IN THE GAP
5517 NW 23rd Street · Oklahoma City, OK 73127
405.748.0712 · www.InTheGap.org

ASKING LEADERS GOOD QUESTIONS

The key in asking great questions is making sure they are open-ended (not a yes, or no). This allows the leader you are talking with to open up and share on a deeper level. As you're listening, make sure you're looking them in the eye, taking a couple notes when applicable, such as when they recommend a book or podcast or have a really powerful one-liner (use a note book… not your phone). Don't take too many notes as that can be distracting… remember, you're having a conversation, not sitting in a lecture.

The key, ACT on what you learn from them (read the book, listen to the podcast, try what they suggested, etc.). This shows that you're someone who is serious, takes initiative, and is hungry to learn and grow. Successful leaders aren't interested in a fan club, they're working on making a difference in the world. If you are respectful, are attentive, and take initiative on what they recommend, you will show them that you're someone who they can invest their time in and that their investment is worth it.

Here are some questions to ask leaders that I've collected over the years. Remember, don't hit them with a ton of questions, but pick out and use maybe 5 or 6 that are of most interest to you. If asking questions is a challenge for you, practice on someone before going to the meeting ☺

Questions to Ask Leaders

1. WHAT IS THE GREATEST LESSON YOU'VE EVER LEARNED?
2. WHAT ARE YOU LEARNING RIGHT NOW?
3. HOW HAS FAILURE SHAPED YOUR LIFE?
4. WHO DO YOU KNOW THAT I SHOULD KNOW?
5. WHAT HAVE YOU READ THAT I SHOULD READ?
6. WHAT HAVE YOU DONE THAT I SHOULD DO?
7. HOW CAN I ADD VALUE TO YOU?

Questions by Dr. Jeff Myers

- "What made the difference for you?"
- "I would like to hear your story about how you got into your vocation field."
- "What are the most important lessons you have learned along the way?"
- "If you had it to do over again, what would you do differently?"
- "Who are the key leaders in that field that I should be paying attention to?"
- "What are the five books you have found most helpful in this field?"
- "Are there any magazines or publications I need to be reading on a regular basis?"

- “What would you say are the essential principles for success in this field?”
- “Time and money aside, what would you rather be doing?”
- “What are your goals at the present time?”
- “How do you manage your time successfully?”
- “Have you ever coached anyone else to be successful in this field?”
- “What are some ways I can learn more about this field?”
- “What are some of the obstacles along the way that I’ll need to be aware of?”
- “What questions have I not asked that I should be asking?”

20 Questions to Ask Every Leader by Michael Hyatt

1. Can you name a person who has had a tremendous impact on you as a leader? Maybe someone who has been a mentor to you? Why and how did this person impact your life?
2. What are the most important decisions you make as a leader of your organization?
3. As an organization gets larger there can be a tendency for the “institution” to dampen the “inspiration.” How do you keep this from happening?
4. How do you encourage creative thinking within your organization?
5. Where do the great ideas come from in your organization?
6. Which is most important to your organization—mission, core values or vision?
7. How do you or other leaders in your organization communicate the “core values”?
8. How do you encourage others in your organization to communicate the “core values”?
9. Do you set aside specific times to cast vision to your employees and other leaders?
10. How do you ensure your organization and its activities are aligned with your “core values”?
11. How do you help a new employee understand the culture of your organization?
12. When faced with two equally-qualified candidates, how do you determine whom to hire?
13. What is one characteristic that you believe every leader should possess?
14. What is the biggest challenge facing leaders today?
15. What is one mistake you witness leaders making more frequently than others?
16. What is the one behavior or trait that you have seen derail more leaders’ careers?
17. Can you explain the impact, if any, that social networking and Web 2.0 has made on your organization or you personally?
18. What are a few resources you would recommend to someone looking to gain insight into becoming a better leader?
19. What advice would you give someone going into a leadership position for the first time?
20. What are you doing to ensure you continue to grow and develop as a leader?