

ACTION LEARNING AND PERSONAL LEADERSHIP



During an Action Learning Session, the team can get to a point that one or more persons discover how he/she or they are part of the problem. In a fast changing environment around the organisation and around the problem of the team, solutions are sometimes found in changing the perspective about the problem, instead of changing some parts of the chain of cause and effect in the environment of the organisation.

First, it is good to know that if a team can go this far and deep into the process of Action Learning. Two conditions then are fulfilled:

- the members in the team feel emotionally and psychologically safe;
- the members in the team can personally reflect about their behaviour.

This is most likely due to openness by all persons present and to good Action Learning coaching.

Second, it is good to acknowledge that through Action Learning, team members can develop their personal leadership skills. Asking open questions is not limited to Action Learning sessions. The course ***Leading With Questions*** from WIAL shows how personal leadership can be developed only by learning how to ask open questions.

According to WIAL experience worldwide, there are four main reasons that make it difficult for you in general to ask questions:

1. You avoid questions out of a natural desire to protect yourself. How does that feel to you?
2. You are too often and too much rushed and stressed. How is that right for you?
3. You are not trained to ask and answer questions due to lack of examples, training, opportunities and experience. How does this fit for you?

4. Your work environment discourages asking questions due to a corporate culture mainly due to adherence to existing assumptions and policies. How is or was this true for you?



The first one is the main reason for members in a team, not to open up for emotion and feeling in the team. And that should be possible, since opening up is the main success factor for teams to become high performing.

So, an Action Learning coach can enable performing teams by guiding the members in a team in their personal development and leadership. The basic condition is the emotional and psychological safety in the team, during the sessions and outside the sessions. It is up to the Action Learning coach to personally intervene in the sessions whenever the team can learn how to secure safety only by asking open questions.

So, any team, guided and coached to discover the benefits of asking questions the Action Learning way, will sooner or later be able to feel safe and to perform higher. Higher performance gives access to coping with fast changing environments and highly complex problems.

What personal development do you as a leader prefer to coach teams safely?

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