Questions that actually work.

12 ways to make the next conversation more useful.

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People aren’t pipelines. Your questions shouldn’t treat them like one.

Use this guide when a buyer hesitates, a follow-up stalls, or your team sees something you don’t. These are starting points for curiosity, not lines to deliver verbatim.

Ask one question.

Give the answer room. Skip the rapid-fire interview.

Check what you heard.

Try: “Have I understood that correctly?” Tone is a clue, not proof.

Respect the answer.

“No” and “not now” are outcomes to understand, not obstacles to defeat.

Hesitation & shared decisions

Make room for the real answer.

01 / THE QUIET BUYER

What part of this feels unresolved for you?

LISTEN FOR	A specific concern, missing information, or a need for time. Silence alone does not tell you which.
GO ONE STEP DEEPER	What would help you get clearer on that?
WATCH YOURSELF	Don’t answer your own question or rush to offer a discount.

02 / “I NEED TO THINK”

What part deserves a little more thought?

LISTEN FOR	Whether they name a tradeoff, an unanswered question, or simply want space.
GO ONE STEP DEEPER	Would an answer help, or would you prefer some time?
WATCH YOURSELF	Don’t turn permission to think into a deadline.

03 / THE SHARED DECISION

What would be most useful for the two of you to talk through?

LISTEN FOR	What the other decision-maker needs to understand and whether both people want to join a conversation.
GO ONE STEP DEEPER	Would a short comparison help, or would you prefer to discuss it privately?
WATCH YOURSELF	Don’t try to get around the person who isn’t in the room.

Value & comparisons

Let them define what matters.

04 / “IT COSTS TOO MUCH”

Besides price, what would make one option a better fit for you?

LISTEN FOR	Their priorities: effort, reliability, flexibility, support, or total cost. Price may still be the deciding factor.
GO ONE STEP DEEPER	Which of those matters most in this decision?
WATCH YOURSELF	Don’t use “value” to dismiss a real budget limit.

05 / THE COMPARISON

What are you comparing this option against?

LISTEN FOR	The alternative they actually have in mind, including doing nothing.
GO ONE STEP DEEPER	What do you like about that option, and what gives you pause?
WATCH YOURSELF	Don’t criticize a competitor before understanding the comparison.

06 / THE HONEST FIT CHECK

What would make this the wrong choice for you?

LISTEN FOR	A non-negotiable, a limitation, or a risk that could make your offer unsuitable.
GO ONE STEP DEEPER	Is there anything about this option that creates that concern?
WATCH YOURSELF	Don’t explain away a mismatch. Be clear about limitations.

Follow-ups & next steps

Bring something worth replying to.

07 / BEFORE YOU LEAVE

What would be useful for me to send after this conversation?

LISTEN FOR	A specific answer, comparison, or summary they actually want.
GO ONE STEP DEEPER	How and when would you like me to follow up, if at all?
WATCH YOURSELF	Don’t treat permission for one message as permission for endless contact.

08 / THE DRIFTING DECISION

What would need to be clearer before you could decide?

LISTEN FOR	Whether the missing piece is information, timing, agreement, or readiness.
GO ONE STEP DEEPER	Is there a next step that would help, or should we pause?
WATCH YOURSELF	Don’t assume every delayed decision can be solved with more explanation.

09 / CLOSE THE LOOP

Would you prefer I leave it here, or is there a better time to reconnect?

LISTEN FOR	A preference you can honor, including no further follow-up.
GO ONE STEP DEEPER	If they want to reconnect: “What timing and channel work best?”
WATCH YOURSELF	Don’t make the exit feel like a guilt trip. Respect opt-outs.

Leadership & feedback

Be curious before being defensive.

10 / THE CHALLENGED PROCESS

What are you seeing with customers that our process is missing?

LISTEN FOR	An observable example and its effect, rather than a debate about attitude.
GO ONE STEP DEEPER	Can you walk me through one recent conversation?
WATCH YOURSELF	Don’t confuse useful disagreement with permission to ignore requirements.

11 / THE FEEDBACK INVITATION

What is one thing I could do differently to make working with me easier?

LISTEN FOR	A specific behavior you can change. They may need time or a private setting.
GO ONE STEP DEEPER	What would a better version of that look like?
WATCH YOURSELF	Don’t ask for honesty and then argue with the answer.

12 / BEYOND THE DASHBOARD

What did we learn from the conversations that the numbers don’t show?

LISTEN FOR	Patterns, friction, and unanswered questions worth investigating.
GO ONE STEP DEEPER	What small change could we try, and how would we know it helped?
WATCH YOURSELF	Don’t substitute a good story for evidence. Use both.