Twitter Thread by Erik Torenberg



Erik Torenberg
@eriktorenberg

1/“What would need to be true for you to….X”

Why is this the most powerful question you can ask when attempting to reach an agreement with another human being or organization?

A thread, co-written by @deanmbrody:

> Next level tactic when closing a sale, candidate, or investment:
>
> Ask: \u201cWhat needs to be true for you to be all in?\u201d
>
> You'll usually get an explicit answer that you might not get otherwise. It also holds them accountable once the thing they need becomes true.
>
> — Erik Torenberg (@eriktorenberg) February 27, 2018

2/ First, “X” could be lots of things. Examples: What would need to be true for you to

- “Feel it's in our best interest for me to be CMO"
- “Feel that we’re in a good place as a company”
- “Feel that we’re on the same page”
- “Feel that we both got what we wanted from this deal

3/ Normally, we aren’t that direct. Example from startup/VC land:

Founders leave VC meetings thinking that every VC will invest, but they rarely do.

Worse over, the founders don’t know what they need to do in order to be fundable.

4/ So why should you ask the magic Q?

To get clarity.

You want to know where you stand, and what it takes to get what you want in a way that also gets them what they want.

It also holds them (mentally) accountable once the thing they need becomes true.

5/ Staying in the context of soliciting investors, the question is “what would need to be true for you to want to invest (or partner with us on this journey, etc)?”

Multiple responses to this question are likely to deliver a positive result.

6/ Positive answers/outcomes include:

A) straight answer that includes a set of conditions that you can reasonably meet (e.g. a reasonable equity ask).

Positive outcome: clear criteria to establishing a deal.

7/ B) straight answer that includes a set of conditions that are not realistic to meet (e.g. renounce leadership position).

Positive outcome: get out of the deal pursuit and save your time OR counter propose with more favorable conditions.

8/ C/ no straight answer and uneasy body language. They struggle to give a clear/concise response.

Positive outcome: bail! Save your time and money as they are not ready or willing to do business.

9/ Note: The Q should come from a place of seeking mutual benefit. Or else it’ll ring hollow and manipulative.

When asking for a raise, it's less: “true for you to feel I deserve this?"

More: “true for you to feel it’s in all of our best interest?”

And you genuinely mean it.

10/ Put differently: The Q below isn't phrased “buy my product, be my employee, etc —

https://t.co/Yo6jHbSit9

it says “be all in”—be a partner.

Seeking win-win.

Like any conversational framework, use somewhat sparingly, and only when genuinely seeking mutual benefit!

> Next level tactic when closing a sale, candidate, or investment:
>
> Ask: \u201cWhat needs to be true for you to be all in?\u201d
>
> You'll usually get an explicit answer that you might not get otherwise. It also holds them accountable once the thing they need becomes true.

— Erik Torenberg (@eriktorenberg) February 27, 2018