions, and as a result, they get better answers. *Tony Robbins*