

40+ questions to get clarity from your boss in your next 1-on-1

Are you in the dark about your performance? Unsure if you're working toward the right things? Overwhelmed by too much to do — or bored by tasks you've already mastered? Or maybe your 1-on-1s just feel underwhelming. Rather than suffer in silent frustration, add a question or two to the agenda for your next 1-on-1 to get the clarity and support you need from your boss.



"I'm sorry, I don't mean to pry."

Get feedback on your performance so you know what's going well and what isn't.

1. What does exceptional performance look like for someone in my role? How do you measure great performance?
2. What's one thing you think I should be doing more of? Less of?
3. What's one area of my work where I should devote more time and focus? What would success look like in that area?
4. Now that project X is done, I'd like your thoughts on how I handled my part of it. What did I do well that I should do again next time? What can I improve on?
5. I'd like to gauge how well I'm doing X. Could we talk about times in the past month when I've done X well and when I've fallen short?
6. You mentioned that I need to get better at X. What should I look for to know that I'm improving? What improvement have you seen so far? Could we discuss my progress again in a few weeks?

Check in on your goals and priorities to be sure you're focused on the most important work.

1. If I were to focus on only two or three main goals this month, what should they be and why?
2. How do you think my goals might shift in the future?
3. Could we review and align on my top priorities for this week/month?
4. What's the importance of X relative to my other responsibilities? If I'm really pressed for time, should I prioritize it?

5. To help me focus on my highest priority work, what one or two things could I delay or take off of my plate?

Get clear on larger team and company goals — and how your work contributes to them.

1. Could we review our team's top goals and how my work can help us meet them?
2. What have you been hearing from leadership about their top priorities — and changes they see on the horizon that could impact our team goals?
3. I'm not clear on the strategic thinking behind X. Could you help me understand why we're doing this work and how it can help us meet our team and company goals?
4. How could I contribute to important project X that our organization is working on?
5. What other people or teams would you suggest I reach out to for input on my project?
6. What's the biggest impact you see our team's work making for our customers or clients? Do you have any recent feedback from them you can share?

Learn about your manager's needs and goals — so you can show your value by helping meet them.

1. What are your two or three top goals? What needs to happen for you to meet them?
2. What are some ways my work contributes to your goals? How else can I align my work with those goals?
3. What's currently challenging you or taking time away from your goals that I can help with?
4. Am I giving you all the information you need? What would you like to be kept better informed about — and what's the best way to share that information with you?

Understand how a company change could impact you and your team.

1. I'd like to better understand this change. Could you share more about why it's happening?
2. Could you share more about what's changing — and how it might impact our team?
3. How do you see this change contributing to our team goal of X?
4. What does this change mean for our team's workload or how we prioritize work?
5. I've been focused on goal X. How do you see this change affecting that goal — or my ability to meet it?
6. What new opportunities could this change create for our team and for me?

Ask for your manager's help to solve a tough problem.

1. Could we talk through a challenge I'm facing? I'd like to get your perspective on it.
2. I've hit a roadblock on project X. I've tried solutions A, B, and C. What else do you think I should try?
3. I see factors X and Y affecting this problem. What else might I be missing?

4. You've dealt with a similar issue in the past. In your experience, what has worked?
5. I'm running into X issue with a colleague. Could we talk about some ways I can approach the person to find a solution?
6. Lately, I'm finding it hard to maintain a good work/life balance. Could we talk through some ideas to improve the situation?
7. Something is happening in my personal life that could impact my work. Could we come up with a strategy to manage the impact?

Seek out opportunities to grow and take charge of your career.

1. I'd like to get better at X. How could I make room in my schedule to learn and practice it? What resources are available to help me?
2. I'm really enjoying working on X. What opportunities do you see for me to do more work like this?
3. How else could I use my expertise in X to help our team or company? What opportunities do you see for me to mentor or share my skills with others?
4. Could you recommend someone who might be open to mentoring me in X?
5. I'd like to be more visible in the organization. What's one opportunity you see for me to take part in higher level work or discussions?
6. Could you help me understand common career paths in the organization? How do people typically change or expand their roles?
7. I'd like to learn more about role X. What resources could I explore or who could I ask for more information about the role?
8. I would like to take my career in X direction. What would I need to do to get there?
9. I'd like to get your input on my development plan. Could we align on my goals and the milestones to get there?