

# *From the Heart...*

*...Lifeskills for Today's Family*  
By Sharon L. Benedict MS



## **Questions to ask your Friend?, part 3**

(published in Boerne Star, Friday, Feb 6, 2015)

Here we go with the next set up powerful coaching questions used in the life coaching arena. These questions not only open up opportunities yet to be discovered. Each question has a purpose.

Previously, there are questions that help anticipate the “what ifs.” Other questions may draw out the person to assess a situation. Questions that help clarify can be especially powerful. Those questions prepare you to utilize questions that evaluate, explore, offer examples, elaborate, and set the stage for perspective on the fun in the process.

Again, it is always important to be aware of your tone and body language when asking questions. What mood are you and your friend in? How do we actually come across? Timing can make a break a friendship at times. Want to still give it another try?

If so, here are the next set of powerful questions to consider focused on a specific purpose as follows (modified from *Co-Active Coaching* by Laura Whitworth). Think about and choose one thing you and your friend want to address with any of these questions.

### **For Instance**

- If you could do it over again, what would you do differently?

- If it were you, what would you have done?
- How else could a person handle this?
- If you could do anything you wanted, what would you do?
- For instance?

### **History**

- What caused it?
- What led up to . . . ?
- What have you tried so far?
- Can you remember how it happened?
- What do you make of it all?

### **Implementation**

- What is the action plan?
- What will you have to do to get the job done?
- What support do you need to accomplish . . . ?
- What will you do?
- When will you do it?

### **Integration**

- What will you take away from this?
- How do you explain this to yourself?
- What was the lesson?
- How can you lock in the learning?
- How would you pull all this together?

These next set of questions above move you and your friend to a deeper level of communication. These questions widen the possibilities, offer important background information to round out those possibilities, formulate ways to take action, and begin to see a more cohesive path or solution.

Remember, you are both entering into the “fire of conversation,” as William Isaac so eloquently defines in his classic book *Dialogue, the art of thinking together*. Through the “architecture of the invisible” you will see your motives for what you believe and how you communicate it. This is your beginning toward mastering crucial conversations that will hopefully allow space for the energy, possibilities, and safety to emerge.

These questions so far set the stage for the next set of powerful questions coming your way for learning, seeing greater options and outcomes, and hopefully all in perspective with time well spent. Let the adventure continue...

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*Sharon L. Benedict, is a speaker, author, and weaver, and loving it! She is available for speaking engagements, freelance writing, and will even weave you a one-of-kind creation, just for you. Sharon also welcomes your questions and comments and can be contacted at [seekreachachieve@gvtc.com](mailto:seekreachachieve@gvtc.com). Visit her website at [www.celebratingyourjourney.com](http://www.celebratingyourjourney.com).*

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## **Questions to ask your Friend?, part 4**

(published in Boerne Star, Friday, Feb 13, 2015)

In part 1 to 3, there were questions that help anticipate the “what ifs.” Other questions may draw out the person to assess a situation. Questions that help clarify can be especially powerful. Those questions prepare you to utilize questions that evaluate, explore, offer examples, elaborate, and set the stage for perspective on the fun in the process.

Other powerful questions (modified from *Co-Active Coaching* by Laura Whitworth) invite you to give a “for instance”, build history, encourage you to implement some action, and integrate what you have come away with so far.

With the next set, select questions to help continue to focus on that one thing you and your friend want to address. Today, these questions expand your learning, help you see greater options that will lead you to desired outcomes, and hopefully continue to round out perspective.

### **Learning**

If your life depended on taking action, what would you do?

If you had free choice in the matter, what would you do?

If the same thing came up again, what would you do?

If we could wipe the slate clean, what would you do?

If you had it to do over again, what would you do?

### **Options**

What are the possibilities?

If you had your choice, what would you do?

What are possible solutions?

What if you do and what if you don't?

What options can you create?

### **Outcomes**

What do you want?

What is your desired outcome?

If you got it, what would you have?

How will you know you have reached it?

What would it look like?

### **Perspective**

When you are ninety-five years old. What will you want to say about your life?

What would you think about this five years from now?

How does this relate to our life purpose?

In the bigger scheme of things how important is this?

So what?

With perspective questions, you just might come to that moment in the “fire of conversation,” where your friend discovers if they are on the path they thought they were on. Your friend may come to “know that he/she knows” the right path for

themselves. Or they may make a major mind shift in their life once they connect their past, present, and future with these questions that open the big picture in perspective.

As William Isaac so eloquently defines in his classic book *Dialogue, the art of thinking together*, through the “architecture of the invisible” you will see your motives for what you believe, how you communicate and live it.

You and your friend will then be ready for the next set of questions in part 5 . . . planning, predictions, and resources. In mastering crucial conversations may your relationship become even stronger than ever before, as you allow space for the energy, possibilities, and safety to continue. See you next time.

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## **Questions to ask your Friend?, part 5**

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As you continue the adventure with your friend into powerful questions that help anticipate the “what ifs,” let’s do a review. Questions offered in previous articles may draw out the person to assess a situation. Questions that help clarify can be especially powerful. Those questions prepare you to utilize questions that evaluate, explore, offer examples, elaborate, and set the stage for perspective on the fun in the process.

Other powerful questions (modified from *Co-Active Coaching* by Laura Whitworth) were covered in previous articles inviting you to give a “for instance”, build history, encourage you to implement some action, and integrate what you have come away with so far. You then moved on to expanding your learning, options available, desired outcomes discussed, all wrapped up with an overarching perspective of the big picture.

You and your friend are now ready for focused questions on planning, predictions, and resources.

### **Planning**

What do you plan to do about it?

What is your game plan?

What kind of plan do you need to create?

How do you suppose you could improve the situation?

Now what?

### **Predictions**

How do you suppose it will all work out?

What will that get you?

Where will this lead?

What are the chances of success?

What is your prediction?

### **Resources**

What resources do you need to help you decide?

What do you know about it now?

How do you suppose you can find out more about it?

What kind of picture do you have right now?

What resources are available to you?

Here is where you both get down to the real life daily strategies for having those dreams and goals come true. The only way to get there is through planning, doing a little predicting of outcomes and where it will all lead, and seeking viable resources to fill in the blanks. Your friend may need to expand the learning and application curves along the way.

In the final article next week on “Questions to ask your friend” you will round out questions on what happened since your last session together, touch on any lingering obstacles stopping your friend, summarize your time together, and discuss any actionable commitment and timeline your friend is ready for. Remember, your role is



being his/her friend and an active listener without any personal agendas. Your friend's responses say, "This is my life and where I want to be." Enjoy the journey together.

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## **Questions to ask your Friend?, part 6**

(published in Boerne Star, Friday, Feb 27, 2015)

Now that we have come to the end of February, with this article, we have also come to the end of *Questions to ask your Friend*. In summary, you have asked your friend many powerful questions that helped anticipate the “what ifs,” and draw out your friend to assess a situation. Then you offered questions that helped clarify and prepare you to utilize questions that evaluate, explore, offer examples, elaborate, and set the stage for perspective on the fun in the process.

Other powerful questions (modified from *Co-Active Coaching* by Laura Whitworth) were also covered inviting you to give a “for instance”, build history, encourage you to implement some action, and integrate what you have come away with so far. You then moved on to expanding your learning, options available, desired outcomes, all wrapped up with an overarching perspective of the big picture.

You and your friend then embarked on where you both got down to the real life daily strategies for having those dreams and goals come true. The only way to get there was through planning, doing a little predicting of outcomes and where it will all lead, and seeking viable resources to fill in the blanks.

In this final article you will round out questions on what happened since your last session together, touch on any lingering obstacles stopping your friend, summarize your

time together, and discuss any actionable commitment and timeline your friend is ready for. Here are the questions:

### **Starting the Session**

What's occurred since we last spoke?

What would you like to talk about?

What's new/the latest/the update?

How was your week?

How's life?

### **Substance**

What seems to be the trouble?

What seems to be the main obstacle?

What is stopping you?

What concerns you the most about . . . ?

What do you want?

### **Summary**

What is your conclusion?

How is this working?

How would you describe this?

What do you think this all amounts to?

How would you summarize the effort so far?

### **Taking Action**

What action will you take? And after that?

What will you do? When?

Is this a time for action? What action?

Where do you go from here? When will you do that?

What are your next steps? By when?

Again, your role is being his/her friend and an active listener without any personal agendas. Yet, being a friend you can certainly at this point offer to help in some way if he/she wants it.

In about a week or two, call your friend and ask how he/she is doing. Ask what impact the “fire of conversation” you both journeyed through had on their life. As William Isaac so eloquently defined in his classic book *Dialogue, the art of thinking together*, through the “architecture of the invisible” you will see your motives for what you believe and how you communicate it.

Throughout the past two months , my hope is you and your friend have experienced mastering crucial conversations that forever strengthened your friendship and your lives. May you both treasure the space you created together for the energy, possibilities, and safety to emerge in the years ahead.

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