

# 50 One-on-One Questions That Actually Build Trust

A field-tested set of questions to make every 1:1 less of a status update and more of a real conversation. Use one or two per meeting — not all fifty at once. Listen more than you talk.

## How they're doing

- What's been the highlight of your week so far?
- How are your energy levels right now — full, steady, or running low?
- Is there anything outside of work weighing on you that I should know about?
- What would make next week feel like a win, personally and professionally?
- On a scale of 1–10, how satisfied are you with your work right now? What would move it up one point?

## Their work

- What are you most proud of this week?
- What's something you finished that no one noticed?
- Where are you stuck, even slightly?
- What's taking longer than you expected — and why?
- Is there anything on your plate that you secretly wish you could drop?
- What part of your work feels most meaningful right now?
- What part feels like a slog?
- If we cleared one thing off your plate, what would have the biggest impact?

## How I can help

- What's one thing I could do differently that would make your job easier?
- Where am I unintentionally creating friction for you?
- What do you wish I knew that you haven't told me?
- When have you felt most supported by me? Least?
- What decision are you waiting on me for?
- Is there a meeting we should kill, shorten, or change?
- What feedback do you have for me that you haven't shared yet?

## Growth & development

- What skill do you most want to build this quarter?

- What part of your role feels most like growth right now?
- What part feels stagnant?
- Who in the company do you most want to learn from?
- What would your dream next role look like — even if it's not at this company?
- What kind of project would stretch you in a healthy way?
- How do you want to be challenged more?
- What feedback have you received recently that stuck with you?

## **Team & collaboration**

- Who on the team are you collaborating best with right now?
- Where do you see tension on the team that I might be missing?
- What's an unspoken norm on our team that you'd want to change?
- If you were running this team, what's the first thing you'd do differently?
- Whose work do you admire right now and why?
- Where do we need clearer ownership?
- What's something we keep talking about but never decide?

## **Strategy & direction**

- What's the most important thing you're working on, and why?
- If you had to cut your workload in half tomorrow, what stays?
- Where do you think we're spending time on the wrong things?
- What would you do if you were in my seat for a week?
- What's a risk we're not talking about?
- Where are we playing it too safe?

## **Energy, motivation & meaning**

- What's giving you energy right now?
- What's draining you?
- When did you last feel genuinely proud at work?
- What does success look like to you in the next 90 days?
- What would make this the best year of your career?
- If nothing changed about your job in 12 months, would that be okay?

## **To close**

- What's the most useful thing we talked about today?
- What's one thing you want me to follow up on?
- Anything we didn't get to that we should put on the next agenda?

*Tip: pick 2–3 questions before each 1:1 based on what you're sensing. Rotate categories so you're not always asking about tasks.*

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