

# What *now*?

## Talking things through.

A hard conversation handled well builds trust. These prompts help you work through a difficult moment, calmly and fairly, leaving room for self-awareness, empathy and shared responsibility.

*Framed for leadership coaching, these questions work just as well in a conversation with a student. The skill is the same: ask, listen, and let the other person do the thinking.*

### Understand what happened

- Can you walk me through what happened?
- What do you remember thinking or noticing at the time?
- What else stands out when you look back?

### Get the detail

- What exactly did they say or do?
- When did things start to change?
- What else happened that might matter?

### Explore impact and emotion

- How did that make you feel?
- Who else was affected?
- What else might have been going on, for you or for them?

### Move to reflection

- What would you do differently next time?
- What could you learn from this?
- What else might help you respond differently in future?

### Encourage empathy

- What do you think it felt like for them?
- How might they have seen the situation?
- What else could explain how they reacted?

### Promote accountability

- What part of this can you take responsibility for?
- How might your actions have contributed?
- What else could you do to make things right?

### Reinforce identity and values

- What kind of person do you want to be here?
- How do you want others to see you?
- What else matters to you about how this is resolved?

### Support next steps

- What do you need to do next?
- Who can help you follow through?
- What else will help you make a positive change?

### Learn from experience

- What have you learned about yourself?
- How could this change the way you handle things next time?
- What else will you take away from this?

# What *next*?

## Thinking things through.

The best coaching question puts the thinking back with the person doing the work. They help to clarify a goal, see what is getting in the way, and choose their own next step. Listen more than you speak, and let them set the direction; people commit to the plans they reach themselves.

### Clarify goals

- What do you want to be doing better?
- What's the main thing you're aiming for right now?
- What else would you like to improve?

### Diagnose obstacles

- What's getting in the way right now?
- When do you find this hardest?
- What else makes this difficult?

### Visualise success

- What would it look like if you'd cracked this?
- How will you know when you've got there?
- What else would show progress?

### Encourage next steps

- What small step could you take next?
- What's one thing that would help right now?
- What else could you try?

### Prompt alternatives

- Is there another way to approach this?
- What's another strategy that might work?
- What else could help?

### Reinforce values

- Why does this matter to you?
- What's your reason for wanting to improve here?
- What else motivates you?

### Support reflection

- What have you learned about how you work best?
- What surprised you?
- What else have you noticed?

### Build resilience

- What have you done before that helped in a similar situation?
- When have you bounced back from something like this?
- What else has worked for you?