

Life

Tweaking

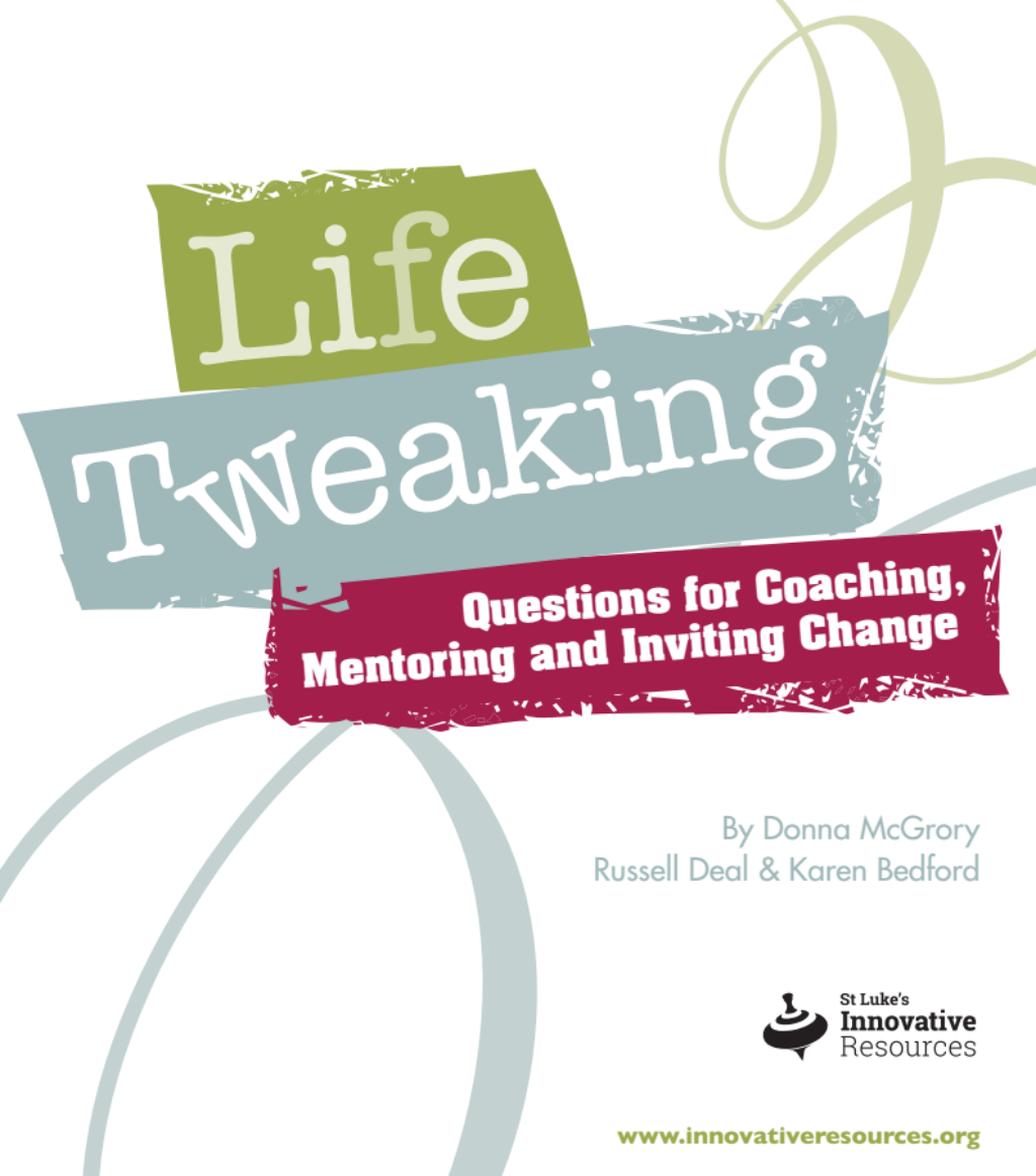
**Questions for Coaching,
Mentoring and Inviting Change**

By Donna McGrory
Russell Deal & Karen Bedford



St Luke's
Innovative
Resources

www.innovativeresources.org



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FROM THE PUBLISHER

Numerous models of workplace and life coaching have proliferated over the last couple of decades. The popularity of coaching might be attributed, in part, to its inspirational nature. That is, it can readily be considered inherently normal and desirable to want to improve one's performance in the workplace, discover greater meaning and fulfillment in life and build deeper connection with others. Surely, the desire to achieve personal growth, to bring out our best and experience enhanced success is what everyone wants?

Therapy, on the other hand, often comes with some stigma and negative baggage because of the implication that the client is experiencing a personal problem of some significance that requires expert assistance to overcome.

However, these two domains of professional conversation-building can actually share a common approach, common values and identical techniques.

Solution-focused and strengths-based approaches

Solution-focused and strengths-based approaches to both therapy and coaching emphasise strengths and resources rather than problems and deficits. They celebrate the expertise the client has on their own life and they explore hopes and preferred futures rather than past traumas.

Solution-focused and strengths-based approaches also recognise

the significance of small changes, and through techniques such as scaling, they have provided strategies for noticing these small changes. St Luke's Anglicare (now a division of Anglicare Victoria) has attempted to build an organisational culture based on such a philosophy and Innovative Resources endeavors to embed these principles in all the 'seriously optimistic', conversation-building materials it produces.

The *Life Tweaking* cards grew out of this culture. As a resource that is intended for use in coaching conversations, it is inherently future-oriented. It aims to mobilise the client's expertise and to celebrate the significance of small changes – hence the name!

We believe that everyone can continue to tweak their lives as part and parcel of a search for meaning, effectiveness and fulfilment.

Valuing partnerships

Innovative Resources has been privileged to collaborate in partnerships with organisations and individuals who share our values and vision. *Life Tweaking* is the result of one such rich and rewarding partnership.

We first met Donna McGrory when she took on the task of guiding a number of our staff through a retail training certificate course. She was a great teacher and facilitator and her passion for coaching and bringing out the best in her clients was clearly evident. As a publisher of conversation-building card sets, it was almost inevitable that we would begin discussing the possibility of creating a set of cards that names key topics and values of coaching conversations. Donna responded very warmly to the idea and began to list the topics and questions she explores with her own clients.

These values and questions became the cornerstones of the cards that we now call *Life Tweaking*. This title suggests that many everyday actions and ideas, while humble, may nevertheless hold within them the potential to be transformative and life-changing.

Over many months we interrogated every topic, word and question on the cards. Of course, there are endless topics and good questions that may form part of a coaching conversation. However, the card set and questions had to be manageable in size, and respectful of the culture and experience of anyone who might pick them up and use them. So after much deliberation we finally landed on fifty key topics, with two questions per topic. We hope that these topics and questions will provide a useful foundation and springboard for coaching, mentoring and counselling conversations in a wide variety of settings.

Over a period of more than two years, Donna was unfailingly patient with Karen Bedford (our managing editor) and I as the three of us shaped and reshaped the topics and questions. Along the way, drafts of the cards were trialled in workplace trainings, workshops and in private coaching sessions. The resulting feedback from practitioners and clients alike was incorporated until we reached what we believe to be a collection of inviting and gently-challenging questions that any coach, therapist, trainer or manager can incorporate into their conversations with staff or clients. We also see *Life Tweaking* as a valuable tool for personal reflection and goal setting.

We hope the addition of this simple tool for the coaching world will help create conversations that touch many lives.

Russell Deal

Creative Director, St Luke's Innovative Resources (at time of first publication)

FROM THE COACH

I am a life coach and workplace business management trainer. In my 20s I lived and travelled extensively throughout Europe for nine years and supported my husband, Scott, to achieve his lifelong dream of winning an Olympic Gold Medal. During this time I also taught business English, learned to speak fluent German and Italian, and learned to love and appreciate the differences that each culture provides.

Journey into coaching

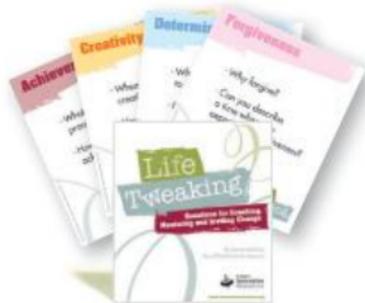
Sadly, only two months before the Olympic Games, we tragically lost our baby son to heart failure. This massively defining moment changed who we were. Whilst still living in Europe, Scott was struggling on the bike and I was desperately hoping to move home to Australia to start a career of my own. We had since had another beautiful daughter, Madelaina, who was the light of our lives. But with the loss of yet another baby at 14 weeks pregnant, along with my ever-present need to work and be closer to family, we decided to move to my home town of Bendigo, Australia, while Scott would continue to return to Europe to train and compete.

Upon returning to Australia, I enrolled in a training and assessment course and subsequently began delivering accredited business and retail training. After much deliberation, we decided to have one last 'go' at having another child. I struggled with the

fear of falling pregnant again and what could potentially happen. It was during this particularly challenging time that my journey with coaching began.

My coach had this amazing ability to assist me in shifting my focus from pain and fear to freedom and love. I was struck by how really simple the whole process was. I spoke with her on the phone for one hour four times over two months and she emailed me worksheets to do in between. I never even met her face-to-face. But the change that occurred in these four phone calls was indelible. It was when I fell pregnant with our second daughter, Leilani, that I decided to become a life coach myself. I enrolled at the renowned Coaching Institute in Melbourne where I learned coaching models that are based largely around Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP) principles.

As a result of becoming a coach many things have changed in my life. My government training classes, which had become mundane and dry to me, were now full of enthusiasm and my students became eager to learn more. My life was richer, my relationship with myself was a lot softer, and I was a better wife and mother.



How the idea for the cards emerged

Through combining coaching with teaching, I have been amazed at how a student's learning is so directly linked to the teacher's enthusiasm. I am amazed at a person's ability to shape and change their lives through the simple act of discovering their own unique set of values.

'Seek first to understand' (one of Franklin Covey's seven habits of highly effective people), has always been a maxim that I have endeavoured to live by, and hence the reason the *Life Tweaking* cards came to life. In order to be understood we must first seek to understand. I believe that many people spend a lot of time justifying their own positions and behaviours, and thereby falling short of seeing what is important to those around them. This can result in communication breakdown and unrest.

It can be very helpful to take the time to be curious about those with whom we work and interact, as well as being curious about ourselves. We may find that we discover the story behind their actions and beliefs ... and perhaps it is an entirely different story than we had imagined!



'I am amazed at a person's ability to shape and change their lives through the simple act of discovering their own unique set of values.'

As a workplace trainer my experience has been that staff members are often sent to training with the purpose of increasing the profits of the company, rather than discovering what their wisdom and advice for the company may be. My main message to management is that if staff members are not genuinely heard then any issues will probably remain unresolved. My aim in bringing the *Life Tweaking* cards to the workplace is for people to find their voice; to explore their team on another level, to explore their own map, to get out on the table what is currently happening, and to identify ways of moving forward. It is essentially change through understanding and acceptance.

Key themes in coaching

Whilst there are many NLP principles I could talk about, I thought I would touch on some of the key topics I have borrowed from NLP and briefly outline how I have interpreted them to work for me and the people with whom I work.

Values, beliefs and the notion of congruency play a major role in coaching. Once a person has identified their core values as well as their resourceful and limiting beliefs, they have their own unique 'map' to create meaningful and lasting change in their lives. True congruency comes from knowing and understanding what your personal drivers are and if you are fulfilling them, and from knowing what limiting beliefs and thoughts you may have that are holding you back. As a coach, I believe that some unrest comes to a person from not knowing what is truly important to them in life and making decisions based on what they think they 'should' do

rather than what is congruent with their values. It is like driving to a new destination without a current and accurate map. So, if our values and beliefs are the drivers in our life then what we believe is what tends to happen. In essence, what we focus on is what we get.

Each *Life Tweaking* card features a key word (or value) and two questions designed to prompt curious conversation. This card set can support people to get out on the table in a safe manner their identity, values, beliefs, stories, motivations, intentions and plans. It is designed to be used in groups and with individuals who would like to explore their patterns of behaviour, including whether these patterns are 'resourceful' or 'unresourceful' to them. Through identifying their drivers and exploring their map, users will have a greater understanding of where they are currently at and what tweaks they may want to make to move forward in a resourceful way.

The aim of coaching is for the person to move towards the life they want with their hands on the steering wheel. They are encouraged to imagine how the end may look, smell and feel. Many come to realise that in order to create meaningful and lasting change they must make that change; that they have choices and can decide what is best for them. Through coaching people can learn to ask themselves empowering questions and take meaningful actions when challenges arise; they may cease to rely on other people to provide them with happiness, and cease 'the blame game'. Some clients ultimately become aware of how they create their own universe and everything that happens within it.

Another supporting belief for coaches is, 'Perception is projection'. This belief personally assisted me greatly in taking responsibility for my life. I was no longer able to gossip about others whom I perceived to be the aggressor in my life because I learnt that what I see in them, I myself possess. I may not do what they do in exactly the same manner, but I am able to see it in them because it exists within myself. Essentially, it is the belief that the world is our mirror!

Another useful understanding that informs my work as a coach is, 'There are no mistakes, only feedback'. Feedback on what worked and what didn't. Coaches help people to notice what is happening around them—are they getting the responses they would like from others, or are they facing resistance to their vision or ideas? What feedback is the world offering them—is it positive, is it helpful, and is it supportive?

How are they contributing to their outcomes? What small tweaks could they make in order to open doors and allow people to see what they truly have on offer? How can they become more flexible in their behaviour? Who could they model in order to access that behaviour within themselves?

Through dynamic questions, conversation, storytelling and reflection, the *Life Tweaking* cards provide opportunities for people to identify their key strengths, values, priorities and next steps. As they say, 'Life is like a box of chocolates', and I hope that people discover new and wonderful flavours in each other and themselves through the *Life Tweaking* cards!

Donna McGrory
Life Coach

COACHING THROUGH A STRENGTHS-BASED LENS

Coaching, like counselling and therapy, is essentially a conversation. There are no hard and fast rules that define the nature of a coaching conversation. The content, structure and processes of a coaching conversation will reflect the values, beliefs and life experiences of the participants.

People seeking coaching may come because of a perceived problem in their workplace, an issue in their personal lives or some difficulties in their relationships. Or they may not.

One significant marketing advantage of coaching over therapy is that coaching does not automatically imply that a problem exists. Someone might seek coaching simply because they want to perform better in the workplace, to know themselves better, to feel more successful, to be more confident in their parenting, to have deeper, more meaningful relationships or to help make plans and decisions. These may equally be reasons to seek counselling or therapy, however the word 'counselling' carries the assumption in most people's minds of a significant problem for which professional expertise is needed.

What transpires within a coaching conversation, however, will still be significantly determined by the coach's own assumptions and theoretical orientation. There are any number of different models that coaches can adopt to suit their own values and preferences. These different models will shape the nature of the coaching

conversation through the style and content of the questions that are asked and the way the session is structured.

Each of the fifty *Life Tweaking* cards features two questions—that is, one hundred questions contained in the whole set. These are but a few of the infinite number of questions that might surface in any coaching conversation. (Please see the section called ‘The Art of Questioning’ later in this booklet for information about the questioning styles contained in the cards.)

The Strengths Approach

The questions featured in the cards reflect a particular stance or approach to working with others known as ‘strengths-based’ practice. The strengths approach is a model of working with others designed to celebrate and mobilise the strengths of the client, and uncover their hopeful possibilities for the future.

Strengths-based coaching and solution-focused therapy share a number of beliefs:

- ‘Clients’ deserve to be treated with utmost respect and are free to make their own decisions.
- We do not have to be shaped by problems; it is often more useful to focus on hopes and preferred futures rather than deficits and issues.
- Being able to identify, mobilise and celebrate strengths can be more useful than assessing and diagnosing problems.
- Everyone has strengths and resources that are the foundations for building preferred futures.

- Coaching and solution-focused and narrative therapy invite the 'client' to tell their unique story in a way that can allow them to think differently and to reconstruct or 're-story' their world.
- The 'client' is the expert on themselves. The role of the coach or therapist is to build a relationship in which it is safe to ask questions to build or enhance this expertise.
- Noticing what is working, making small adjustments ('tweaks') and taking small next steps can be more useful than searching for (or waiting for) large, dramatic transformations.

Life Tweaking cards are not intended as an assessment or diagnostic tool, or a definitive model for service delivery. They are designed to generate curiosity, gently challenge and build anyone's pictures of their preferred future. The creators and publishers of *Life Tweaking* hope this resource will open up some novel insights for any coach or client, irrespective of their theoretical model or world view.



'The strengths approach is a model of working with others designed to celebrate and mobilise the strengths of the client, and uncover their hopeful possibilities for the future.'

GOING AHEAD IN TWEAKS AND BOUNDS

Central to all models of life coaching is the belief that people have a capacity to change their own lives. This capacity can be diminished or constrained by many factors, both internal and external to the person. Change can come from many different places, sometimes surprising, unanticipated and out-of-the-blue. At other times, the impetus for change might be right before our eyes if we can only look keenly enough or from a different perspective.

Values, understanding and curiosity

While the key catalysts of change can be hard to script there are some recurrent themes. Firstly, discovering one's unique set of values is important. What is really important to me?

Secondly, understanding both ourselves and others is important. As Donna said in the section called 'From the Coach' earlier, one of Franklin Covey's habits of highly effective people is 'Seek first to understand'. Can we say we have achieved real understanding of ourselves—who I actually am? Can we really claim understanding of others when we so often carry around huge sets of assumptions? Such questions are worth revisiting along the way.

Thirdly, the antidote to living life through untested assumptions is curiosity. What do we question and wonder about? What intrigues, challenges, annoys and mystifies us?

One thing emerged clearly from the many animated discussions that took place around the development table for *Life Tweaking*; we all agreed that values, understanding and curiosity are fundamental catalysts of change and ingredients of coaching. It is no surprise, then, that we have tried to bring these themes alive in the *Life Tweaking* card set.

How the light gets in

Leonard Cohen sings in his song *Anthem*: ‘There is a crack in everything. That’s how the light gets in’.

Life Tweaking is based on the belief that small cracks or tweaks can be just as transformative as the huge seismic shifts for which we sometimes yearn. For every blinding conversion such as the Apostle Paul’s on the road to Damascus, there may be innumerable ‘sparkling moments’—illuminated by shafts of light penetrating through little cracks.

These cards are one way of building small cracks in the traditions and routines that constrain our lives. Some of our habits can lock us into patterns of behaviour that are limiting and unfulfilling, and others can lock us out of feelings of success and satisfaction. These habits can be quite entrenched. Walls can seem impenetrable. But cracks can appear if we continue to ask useful, gently-challenging questions. As David Cooper-Rider, one of the developers of Appreciative Inquiry, has said, ‘Humans grow towards the questions they persistently ask’.

Just as cracks can be small and seemingly insignificant, so too can be the events that prompt us to change. Sometimes in our search for change we imagine that the impetus has to be big. We can

tend to think that to shift the inertia we feel, the change has to be a 360-degree turn or a cataclysmic event such as a meteor hitting earth or a tsunami. Sometimes the term 'life coaching' implies such a seismic shift.

Not a tsunami but a small step

Strengths-based practice is ultimately very minimalist. It suggests that our preferred futures may not require an earthquake or tsunami but might be found on our doorsteps with the strengths and resources we already have at our disposal. A strengths-based world view values simplicity. But simple is not simplistic nor is it necessarily easy.

For people wanting to experience change in their lives, *Life Tweaking* cards can open up conversations, in perhaps some novel ways, about what's important, what we understand and what we are curious about. When feeling stuck or oppressed by the size of issues that confront us, a little light can be invaluable; perhaps we need to look for, and celebrate, the tiny cracks when we find them.

Life Tweaking is not a prescription for living. It is not a road map or an ideology. It does not suggest that one should think or act in any particular way. It is not a curriculum, a philosophy, a model or a framework.

The one hundred questions contained in the complete set of *Life Tweaking* cards are intended to be used simply for noticing and opening up the cracks. They promote curiosity, not to celebrate the coach as any sort of messianic figure, nor as part of an assessment exercise whose aim is to apply convenient diagnostic

labels, but rather, to suggest a range of new insights and possibilities that otherwise might be overlooked.

While big changes can certainly emerge from using the cards, the authors hope that you will find some of the suggested tweaks useful and transformative in quiet and simple ways.

We purposefully called our coaching cards *Life Tweaking* to highlight the significance of small changes—baby steps, if you will. These small changes can be the cracks where the light comes through, and small cracks can create momentous change.

One of the authors of *Life Tweaking* has a love of dry stone walls and spends as much leisure time as possible building them. Near where he lives in Central Victoria is a granite quarry. One time-honoured way of quarrying stone is to hammer small wooden wedges into cracks or tiny holes that have been bored into the stone. The wedges and cracks are then soaked with water and left over night. On frosty nights the water expands and the rock sheers off without needing explosives.

If the *Life Tweaking* cards need an appropriate metaphor for small but powerful change, is there a better one?

Small tweaks—like cracks with a little water—can shift heavy loads.



‘For people wanting to experience change in their lives, *Life Tweaking* cards can open up conversations, in perhaps some novel ways...’

THE ART OF QUESTIONS

Questions are an essential component in the kit bags of coaches, counsellors, trainers, psychologists, social workers—and almost anyone who works educationally or therapeutically with others. They are certainly part of building a rich inner life for any individual. Not only can questions facilitate learning and reflection, but they can be catalytic in so many other ways.

There are rhetorical questions, questions that fulfil a social function and questions that are really an excuse for giving advice or even hurling an insult. Questions can be funny, unexpected, seemingly insignificant, intriguing, unanswerable and ... just plain annoying. Take, for example, the question emanating from the back seats of cars all over the nation: 'Are we there yet?'

However, the right question at the right time can open up many possibilities for change and growth, as well as fun and play. Such questions can flip us into a different perspective. They can cause us to reflect, examine, ruminate, ponder and contemplate. They can challenge us, make us angry, help us open up to new possibilities and develop whole new skill sets.

In many ways questions can be so much more interesting than answers. We have all heard the cliché that hidden within a question are the keys to the answer. Often it is not so much an answer that is sought, but a next step or a fresh perspective. For this reason, perhaps the word 'response' is a more useful one than 'answer'.

Some questions might even be described as ‘living questions’. These are the questions we are drawn to return to. Some of these stay with us for years and even a lifetime—eliciting different responses at different times. These recurring questions may be the ‘big’ ones such as, ‘Who am I?’ and ‘What is the purpose of my life?’ Or they may be seemingly trivial, yet nevertheless, frequent visitors such as, ‘What on earth am I going to wear?’

Altogether, there are one hundred questions contained in the *Life Tweaking* cards. These questions have been worked and re-worked during the two years of development. Each question has been placed under the microscope and, well, questioned! Many questions have appeared on the list but may not have made the final cut for a variety of reasons. In examining and re-examining the questions, we asked ourselves such questions as:

- If you can only ask two questions on each topic, which two questions will they be?
- Do the questions cover enough of the core territory you would expect to find in many coaching conversations?
- What, if any, are the assumptions behind the questions?
- Is there enough variety represented in the questions?
- What repetition are we noticing?
- Is there the right mix of tone, for example, serious and whimsical?
- Is this question easily understood?
- Is this question likely to open up useful conversations?

- Is this question respectful? Does it avoid stereotypes and labels?
- Is the language simple and natural? Does it avoid jargon?
- Are there enough invitations for storytelling?
- Have we included some surprising, intriguing and left-field questions?

In creating the questions for *Life Tweaking*, we wanted to ensure a rich mix of questioning forms. Below is a list of the kinds of questions you will find.

Audience Questions: Gathering supporters and witnesses. Who will notice your effort and progress? Who will celebrate with you when the goal is achieved? What would a trusted person say was one of your strengths?

Miracle Questions: Imagine a miracle has occurred overnight while you slept, what is different? (There can be many different versions of the miracle question.)

Picture of the Future Questions: Painting a concrete picture of goals. What does the desired outcome look like? What do you want to do more of? You can use time frames for goal-setting for example, one week, one month, five years.

Video Questions: If we filmed your family (team, classroom, you and so on) on a good day or a slightly better day, or even the best day possible, what would we see?

'What if...' Questions: Fantasy through to smallest possibilities.

Exceptions Questions: When the problem is slightly less severe or gone altogether, how are things different?

Strengths Questions: Noticing and building past, present and future strengths, accessing and sharing strengths and resources with others. This includes questions such as ‘What are your strengths?’ and ‘What strengths can you bring to this situation?’

Award Questions: If you won an award, or there was an article published in the newspaper about you, what would you like to be acknowledged for?

Story Questions: ‘Can you tell a story about ...?’ Inviting storytelling, possibly by using images, objects, topics, sentence starters or other prompts such as ‘BWF’: Best/Worst/Funniest

Metaphor Questions: Inviting the naming and describing of experiences and feelings via metaphors such as ‘If you are a car, who is in the driver’s seat?’ If this problem is like a flea in your ear, what would it take to swat it away?

Scaling Questions: Using numerical or visual scales to measure change over time e.g. measuring creativity, stress levels or emotions. For example, ‘On a scale of one to ten where one is peaceful and 10 is very agitated, where are you right now?’

Externalising Questions: Questions that separate the emotion or problem from the person, for example, sadness as a dark cloud, anxiety as a monkey on one’s back, an emotion pushing us around, a blanket of stillness embracing us.



‘The right question at the right time can open up many possibilities for change and growth, as well as fun and play.’

Blink Questions: Surprising, left-field questions that boggle the mind or flip us into another perspective. For example, ‘If there was a movie made about this, who would play you?’ ‘What if you decided to smile internally all day today, no matter what?’ ‘What if you are actually doing really well?’ ‘What would a mountain/the rain say about this?’

Memory Questions: Questions about past memories, experiences, strengths, strategies, sayings, smells, holidays, houses, pets, challenges, triumphs and achievements.

Hero Questions: People, characters, qualities you admire—sportspersons, family members, celebrities, animals, things in nature, cartoon characters, historical figures. For example, ‘Who do you know who does this really well?’

Kaizen Style Questions: Questions which support continuous improvement through small and incremental steps. Kaizen questions focus on breaking down the larger goal into smaller and more manageable steps. For example, ‘What is one more thing?’ ‘What is the next small step?’

Chunking Up Questions: In Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP), ‘chucking-up’ refers to moving to more abstract or general pieces of information. For example, ‘For what purpose do you want this?’, ‘What’s your overall intention?’ These types of questions help to create a vision and to clarify the person’s broader sense of where they are at.

Chunking Down Questions: In NLP ‘chunking-down’ means moving to more specific or detailed information. For example, ‘What is an example of this?’ What? Who? Where specifically? These types of questions are used to come up with solutions and to pin point exactly what is happening.

More Great Generic Questions: Each *Life Tweaking* card features a topic (or value) and two questions about that topic. Of course, these are not the only questions that can be asked about that topic, nor are they necessarily the most appropriate questions to ask in every situation. Deciding on what questions to ask is an important skill that rests with those using the cards. Over time, most therapists, counsellors and coaches develop a set of favourite questions they like to use in almost every session. The authors of *Life Tweaking* hope that the one hundred questions presented in the cards will enhance practitioners’ questioning repertoires. At the very least we hope the questions on the cards will be a useful starting point and that people will be inspired to think of additional or alternate questions they would like to explore in relation to the topics.

In addition to the questions on the cards (which are specific to the individual topics) here are some generic questions that can be asked in relation to any topic:

1. What does this mean to you?
2. What are you willing to do for this?
3. What is the first step towards creating more of this in your life?
4. When does this get in the way?
5. What else?

For your reference, these great generic questions are printed on the inside back cover of this booklet.

THE COMPLETE ARRAY OF CARDS

Achievement

- What is your proudest achievement?
- How do you acknowledge success?

Adventure

- What has been your biggest adventure?
- What's next?

Balance

- How do you bring balance to your life?
- When do you feel off balance?

Challenge

- What challenge would you like to take on?
- What is testing you most right now?

Change

- What's just around the corner?
- What changes would you like to make?

Communication

- What is good communication?
- How might you improve your communication?





Community

- What communities are you part of?

Compassion

- What acts of kindness have touched you?

Confidence

- When are you most confident?

Control

- When is being in control important to you?

Courage

- When have you been surprised by your courage?

Creativity

- When are you at your creative best?

- How could you invite more creativity into your life?

Life
speaking

Community

- What communities are you part of?
- How do you participate?

Compassion

- What acts of kindness have touched you?
- When do you struggle to find compassion?

Confidence

- When are you most confident?
- When are you less confident?

Control

- When is being in control important to you?
- When could you let go a little more?

Courage

- When have you been surprised by your courage?
- How could courage be useful to you now?

Creativity

- When are you at your creative best?
- How could you invite more creativity into your life?

Determination

- When have you refused to give up?
- How do you maintain your determination?

Energy

- How do you know when your energy is running out?
- How do you refuel?

Fairness

- If you could correct an injustice, what would it be?
- When have you stood up for fairness?

Family

- Is your family getting enough of you?
- What does your family do well?

Feedback

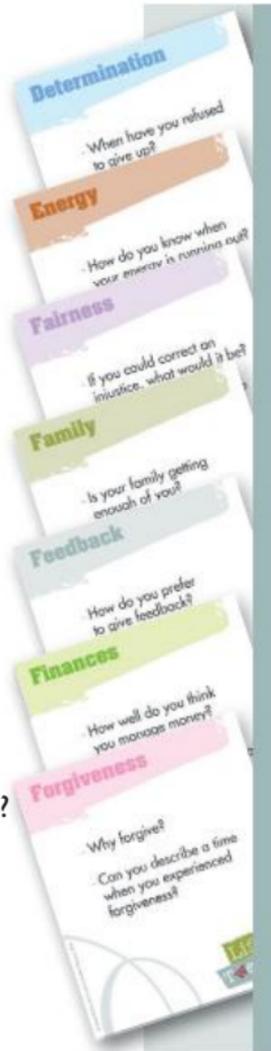
- How do you prefer to give feedback?
- How do you prefer to receive feedback?

Finances

- How well do you think you manage money?
- What would you do if you had a large windfall?

Forgiveness

- Why forgive?
- Can you describe a time when you experienced forgiveness?





Freedom

- When do you feel free?

Generosity

- Who inspires you with their generosity?

Goals

- What are your goals?

Gratitude

- What are you thankful for?

Happiness

- When have you experienced a moment of happiness?

Health

- When do you feel most healthy?

Humour

- What makes you laugh?
- When has humour been useful?

Life
Treating

Freedom

- When do you feel free?
- When do you feel stuck?

Generosity

- Who inspires you with their generosity?
- How might you be more generous with yourself?

Goals

- What are your goals?
- What will it take to achieve your goals?

Gratitude

- What are you thankful for?
- How do you express gratitude?

Happiness

- When have you experienced a moment of happiness?
- What brings you happiness right now?

Health

- When do you feel most healthy?
- How do you manage stress?

Humour

- What makes you laugh?
- When has humour been useful?

Job Satisfaction

- How important is job satisfaction to you?
- How could you increase your job satisfaction?

Leadership

- Is there a leader who inspires you?
- How would others describe your leadership style?

Learning

- What would you like to learn?
- How do you learn best?

Loyalty

- What are you loyal to?
- Have you ever been loyal to something and then changed your mind?

Meaning

- What is meaningful to you?
- What is not important to you?

Privacy

- What areas of your life are private?
- How can privacy be protected?

Purpose

- Where are you heading?
- What legacy would you like to leave behind?





Relationships

- What relationships are most important to you?

Relaxation

- How do you know when it is time to relax?

Resilience

- When have you been resilient?

Respect

- How do you earn respect?

Responsibility

- What responsibilities do you enjoy?

Risks

- Are there any risks you would like to take?

Roles

- What are some of your key roles?

- How do you manage when roles clash?

Life
Tweaking

Relationships

- What relationships are most important to you?
- How do you build relationships?

Relaxation

- How do you know when it is time to relax?
- How do you relax?

Resilience

- When have you been resilient?
- How do you get through tough times?

Respect

- How do you earn respect?
- How do you show respect?

Responsibility

- What responsibilities do you enjoy?
- What responsibilities do you struggle with?

Risks

- Are there any risks you would like to take?
- What's stopping you?

Roles

- What are some of your key roles?
- How do you manage when roles clash?

Security

- How secure do you feel in your life right now?
- How important is security to you?

Self-discovery

- What three words would you use to describe yourself?
- What aspects of yourself would you like to explore further?

Service

- How do you give back?
- What are your unique gifts?

Strengths

- What would your friends say are your key strengths?
- What strengths would you like to develop further?

Support

- How do you show your support?
- Who is there for you?

Teamwork

- When have you experienced good team work?
- What do you contribute to your teams?

Time

- Do you manage to meet your priorities?
- If you had more time, what would you do with it?





Trust

- How do you know when to trust?

Vision

- What is your most hopeful picture of the future?

Work

- What is the most important work you do?
- What changes would you like to make in your work?

Life
Talking

Trust

- How do you know when to trust?
- How do you build trust?

Vision

- What is your most hopeful picture of the future?
- How might your vision for the future affect others?

Work

- What is the most important work you do?
- What changes would you like to make in your work?

GONE TWEAKING: IDEAS FOR GETTING STARTED

There are no set ways of using the *Life Tweaking* cards. We encourage anyone who discovers the cards to invent ways of using them that are respectful and useful. We hope that people will create their own activities or rituals to open up rich conversations – both within themselves and with others.

But no hands-on conversational tool works for everyone. Each of us has our own personal taste in language, metaphor and illustrative style. Even when great care is taken, a resource or activity simply may not work for a particular group or individual.

In addition, we all carry grief and loss within us and sometimes even apparently innocuous materials or topics can evoke strong emotions. Questions, with or without illustrations, can be confronting; they can give rise to unexpected memories and associations. Powerful emotions can begin to tumble out.

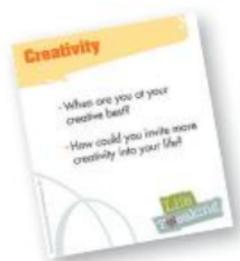
Taking care before you begin

In using any conversational prompt it is always important to be aware of this potency and potential impact. We can all be caught by unexpected revelations in our conversations. Please consider the following:

- **The facilitator's own comfort with the cards:** Does the resource work for you? Are you comfortable using it for your own reflection? Can you imagine introducing it to colleagues, family and friends?

- **Your knowledge of the materials:** Are you familiar with the cards? Do you need to use all of the cards or are there some you can leave out? Have you used cards before? What did you discover?
- **Your knowledge of your clients or audience:** Does your knowledge of the culture, age and literacy of those you are working with suggest that they will relate to the cards easily? Are you comfortable taking the risk that the cards may not work as you anticipate?
- **The safety of the setting:** Do you believe you have created a 'safe space' for people to talk openly and honestly? If you are introducing the cards to a group, what are the dynamics and mood of the group? Is there respect in the group? Is the timing right? Have ground rules such as listening and confidentiality been established? Have you thought about how you will enable people to 'pass'—that is, to feel free to decline an invitation to share or comment if they wish? What if the cards elicit strong emotions—if this happens, how will you help ensure that people are cared for during or after the session?
- **Valuing people's own interpretations:** Have you thought about how to support people's own interpretations of meaning while keeping the door open to consider other possibilities?
- **Your expectations:** How do you imagine conversations will flow? What if something different happens? Do you have an alternative plan if something isn't working?

- **Inclusiveness:** How will you help ensure that ‘quiet voices’ in a group are heard?
- **Setting the context:** Have you thought about how to best introduce the cards? Do you want to introduce them with a particular activity? Or will you simply leave the cards on a table or shelf (or a notice board) where clients might find them and begin a spontaneous conversation?
- **Time management:** Have you allocated enough time for each activity? How will you conclude an activity while ensuring that each person has had their turn to contribute?
- **Evaluation:** What do you think constitutes ‘successful’ or ‘unsuccessful’ use of the cards? How will you find out what worked for participants?
- **Follow up:** Is there any follow up that you will do with the individual or group?



‘We hope that people will create their own activities or rituals to open up rich conversations – both within themselves and with others.’

Beginning with Personal Reflection

We invite you to experiment with using the cards yourself before you try them out with others. Some questions that might work as starters are:

- Which cards have the most appeal?
- Why might this be so?
- Which cards reflect strengths am I aware of holding right now?
- Which card represents a strength or value I would like to develop more?
- Is there an event or a story that comes to mind when I think of this card?
- Which card reflects themes or values that are not important to me at this time?
- Is there a card that represents something that was important to me once but is no longer so?
- Which card reflects themes or values that I find most challenging?
- Is there a theme or question from the cards I would like to write about or reflect upon each day? Consciously incorporate this card into your day and way of being, if possible. You may wish to place the card on your desk, travel with it in your bag, put it on your fridge, or share it with your family.
- Can I use the cards to create a plan for some key areas of my life identifying some small simple steps?

Following the activities, you may want to ask yourself such questions as:

- Did I enjoy using the cards?
- What did I find most useful about them?
- Which cards and questions had the greatest relevance?
- Which had the greatest impact?
- Were there any surprises?
- Would I be confident to introduce them to others in my coaching role?

If you found the cards and questions enjoyable and useful to use, perhaps there is a way to incorporate the cards into simple daily rituals such as:

- Starting or finishing the day with a *Life Tweaking* card or question
- Meditating on this
- Writing about your reflections on this
- Considering how your responses to this theme or question may have changed over time
- Wondering how others would imagine you would answer the question
- Placing the card deck on your desk and randomly choosing a card each day to remind yourself of the tweaks you may want to make.

Once you have used the cards yourself, and considered all the factors involved in creating a respectful setting, it is time to think about how you will invite participants to engage with the cards. While there are endless possible activities, they all fall into two simple strategies—‘Spread, Scan and Select’ and ‘Serendipity’.

The three Ss: Spread, Scan and Select

Because there is a lot to absorb in these 50 cards, time must be allowed for participants to become familiar with the whole set. This can be spread over a number of sessions. There are several ways this process can be started, keeping in mind that it is important for participants to feel safe whether the conversation is a one-on-one meeting or a group discussion.

The first suggestion is for the 50 cards to be spread out with the topic side upmost and readable. Participants can be asked to choose those particular topics or values that are most relevant to them at present. A certain number of cards might be specified, commonly between one and five. These cards can then be used to build a conversation using such questions as:

- Why did you choose these cards?
- Which questions really intrigue you?
- Which ones are most useful right now?
- Are some questions or topics more challenging than others?
- Are there any questions you are not comfortable answering?
Can you say why?

- Are these the sort of questions you might have expected to be asked about that value or topic?
- Are there other questions you would want to consider? How would you answer these questions?

Rather than restricting the use of the cards to face-to-face coaching conversations, the *Life Tweaking* cards are very effective tools for reflecting between sessions as well. The client can use the cards in their own time to build on the conversation they had with their coach by choosing cards that reflect themes that have emerged after the session, or to follow up on what was discussed during the session. These questions, together with the thoughts and responses they generate can be written down and brought to subsequent sessions as reminders or prompts for further discussion.

The fourth S: Serendipity

Sometimes it can be interesting to use a random choice method as a way to introduce the cards. This can work well when the cards are numerous or complex. This can be called the 'Fourth S', which stands for 'Serendipity'.

Random choice can be as easy as shuffling the pack and placing them on a table. The card at the top of the pack is the one used to start the conversation.

Another idea is to take turns in selecting the top card from the deck and answering the questions on the card. This simple variation can enhance the equality and reciprocity in the conversation.

In a group situation the cards can simply be dealt out so that each person receives one or more cards. Alternatively, the cards can be laid out on a table face down and participants can choose their own cards at random.

Questions built around 'the fourth S' can include:

- Even though the cards you now have in your hand were not deliberately selected, do they have any particular meaning for you?
- Can you think of times when one or more of the cards in your hand have been particularly relevant in your life?
- Do these cards have any significance or special relevance for you at the moment?
- Would you have deliberately chosen these cards?
- Looking at all the cards you have in your hand, do you think they relate to each other? Are they complementary in any way?

TWEAKING YOUR IMAGINATION: MORE IDEAS FOR USING THE CARDS

Apart from always using card sets in respectful ways as outlined in the previous section, there are no set rules or manuals for how to use the cards. People say again and again that when they take the plunge and simply begin using Innovative Resources' card sets, they very naturally think of other creative activities they would like to try. Many people begin with a very simple question—such as 'Pick a card that jumps out at you for any reason'.

The purpose of this section is to offer lots of ideas for using the cards. Some of them may appeal to you exactly as they are presented, others you may want to adapt, and still others you may not wish to use at all. We hope the ideas presented here will tweak your imagination and that many other creative ideas for activities will bubble up as a result.

Goal Setting

Invite each person to think of something that is happening in their life right now that they would like to change or improve upon. Ask them to describe the situation; 'What is happening right now in this area?' Ask them to imagine that this situation is now solved, or as they wish it to be. Ask them to choose three to seven cards which would best represent how life would look, be, feel, when they have succeeded in achieving this goal.

You may like to incorporate questions such as the following:

- If you had to choose your 'Number One' card, which would it be?
- How will you know when you are on track to succeeding?
- What will be different when you achieve this goal?
- How is this situation important to you and your ideal life?
- How will you know when you get there?
- How will your world look? How will you feel? What is a small sign that the original scenario has improved?
- What do you think other people will be saying about you when you have achieved your goal?
- Where do you have influence in regards to this goal?
- What can you control?
- What comes after having achieved your goal?

You may wish to invite the client to explore the present situation in more detail with questions such as:

- What is happening that you would like to continue?
- What would you like to do differently?
- Is there anything missing now? Is there a card that represents this?
- What have you tried so far to turn this situation around?
- What have you done in the past that might help now?

- What do you believe will happen if you don't achieve this goal?
- What obstacles are in your way? How do you plan on getting around them?
- What is happening now that makes this goal so important to you?
- What would you need to believe in order for this goal to become a reality?
- Is there a card you didn't pick up that could be useful in this situation?
- Is there a card somebody important to you might suggest you pick up?
- Where are you focusing most of your energy right now in life?
- Who is there to help you?
- What is getting in your way right now?
- When does the 'theme' or key word on the card get in the way?
- What is staying the same costing you?
- What belief would you need to let go of in order to move forward?
- What belief serves you in your vision?
- What do you like about staying the same?
- What do you not like about staying the same?

- When did you decide to set this goal?
- When have you demonstrated these themes in life before or had them in your life?

Questions such as the following can be useful in creating a sense of 'options' and moving forward:

- What would somebody else do in this situation?
- What could you do if you were without fear?
- What would have to happen for you to do this?
- What would not have to happen for you to do this?
- What are you willing to do for this value?
- What else?
- What is one thing you could do today?
- What would make this fun for everyone?
- How could you do this differently?
- If you were to stretch yourself now, what would you do?
- What would you do if you knew you could not fail?
- Would it make a difference if you just do it, rather than 'tried' to do it?
- What is a belief that could support, nurture and challenge you?
- Which action is going to bring about the most change?
- When will you be ready to commit to this goal?

- What has worked in the past for you?
- Which card will need more attention?
- What is a new habit that you could start today that would help you in achieving this goal?
- When will this goal be completed?
- Who is on your team and who should you tell about your goal?
- Is there anything that you need to do before you take action?
- Is there a card that needs swapping with another card now?
- How does the world feel now that you have committed to this goal?
- What is the first step in creating more of this in your life?

Supervision

The nature and variety of the questions in *Life Tweaking* make them an ideal resource to build into supervision. They provide a different window to examine questions of professional identity and personal growth.

Supervision within human services has a number of excellent conceptual frameworks but few hands-on resources. *Life Tweaking* cards can be a useful tool to add to any supervision session. They can also be used to brighten supervision if sessions begin to feel stagnant. The questions may be slightly left-field compared to the questions commonly discussed in human services supervision, and so they have the capacity to inform and enliven faltering sessions.

In addition, the nature of the questions gently challenges assumptions and habits that may be at play—a useful outcome of effective supervision.

Life Tweaking cards can be introduced within supervision sessions by inviting the supervisee to choose a relevant card or question. They can also be introduced by random choice to add a light-hearted touch. But perhaps one of the most useful applications of the cards is as a reflective tool between sessions. Supervisees can be asked to choose cards by any method and consider their answers between sessions, perhaps using journalling or creative writing.

You may wish to invite the supervisee to pick cards based on questions such as the following:

- What strengths do you bring to your practice?
- What first attracted you to your work?
- Where are you at in your professional journey right now?
- Is there a strong theme in your work right now?
- How do you keep going in tough times?
- Since we last met, what have you focussed on most in your work?
- What would you like to do more of?
- What strengths do you notice in a client or team member?
- What do you find challenging?

- What are some key factors in your planning for the future?
- Who do you know who does this well?
- Is there a question or topic you find challenging/mysterious/scary/inspiring?
- Is there a card that can represent a story about your week?
- Imagining yourself as a supervisor—is there a card you would want to be a key feature of how you do things?
- What you will take away from this session?

Conversations with Family and Friends

Ask a family member to choose a card for you for the day.

- How will you practise this during the day?
- What will you do differently?
- How will you know you are doing it?

Then you can let them know how it went:

- What exactly did you do to practise this?
- How was it? Was it challenging or easy?
- How did you feel at the end of the day?
- What did you learn or notice?
- Did others notice any difference?
- If you were to practise this again tomorrow, would you do it differently?

- How would your life be if you practised more of this strength or value on a regular basis?
- What do you think might change?

For a different type of conversation around the dinner table the *Life Tweaking* cards can be chosen in any number of ways to spark discussion. You might use the two questions on a single card to invite everyone to share their individual answers. Or each person might choose a card for themselves or another family member to answer.

To be daringly different, perhaps the cards could be introduced at a party to see what answers are offered? At birthday parties, dinners, farewells or award ceremonies, people can be asked to choose a card to talk about something they admire in the person being celebrated or a participant at the event.



‘The nature and variety of the questions in *Life Tweaking* makes them an ideal resource to build into supervision.’

Teams and Groups

Life Tweaking cards can be integrated into any number of group work activities. Inviting members of a group or team to discuss important questions in a safe context can be a useful team-building exercise. Questions about values, hopes and beliefs can provide new insights into the lives of those we work alongside, especially when being busy so often constrains rich conversations. Even members of a team who have worked together for years and who have developed trust and goodwill along the way, can be surprised at the new insights that they gain about their colleagues and themselves.

Putting carefully chosen questions on cards can bring conversations alive in all kinds of unexpected ways and people are often surprised by how quickly the conversation can open up. Perhaps the creative and sometimes playful activities associated with card sets (such as sorting, selecting, shuffling and dealing) helps create an atmosphere of ease where meaningful conversations and storytelling can take place?

Here are just a few ideas for using *Life Tweaking* cards in teams:

- Each person is invited to introduce the person next to them by selecting one card and describing when and how their colleague displays this quality. A story may be used to elaborate. The person selected may then choose to answer the questions on the card to further elaborate on the story.

- Acknowledging people, noticing their strengths, and thanking people are very important factors in building relationship or teams. One very simple and delightful way to practise this is to invite participants to 'gift' a card to the person next to them. Each person is asked to describe how their colleague 'does' this unique strength within the team environment, and how this contributes to the team.
- Place the cards face down and invite each participant to choose a card, or shuffle and deal cards to participants. Invite participants to talk about what role they think this card plays in their team. Are there particular times when this is a key value in a team? Is it a key value in your team? How well do you think your team demonstrates this value? Would you like to see your team demonstrate this value even more? If so, what are some key things we would see you or your team doing when you are demonstrating this value? What cards show strengths you believe you bring to the team? Thinking about a particular project your team is working on (or about to undertake), what cards show strengths you think will be very important in making the project a success?



'Life Tweaking' cards can be integrated into any number of group work activities.'

- Here is a role play you may want to try with a group that is willing to engage with an imaginary scenario. Each person picks a card, and a challenging scenario is given to the group. Each person is invited to play out the key word (or value) on their card when solving the problem. Please note that the card has been picked at random so the value may be unfamiliar to the person. Essential to the game is a 'director' of the scene who helps everyone to stay in character. The purpose of the exercise is to 'walk in somebody else's shoes' and to experience how it feels to look at a situation from a different perspective. As it is an entirely fictional game, participants are invited to answer the questions on their card with fictional stories that portray this theme or value as the number one thing in their lives.
- At the end of the game, participants can discuss what it was like to put this value first in their lives by using such questions as: How did it feel to place such high importance on this value? Was this familiar or unfamiliar territory? Is this something you actually value in your life? Do you think the role play will affect your views in any way?
- Another way to introduce participants to each other in a fun and yet meaningful way is a variation on speed dating. Working in pairs, participants are given one minute each to answer the questions on a card (randomly chosen or otherwise) before they move on to another participant and talk about a different card.

Storytelling, Journaling and Creative Writing

Storytelling can take place in groups, in pairs or in a solitary way via creative writing or journaling.

- Choose a card. Can you tell or write a story about a time when the key word on your card featured as a theme in your life? Can you remember the first time or the last time you experienced this theme?
- Place the cards face down and randomly choose three to six cards. Or shuffle and deal the cards. Can you tell or write a story using all of these cards?
- A variation is to leave the ending open and randomly choose another card that will give you clues to the ending of the story.
- Do you think the key themes on these cards are related? What was your experience of linking all these cards together in one story?
- Choose a card. Can you tell or write a story about what happens when this theme seems to disappear from your own life, or the life of your family, community, workplace, or world?
- What actions could you take to 'invite' this theme back?
- Can you tell a story using the cards about your best, worst and funniest experiences today or this week?
- Can you tell a story about someone you admire using the cards?

- Pick two or three cards and imagine them as cartoon characters. Write a character profile for each card (you may even want to draw the character). Can you give a name to each character?
- Write an imaginary conversation these characters might have with each other. What do they each have to say to each other? What can they learn from each other?
- How would your characters answer the questions on 'their' card?
- Each person randomly selects three cards and lays them out on the table in front of them. They then think of a scenario or aspect of their lives that they would like to strengthen. They are then invited to tell a story beginning with 'Once upon a time' and ending with 'They lived happily ever after'. One card is for the beginning, one the middle and one the end of the story. They may wish to verbally share these stories in groups of two, or write them in a journal and share some with the entire group at the end.
- Another storytelling or creative writing technique is to invite participants to choose a card, again randomly or intentionally, and describe how they would have answered the questions at a particular age, say, 17 or 25 or...? Invite participants to speak about how their answers have changed over time. This can be a different yet powerful way of writing a memoir or tracing their life story.
- Select a card each day. Use it as a theme for reflection and writing in your journal.
- Choose a card and write a poem inspired by it.

Scaling

Scaling is a widely used technique within strengths-based approaches. For example, a worker may ask a client to rank a feeling or theme according to its perceived intensity or importance. This can be done, for example, on a scale of one to ten, where one is very mild or not important at all, and ten is very strong or very important.

Visual scaling adds another dimension by providing a graphic way of rating one's response to a question, a statement or the experience of an event. Many visual scales are in common use such as a thermometer rising or falling to measure an emotion (such as anger), or to gauge funds being raised by a community. (Please see *The Scaling Kit* published by St Luke's Innovative Resources for a range of other simple, digitally interactive scaling tools).

Life Tweaking cards can be used to rate an organisation's performance in the particular domain indicated by the key word on the card. This rating can be used to assess the organisation's journey over time, or as part of a 'snapshot evaluation' of where the organisation is at right now. Taking the pulse of the organisation in this way can be a valuable part of planning for the future.

Questions that might be asked for scaling or rating include:

- How important do you think this theme is to your organisation?
- How often does this theme come up in conversations?

- How would you rate your organisation's performance in this area?
- How do you think your rating would differ from other staff?
- Is the rating you give your organisation now, different from when you first joined? In what ways?
- How are your organisation's priorities different from, or similar to, your own?

Interviews

Life Tweaking can be used as a tool for creating fresh and meaningful ways of opening up lively conversations with interviewees. You may wish to begin with spreading the cards on a table and inviting the interviewee to choose three to seven cards that best describe themselves.

- What does each of the cards you have selected mean to you?
- Were these themes important in a previous job?
- How can these assist you in this job you are applying for today?
- Is there a card that you didn't pick up, that you think could also assist you in this job?
- Which card represents something you find challenging?

THE DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Donna McGrory

Donna is a life coach and workplace business development trainer and facilitator. In her 20s she travelled extensively throughout Europe supporting her husband, Scott, to achieve his lifelong dream of winning an Olympic gold medal in cycling. During this time in Europe, Donna taught both vocational and business English. This is when Donna decided her path was in teaching as she loved connecting with people from all walks of life.

Upon returning to Australia, Donna undertook a training and assessment course and began delivering workplace business and retail training. After three years she decided to add to her skill set by becoming an accredited life coach at the Coaching Institute in Melbourne.

Donna has worked as a coach with individuals, groups and organisations in a wide variety of settings including IGA supermarkets, Tarrengower Prison and Mazda. More recently her coaching skills have been put to good use with the training and coaching of people experiencing long-term unemployment, including delivering a Life Skills program. Donna has also designed a series of training modules for Certificate I in Work Education for people with disability. Her role sees her mentoring and training disability support workers to offer training and assessment certification in their workplaces.

In all her coaching and training interactions Donna aims to engage with people through storytelling, metaphor and quality questions in order for them to raise their level of self-awareness, resilience and wisdom. The art of coaching has enabled Donna to better connect with people and see them for the whole and beautiful individuals they are.

Donna lives in Central Victoria, Australia with Scott, their children Maddy and Leilani ... and their dog Molly.

Russell Deal

Russell is the founder and former creative director of St Luke's Innovative Resources. He has an academic background in social work, psychology and education. Initially, he worked as a social worker in the Prisons Division of Victoria's Social Welfare Department (as it was called at the time) before becoming a social work educator and then joining St Luke's Anglicare in 1984.

In the early 1990s Russell became interested in use of hands-on tools for building conversations with clients. This led to the creation of *Strength Cards* – a set of 48 illustrated cards that named possible strengths people might identify as resources for facing challenges in their lives.

In 1994 he was awarded the Anita Morawetz Scholarship through the University of Melbourne for innovation in family therapy research. Russell used this scholarship to research how practitioners used *Strength Cards* and other 'therapeutic artefacts' to build conversations. Since that time he has created or

published over 50 'seriously optimistic, conversation-building tools' through Innovative Resources, and delivered hundreds of highly interactive workshops demonstrating their use.

In 2013 he was the recipient of an Order of Australia Medal for services to social work education and the community.

Russell is married to Annie, has two children and two grandchildren. He retains a fascination for the power that visual metaphor has to transform people's lives.

Karen Bedford

Karen has a Master's degree in linguistics and literature, a Diploma of Teaching and a Diploma of Counselling Psychology. Karen has taught editing and writing at tertiary level, and has worked as the managing editor of Innovative Resources for many years. She has been involved in creating many strengths-based card sets, picture books and books for educators, counsellors, social workers and managers including editing seminal books on strengths-based practice *The Strengths Approach*, *Communities of Hope* and *Building Community*.

Karen is the author of the book *The Uses of Sadness* (Allen and Unwin, Sydney, 2009). She has facilitated workshops based on this book and on the use of strengths-based tools for a wide variety of organisations. She facilitated a therapeutic creative writing program that resulted in the publication of a book of participants' writing called *The Treasure Trove* (Open Place, Melbourne, 2013).

ABOUT INNOVATIVE RESOURCES

Innovative Resources is part of Anglicare Victoria, one of Australia's leading community service organisations. Anglicare Victoria is a not-for-profit organisation providing a range of child, youth, family and community services throughout Victoria and New South Wales.

Our Publishing

Innovative Resources publishes card sets, stickers, books, picture books, digital and tactile materials to enrich conversations about feelings, strengths, relationships, stories and goals. Our resources bring colour and creativity to therapeutic and educational settings all over the world. They are used by counsellors, teachers, trainers, social workers, managers, mentors, parents, teams, supervisors ... and anyone who works with people to create positive change.

Our Training

Innovative Resources also offers highly-engaging training in 'strengths-based' approaches to working with people where change arises out of a focus on strengths, respect and hopeful possibilities. We also offer 'tools' workshops on ways of using our resources to invigorate human service work. Our workshops honour different learning styles and the power of visual images to open up storytelling and other ways to truly connect with children and adults alike.

www.innovativeresources.org

More Great Questions

ABOUT ANY TOPIC

1. What does this mean to you?
2. What are you willing to do for this?
3. What is the first step towards creating more of this in your life?
4. When does this get in the way?
5. What else?

Life
Tweaking

This unique card set names 50 key topics and 100 important questions that go to the core of coaching conversations.

Life Tweaking cards adopt a strengths-based approach to coaching conversations that:

- looks at strengths and resources rather than problems and deficits
- treats each person as the expert on themselves
- supports people to achieve their goals and plans
- embraces what already works
- is inherently hopeful.

Life Tweaking cards celebrate the transformative power of key questions used by life coaches, mentors, supervisors, managers, facilitators, counsellors and social workers. In this unique card set you will find questions about: Goals, Happiness, Health, Relaxation, Risks, Teamwork, Balance, Money and Determination...and many other key topics.



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*'If it is the small cracks
that let the light shine in,
perhaps it is the small
tweaks we make in our
lives that make the most
difference in the end.'*

From the preface