

THE ACED STANDARD QUESTIONS

'ASPIRE' QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Ask the Performer to select an 'issue' they want to move forward with. If you are their supervisor you might choose the issue for the intervention. Either have them clarify it in a few words or you do depending on the situation.

Some questions are subordinate to previous questions and don't always need to be asked.

- 1) Now that you've clarified the 'issue' how would you rephrase it as a goal to achieve or a problem to solve?
- 2) When the goal is 'perfectly' achieved or the problem is 'perfectly' solved what will be happening?
- 3) (or to put it another way) What will tell you that it has been achieved/solved?
- 4) What will you see going on around you?
- 5) What differences will you see compared with now?
- 6) What will 'they' be doing?

It sometimes helps if the performer considers what others will be doing before they think about themselves and what they will be doing. It takes away the mental obstacle of 'I can't because of them'

- 7) What will you be doing?
- 8) How will you feel?
- 9) What words would describe things that tell you the goal is fully achieved/problem is completely solved?

If that question throws up an obstacle that will always stand in the way ask if addressing that obstacle should be made part of the 'perfect outcome' otherwise allow the performer time to describe their version of perfection

You might not use each of these questions; they are listed merely to help you. Depending on how the performer describes the successful outcome you might add prompts or you might choose to repeat some questions depending on how verbal the performer is and how well they can visualize the successful outcome.

Next, you want the performer to decide on a goal for this coaching session – the ultimate goal might be huge or long term – organize a successful conference or achieve annual target. So it is really valuable to bring goal achieving close. It is essential, to help the Performer to focus for them to establish a goal for the session. They might, for example, decide on a first step to take or create an outline for a plan of action.

10) By the end of this session what do you want to achieve?

11) How far do you want to get with this issue, in today's session?

12) A total solution, a plan of action, two or three things you will begin, a first step?

If you are taking notes on what is being said you might, on the performer's behalf, write "By the end of this session I want to have" . . . and you record what they say.

13) Be as specific as possible – what do you actually want to achieve in this session?

OK. You now have two goals – an ultimate goal and a goal for this session. This is what you *ASPIRE* to. Your ideas and your words. Words and ideas that you 'own'.

Read your notes out loud, so the Performer can take it in and own them.

14) If you get to this point in our session will it actually move you forward?

15) If not should you change something?

16) What timescale should you put on achieving the whole thing?

17) If your session goal is, e.g., to decide on a first step – by when will you have taken it?

18) It's essential that you give yourself a deadline – your goal, your decision, your timescale, so is what you've just said, a timescale you can keep to?

'CONSIDER' QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

19) What is going on, now, as far as your issue is concerned?

20) Describe the main points – where are you now is what I'm asking?

21) How much control do you, personally, have over what's happening, now?

22) How much control would you say you have over what you want to achieve?

23) If you have total control score it '10' if less than total control what score would you use?

- 24) Whatever score you give it tells us how much control you believe you have.
- 25) If you don't have much control is there an area where you do have a lot of control?
- 26) Re your session goal and overall outcome, does this control score mean you want to change anything?
- 27) Now you've done that – are there any other factors hiding away in there?
- 28) Will focusing on your (revised) session goal move you forward the way you want?
- 29) If not, how could it be changed so that achieving it will get you to where you want to go?

It is often helpful to a Performer to do a quick review at this point – they have clarified their issue, redefined it as a goal to achieve or problem to solve, described how things will be when the successful outcome is achieved, defined a goal for this session and have begun to consider the present situation

- 30) Let's go back to your overall goal – what have you done about it so far? (and it might be nothing, of course)
- 31) What were the results? Be as detailed as possible.
- 32) Is there anything to add to what you just said – something you've done or a result we've not covered, yet?

Now let's explore some ideas to take you forward.

'EXPLORE' QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

- 33) As far as the overall goal is concerned what *could you do*? That's could do – not will do.
Could do
- 34) Give me 5 things you *could do* – good, bad, stupid, impossible, just speak!

After the Performer says five things, encourage them to keep thinking by asking more questions:-
- 35) What if those obstacles you mentioned earlier (if any were) weren't there – what could you do?
- 36) What if you had more time – what could you do?

- 37) What if you had unlimited money to throw at it – what could you do?
- 38) Who would you ask for help, if you could ask anyone?
- 39) What would you hope they'd tell you?
- 40) Let's review – is there one or a combination of *could-do's* you'd like to focus on?
- 41) Is it worth breaking down any of them into smaller *could-do's*?
- 42) If you were me (given you are their supervisor) what could you do that you haven't mentioned, yet?

You can keep asking questions and keep listening for ideas. When you have a good list it's time to focus on one or a combination of ideas. Pass the list to the performer to look at so they can review what they said and to choose one as the first step towards the goal.

- 43) Based on what you said and your goal for this session is there one of these *could-do's* you want to choose to move you towards your goal (or solution)?
- 44) Is there more than one idea that you'd like to combine?

'DO' QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS

Now let's take that idea and work with it

- 45) Now that you've chosen that *could-do* as your first step towards your goal – when will you take that step? When will you do what you said you would? That's your Do. You've gotta do the Do
- 46) Give me a date and a time
- 47) How long will spend on the Do – on that date and at that time?
- 48) If it all goes well – when might you be ready to take your second step?
- 49) Can you think of anything that might stop you from taking your first step – from doing the Do?
- 50) If there is something, should your actual first Do be to remove that obstacle?
- 51) Do you need any help to remove it?
- 52) If so, who should help and when will you ask them?

53) If you're good to go on that first Do - do you need to keep anyone informed about it?

54) If so, when and how will you inform them?

55) After you've done your first Do and it's successful what effect do you want it to have?

In summary, the performer now has an end goal, a session goal, is clear about the present situation, a list of things they could do to take them towards their goal, a selected idea they will take as their first step, a date and time they will take it, an amount of time they will give to completing it, and if they need help they have chosen who to ask and when they will ask them.

Now ask the 'Head', 'Heart' and 'Guts' questions

56) On a scale of 1 – 10 give me a number that best describes how much you *INTEND* taking that first step – doing the Do. That's your 'Head' number

57) On the same scale of 1 – 10 give me a number that describes how *GOOD* you feel about doing it. That's your 'Heart' number

58) On the same scale give me a number that describes how *SINCERE* you are about doing it. That's your 'Guts' number

If any of the scores are 7 or less it is a good indicator that there's an obstacle of some sort – real, imagined, physical or emotional that hasn't come out, yet. Focus on raising the low score.

59) That score of (e.g. 5) suggests there's a problem that will get in your way – should dealing with that obstacle be your actual first 'Do'?

60) Let's set a new goal of removing that obstacle (and now you can loop back to whichever Questions are appropriate and ask them)

Quite often the perceived obstacle evaporates and you can just get a new Head, Heart or Guts score. If it is a real obstacle and the Performer works out how to deal with it, repeat the 'Do' questions as necessary and get scores on the new first step.

Check with the Performer that once that obstacle is out of the way they will be able and confident to work on that original action they'd decided on.

Agree a review date with them.