

Good Leaders Ask Great Questions
Your Foundation for Successful Leadership

Mastermind Facilitator's Guide
An Interactive Personal Growth Resource

by Charlie Wetzel

Based on the book
Good Leaders Ask Great Questions
by John C. Maxwell

October 2, 2014

The JOHN MAXWELL **Team**

A NOTE FROM JOHN MAXWELL

Dear Coach,

You are preparing to engage in an important activity. The mastermind you are about to facilitate has the potential to change people's lives—including yours!

As you lead this mastermind, always remember that your goal is to add value to people. As a John Maxwell Team coach, you are a guide who is able to help people navigate some of life's difficulties and discover principles and practices that will make it possible for them to live better lives, develop healthy relationships, be more successful, and help others.

If you focus on adding value and you are successful in doing that, you will find this experience very rewarding. You will also likely gain opportunities to add further value in the future to many of the mastermind participants or to their friends and colleagues.

As you embark on this journey, just remember to be yourself, bring energy to the meetings, and focus your attention on the people you're leading.

Thank you for being a valuable member of my team. And always remember that I believe in you!

Your friend,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'John', written in a cursive style.

John

LEADING AN IMPACTING MASTERMIND

What is a Mastermind?

A mastermind is a small group of people led by a strategic facilitator, who meet together regularly for a set period of time in order to learn and grow together. A mastermind differs from lunch and learns, workshops, and trainings because it is focused on discussion, self-discovery, and personal application.

Who Should Participate?

Anyone who desires to grow or who wants to learn in a particular subject area is a candidate for a mastermind group. Participants can be members of an established group or individuals who do not know one another prior to joining.

Where, How Often, and for How Long Should We Meet?

A group can meet anywhere as long as the environment feels positive, is conducive to discussion, and prevents outside interruptions. We recommend that you meet weekly for a preset number of weeks, with each session lasting from 60 to 90 minutes. It's important to keep the group's meeting time within the announced timeframe.

Why Lead a Mastermind?

Leading a mastermind group is an opportunity to add value to people. A mastermind can be employed to bring together friends who want to grow, help people in a specific community to improve their lives, meet and get to know potential future clients, or develop people for an organization with whom you're doing business.

What Does a Good Leader of Masterminds Do?

Good leaders of masterminds don't lecture or focus on delivering content. They function as facilitators. They instigate discussion, promote self-discovery, and encourage the application of ideas presented in the book being studied among participants. How do they do that?

- By taking responsibility for the group environment.
- By creating positive energy and directing the energy of the group.
- By modeling humility and authenticity to the participants.
- By encouraging every person to participate.
- By focusing on putting ideas into action so that people experience positive change.

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Good mastermind leaders rely on their coaching skills, and use them to help participants expand their world and develop new skills that increase their potential.

What are Some Good House Rules for the Meeting Time?

The first time you meet with your mastermind group, establish any “house rules” for your group. Here are some suggestions:

1. Please arrive five minutes prior to the stated starting time.
2. Please do not answer your cell phone, receive or send texts, or access email during the group time.
3. Please read the assigned text of the book prior to the meeting.
4. Please treat other group members with respect.
5. Please treat personal information about other group members as confidential.
6. If you have an emergency and must miss a meeting, please let the leader know as far ahead of time as possible.

How Should I Measure Success?

The highest level of success you can achieve as a mastermind facilitator is a changed life. If someone in your group makes positive changes as a result of time in the group, it doesn't get any better than that.

When I first began leading groups, I thought I had achieved success when people showed up and I presented material effectively. I have to admit, I set the bar very low in the beginning.

As I grew in my leadership and facilitation skills, I became more adept at getting people to talk and think. I was able to redirect the conversation seamlessly when it got off track. And I learned how to drive the entire discussion and guide people to application by using only questions. And I found that the best group times I had came after I learned how to generate strong positive energy and direct the energy of the group in positive ways.

If leading a mastermind is new to you, make adding value your first target, and try to encourage people to take action on what they discover. As you gain more experience, you will develop additional facilitation skills.

How is this Facilitator's Guide Set Up?

This facilitation guide for *Good Leaders Ask Great Questions* is designed for a four-week mastermind. The first three weeks are based on the first three chapters of the book. The fourth week—which could be repeated up to seven times to extend the mastermind—focuses on discussing some of the leadership questions John answers in the remaining seven chapters of the book. You as the leader will need to decide how many sessions the group will meet.

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The four planned sessions for this mastermind are as follows:

1. Why Are Questions So Important?
2. What Questions Do I Ask Myself as a Leader?
3. What Questions Do I Ask My Team Members?
4. Which Leadership Questions Would I Like Answered?

Each session has an optional single page handout, which can be given to participants. Each session also provides a facilitator's guide to be used by the leader. The facilitator's guide includes:

- A **summary** of the chapter for the leader.
- **Goals** for the mastermind session.
- One or more brief optional **mini-lessons** that can be presented by the leader.
- A **series of open-ended questions** designed to facilitate discussion among participants.
- **Insights** into the questions and what they are designed to accomplish.
- An **application section** encouraging participants to put what they've learned into action.

Note: Information in the facilitator's guide that is directed to the leader but does not appear in the one-page handout can be found in shaded boxes.

As the leader, your goal should be to get every participant to engage in the discussion. A good rule of thumb is that the leader should be speaking less than 20 percent of the time. This includes the time asking questions and directing the discussion. For example, if your mastermind group plans to meet for 60 minutes, you should speak for only twelve minutes. If your group will meet for 90 minutes, you should speak for only eighteen minutes.

For this reason, you may elect *not* to teach the mini lesson. If you do, try to limit your teaching time to approximately 5 to 10 minutes.

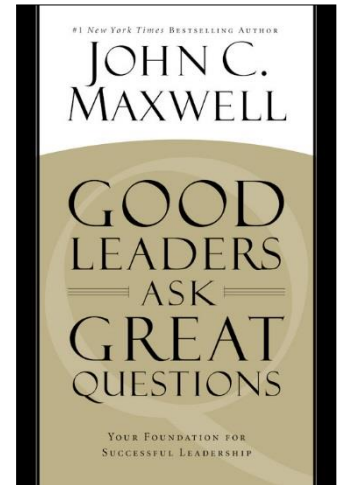
Your main focus should be on encouraging participants to internalize what they're learning by understanding the ideas, applying it to their lives intentionally, and putting them into action.

PRIOR TO YOUR FIRST MASTERMIND SESSION

1. Become Familiar with the Book and Mastermind

As the facilitator of the group, you will be setting the direction and tone of the group. Participants will expect you to know where you are taking the group and to have an understanding of the content of *Good Leaders Ask Great Questions*. Ideally, you will have read the entire book before the first meeting, but this is not absolutely necessary. But do spend some time getting a feel for the book.

The book is laid out in two sections. The first part, “Questions I Ask Myself,” is comprised of three chapters. In these chapters John teaches the importance of asking questions, and he guides the reader through the process of learning how to ask questions to gain the greatest benefit personally as well as how to get the most out of a team.



The second part is called “Questions Leaders Ask Me,” and it comprises the remaining seven chapters of the book. In these chapters, John answers the most common leadership questions people ask him. This part of the book is a virtual encyclopedia of leadership. John says this is the most comprehensive leadership book he’s ever written.

The *Good Leaders Ask Great Questions* mastermind looks in depth at the first three chapters of the book. It provides a template for the second part of the book allowing the facilitator to decide how many additional sessions to include. ***Decide how many total sessions the mastermind will include before you invite your participants. It is designed to be four sessions, but can be expanded to be as many as ten.***

2. Decide on the Time and Place for the Meetings

Find an appropriate place and time for meetings, then set the date for your first meeting. This puts a stake in the ground and gives you a deadline for recruiting the members of this mastermind group.

3. Select and Invite Your Participants

Identify the people you will ask to be a part of this group. Your goal will be to have enough people to create energy in the group but not so many that it prevents everyone’s having an opportunity to talk. We would recommend no fewer than five participants and no more than twelve.

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We recommend that you get good contact information for each person and stay in touch with people between the time you invite them and the day of the first mastermind meeting.

4. Make Sure Everyone Gets a Book in Time to Read

This mastermind is written in such a way that a participant who fails to do the reading *will* be able to participate. However, participants will not get the full value of the mastermind experience if they neglect to do the reading. For that reason, make sure everyone gets a book, and encourage them to do the reading.

5. Give the First Assignment a Week Before the First Meeting

Ask participants to read the first chapter of the book (pages 3-35). before coming to the first session, and encourage them to come to the first session ready to discuss it.

6. Prepare Yourself to Lead the Group

As the leader of a mastermind group, you should always be aware of four areas of responsibility and do your best to fulfill them with excellence:

Preparation and Overall Strategy: Participants of your group want to know that you have goals for their growth and have a strategy to help them reach them. This means you have thought through the entire mastermind process, looked ahead, know where you want to take the group, and have a plan to get them there. Every time they show up to meet with the group, you are well prepared and confident.

Facilitation of the Group Meetings: The hallmark of effective mastermind leaders is that their groups run smoothly. They start and end on time. They create an environment that's relational and fun. They encourage people to talk while directing the flow of discussion. And they accomplish a lot in the time they have. People walk away from the meeting feeling it was time well spent and it really helped them.

Connection with Participants Between the Meetings: Good leaders make the effort to connect with people, get to know them, and offer to help them not just during the scheduled meeting time, but also between those meetings. Touch base with people. Let them know you care and are there to help.

Next Steps for Developing Participants' Potential: As you get to know people, look for their strengths, listen for their dreams, understand where they want to grow, and seek out ways to help them develop to their potential. And when you have developed enough credibility with them, offer to help them take next steps in their growth.

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7. Goals for this *Good Leaders Ask Great Questions* Mastermind Group

Most successful people are very busy. They are often focused on achieving their goals and getting work done. Rarely do people slow down and become intentional about asking questions.

John Maxwell is a high-energy person who gets a lot done. He has been very successful. He had to train himself to stop doing and start asking questions. That strategy has been highly effective for him personally and for his team.

The goals for participants in this mastermind are for them to ...

- Understand why questions are so important,
- Become expert questioners of themselves and their teammates, and
- Leverage the questions they ask and the answers they receive to become better leaders.

CHAPTER 1

WHY ARE QUESTIONS SO IMPORTANT?

Chapter Summary

Most people are willing to acknowledge the importance of questions as a way to gain information. However, John Maxwell believes questions play an even more vital role in a person's life. They can be used connect with people, collaborate with team members, build ideas, and develop people's leadership. When embraced as a lifestyle choice, asking questions can open doors to increased personal potential. As he says in the chapter, "Good questions inform; great questions transform."

This Session's Goals

1. Allow participants to begin getting to know one another.
2. Help participants to see how questions have already benefitted them.
3. Reveal how questions can improve their lives both personally and professionally.
4. Encourage participants to embrace the value of asking questions as a lifestyle.
5. Prompt participants to begin utilizing questions more in the next seven days.

Opening Question

Every session will begin with a question. This week's question will allow you to better understand what everyone's expectations are for the mastermind.

While asking participants to answer the below questions, you should also ask them to share their name, tell what they do for a living, and give one interesting little-known fact about themselves.

What do you hope to get out of this mastermind study? What would be a win?

Discussion

Insights

The following questions are arranged in an order that will feel safe to most participants. People are usually willing to share their opinions and tell what they think about a subject or idea, so that's where these questions start. However, you will notice that as the discussion progresses, participants are invited to answer questions that are more personal. And the discussion shifts from ideas and beliefs to practices and changes that can be made personally. The goal is always to help participants understand themselves better and encourage them to make positive changes in their life based on what they're learning.

As you lead the discussion, if you ask a question and people don't seem to want to answer it, don't fill the silence by talking. Wait and give people an opportunity to speak up. If they still don't volunteer to answer the question, ask the same question in another way. Or ask a similar one. Then wait again. If needed, ask one of the participants for his or her opinion. If necessary, ask someone else to respond to what that person said. Your goal is to facilitate positive interactive discussion among the participants. If some part of the discussion seems to excite or energize people, you can ask follow-up questions that are not in the handout. As long as people are learning, the discussion is productive, and the overall direction of the mastermind is moving toward application, keep going.

1. Maxwell listed several practical ways that questions can be a benefit. Which ways have you used questions and what were the results?
 - Questions unlock and open doors that otherwise remain closed.
 - Questions are the most effective means of connecting with people.
 - Questions cultivate humility.
 - Questions help you to engage others in conversation.
 - Questions allow you to build better ideas.
 - Questions give you a different perspective.
 - Questions challenge mind-sets and get you out of ruts.
2. In the chapter, Maxwell gave two lists of questions that changed his life: questions others asked him, and questions he asked others. Can you think of a question that made a major impact on your personal or professional life?
3. John Maxwell has said that when he started his career as a leader, he thought the leader was supposed to have all the answers, and his focus was on *answering* questions. Today, he is focused on *asking* questions. As a leader, when do you think it's important to ask questions and when to you think it's important to answer them? Explain.

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4. When you ask questions, are they more likely to be philosophical (idea-based) or pragmatic (results-based)? What motivates you to ask the type of questions you naturally gravitate to?
5. Are you impatient with or appreciative of leaders who ask the opposite type of questions? Why?
6. How might you benefit from being more open to other kinds of questioners?
7. When you want to brainstorm ideas, solve problems, or build upon concepts to improve them, whom do you invite into the process and why?
8. Look at the criteria Maxwell uses when deciding whom to invite to the table to share ideas (page 12). He invites people who:
 - Understand the value of questions
 - Desire the success of others
 - Add value to others' thoughts
 - Are not threatened by others' strengths
 - Can emotionally handle quick changes in the conversation
 - Understand their place of value at the table
 - Bring out the best thinking in the people around them
 - Have experienced success in the area under discussion
 - Leave the table with a "we" attitude, not a "me" attitude

Would you eliminate any of his criteria? If so, why? Would you add criteria of your own? Why?

9. What problem or challenge are you currently dealing with that is especially difficult? How might you benefit by asking questions to bring resolution to the issue?

Optional Mini-Lesson

The following mini-lesson is adapted from material on page 7 of the book. If you decide to present it, personalize the material and make your presentation brief.

If time permits, this might be a good place in the mastermind to allow participants to ask one another questions to help them solve the problem they are currently facing.

Using Questions for Problem Solving

“The ability to ask the right question is more than half the battle of finding the answer.”

--Thomas J. Watson, founder of IBM

The key to solving problems is asking the right question.

John Maxwell offers three questions a leader can use for problem solving:

- Why do we have this problem?
- How do we solve this problem?
- What specific steps must we take to solve this problem?

Maxwell's questions are a good starting point. Here are additional questions we might ask within the context of “Why do we have this problem?”

When did this problem first arise?

Why is it a problem?

What are the symptoms of the problem?

What are the negative results of this problem?

What is the root of the problem?

What other kinds of difficulties may arise as a result of this problem?

Do we need to investigate further to understand the problem adequately?

How critical or urgent is this problem?

Who on the team has the greatest expertise in this area and what does he or she think?

What's the opinion of the person closest to the problem?

What questions might you ask to expand on Maxwell's second question: “How do we solve this problem?”

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10. Most people who have developed a high level of expertise in an area start giving more answers and asking fewer questions in that area. In what area might that be true for you, and how might you re-start the questioning process to gain from its benefits again?

Application

The most important part of the mastermind process is helping people transfer what they learn in discussion and carry it into action in their lives. Strongly encourage people to commit to use questions more strategically in the coming week. And tell them that when you meet next time, you plan to ask everyone how that worked out.

In what area, context, or situation are you willing to commit to asking more questions in the coming week? What benefit do you expect to gain from it?

Reading

Before the next mastermind meeting, please read “What Questions Do I Ask Myself as a Leader?” on pages 26-47.

CHAPTER 2

WHAT QUESTIONS DO I ASK MYSELF AS A LEADER?

Chapter Summary

Leaders are used to dealing with tough questions. But most are not used to posing tough questions to themselves. That can lead to problems. In the chapter, John quotes Socrates as saying, “The unexamined life is not worth leading,” and then he adds, “The unexamined leader is not worth following.” Why? Because they can get off track personally, abuse their leadership, and fail to reach their potential.

The solution is to go through the often-difficult process of asking yourself tough questions before anyone else needs to. John maintains that the people who do are able to maintain their integrity, increase their energy, and improve their leadership capacity.

This Session’s Goals

1. Introduce participants to the idea of asking themselves questions to improve their leadership and effectiveness.
2. Invite participants to evaluate the questions John presents in the chapter.
3. Challenge participants to devise their own personal set of questions.
4. Encourage participants to put that set of questions into practice.

Opening Question

If people in the group still don’t know each other well, ask people to say their name again before answering the question. Allow people to volunteer to answer the questions. However, if someone in the group does not offer to answer the question, then ask him or her the question directly. This will raise the level of accountability in the group.

In what area did you commit to asking more questions last week, what were you hoping to gain, and how did that turn out?

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Discussion

Insights

The questions in this session get pretty personal. You will be asking people to be fairly vulnerable. To ease the tension, you may want to answer some of the tough questions first. If you do, it is important that you be humble and authentic. You must model for the group, yet at the same time maintain your ability to lead the group, which can be a difficult balance to strike.

As before, if you ask a question and participants seem reluctant to answer, don't let them off the hook. Wait. Or rephrase the question. Or call on people without embarrassing them.

1. How important is it for leaders to possess vision, anticipate problems, and continually look ahead for the team or organization? Why?
2. How do you think asking questions of yourself as a leader could help you to possess vision, anticipate problems, and look ahead in your personal leadership?
3. The practice of asking ourselves questions helps us to become more self-aware. Have you ever known a leader who was not self-aware? Without naming names, describe what happened to that person's leadership.
4. Have you ever engaged in the strategic practice of asking yourself questions? If so, in what area of your life did you do so? What was the result?

Optional Mini Lesson

This is designed as a side discussion. If you choose to do it, we recommend that you describe a situation where you did not ask yourself these questions but should have, and tell how things didn't turn out well as a result.

Three Questions Leaders Should Ask Themselves Before Leading Others

Take a look at these three questions, adapted from Maxwell's "Three Questions People Ask of Their Leader" (page 31). Why do you think it would be beneficial for us to ask ourselves these questions before trying to lead others?

Can I help them? That is a competence question.

Do I care for them? That is a compassion question.

Can they trust me? That is a character question.

What should you do if you answer no to one or more of these questions?

5. Look at the list of Maxwell's questions from the chapter:

Am I investing in myself?
Am I genuinely interested in others?
Am I grounded as a leader?
Am I adding value to my team?
Am I staying in my strength zone?
Am I taking care of today?
Am I investing my time with the right people?

Which of those questions do you think would give you the highest return if you started using it right now?

6. Which of the seven areas the questions ask about have you neglected most? What have been the consequences of that neglect?
7. Maxwell's last question in the chapter is about investing in others. Why do you think that is important for a leader?

Optional Mini Lesson

One of the most valuable things any leader can do is invest in other leaders. It is the fastest and most effective way to grow an organization.

As you present John's factors describing what to look for in someone they can mentor (p. 45-46), add explanations and examples from your own leadership experience. Then get participants thinking about who they could and should be mentoring.

The People You Should Invest In

1. **The Influence Factor**—Do they influence others?
2. **The Capacity Factor**—Do they have the potential to grow and develop?
3. **The Attitude Factor**—Do they desire to grow and develop themselves?
4. **The Chemistry Factor**—Do we like each other?
5. **The Passion Factor**—Are they self-motivated?
6. **The Character Factor**—Are they grounded?
7. **The Values Factor**—Are our values compatible?
8. **The Teamwork Factor**—Do they work well with others?
9. **The Support Factor**—Do they add value to me?
10. **The Creative Factor**—Can they find possibilities in impossibilities?
11. **The Option Factor**—Can their contribution give me options?
12. **The 10 Percent Factor**—Are they in the top 10 percent of those on our team?

For the people you already mentor or invest in, how many of these twelve factors apply to them? Are there any people in your sphere of influence whom you could mentor or invest in who display these characteristics? If so, what are you prepared to do to invest in them?

8. Are you willing to adopt the practice of asking yourself questions in order to grow, to keep yourself accountable, and to improve your leadership capacity? If so, will you use Maxwell's list or develop your own? When will you start?

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Application

The most important part of the mastermind process is helping people transfer what they learn in discussion and carry it into action in their lives. If they committed to asking questions in response to #8 above, then ask them to do the application assignment below.

Create a list of questions you will ask yourself as a leader. If you intend to create your own list of questions, then commit to creating it within the next 48 hours. Otherwise, you can use Maxwell's. In either case, designate specifically when you will ask yourself these questions. Put it in your calendar. Plan to report back on its impact at the next meeting.

Reading

Before the next mastermind meeting, please read "What Questions Do I Ask My Team Members?" on pages 48-77.

CHAPTER 3

WHAT QUESTIONS DO I ASK MY TEAM MEMBERS?

Chapter Summary

Good leaders have a bias toward action. Many leaders are also quick to talk because they want to cast vision and inspire others. While these traits are highly valuable to leaders, they also cause many of them to be poor listeners.

John highlights the importance for leaders to do the following: listen, learn, and then lead. But the value you receive by listening comes only when you ask the right questions.

In this chapter, John shares the top eleven questions he asks members of his team. These questions, plus their answers, make him a better leader.

This Session's Goals

1. Invite participants to assess their listening skills.
2. Ask participants to judge whether they are fostering an environment that values questions.
3. Invite participants to evaluate the questions John presents in the chapter.
4. Challenge participants to devise their own personal set of questions or adopt some of John's.
5. Encourage participants to put that set of questions into practice.

Opening Question

Allow people to volunteer to answer the question. However, make sure every person answers. If someone confesses to not having done the work, don't make him or her feel guilty. Simply encourage the person to follow through next time.

What question did you ask yourself most often in the last week, and what was the result?

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Discussion

Insights

By this third session, participants should be feeling more comfortable speaking freely about their situations. If they are still resisting being authentic and open, then you must continue modeling these traits to them by answer some questions first and being humble and authentic.

If participants are open and willing to learn from this lesson, it has the potential to transform their teams, especially if some of these leaders have helped create hierarchical environments that don't value collaboration or encourage listening. Get them to examine their assumptions and gently challenge any leader who says his or her team members have nothing to contribute, because every team has people with something to offer.

1. Who is the best listener you have ever worked with? How did he or she make you feel? How did that person's skills benefit you and the team?

Optional Mini Lesson

This is designed as a side discussion. However, you could teach it instead. If you do, we recommend that you describe a situation where you did not listen but should have, and how things didn't turn out well as a result.

The Three Levels of Listening

Few people consider themselves to be bad listeners. John Maxwell didn't—until someone close to him pointed out that he seemed distracted and unfocused in one-on-one conversations. He had to discipline himself to become a better listener.

Maxwell refers to the levels of listening mentioned in the book *Co-Active Coaching*. Below are the levels, along with a phrase that sums up that level:

Level I: Internal Listening – What's in it for me?

Level II: Focused Listening – What's happening in you?

Level III: Global Listening – How does what you're saying impact everyone?

Maxwell calls Level III the listening level of effective leaders. What must you do or change in yourself to practice that level of listening consistently?

2. Who are the people in your life that you are most likely to ask for an opinion? Why them?
3. Maxwell gave his reasons for asking his team members, "What do you think?" When you ask others what they think, what are some of your reasons for asking? If you have not asked this question of others, why not?
4. Jack Welch once said that when a boss asks a subordinate an informational question, the boss already knows the answer but is trying to substantiate his opinion with further information. He also desires to assess the skills of the subordinate. As a leader, do you agree or disagree with Welch's comment? Why?
5. If a leader asks questions *only* to verify what he or she already believes to be true, how might that mindset impact that leader's listening skills? Will he or she still be an effective listener? Explain.

Optional Mini Lesson

Because so many people think of themselves as good listeners—whether or not they actually are—you may want to pause to let people take this quick quiz. There is no hard and fast scoring standard. Let's just say that the more statements that are not true for people, the worse listeners they probably are.

How Good are Your Listening Skills?

Are you a good listener? Most people answer yes to that question, whether or not they actually *are* good listeners. To assess your skills, check each that is true for you:

1. When someone talks to me, I stop what I'm doing to listen to them.
2. I always try to maintain eye contact with the person who is talking with me.
3. When someone is talking to me, I do not look at my phone or computer.
4. When choosing a seat to have a conversation, I try to pick a place to minimize distractions.
5. When someone else is talking, I never interrupt them or finish their sentences.
6. When someone is explaining something to me, I do not come to a conclusion before they finish their explanation.
7. When someone is talking to me, I always try to read their body language for clues to what they're feeling.
8. If my phone rings when someone is talking to me, I do not check to see if I should answer it.
9. When someone says something critical about me or gives me bad news, I don't become defensive or punish the messenger.
10. When someone is talking to me, I can tell when they think I don't understand, and I paraphrase back to them what they have said.

How many of the statements did you check? If you gave this list to your spouse or some other people who know you well, would they agree with your self-assessment? If you're not sure, try it. Find out how good your listening skills really are.

6. How easy is it in your current work environment for people to ask questions? Are questions welcomed? Explain. What could be done to improve that environment?
7. On a scale from 1 (never) to 10 (continually), how would you rate yourself in terms of how often you ask questions of your team members? Why do you think you use questions the way you traditionally have? How might you become better at using questions?

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8. Look at the list of Maxwell's questions from the chapter:

- What do you think?
- How can I serve you?
- What do I need to communicate?
- Did we exceed expectations?
- What did you learn?
- Did we add value?
- How do we maximize this experience?
- What do I need to know?
- How do we make the most of this opportunity?
- How are the numbers?
- What am I missing?

Which if any of those questions do you currently use? In what situations do you use them?

9. Which of those questions would give you the highest return if you started using it immediately? Why?

10. What can you do immediately to use questions more effectively in your personal or professional life?

Application

This activity has the potential to give a high return immediately—unless participants work or live in an environment where questions are not welcomed or valued. If that is the case, you may want to review “How to Create an Environment that Values Questions” on page 75.

Choose three questions to ask team members—from Maxwell's questions list, a list you create yourself, or some combination—and used them consistently every day for the next week. Make note of what results you get.

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Reading

The reading assignment you give this session will depend on the decision you made regarding the number of weeks this mastermind will meet.

If you have chosen to meet for only four sessions, then ask participants to scan chapters 4 through 10 of the book to pick a question they would like to discuss. This will be easier for them than it might at first seem. There are two easy ways for them to do this. They can look at the first page of each chapter and see a list of all the questions in that chapter. Or they can use the index to search for a question by topic.

Before the next mastermind meeting, please search the book for a question you would like to discuss with the group.

CHAPTERS 4-10

WHAT QUESTIONS DO WE WANT ANSWERED AS LEADERS?

Chapter Summary

By this time in the mastermind of *Good Leaders Ask Great Questions*, participants should have bought into the importance of asking good questions, and they should have a pretty good feel for when and how to ask questions to improve their professional effectiveness, personal growth, and leadership ability.

Now it's time to transition to specific questions that will help participants in their leadership development.

As previously stated, you can do a single session that covers the remaining seven chapters of the book, or you can hold as many as seven more sessions, one for each remaining chapter of the book.

If you plan to do a single session, ask participants to pick one question to discuss from any of the remaining seven chapters. If you plan to do seven sessions, ask them to pick one question to discuss from the *next* chapter of the book. Note: if you go chapter by chapter, multiple participants may choose the same question. If that is the case, you may need to ask additional questions to extend the discussion.

In the guide below, you will see a pattern of questions that you can use with each participant when it is his or her turn to talk about the question picked from the book. Use the plan to start the discussion. However, don't be afraid to depart from it. Guide the discussion to any area that is helpful to the participants. If you're short on time, skip some of the provided questions. If participants are speeding through the discussion, create and ask additional follow up questions based on what you hear.

You will also need to help participants choose what action they will take to apply what they've learned during the discussion.

This Session's Goals

1. Invite participants to discuss the leadership issues that are important to them.
2. Engage participants in collaborative problem solving of leadership issues.
3. Provoke healthy discussion between participants.
4. Engage participants in the process of thinking about their personal leadership development.
5. Inspire participants to commit to further leadership growth and development.

The JOHN MAXWELL **Team**

Opening Question

What question did you ask this past week that had a positive impact on you, your team members, or your organization?

You will notice that this question has been written in such a way that it can be used multiple weeks.

In the week following the session on chapter 3, “What Questions Do I Ask My Team Members?” place the emphasis on the three questions participants agreed to use during the week.

In subsequent weeks, encourage participants to share any kind of success story that has come as a result of asking questions.

Discussion

Insights

The sessions based on “Part II: Questions Leaders Ask Me” are entirely discussion driven. (No mini-lessons are provided.) Ideally, each person will have time focused on him or her where you ask the questions below and the discussion is based on their interests.

Ask for someone to go first. When the discussion centered around the questions he or she if finished, then ask for the next volunteer. Continue until every person has gone.

If the session will cover the entire book, participants will have chosen any question from any chapter.

If you choose to go chapter by chapter, you will ask participants to choose one question from each of the remaining chapters:

Chapter 4: What Must I Do to Lead Myself Successfully?

Chapter 5: How Does Leadership Work?

Chapter 6: How Do I Get Started in Leadership?

Chapter 7: How Do I Resolve Conflict and Lead Challenging People?

Chapter 8: How Can I Succeed Working Under Poor Leadership

Chapter 9: How Can I Successfully Navigate Leadership Transitions?

Chapter 10: How Can I Develop Leaders?

The JOHN MAXWELL **Team**

One by one, each member of the group should receive the opportunity to discuss the following based on the question he or she chose from the book:

1. What leadership question did you choose?
2. What need, challenge, or situation prompted you to choose it?
3. What insight did Maxwell's answer give you that you perhaps didn't have before?
4. What is the perspective of others in the group? Does anyone else agree with Maxwell's perspective? Does anyone disagree? Does anyone else have an additional insight to add?
5. Is there a practical takeaway that you believe you can implement based on Maxwell's insights or those of a group member?
6. Does anyone else in the group see another takeaway?
7. Are there any changes you will have to make or difficulties you will have to overcome to implement the takeaway?
8. Does anyone in the group have anything to add before moving on?

Application

Encourage people to do the activity below.

If this is your last session, be sure to do the following:

1. Thank everyone for their participation.
2. Encourage everyone to continue using questions to learn, grow, and develop their leadership potential. (You may want to draw upon the conclusion on page 289.)
3. Give next steps if you will be continuing your coaching with any people in the group.

Create an implementation plan related your question and the solution you discovered. Then give yourself a deadline this week to put it into practice.

Reading

The reading assignment will apply only if you plan to continue meeting for additional sessions.

Before the next mastermind meeting, please search the book for a question you would like to discuss with the group.