
What's your most useful question ever?

Posted by Gavin Meikle - 2010/03/24 15:18

I am writing an article about the value of questioning to trainers and thought I would tap into the power of BFLG group. Would you be prepared to share one (or more!) of your favourite, most powerful questions?

One of my favourites is "What has to happen..."

E.g. Objection handling - "What has to happen for you to choose us to work with even though we are more expensive?"

It makes the other person think and is great for teasing out blocks, barriers and next steps. Note that it doesn't say "What do I have to do.." it's much more open than that.

I look forward to compiling a list of your ideas and will be happy to send a copy to all those that contribute.

Regards

Gavin

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Re:What's your most useful question ever?

Posted by jonathanstevens - 2010/03/25 12:06

Gavin

The first thing that sprang to my mind on reading your post was a question suggested by Susan Scott who wrote "Fierce Conversations".

Her book is aimed at people who have a passion for actually affecting the world around them and driving change through, amongst other things, one-to-one interaction with other individuals (managers, trainers, close friends, vicars, you name it...)

The book advocates that such folk should aim more often to engineer conversations which actually achieve something, rather than (as she maintains happens all too often) let our conversations be wishy-washy, small-talky, manoeuvring.

(I've not explained this particularly well. You'd best read the book!!)

Anyway, to the point: one of her suggested questions really struck me. It would be a great way to start of a purposeful conversation where both parties are committed to going out on a limb if necessary to actually make something happen... appraisals perhaps (if the junior is really prepared for it!); negotiations maybe, where there's a real will to find a resolution; sales pitches maybe ...)

The question is: "What is the one topic you most hope I WON'T ask you about right now?"

If the respondent is bold enough to answer this honestly... it's a great way to quickly get stuck into a really meaty topic, where some BIG result, or at least significant progress, might just ensue! It gets 'fierce' issues into the open.

If the person answering is a little less bold, they are still likely to come up with a topic to get ones teeth into, instead of platitudes, areas of broad agreement, non-controversial points, chit-chat etc...

I have to confess, I haven't used this very much since hearing about it 7 or 8 years ago!! But I've always remembered it as a potentially power-packed question!

Jonathan

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Re:What's your most useful question ever?

Posted by B1B*Stella - 2010/03/26 10:56

This is the best question I ever heard for customer service and came from a real life experience. I was at a Nandos (I'll name them because it was such a great question) one night after running a Customer Service

training course with a colleague. We were both tired and wanted a quick meal and early night - and were feeling particularly picky about customer service.

Ordered our food, sat down, waited, waited, waited and realised other people were being served.

I caught the eye of one of the staff who immediately realised something was wrong and came straight over to apologise and explain something had gone wrong on their system just as we'd ordered. He told us they'd produce our food immediately and then told us that we could have a complimentary pudding as a gesture - I imagine this is their normal policy.

Anyway, he saw our faces fall - my colleague was on a strict diet that didn't include puddings and I was too tired to want one. We said it wouldn't do at which point he asked for a moment to make sure our food was coming and he'd come back to us.

He appeared to take that moment to think what would work (I liked the fact he took the time to think) and then came back and said 'What would make you happy?'

What a great question - suddenly we had lots of choices and the option of being happy.

We asked for a reduction in the price and when we came to pay our bill all we paid for was our soft drinks - which was far more than we were expecting.

It was a great question for us as customers but I think it was a great question for the organisation too as it turned us into 'advocates' rather than just customers. What Nandos, and that young man in particular didn't know was we were training up to 1000 people in customer service over the next few months and I told that story regularly - and I'm still impressed and telling it now about their company's great customer service.

I later read that Nandos were keen to empower their staff to deliver great customer service in the way that seemed appropriate - they didn't have a set way of doing things - they respond to customer needs.

So..... What can I do to make you happy?.

Stella

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Re:What's your most useful question ever?

Posted by Sheila Fraser - 2010/05/10 10:54

My most useful question is..

What do you want the participants to do; think or feel as a result of the training.

Works great at getting the client to be clear about what they want

:cheer:

Sheila

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