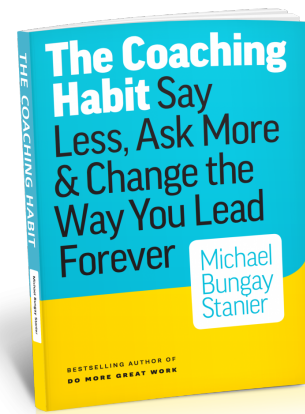


The Coaching Habit Say Less, Ask More & Change the Way You Lead Forever

by Michael Bungay Stanier
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Harlan Howard said every great country song has three chords and the truth. *This* book gives you seven questions and the tools to make them an everyday way to work less hard and have more impact.

The Coaching Habit has received praise from thought leaders such as Dan Pink, David Allen, Brené Brown and Dave Ulrich, as well as senior leaders from over 100 organizations, ranging from Facebook to TD Bank.



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have included the best-seller **Do More Great Work** and the philanthropic **End Malaria**.

A Synopsis of the 7 Essential Questions from *The Coaching Habit*

A good opening line can make all the difference (just ask Jane Austen or Vladimir Nabokov or any guy in a bar). **Question #1** the **Kickstart Question** starts fast and delivers the punch of a great first line: “**What’s on your mind?**” It’s about getting quickly to the thing that matters most, and this opener dissolves tired agendas, sidesteps small talk and defeats the default diagnosis.

Question #1 is also the first half of what author Michael Bungay Stanier calls **The Bookend Questions**. Question #7, the other half, is all about finishing strong – but more on that later.

Question #2, the **AWE Question**, leaves no investigative rock unturned: “**And what else?**” may seem like three innocuous little words, but it’s actually **The Best Coaching Question** in the world. That’s because the first answer is never the only answer and rarely the best answer. There are more answers to be found and possibilities to be generated. And equally as important, it slows down the “advice monster” – that part of every manager that wants to leap in, take over and give advice/be an expert/solve the problem.

Question #3 - “What’s the real challenge here for you?” - is the **Focus Question**. It gets to the heart of the challenge at hand. Busy managers have to grapple with the continuous desire to tackle every problem themselves, and this question slows down the rush to action so that they spend time solving the *real* problem, not just the first problem. The first three questions combine to form a powerful script for any coaching conversation, short or long, performance-review formal or water-cooler casual. The key is to start strong, provide the opportunity for the conversation to deepen, and then bring things into focus.

Questions 4 through 6 provide strong and simple ways to apply the neuroscience of engagement, be lazy while doing great work, and strategically set boundaries.

Question #4, “What do you want?,” is the **Foundation Question**. It gets you thinking about how you can influence the environment that drives engagement. The easy-to-remember **TERA Quotient** (hint: workers who feel safe and autonomous are happier, more productive people who do better and more meaningful work) summarizes and applies what Evan Gordon calls the “fundamental organizing principle of the brain”: the risk-and-reward response.

It might come as a surprise that sometimes managers’ desire to be helpful can actually have a disempowering effect on the person being helped. The **Lazy Question #5 – How can I help?** works in two ways. First, it forces the other person to make a clear request, by first forcing her to get clear on what it is she wants or needs help with (for the important relationship between wants and needs, you’ll need the book!). Second, it is a self-management tool to keep you curious and keep you lazy – it prevents you from spending time doing things you *think* people want you to do.

If you’re someone who feels compelled to say Yes to every request or challenge, then **#6 the Strategic Question** is for you. Overwhelmed and overcommitted, you’ve lost your focus and spread yourself too thinly. This is why you need to ask: **If you’re saying Yes to this, what are you saying No to?** A Yes without an attendant No is an empty promise. This question helps make the promise real.

Your closer, and the second half of **The Coaching Bookends**, is **#7 the Learning Question**. It helps finish the conversation with a sense of accomplishment and meaning on all sides. Asking **“What was most useful for you?”** is an effortless way to reinforce learning and development. By asking people to identify and reflect on the process, this question helps to create the space in which insightful moments of learning can occur. The question also assumes that the conversation was helpful, providing a naturally meaningful conclusion to your robust coaching script.