COACHING THE SCEPTICS: USEFUL QUESTIONS

'I don't know'

1. "This is a good place to start. Let's relax for a moment into this 'don't know' place."
2. *Simply use silence. Don't respond at all and wait calmly for their answer.*
3. "Ok, I hear that. Let me re-phrase that, then. Let's *just imagine* that you did know. Imagine you did know...what would you be thinking about?"
4. "Remember that we are just exploring possibilities...not making a plan, or committing to any action"
5. "What might seem easier, by not knowing? How might not knowing be a useful place to be with this issue/situation/challenge?"
6. "I feel that too sometimes. Let' just pause our conversation for a moment, so you can think. When you are ready, let me know what your initial thoughts are."
7. "Let's accept that is true, you don't know *(what you want to do, what to say, how to solve this issue, etc.)* Let's think a bit about what you *do* know. Tell me about that."
8. "While I can accept that you don't know, I am guessing you have done some thinking about this already. Tell me a bit about that – what have you been thinking, about this (issue/situation/person, etc.)"
9. "How is that for you – to *not know*?"
10. "How are you feeling right now, as you think about answering this question?"
11. "What if we could adjust the situation a bit, so that it was easier for you *to know* – what would you want us to think about, or change?"
12. "What is a good first step toward knowing? What might move you closer to knowing?"
13. "What is getting in the way of knowing?"
14. "What do you need to do, to find the answer? Is there anything I can do, to help you get to an answer?"
15. "So that we do not get stuck here, what is the easiest way to move forward with this?"

Animate

"You are the manager, you tell me…"

"I can tell you what I think – I am happy to do that later. Just now, I am wanting to know more about what *you* think about xxx"

"My job as your manager is to support you to do your best, and sometimes that is telling you how things need to happen. This isn't one of those times – this is a time for us to think about… *(what needs to happen, how to move something forward, how you can learn, etc.)*

"How would knowing what I think about this help you?"

"I think you know a lot more about xxx than I do, so let's start with that – I can add my thoughts"

"If we start with me telling you how to do it/etc., then I am not making the best use of the team's resources, which is my responsibility. Your thoughts/ideas are one of the team's resources."

Helping someone get 'unstuck'

"What would be the most useful question I could ask you?"

"Imagine for a moment that your issue is resolved/was a success. How did you get there?"

"What might be getting in the way of you moving things forward on this?"

"What might be being 'helped'/feel better by not moving this forward?"

"What feels like a good first step?"

"What haven't you admitted out loud yet?"

"What's the problem in one sentence?"

"Think of someone you admire at work – how would *they* move this forward/resolve this?"

What could you do, that would be a small step toward 'better'?"