Questioning Skills

Effective questions in coaching are simple and have a purpose. Effective questions open doors in the conversation. As a coach you will be wanting to use open questions – how, what, where, when. Closed questions can be useful to seek clarification, to ensure you have summarised or reflected back correctly or to focus on a specific point. Try to avoid questions that imply judgement and directive questions/statements.

Other things to think about are Intonation as this can really change the way a question is asked. Pauses and silence in coaching is good as it allows time for reflection.

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| **Question type** | **When to use** | **Example questions** |
| Open questions | When you want information | What do you want to get out of mentoring? |
| Probing questions | When you want more detail | What do you mean by ‘progress’?  What do you think needs to happen next? |
| Alternative questions | When you want a creative response | What other ways could this be achieved?  How else could you go about this?  What other resources have you not considered but could be useful? |
| Reflective questions | When you want your mentee to assess the situation critically or when you want to challenge their thought process | Why do you think that was the response?  What would you do differently next time?  How could you avoid that in the future? |
| Closed questions | For agreement/commitment | Are we happy with that? |