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Master Tips for Asking Great Questions

Organizations want results. Employees want fulfillment.

Effective communication is collaborative in nature, yet people tend to communicate in a self-interested sort of way. Shifting your attention to others' thoughts and opinions will increase engagement, willingness, and results.

Your two primary goals for asking questions is to uncover information to better understand a situation and then move to a decision of agreement about the action that will be taken.

Let's explore some tips to become more effective.

Tip #1: Ask Only One Question at a Time

You know what it feels like to have a string of questions fired at you, right? Discipline yourself to ask one question, then stop. Be quiet. Listen to the answer. Silence is only passive for you. The other person is actively thinking.

Tip #2: Start with Wide-Open Questions

Near the front end of a conversation, use wide and broad questions like what's going on? How can I help? What happened?

Tip #3: Listen for What Hits Your Ear

When a word or phrase catches your attention and curiosity, use it to launch your next question. Explore.

Go deeper into the conversation. You mentioned Joe. What does he think about this? Who is they? What do you mean by "better?"

Tip #4: Rely on "What Else?"

This is a critical daily question. Keep asking 'What else?' Until the response is 'that's it!'

Tip #5: Use Statements as Questions

A few simple statements will help you uncover information and get the other person thinking. Tell me more about...; Give me some background information on....; Give me an example.

Tip #6: Ask Questions that move to Action

The final phase of most workplace conversations involves deciding on actions or next steps. You can use questions to involve and engage the other person in creating these actions. How would you approach this? What would you do if I weren't here?

The ability to excel at asking questions will set you apart from other. You may be surprised to find that this approach helps you get your needs met more successfully through collaboration and mutual agreement!

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