The following questions are a resource developed by Duane Epton. Having an accomplished career in the competitive world of print and publishing, Epton frequently used the following types of questions in conversations to coach, mentor, and learn about the wide variety of persons he worked with.

Each question in this document is considered an open-ended question. Open-ended questions are questions that cannot be answered with a simple "yes" or "no" and encourage detailed, thoughtful responses.

Consider memorizing one or two questions from each category and employ them in conversations that require you to learn as your lead through confrontation. These categories are meant to build depth and are offered sequentially for your benefit.

Author’s notes…

Do not attempt to short cut the initial categories as you attempt to move toward the latter unless significant openness or trust has been established.

Notice that there are no, “*WHY*,” questions. Regardless of how you attempt to word, the question, “*WHY*,” will place the other person on the defensive before a discussion begins.

**Probing Questions**

*Questions that lead by allowing people to answer in any way they choose.*

1. Tell me a little more about that."

2. Give me some background - what led up to this situation?"

3. What feelings do you have when you think about that situation?"

4. "You mentioned that …... Say more about that."

5. "What did you mean when you said ?"

6. "What was most significant to you in this experience?"

7. "What would be most important for us to focus on?"

8. "How did that happen?"

**Revealing Questions**

*Questions that change viewpoint* or *help the person* get *out of* a *box and think creatively.*

1. "What does your [spouse, peer, coach, friend] think about that?"

2. "If you removed that limitation, then what would you do?"

3. "If [money, time, resources, energy] wasn't an issue, what would you do?"

4. "Put yourself in the other person's shoes-what can you see from their perspective?"

5. "What does Scripture say that you could apply to your situation?"

6. "What worked for you in similar situations in the past?"

7. "What would be the best possible outcome?"

8. "If the perfect opportunity came along, what would it look like?"

**Ownership Questions**

*Questions that focus on taking responsibility and being proactive in order to make things better.*

1. "How might your actions have contributed to the breakdown?"

2. Let's say God is using this situation to get your attention on something. What do you think that something could be

3. "Let's say this person never changes or 'gets it.' What you need to do to move on in life even if he doesn't?"

4. "What could you do that would turn this into a positive experience?"

5. "What do you think God is trying to form in your character through this?"

6. "If you were going to respond in the best possible way to your circumstances, to do something you'd really be proud of in the future, what would you do?"

7. "Since we can't change the other person, what could you change about *you* that would make things better

8. "If you were still in this situation three years from what would that be like? What would you be willing to do to prevent that from happening?"

**Direct Questions**

*Questions that cut to the heart* of *the issue.*

1. "Are you being true to your own values?"

2. "What are the implications of that choice for your [marriage, family, job, relationship]?"

3. "What has God said to you about this?"

4. "Is this the way you want to live?"

5. "Who benefits most from that course of action

6. "How does your response line up with Scripture?

7. "Are you comfortable with your decision?"

8. "What are you going to do about that?"

**Asking Permission**

Opens *the door to entering* a *new area or broaching* a *sensitive subject.*

1. "Would it be OK if we probe that area a little?"

2. "That statement caught my *attention-would* you *mind talking* a little more about *it?"*

3. "Would it be helpful if we talked through that a little together?"

4. "Can I challenge you on that?"

5. "Can I ask you to look at that from another angle?"

6. "Would you be open to hearing another perspective on the situation?"

7. "Can I make a request? (You may choose to do this, to not do it or to modify this request.)"

8. "Would you like to talk about that?"

**Decision-Making**

*Questions* to *ask in* a *decision-making process.*

1. What do you need that you don't have now to make a great decision?"

2. Who could you tap to help you make a great decision?"

3. lf you had unlimited resources and couldn't fail, what would you do?"

4. "If you saw someone else in your situation, what would you tell him/her?"

5. On a scale of one to ten, how sure are you that this is right decision? What would it take to make that 'six' into an 'eight'?"

6. What has God spoken to you about this decision?"

7. What's the worst-case scenario if you take this course Can you live with that if it happens?"

8. "What would it cost you if you *didn't* move forward with this?"

**Taking Action**

Questions *that turn ideas into committed action steps.*

1. "Make an action step out of that-what do you want to do?"

2. "What *will* you do? When will you do it?"

3. "On a scale of one to ten, how sure are you that you'll carry that step out? What would it take to make that 'six' into an 'eight' or a 'nine'?"

4. "Is that a step you want to take?"

5. "You said you [might, ought to, could] do that. Nail it down: what *will* you commit yourself to doing?"

6. "Is this step important enough to take? Will it move you toward your goal?"

7. "What kind of support do you need from me (us) or others to make sure this gets done?"

8. "What obstacles do you need to overcome to reach your goal?"

*From the Author*

*Please note, there are no* ***WHY*** *questions. Regardless of how you attempt to word the question with* ***WHY*** *you will place the other person on the defensive before a discussion begins.*

Developed by

Duane Epton, DTM

Mastering Speech- Simplified