

Questions that lead to stronger work relationships

Michael Bungay-Stanier shares questions to ask during a 'keystone conversation' to set up your expectations of a working relationship.



If you want to learn more about Michael Bungay-Stanier's work, visit mbs.works for a range of helpful resources.

THE AMPLIFY QUESTION

What's your best?

What you'll learn: What that person considers to be their best qualities/abilities. For example, do they consider themselves a big-picture thinker or a details person?

THE STEADY QUESTION

What are your practices and preferences?

What you'll learn: How they like to work. For example, are they good on the fly or does the lack of a clearly communicated plan cause them anxiety? This can help pre-empt any issues that could arise in terms of a collaborative project.

THE GOOD DATE QUESTION

What can you learn from successful past relationships?

What you'll learn: What they value in a manager/colleague. From an HR perspective, this is a great question to ask during the onboarding stages, as it's useful feedback to share with that person's manager to ensure a new hire's first impressions of your organisation are positive.

THE BAD DATE QUESTION

What can you learn from frustrating past relationships?

What you'll learn: What don't they value in a manager/colleague? This information is worth its weight in gold. Say they disclose their frustrations with a former manager micromanaging them, you can then ensure you're pairing them with a manager who is known for promoting autonomy.

THE REPAIR QUESTION

How will you fix it when things go wrong?

What you'll learn: How your manager/colleague prefers to handle difficult situations. For example, would they prefer to address challenging situations outside of the work environment? Or perhaps they'd rather call and talk about things over the phone rather than going back and forth on emails.