

SURPRISE!

Coaching leaders is DIFFERENT than coaching teams



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Introduction

Bob Galen



- Independent Agile Coach (CEC) at [RGCG, LLC](#)
- Director, Agile Practices at 
- Somewhere 'north' of 30 years overall experience ☺
- Wide variety of technical stacks and business domains
- Developer first, then Project Management / Leadership, then Testing
- Senior/Executive software development leadership for 20+ years
- Practicing formal agility since 2000
- XP, Lean, Scrum, and Kanban experience
- From Cary, North Carolina



Bias Disclaimer:
Agile is THE BEST Methodology
for Software Development...
However, NOT a Silver Bullet!



Introduction

Coach: A Broad Definition

- When I say coach, I'm implying, you could be in one of these roles:
 - ❑ ScrumMaster
 - ❑ Formal Coach
 - ❑ Manager / Team Leader
 - ❑ Senior Leader
 - ❑ CxO
 - ❑ Project Manager

- Virtually anyone who is guiding an Agile Transformation...

Introduction

Agenda



- 10 minutes:
 - gather in pairs and write down Leadership coaching anti-patterns.
What NOT to do...Collect & Review
- 10 minutes:
 - gather in pairs and write down Leadership coaching patterns.
Things that HAVE WORKED for you...Collect & Review
- 25 minutes:
 - I'll share some patterns that have worked for me.
- 15 x 2 minutes:
 - Leadership coaching DOJO's
- 15 minutes:
 - Debrief - Close

Coaching Patterns

Vet your clients

- Assess

- ❑ Organizational readiness
- ❑ Leadership readiness
- ❑ Team readiness



- Coaching style
- Experience & domain connection
- Are they “serious”?
- “It’s just lunch...”

Meet them where they are

- Try not to coach too “far away” from their current context
- Empathy for the current landscape
 - Agile transformation, culture, skills, leadership dynamics, business dynamics
- Give them the “Truth” they can “Handle”



No Baggage!



- Leave behind your own baggage
 - ❑ The more travelled, the harder it is
 - ❑ It will influence your behavior and body language
- No marginalization of management or leadership
- Stop referencing Dilbert
 - ❑ Stop stereotyping
 - ❑ All "managers" are not the same
 - ❑ Be patient!

Experience counts



- And not your coaching experience. It's YOUR leadership resume that counts
 - ❑ Acknowledge it, leverage it, share it
 - ❑ Horse whisperer
 - ❑ Storyteller
- Don't fake it; as in you're the CEO of a 5-person agile coaching firm
- If you don't have it, get a “partner” to help

Be crisp with your language

- Velocity, Throughput
- Failure
- Agile
- Self-directed
- Servant Leader.
- Trust, buy Verify
- That's not "agile"
- Testing
- Developer vs. Tester vs Business Analyst
- SAFe, DAD, Less, etc.
- Scrum, XP, Kanban, etc.



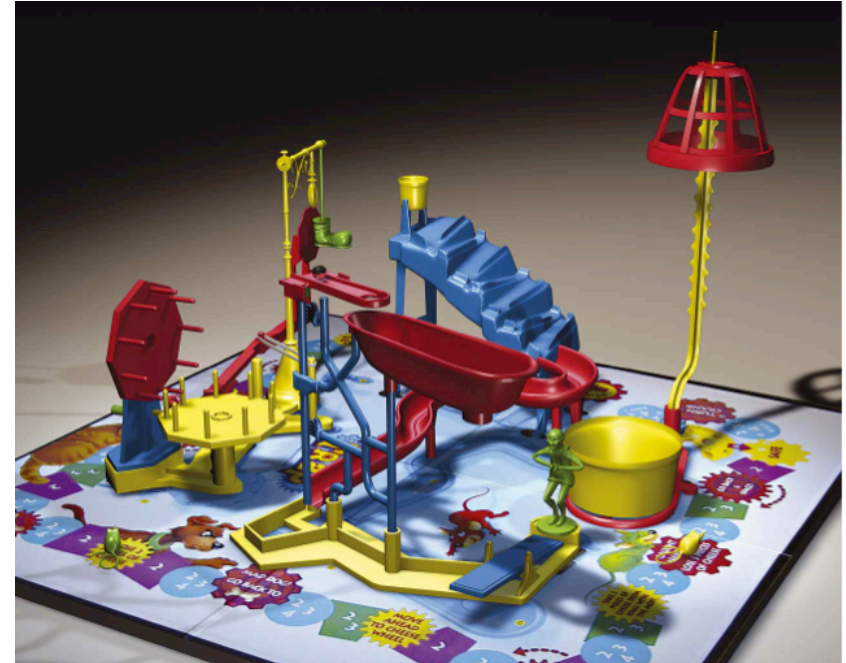
- Results
- Transparency
- Engagement
- Partnership
- Pivot
- Autonomy
- Team health
- Trust
- Predictability
- Quality
- Team member
- Continuous improvement

Don't play games

- Be careful with the number of:

- ❑ Games
- ❑ Simulations
- ❑ Workshops
- ❑ Activities

you try with executives.



- Instead, honor their time and share:

- ❑ Case studies
- ❑ Short video's
- ❑ Expert testimony

With them...

Walk your talk

- Agile principles
 - Be transparent
 - Be courageous
 - Take risks
 - Tell truth
 - Serve your client
- Full-time (embedded) vs. part-time coaching
 - Don't follow the \$\$\$



Coach!?!

- Try not to over-coach
 - Coaching stance
 - 5-why's
 - Powerful questions
- Listen deeply
- Emotional Intelligence
- Empathy
- Partner more; establish skin in the game



Have Models...

For example:

- Goleman – EQ
- Kotter – 8-steps of Change
- Crucial Conversations
- Strengths Finders
- Lencioni – 5 Dysfunctions of a Team
- Pink – Drive
- Joiner – Leadership Agility
- Change J-curve
- Collins – Good to Great
- Cain – Quiet (introverts)
- 9 Coaching Roles, Coaching Stance
- Shu-Ha-Ri or Dreyfus (skill acquisition & maturity)



I don't have the “energy” for it...



<http://rgalen.com/agile-training-news/2016/2/20/is-it-worth-the-energy>

Final coaching points...

Agile Coaching

Context & Tactics

■ Coaching contexts

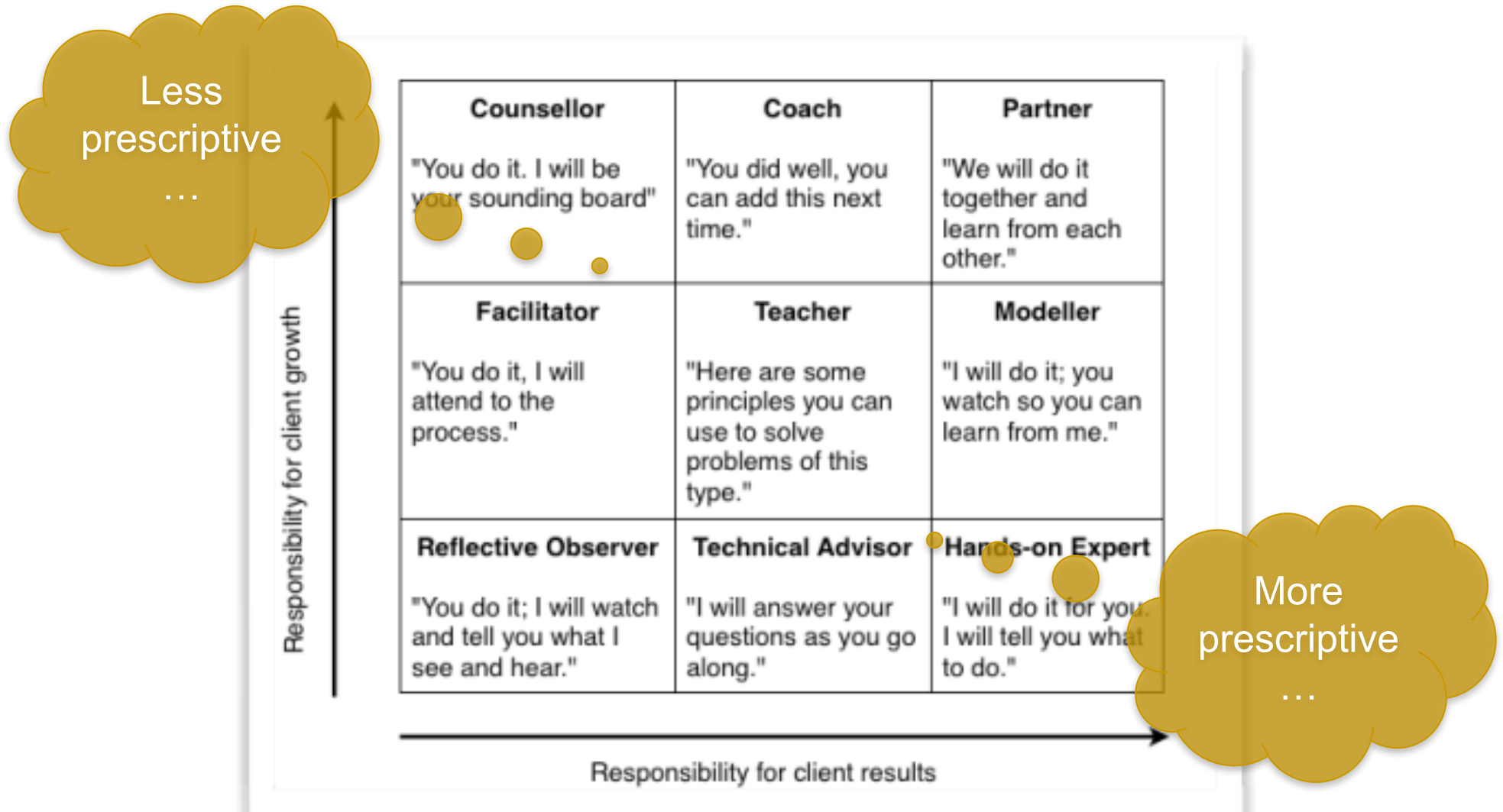
- ❑ What conversations have you had before?
- ❑ Maturity – Shu-Ha-Ri?
- ❑ Culture and norms
- ❑ Role & Responsibilities
- ❑ Business implications
- ❑ Safety implications
- ❑ Risk implications
- ❑ Your skill & comfort zone
- ❑ Self awareness
- ❑ Coaching relationship

■ Coaching tactics

- ❑ Mentor
 - ❑ Leadership Coaching Circles
 - ❑ Storytelling
 - ❑ Sounding Board
 - ❑ Teacher
- Push vs. Pull;
- ❑ Be ready to be asked
 - ❑ Be approachable
 - ❑ Provide value

9 Coaching Roles

Derby & Gray, (Douglas Champion, Davie Kiel, and Jean McLendon)



Shu Ha Ri

Aikido – first learn, then detach, finally transcend



■ Shu

- ❑ Novice or beginner; narrowly following given practices

■ Ha

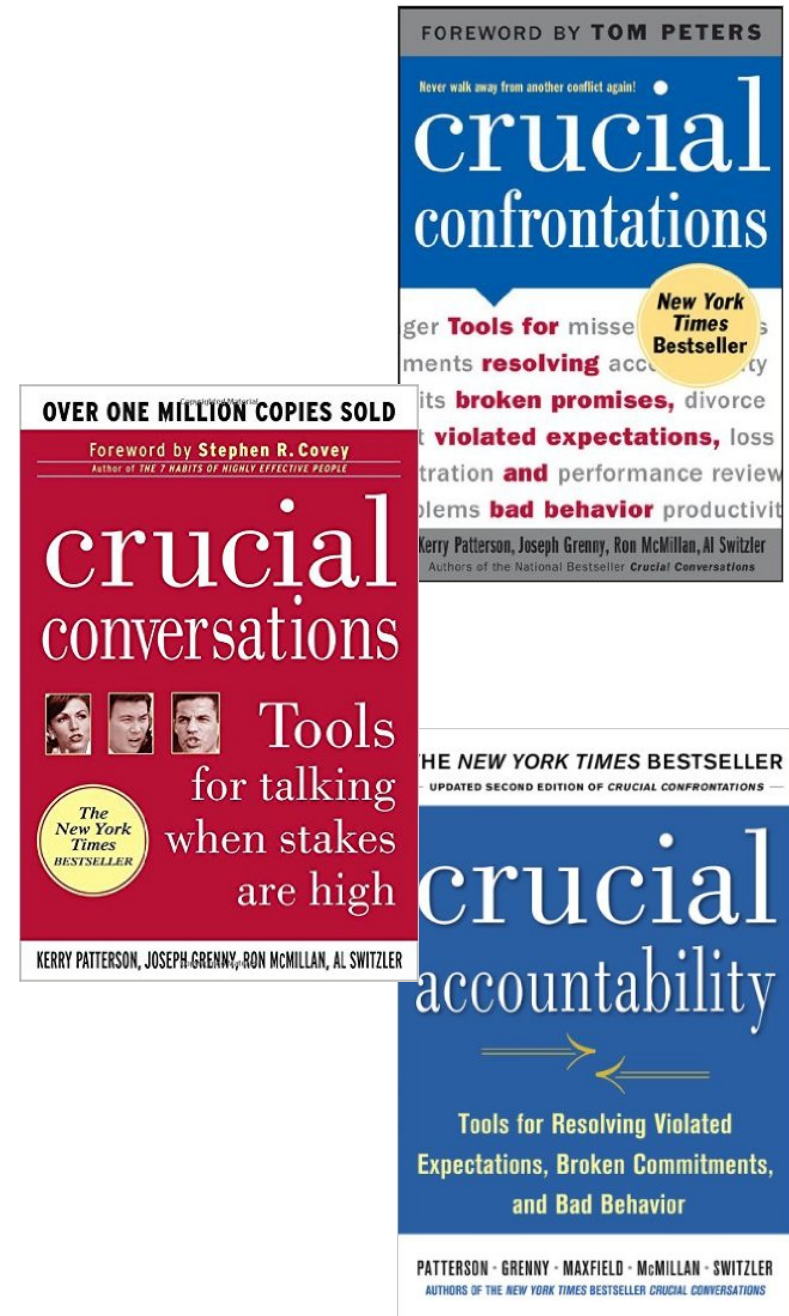
- ❑ Journeyman; following, but extending, perfecting, occasionally breaking the rules
- ❑ Mentoring in specific strength areas

■ Ri

- ❑ Expert; perfecting to creating your own practices
- ❑ Coaching; mentoring; 'Sticky' practices

Crucial Conversations

- In agile contexts, leadership feedback is essential
 - Sprint & Release reviews
 - 1:1 meetings
 - Real-time opportunities
- I have a view that pareto rules here in that only 20% of leaders are willing to give 80% of the feedback
- And it needs to be honest...



The “One Thing”

When it comes to risky, controversial, and emotional conversations, skilled people find a way to get all relevant information out into the open.

That's it. At the core of every successful conversation lies the free flow of relevant information. People openly and honestly express their opinions, share their feelings, and articulate their theories.

They willingly and capably share their views, even when their ideas are controversial or unpopular.

-- Crucial Conversations: Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, Switzler

Workshop Dynamics



- You've been given a hand-out with ~20 coaching scenarios
- Break into groups of 3 (Triads – Coaching Dojo)
 - Coachee, Coach, Observer
- Pick 2 coaching scenarios OR create your own
- Adjust coachee roles as necessary
- Explore coaching strategy and / or conversation(s)
- Capture notes on the card
- Role play, Have FUN with it!



*We don't meet people
by accident. People are
put in our path for
various reasons, but it
all comes down to
helping each other
learn and grow.*

Leeza Donatella

Workshop Dynamics



- Let's debrief some of the scenarios...care to share?
- Pick another 2...rinse & repeat

- At the end...
 - *What are some useful strategies you heard?*
 - *Any useful patterns you observed?*
 - *How is “coaching up” different?*

Wrap-up



*I'll collect the results and share with
You via Twitter and my website
mailing list*

Thank you!

Contact Info

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**Experience-driven agile
focused training, coaching
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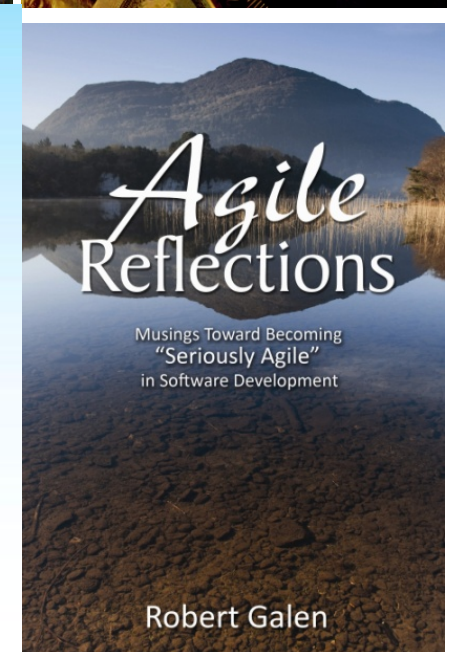
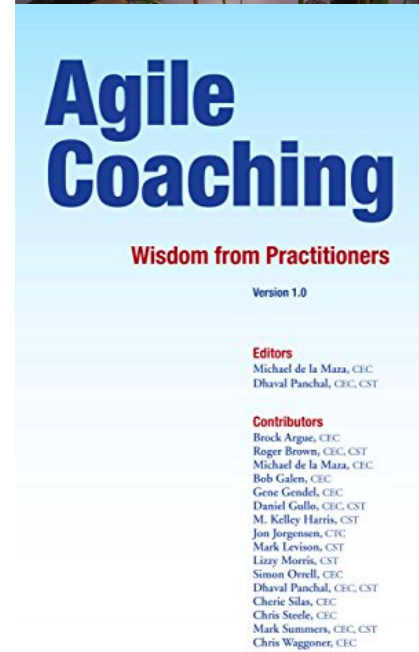
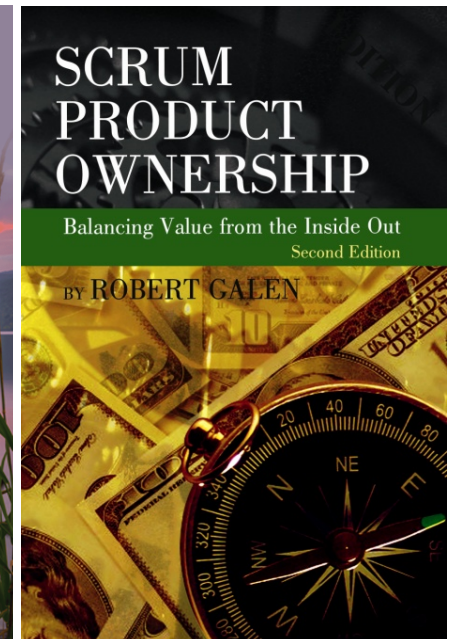
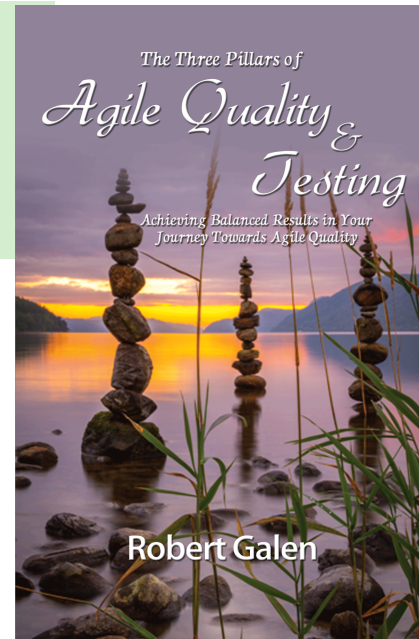
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Podcast on all things 'agile' -
<http://www.meta-cast.com/>



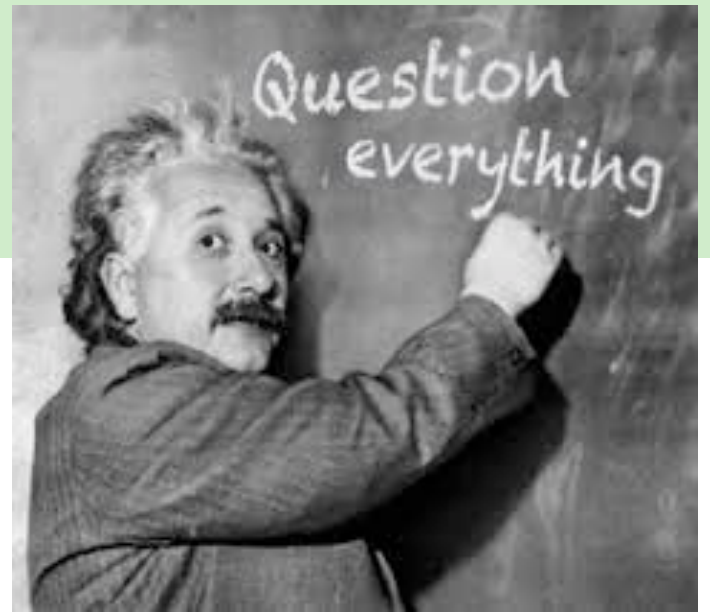
Backup

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- HBR article: <https://hbr.org/2016/03/two-thirds-of-managers-are-uncomfortable-communicating-with-employees>
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Powerful Questions

Lyssa Adkins and Co-Active Coaching



■ They are often:

- ❑ Truly open-ended
- ❑ Not asked with a “correct” answer in mind
- ❑ Invite introspection
- ❑ Reveal additional solutions
- ❑ Almost always lead to greater creativity and insight
- ❑ Send people into a realm of discovery

■ The are not:

- ❑ Leading
- ❑ Judgmental
- ❑ Imply solutions
- ❑ Closed
- ❑ Tricks

Powerful Questions

- What else?
- What is important about that?
- What would a simpler way look like?
- What would an experiment look like?
- What's already working that you can build on?
- How does it look to you?
- What is stopping you?
- In the bigger scheme of things, how important is this?
- What is the lesson from that?
- When is it time for action?
- What part is not yet clear?
- Whose opinion matters on this topic?
- What have you tried so far?
- What is stopping you?
- What's the worst part for you?
- What is your prediction?
- If you got it, what would you have?
- In the beginning, how did you want it to be?
- What other angles can you think of?
- How do you really want it to be?
- What's the worst/best that could happen?
- Which part is confusing, surprising, annoying, etc.?
- What is at risk?
- What might "help" look like?