# AWARENESS PIVOT | ASKING BETTER QUESTIONS

**ACTIVITY TITLE:** Asking Better Reflection Questions

**OBJECTIVE:** To help leaders cultivate questions that allow for greater self-awareness.

## Activity Overview:

When practicing mirror work, there is a better way to word questions that will allow for greater self-awareness and less negativity.

### ERODING VS AFFIRMING QUESTIONS

Eroding questions can lead to different answers due to small variations in wording. However, asking these questions has detriments.

1. **Undermine Confidence**: Eroding questions like "Why am I so bad at this?" focus on negative aspects and can diminish self-esteem and confidence.

2. **Reinforce Negative Beliefs**: These questions confirm and reinforce negative beliefs about oneself, leading to a fixed mindset and limiting personal growth.

3. **Create a Negative Focus**: They shift the focus to weaknesses and failures rather than strengths and opportunities, which can hinder motivation and progress.

4. **Reduce Constructive Feedback**: Eroding questions do not encourage constructive feedback or solutions, making it harder to identify actionable steps for improvement.

5. **Increase Stress and Anxiety**: Constantly questioning one's abilities in a negative way can lead to increased stress and anxiety, affecting overall well-being and performance.

Affirming questions encourage critical thinking, promote engagement, and unveil insights that closed questions often miss. Here are examples of how leaders can flourish by asking affirming questions.

1. **Promote Positive Reflection**: Affirming questions encourage individuals to focus on their strengths and potential, rather than their weaknesses or failures. This helps with building confidence and a positive self-image.

2. **Enhance Self-Awareness**: By asking affirming questions, leaders can gain deeper insights into their own behaviors, motivations, and impact.

3. **Foster Constructive Feedback**: Affirming questions create a safe space for receiving and giving feedback. They help in framing feedback in a way that is supportive and growth oriented.

4. **Encourage Continuous Improvement**: These questions motivate individuals to think about how they can leverage their strengths to overcome challenges and improve

5. **Build Trust and Collaboration**: In group settings, affirming questions can strengthen relationships and trust among team members, leading to better collaboration and a more positive work environment.

## Examples:

### ERODING QUESTIONS

- What do I need to fix about my leadership?
- Why am I not a better person?
- Why do I seem to hurt the people closest to me?
- How did I mess this up so much?

### AFFIRMING QUESTIONS

- How can my aversion to conflict enhance my leadership?
- In what ways can I improve my (patience, listening skills) and be more effective in my relationships?
- Are there any negative thought patterns or limiting beliefs that I need to challenge and reframe?
- How can I cultivate a more mindful and balanced mindset to foster clarity in my thinking and actions?
- What habits or patterns of behavior would I like to change or improve?
- What motivates me to take certain actions or behave in specific ways?

## Personal Worksheet:

In the spaces below, write eroding questions you hold about yourself or your leadership style. Then, write affirming questions that are asset-driven. Use these affirming questions in your daily mirror practice.

| ERODING QUESTIONS | AFFIRMING QUESTIONS |
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## Organization Worksheet:

Either in your role as a leader or with your team, reflect on your organization's evaluations, research, and impact data. Then, identify eroding questions you hold about your work. Then, write affirming questions that are asset-driven. Use these affirming questions in your team reflection practices.

| ERODING QUESTIONS | AFFIRMING QUESTIONS |
|---|---|
| *Examples*:<br>• Why are we failing to meet our targets?<br>• What are the weaknesses in our team?<br>• Why do we always struggle with deadlines?<br>• What's wrong with our current strategy? | *Examples*:<br>• What strengths can we leverage to meet our targets?<br>• How can we build on our team's existing skills?<br>• What strategies can we implement to improve deadline management?<br>• What aspects of our current strategy are working well and can be expanded on? |
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