

Twitter Thread by Erik Torenberg



Erik Torenberg

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1/ Here's a list of conversational frameworks I've picked up that have been helpful.

Please add your own.

2/ The Magic Question: "What would need to be true for you to...X?"

<https://t.co/JxjjUTV0is>

1/\u201cWhat would need to be true for you to\u2026X\u201d

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](#): <https://t.co/Yo6jHbSit9>

— Erik Torenberg ([@eriktorenberg](#)) [December 4, 2018](#)

3/ On evaluating where someone's head is at regarding a topic they are being wishy-washy about or delaying.

"Gun to the head—what would you decide now?"

"Fast forward 6 months after your sabbatical--how would you decide: what criteria is most important to you?"

4/ Other Q's re: decisions:

"Putting aside a list of pros/cons, what's the *one* reason you're doing this?" "Why is that the most important reason?"

"What's end-game here?"

"What does success look like in a world where you pick that path?"

5/ When listening, after empathizing, and wanting to help them make their own decisions without imposing your world view:

"What would the best version of yourself do"?

6/ When someone asks you a personal or vulnerable question and you don't yet have an answer, although you want to answer soon:

"The Quakers have this idea where you don't speak unless the spirit moves you. I'm waiting for the spirit to move me."

h/t a friend

7/ When someone confronts you w/ a problem they have with you

A/ Thanks for sharing because I value this relationship + want both of us to get needs met

B/ What I heard was X (summary)-- was that accurate?

C/ How can I contribute to meeting your needs?

8/ When really angry:

"..." Don't say anything!

Take a lap. Or cold shower. Workout. Change your mind state before re-entering the conversation

9/ When really angry during the heat of the moment:

"..." Still don't say anything!

Ask for a pause: "Do you mind if we take a quick break and return tonight? I want to make sure I can fully listen to your story + appreciate where you are coming from."

That last part is key.

10/ When giving unsolicited feedback

"..." Probably best not to.

Unless you ask the caveat: "Are you interested in hearing feedback?"

11/ When confronting somebody:

Instead of "Why did you do that?"

Maybe: "What was going on for you?"

12/ Discovering ambition:

"If you had a billion dollars what would you do with

- a) the money
- b) your time”?

This shows where they want to change society and what they truly want to be doing.

13/ "What was your past manager (or friend) like?"

This determines how they'll talk about you in the future--whether they'll view you in a charitable light or not.

14/ When rambling with nowhere to go:

“I’m going to pause right there for reactions”

<https://t.co/g2en4UnweD>

Conversational tactic:

After rambling so much you either forgot your intended original point and/or don't know how to elegantly stop talking, say 'I'll pause for any thoughts or reactions.'

— Erik Torenberg (@eriktorenberg) [February 28, 2018](#)

15/ in group meetings when two people are talking about something unrelated:

“Let’s take this offline”.

16/ When assessing VC/founder alignment in an VC pitch:

“Why not bootstrap it so you can control your own destiny and have more optionality over selling for 50m, 100m?”

Also just a good question for every founder to ask themselves.

17/ Note: conversational frameworks are effective when coming from a genuine place of wanting mutual benefit--seeking win-win.

<https://t.co/YfOt4FzoPt>

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.

— Erik Torenberg (@eriktorenberg) [December 4, 2018](#)

18/ When someone asks a somewhat vague Q:

"What's the question behind the question?"