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Suggested Questions for Coaching¹

Dealing with Performance Issues

1. How do you think it went? Are you interested in discussing what happened?
2. Have you dealt with this issue/challenge before? How have you handled it?
3. Why do you think this is a problem?
4. What is your best thinking on this?
5. What does success look like on this issue for you (in six months, a year)?
6. What do you think the main reason is for this issue you are facing?
7. What do you want to accomplish in this effort?
8. What steps can you take to improve the situation?
9. What is keeping you from getting the results that you want?
10. What behaviours will you need to enhance or change?
11. Who are supporters? Detractors? What is your plan for each?
12. How do you think I can be useful to you?

High Potentials/ Career Planning

1. What do you want to accomplish in this particular effort/challenge?
2. What would successfully fulfilling these goals look like? How would you measure it?
3. How much time do you have to achieve this?
4. How much progress have you made so far?
5. How does this challenge fit into the goals that you have for yourself?
6. Who needs to know about this? What do you need from them? What is in it for them?
7. What one thing do you enjoy most about your work?
8. What are the things you like least?
9. If you could design your own job (no constraints) what would it look like?

¹ Adapted from “Executive Coaching with Backbone and Heart”, O’Neill, 2000 and “First Among Equals”, McKenna and Maister, 2005



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10. What are your strengths that you want to preserve and build upon?
11. What do you want to strengthen or change as I coach you in the future?
12. How do you think I can be useful to you?

Shifting Realities

1. What do you think has changed for you? How has that impacted your work?
2. How have you responded to the change? How might you respond differently?
3. What is new that is standing in your way? What strategies do you have to deal with it?
4. How can I be helpful to you on this?
5. Who else can be helpful to you? What do you need from them? What is in it for them?
6. What does success look like in this new reality? How would you like things to be working in six months/ a year?

Debriefing

1. How do you think you did?
2. To what extent did you achieve your goal? What did you do well?
3. What challenges do you continue to face?
4. What next steps do you want to take?
5. What can I focus on as your coach going forward? How can I help you more effectively?