

Strategic Questions

Asking great questions changes your conversations, your focus, your impact, and your success.

Questions have many purposes and different impacts. They:

1. Gather information and details.
2. Create connection and build relationships.
3. Foster strategic conversations.
4. Establish purpose, the Why.
5. Develop critical thinking and talent.

Most questions have more than one purpose, but it's useful to reflect on and be intentional about what you're trying to achieve. Asking any of these questions (to yourself and to others) develops critical thinking and development.

Melissa Creede's 10 Favourite Questions

Melissa's Ten Favourite Questions:

1 What would success look like? (at the end of this meeting, project, conversation, 1-2 years from now)?

(strategic focus, critical thinking)

- Encourages clarity around desired outcomes and results
- Gets us out of the weeds and into the big picture and the future
- starts with the end and works back

2 How does this align with our North Star? How does this align with our vision, goals, strategy?

(strategic focus, purpose, critical thinking)

- Keeps the conversation focused on strategic alignment
- Encourages ideas and actions are connected to the organization's strategic objectives

3 What's the impact we want to have (in this meeting, this project, this memo, this initiative)?

(strategic focus, purpose, critical thinking)

- Stay focused on the right outcome in design and execution
- Starts with the end and work back

4 What's important about that? A year from now, what will be important?

(strategic focus, purpose, critical thinking)

- Understand why this is important to the team, project, other person
- Narrows down the most important things to focus on
- Establishes a shared purpose

5 What else? Can you say more about that?

(relationships, critical thinking)

- Provides more information before jumping to conclusions or action
- Shows interest and support when you aren't sure yet what to say
- Allows you to focus on listening more than solving

6 Who do we serve and what do they care about? (Our clients? Someone 2 levels up from me)?

(relationships, purpose, influence, motivation)

- Helps us see the bigger picture and others' priorities.
- Refocuses our purpose and outcome
- Improves influence

7 Who else needs to be at the table to make this successful?

(strategic focus, relationships, influence, critical thinking, action)

- Gets buy-in
- Involves others early for a better outcome.
- Helps you focus on your real priorities.

8 What might derail you along the way? What potential barriers can we anticipate, and how can we address them?

(strategic focus, relationship, critical thinking, moves into action)

- Anticipates challenges early and problem-solve proactively.
- Considers opportunities, risks, and solutions.
- Shows support while keeping the accountability with the other person.

9 What do you need to make a decision?

(strategic focus, critical thinking, moves into action)

- Prioritizes essential data and helps avoid getting lost in minor details.
- Helps move into action.

10 What are 3 critical next steps that will move this forward quickly and effectively? Who is responsible for each action?

(strategic focus, critical thinking, accountability, moves into action)

- Shifts focus from process to actionable steps, driving progress.
- Moves the conversation to action with clear accountability.
- Establishes clear ownership and responsibility.

Adopting some of these questions into your day-to-day conversations and thinking will create more strategic conversations and mindset.

Meet Melissa Creede

P.Eng, CPCC, PCC, CPQC

Executive and Celebrity Coach

Melissa Creede helps executives, business owners, and celebrities lead from purpose and create impactful change. With a 30-year career spanning Fortune 500 leaders to vulnerable youth in Uganda, she bridges leadership, heart, and legacy.



Melissa is an international bestselling author of *Beyond Your Inbox: Intentional Leadership in a Distracted World*. She helps clients design a bold vision for the future and focus on what matters most, without getting derailed by distraction. She balances big-picture vision with tangible actions. She is known for being direct and clear, and for asking powerful questions to achieve clarity, learning, and results. She helps clients see other perspectives to help them more effectively communicate and influence.

Melissa is a Certified Co-Active Coach, a Professional Certified Coach, a certified mental fitness coach and is certified in several assessment tools. Melissa graduated with a Bachelor of Applied Science in Civil Engineering.

Before becoming a coach, Melissa was a climate change and sustainability executive known for bringing visionary thinking and practical strategy to complex global challenges.

Melissa has worked and played in over 60 countries, including hiking in Nepal, Kenya, and Pakistan, installing solar panels in rural schools in Argentina, and backpacking in Southeast Asia, Europe, and Eastern Africa.

My calendar link

If you need help focusing on what's important instead of what's urgent, I'm happy to chat