



Skill Builder – Week 7 - 9

Energizing Your Well Formed Outcome

One of the main goals of the Kick-Ass, Confident Coach mentoring program, is to make the Meta-Coach training simpler. Albert Einstein said: “Make things as simple as possible, but not simpler than that.” There is a fine line between over-simplifying and making things easier to grasp and integrate.

In this skill builder, I will give an overview of the main dance you do as a Meta-Coach. First, please read Michael Hall’s article on “Making Your Questions Work”.

From: L. Michael Hall
2013 Meta-Coach Reflections – #50
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MAKING YOUR QUESTIONS WORK

Is there’s a secret for making your questions really, really *work*? I mean, a process by which the questions you ask as a coach can activate the best responses in your client, mobilize his or her resources, facilitate discoveries of self-awareness and Aha! insights, and generate the kind of



changes and transformations that you want for your clients? When a question really *works*, it challenges, it confronts, it activates, it releases blocks, it captures the attention, it inspires, etc. It does all kinds of wonderful things.

One of my privileges for over a decade now has been to interview dozens and dozens of expert coaches and entrepreneurs, 31 Expert Coaches and 20 or so Entrepreneurs, and to observe them in action using questions very powerfully. As I have learned so much from them about questioning, it has revolutionized my own questioning skills.

Now the first and foremost questions for a Meta-Coach are the 18 Well-Formed Outcome questions. I began with the five that were the original NLP pattern, and over the years added additional questions until Bob and I had the 10 WFO questions which we put in *User's Manual of the Brain*. Those were the 10 that I taught when I used to teach NLP Practitioner. Then in the years of modeling expert coaches, I have added the additional 8. To this day I am still excited about these formatting and framing questions for you as a Meta-Coach because they enable you to facilitate the Clarity Conversation and the Decision Conversation and to create a high quality *contract* for your coaching.

And now there's more. *How do you use the WFO questions so powerfully?* I've been asked that over and over by Team Leaders and the Meta-Coach Trainers and recently I began

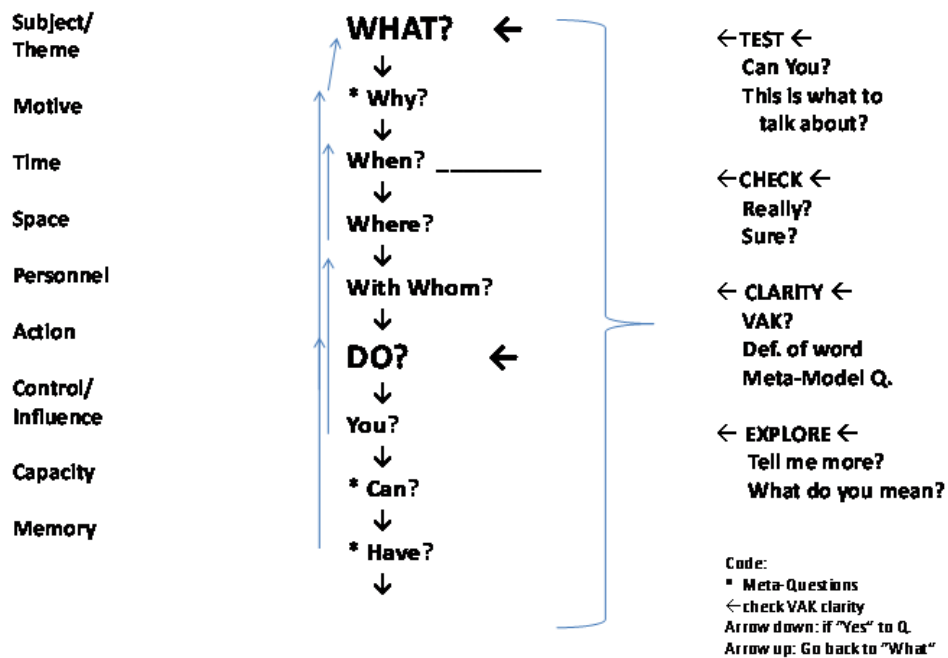


modeling that out and last week in Guangzhou China I introduced the following diagram (it is in two parts due to its size). This diagram is a *Decision Tree* or a *Flow Chart* for asking the questions and for knowing where to go after you ask the question. To ask the questions one after the other *and to not notice the response you get* is to use the questions in the most superficial and ineffective way. You will not get much if you do that.

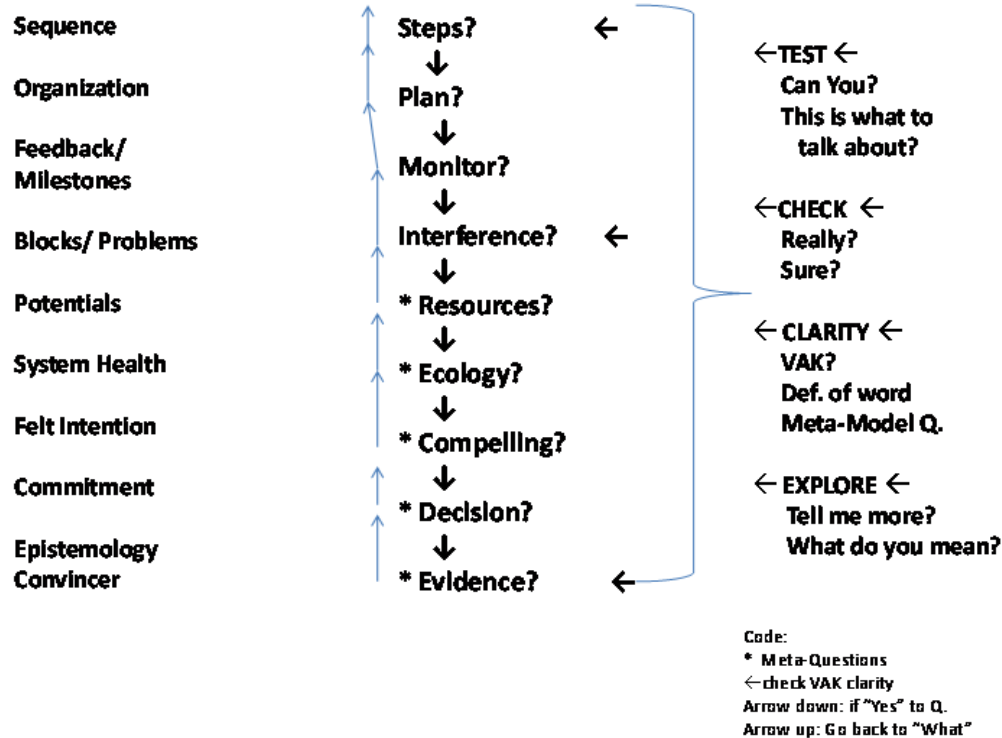
How do you use these questions powerfully? To create a strong personal impact with them— ask the question, notice if the person answers your question, if not notice what question the person does answer (!), acknowledge that, and then repeat the question. To then really get some mileage out of the questions, *refine the questions*. And how do you do that? Refine each WFO question with the *testing, checking, clarity, and exploration questions*. This is illustrated in the diagram as the penetrating arrows (B). Use these questions to *refine* the WFO questions. This creates clarity, focus, and the relevant details.

If you move too fast— racing down the WFO list, you won't know what the hell you're talking about! So *refine* the answer by checking questions, testing questions, clarity checks (for how the person is using the terms), and exploration. Do this to *ground* the conversation. Every “yes” answer that you get, move down to the next WFO question. Every “no” move up to the “What?” question again and go from there.

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In this way, the WFO questions can be used as a system and so operates systemically to guide your questioning. Using the four sets of refining questions enables you to ground and detail and for a global person, this will help you “chunk down” (to use the NLP jargon) to sufficient specifics so that both you and your client know what you are talking about. If you notice the penetrating arrows (β), these are the key places where you need to get a *sensory-based description* (the VAK to use more NLP jargon). This answers the question, *Where* does the VAK occur in this set of questions? Answer: It occurs several places!

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When you put this together, you will now have the ability to truly *work over* the answers of your client so that they create clarity — insight, awareness— and then decision. How do you learn this? Practice! And then some more practice. Keep checking with your client to see how he or she is experiencing the exploration. Get to a MCF chapter to practice this. Create a MCF chapter and get people there so you can practice or observe this. Then you too will become a powerful questioner!

What is the power in this? It is your power to get your client to become clear and concise on what he or she wants. It is to enable and empower your client to think critically about the goal presented. It is to interrogate their reality— that's what you are doing with the clarity, testing, and checking questions. And altogether this then becomes the conversation that is like none-other. It is focused, it is challenging, and it is clarifying. Welcome to Meta-Coaching!

We energize the Well-Formed Outcome by looping back to the WHAT until we have the WHAT that is the leverage point for change. And we do so through asking Testing, Checking, Clarity, Exploration and Meta-Questions. However, that's not all. There's something else that we do, which is also covered in the benchmarking form. I have added another column to the overview, which shows this extra step.

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There are the well-formed outcome questions, and then you have the 5 extra questions that help you loop back to the What question until you have the what behind that what. The extra step is that of giving feedback. The definition of Meta-Coaching is “the art of facilitating the mobilization of inner and outer resources to ***an agreed upon outcome.***” Your client decides what outcome is needed, and so while you are asking the well-formed outcome questions as well as the 5 extra questions, these only help your client gain awareness if you use the information from those questions and feed them back.

Well Formed Outcome

1. What
2. VAK
3. Why?
4. When
5. Where
6. With Whom
7. Do What?

Explore and Refine For Leverage Point

Testing
Exploration
Clarity
Meta-Questions
Checking

Giving Feedback (Creating Awareness)

Acknowledgement
Summarize
Identify Patterns
Detect Frames
Confront

You can do this in the form of acknowledgements, making a summary statement (tentative, of course!), identifying patterns, detecting frames and making confrontations. As you do any of these, and your client gains awareness, you can then go back to a testing question (Is that what we need to talk about?) and loop back to the initial What question.



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- Listen to the training call on Making Your Questions Work:
<http://vimeo.com/83892684>
- Practice energizing your WFO questions by dancing with the 5 questions for exploration and refining as well as the skills for giving feedback. Tip: Don't overwhelm yourself! Pick 1 or 2 skills from the second and third column and simply practice with those first.
- Self reflection:
 - What skills are you comfortable with? What skills do you need to focus on to improve your skills of getting the WFO? Anything getting in your way?
 - What awareness and insights did you get from practicing with energizing the WFO?