



Foundational Coaching Questions

for Executives and Professionals

What are your strengths? What are the skills, talents, accomplishments about which you are confident? Be as specific as you can; try using verbs instead of nouns: For example, “Leadership” is less specific than “Leading a new team to identify complementary skills and build collaboration.”

Do you ever wonder whether your strengths also have shadow sides? For example, are you sometimes uneasy that your commitment to bringing out the best in each member of your team stretches your own energy and effectiveness too thin?

What do you want to gain from coaching? Again, be as specific as you can. Areas to consider include:

- Skills and competencies you want to build
- Learning curves you find daunting
- A vague sense of unease that you’re missing something important
- Conflicts or confusions in relation to your boss, direct reports, colleagues, clients
- Exhaustion, overwhelm, a desire for more balance in your life
- Future possibilities – horizons for when this position no longer brings out the best in you

How do you think and talk about your challenges: *Are you putting out fires? Stuck in a rut? Herding cats? Building the plane while flying it? Reinventing the wheel?* Tuning in to your metaphors and images can prioritize your coaching objectives.

What’s your preferred learning style? Do you learn best by reading or studying on your own, by practicing and experimenting, by seeking out teachers, mentors, and role models? Are you stuck in a single learning mode, or do you change it up occasionally?

What have you learned lately that wasn’t specifically needed for your work? What do you do for fun and relaxation?

Do you have a physical practice that balances your mental load? Examples include yoga, t’ai chi, running, knitting, meditating, walking, painting, any activity which you enjoy and value which engages your senses. How often do you actually practice this activity?