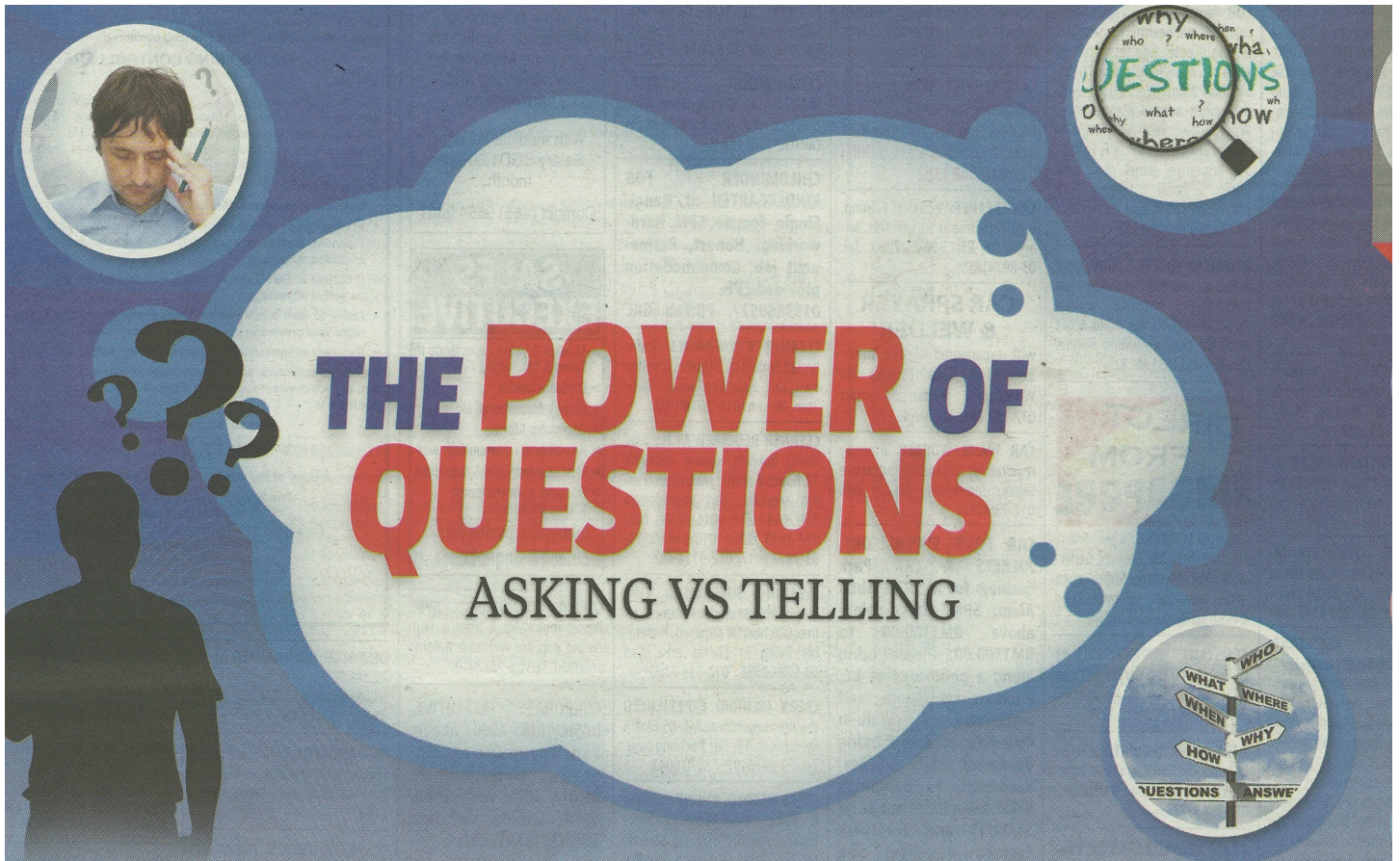


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CORPORATE COACH



Q&A
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Q: I am rather doubtful about the use of questioning as a leadership strategy to lead people in organisations. Many coaching professionals are advocating 'talk less and listen more.' However, I am still not convinced for these reasons:

Firstly, I am sure people do ask questions even though they are not told or reminded to do so. So what is the difference now? Secondly, it is rude when someone asks you for an answer and you respond by asking them a question.

Thirdly, isn't it strange and frustrating to ask a question when you already know the answer? Why take the long route when there is a shorter one? I am grappling with these contradictions. I need to be 'sold' on 'asking more than telling.' - **Confused**

A: You may think all questions are 'one type only', when in truth there is a differentiation between a good question and a weak one. Everyday questions are

usually general - they are asked without much thought and raised in our reaction to a situation such as: "Why did you do this? Do you agree with me?" and so on.

So, when we ask reactive-type questions we end up not stretching the person more, let alone offending or hurting them. Either way, they do not move forward.

In the same vein, it is natural for people to ask for solutions rather than finding their own answers. Either they have been brought to think this way or they are used to getting answers from others all the while.

So, how can they grow when we quickly respond with immediate answers for them, or simply give them a fish and not teach them how to fish!

The Bottom Line: When questions are asked properly, they help people grow and move them towards the next level of their lives.

Here are some tips to improve your questioning skills:

The first place to start is to listen deeply; to hear as well as feel the person's words so you are connected to their 'inner world' of feelings and emotions.

Once you are in this zone, you will find that your questions are more focused and powerful.

Secondly, is to improve the quality of your questions. Avoid interrogating questions, which can offend a person, such as:

"Why are you not doing this or that?" Rephrase your questions to find the underlying reasons for their actions, such as: "What is really stopping you from doing it?"

Another technique is to ask questions that broaden a person's perspective such as: "What is one more improvement you can still make?" Finally, ask questions to move the person forward. For instance: "What will you do now?" Using these tips will get you the results you want more, than what you have been getting all these while.

Powerful Questions: What is your current ratio of talking versus listening? How happy are you with the results you are getting in your communication? What results do you want to see more? How can you change the way you ask questions to achieve this?

BUILDING A STRONG CORPORATE CULTURE

Q: I hear the word 'corporate culture' being talked about or discussed on many occasions. Usually, I do not participate in such discussions because I think it is just another 'hype' to make the conversation interesting, or to impress someone with jargon.

But the more this is being talked about, I am beginning to wonder whether it is worth knowing more, or whether it is important for my organisation to do

something about this. - **Skeptical**

A: Let's get it right. Every organisation has a corporate culture whether they want it or not. After all, a culture is simply a set of beliefs, values, and behaviours of people within an organisation. The more important issue is whether the culture is an enabler for further organisational growth, or is it a roadblock.

An enabling culture means the beliefs, values, and behaviours are in sync with one another, and are well-aligned to support the organisational goal. When this happens, the energy flows in the right direction and is vibrant, as people are motivated and highly productive. This is what I call a high performing culture.

The Bottom Line: Many high performing organisations are led by purposeful leaders who not only provide a vision, but a compelling one too. Everyone is focused on a clear vision which almost everyone accepts and can be identified with. High trust exists and people are not controlled; they take charge and dare to take risks to improve their work.

Powerful Questions: How would you describe the 'goings on' by people in your organisation? How conducive is this in helping you achieve your organisational goals? What else is missing? What do you want to do to make it more supportive, and build the organisation that you want?