

# DISCOVERY QUESTIONS in Sales and Negotiation

## INTRODUCTION

As you have already read in Chapter 13 of “The Self-Worth Safari”, it’s hard to negotiate if you do not value yourself. A lot of people struggle with sales for precisely this reason. Of course, some of them will object to this statement: citing other reasons for their distaste for selling. However, everyone needs to “sell” (or influence) on some occasions: for example when going for an interview, or just seeking consensus for a course of action.

Self-worth is a great ally in other ways, too. It’s not just a matter of having confidence or self-belief. The real power of self-worth is that it **frees you from the need to prove yourself**; so that you are now free to **discover the deep needs** of other people. In this way, self-worth is very different from self-esteem.

Sales people with self-esteem often talk a lot about themselves or their services. Those who possess self-worth don’t need to do this: they are free to explore (and share experience) from the world of their clients and their customers.

## DISCOVERY QUESTIONS

Discovery questions are the key to success in sales and negotiation. We have already seen some effective value questions in the resources on career development. In this article, we expand on these, and also add to those already outlined in Chapter 13 of “The Self-Worth Safari”.

Feel free to order them in any sequence that works for you: also, to customise the language to your unique situation. It’s very unlikely that you will use all of these questions! So please choose those questions that are best for you.

Notice how all of the questions are about usefulness – not self-evaluation. As with career questions, we start with the “why?”:

1. What prompted you to reach out for support?
2. What have you established so far, that has been most useful / helpful?
3. Why is that significant?
4. Of all the issues that you are grappling with, which are the most important?
5. Why is that particularly important?
6. Who are the people most impacted by this problem?
7. What risks is that issue creating? Who is most exposed?

## REVIEWING THE SITUATION RIGHT NOW

8. What's your current installation / setup / system etc?
9. What's the capacity of that?
10. What other developments are going on, that relate to this project?
11. If the current situation continues, where is the biggest threat today?
12. What impact would that have?
13. Who else would be affected?
14. What would the early results look like?
15. Where would you see tangible evidence for this?
16. Are there additional intangible benefits?
17. Which of these would your boss (or board or shareholders) notice?
18. Who are the key people with a stake in the success of this project?
19. Who will need reassurance? How do we give that to them?
20. How are your competitors dealing with these issues?
21. How's business? (Can often be asked right at the beginning, even before the meeting)
22. What happens if you do nothing?
23. Apart from cost, what else is a key criterion for your decision?

## LOOKING AHEAD

The following questions are focused on the future.

24. What does your future setup (or organisation, or operation) look like?
25. How will the future be different from the past? For you? For your customers? What impact(s) will that have? Who will succeed (or not) in that environment?
26. How will you value the impact of this project, in a year from now?
27. What are the key risks that we need to anticipate?
28. How will that impact sales / costs / working capital / marketing / customer feedback etc?

