

100 PRODUCTIVE

CONFLICT QUESTIONS

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STATEMENTS AND ASSERTIONS shut people down and lead to unproductive or unhealthy conflict. Using questions opens up the dialogue and leaves room for a path forward.

If you can't find the perfect question, sometimes the best question is no question at all. Leaving silence makes room for the person to steer the conversation in the direction that they think is most important. That can give you great insight about what matters to them and how to find a path through the conflict.

GOAL #1

Get in the Right Mindset

1. What do I need to say?
2. What is my mindset?
3. What's the ultimate goal?
4. How can I add value in this conversation?
5. Am I ready to listen?
6. How open am I to the other person's perspective?
7. How can I broach this topic respectfully?
8. When would be a good time to talk about this?
9. Where would be a good place to raise this?
10. What do I need to keep in mind?

GOAL #2

Establish a Clear Line of Communication

Stage 1: Engage in the Discussion

11. When would be a good time to talk about...?
12. How should we solve for...?
13. Who should be included in this discussion?
14. What's your priority for dealing with ...?
15. Can we switch out of email and get on the phone?
16. Who should I talk to about...?
17. What should I know before we talk about this?
18. What feedback are you looking for?
19. Who's the best person to share my feedback with?
20. What would be helpful at this stage?

Stage 2: Share Your Concern

21. I'm worried about x, can you help me?
22. I'm wondering what would happen if... what do you think?
23. What would be the implications if we...?
24. How would you react if I...?
25. I'm concerned about x, what do you think?

Stage 3: Listen and Learn

26. What are the key facts?
27. What do I need to know?
28. How are you thinking about this...?
29. What are you thinking about when you say...?
30. What's driving that?
31. What does my plan make you think about?
32. How are you feeling about this?
33. How do you define...?
34. What's most important to you here?
35. What doesn't sit right with you?

GOAL #3

Create a Connection

Stage 1: Validate the Other Person

36. You believe x, is that right?
37. For you, this is about x, is that true?
38. You're feeling x, is that accurate?
39. I get the sense that you value... Is that fair/accurate?
40. I notice you used the term x, what made you choose that term?

Stage 2: Inquire to Understand

41. How do you see this playing out?
42. What risks are you anticipating?
43. Give me an example of what you're thinking?

44. What do you think x would say about this?
45. What does your gut tell you?
46. How are you thinking about this problem?
47. What are the different aspects of the issue?
48. Who do you have in mind when you say that?
49. How should I be approaching this?
50. What's the root cause of that?
51. What concerns you?
52. Who would feel differently about this?
53. What resistance are you anticipating?
54. Where will I face resistance to my plan?
55. When would this get the best reception?

Stage 3: Reflect Back What You Hear

56. Am I interpreting that correctly?
57. Are you saying...?
58. You would call that...?
59. For you, this is a case of...?
60. It's important to you that...?

GOAL #4

Contribute to a Solution

Stage 1: Explore Workable Options

61. How should we tackle this?
62. If I could move the needle on one thing, what would you want it to be?
63. What is your first priority?
64. What pressures are you getting?
65. What are your non-negotiables?
66. What's working for you so far?
67. What would a good solution look like for you?
68. What would have to be included for you to sign on?
69. What's the best-case scenario for you?
70. What would be a show stopper?
71. How else could we think about this problem?

72. What am I missing?
73. What was a similar situation where things worked out?
74. Where have you seen this kind of thing go well?
75. Where do you draw the line?
76. Where is there some wiggle room?
77. Who would I have to get sign-off from?
78. Which is more important?
79. Who are we missing from the approach?
80. When would this approach be effective?

Stage 2: Test Potential Solutions

81. Would it work if we...?
82. How does x sound to you?
83. Does this plan meet your needs?
84. Are we aligned on the plan?
85. How would you feel about...?
86. What do you think about...?
87. Am I on track when I say...?
88. How close are we with the current proposal?
89. What would it take to make this work for you?

Stage 3: Solve and Close

90. Are we aligned on the plan?
91. What should our next steps be?
92. What are you expecting me to do?
93. What are you going to do?
94. When do we need to do this by?
95. How should I follow-up on this?
96. What should we think about for next time?
97. Did we miss anything?
98. Are we on the same page?
99. How could we have broached this differently?
100. Will you let me know if you have any concerns?

