

How to ask precision questions

Two Types of Question:

Closed: Require a yes/no answer, or a specific response. Can be useful to slow someone down, or close a conversation, but will 'kill' an open-ended conversation or interview.

Eg: 'Are you OK?'; 'What's your name?'; 'Do you agree?'

Open: Begin with the words: **when, where, how, why, what, and who** - see below...

How to Ask Precision Questions:

1. Specify **Nouns**; Eg: 'People don't return my calls'

By asking: '**Who** doesn't return your calls?'
'**What** don't they get back to you about?'
'**When** does this happen?'

2. Specify **Verbs**; Eg: 'You rejected my proposals'

By asking: '**How** did we reject them?'
'**What** proposals did we reject?'
'**What** did we accept?'

3. Specify **Limitations**; Eg: 'I can't tell you the truth'

By asking: '**What** would happen if you did?'
'**Why** do you say that?'

4. Specify **Generalisations**; Eg: 'No-one listens to me'; 'Everyone knows it won't work'

By asking: 'No-one?', 'Never?', 'Everyone?'

5. Specify **Comparisons**; Eg: 'This is the worst, biggest, best, etc'

By asking: 'Compared to **what**?'

6. Specify **Processes**; Eg: 'You have to improve communications'

By asking: '**How** would you suggest we do it?'
'**Who** needs to improve communication?'
'**Where** do we need to improve?'

We hope you have found this material useful. If you have any questions on how to use it, we'd be happy to talk you through it.

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