

Coaching Questions: Encouraging Divergent (“If”) Thinking

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In *coachbook: A Guide to Organizational Coaching Strategies and Practices*, Agnes Mura and I present a series of “If” questions that encourage a coaching client to expand their horizon and move in new directions with regard to both their thinking and their actions. This encouragement of divergent thinking and actions is particularly appropriate and timely if a coaching client is mired in a difficult situation and caught up in feelings of helplessness and hopelessness. I present additional “If” questions below that similarly encourage divergence.

- (1) If you could work in any contemporary organization in the world, which one would it be and why would you want to work there?
- (2) If you could work for five years alongside anyone in the world who would it be and why would you want to work with them?
- (3) If you could spend the rest of your life doing one thing twelve hours a day what would it be? Why? Could you really do only one thing that many hours per day for the rest of your life?
- (4) If you could relive one year in your life, knowing everything you now know, what year would it be? Why?
- (5) If you were granted super powers to be able to see, hear or physically perform better than anyone in the world, which power would you choose?
- (6) If you were to receive public recognition for doing one thing that impacts your local community what would this act be and what would you like the message to be on the plaque that honors you?
- (7) If you could be any one person in history during the past century, who would it be? Why would you want to be this person?
- (8) If you could ask five of your closest friends to be absolutely honest in telling you one thing about yourself, what would be this one thing?
- (9) If you could go back to a university for one year and have all your costs covered and receive the income you are now getting without having to do anything other than read and attend classes, what would you like to study? What classes would you like to attend? With whom would you like to study?

(10) If you could eliminate one day from your past life, what day would it be? Why?

(11) If you could relive one day from your past life, what day would it be? Why?

(12) If you could choose the most difficult question that a dear friend (or coach) might ask you, what would that question be?