

## Action Learning Facilitation

Action Learning is a practical hands-on group-coaching methodology focused on real ‘live’ current issues. It is exploratory and NOT about advice giving. It is about deep listening, listening to ask the appropriate questions. This is a form of dialogical communication that is useful for peer-to-peer learning and enquiry based meetings.

The process is;

1. Listen to the ‘Issue Holder’ outline (briefly) the issue they are bringing to the session or meeting. To put a **positive** slant on it you might want to ask,
  - *We call these issues, but is this a challenge or an opportunity for you?*
2. Then spending a few minutes asking clarification questions around this issue, helping the Issue Holder articulate the question they wants to pose. Some useful questions might be:
  - *What do you hope to achieve?*
  - *For what purpose?*
  - *What will that give you?*
  - *What does that mean?*
  - *What is important about this?*
  - *What is your motivation?*
3. The bulk of time is then spent posing exploratory questions to help the Issue Holder reach their ‘own’ insights or conclusions for their next steps (see Example Exploratory Questions).

Explore	What are you confident about?	Explore	What would you expect to happen as a result?
Explore	What are the pros and cons of...?	Explore	How comfortable are you with...?
Explore	What skills/knowledge/mindset does this situation require of you?	Explore	What questions does that raise for you?
Explore	What can you apply from similar situations you have dealt with?	Explore	What options might there be for resolving this?
Explore	How realistic are you being with yourself?	Explore	How do you feel about...?
Explore	What would make this less stressful/demanding/difficult?	Explore	What would the perspective of (your boss/best friend.. )Be?

It is important to listen to one another in the session or the meeting so the questions asked follow on from the previous question so there is a natural flow. The intention is that the group get into synergy with one another (not competing to ask ‘their’ question. So questions should be based on the Issue Holders response, not what ‘you’ had previously wanted to ask.



Further questions to help people reach their own insights or conclusions for the next steps might be;

- If the **scope of their enquiry is too large** – ask, *What boundaries exist?*
- Often people worry about **lack of time** – ask, *How can you give yourself more time?*
- Often they feel **held back** – ask, *What is pulling you forward?*
- People can get **bogged down in doing things right** – ask,
  - *What would it mean if you didn't have to get it right?*
  - *What are your intentions right now?*
  - *What criteria are you using?*
  - *What have you noticed about how you are dealing with this?*
  - *When are you most energised?*
  - *What are you afraid of?*
  - *What is the element of this issue you yearn for right now?*
  - *How much of this situation do you feel is within your control?*
- Sometimes there are **too many things the person is taking on board, or holding on to** – ask,
  - *What aspects are you willing to accept, which are you willing to let go of, and which are you willing to take responsibility for?*
  - *What is the emotional rewards?*
- People **place limits on themselves** – ask,
  - *What would life look like without limits?*
  - *What do you think is your potential right now?*
  - *What are you listening too? And what are you hearing?*
- Sometimes people **don't think they have, or are, enough** (resources, self) – ask,
  - *What are you willing to do with what you currently have?*
  - *Who else is supporting you with this?*
  - *If you had free rein, what would you do?*
  - *What kind of experience do you want?*
- Sometimes people simply want everyone else to change to suit their needs – ask,
  - *If you were able to **change everything** to meet your needs, what then?*
  - *If you were to focus on the other person's needs, what difference might that make?*

4. From here the Issue Holder can hone in on the key actions or things they will take forward. To help set **Future intention** – ask,

- *What do you want (to do, to achieve, it to look like)?*
- *How might you?*
- *What are your priorities?*
- *What other approaches might there be?*
- *What will you do now? By when?*