Emotional questioning techniques

Building stronger client relationships

CFS 10x

Deeper relationships are better for business

For the first time, financial advisers are servicing clients across four generations, each with specific values, belief systems and goals.

How you connect and communicate with your clients is as important as the expertise and experience you bring. This is the foundation of long lasting, powerful relationships.

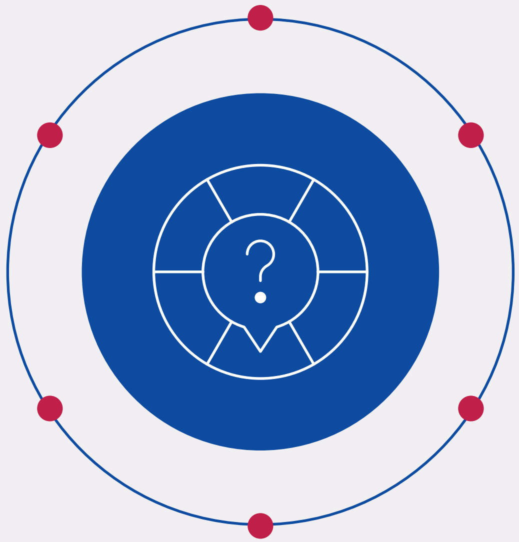
Emotional questions create connections

Building trust and connection starts with understanding your clients on a deeper level.

Emotional questioning is one of the most effective ways to move beyond transactional conversations and uncover the beliefs, values and motivations that shapes clients' decisions and behaviours.

By asking thoughtful questions, you create the foundation for a more personal, meaningful relationship while helping them feel seen and understood.

They'll help you explore things like:



Uncovering your clients' underlying emotions, values and motivations will help you build stronger emotional connections that will make the advice experience more rewarding for you both.

General questions

Have you ever felt distressed or disappointed about a financial decision you've made?

How do you feel about today's meeting?

Are there any past experiences that affect your financial decisions today?

What needs to happen in your life for you to feel happy and content?

What emotions arise when you think about providing financial stability for your loved ones now and in the future?

How did you feel about your previous adviser, and how would you like us to work together?

Retirement questions

How do you envision your life in retirement, and how does it make you feel?

How do you feel about taking proactive steps for financial wellbeing, even if it means making sacrifices?

What are your biggest fears or worries?

How would achieving your retirement goals impact your relationships with family and friends?

Have you experienced a significant life event that made you reconsider your plans? How did it affect you?

Can you recall a time you felt overwhelmed by financial decisions?

Investment questions

How do you feel when you think about leaving a financial legacy for your loved ones?

Have you ever experienced financial stress or anxiety, and how did you manage it?

Have emotional factors ever influenced decisions you've made about investments in the past?

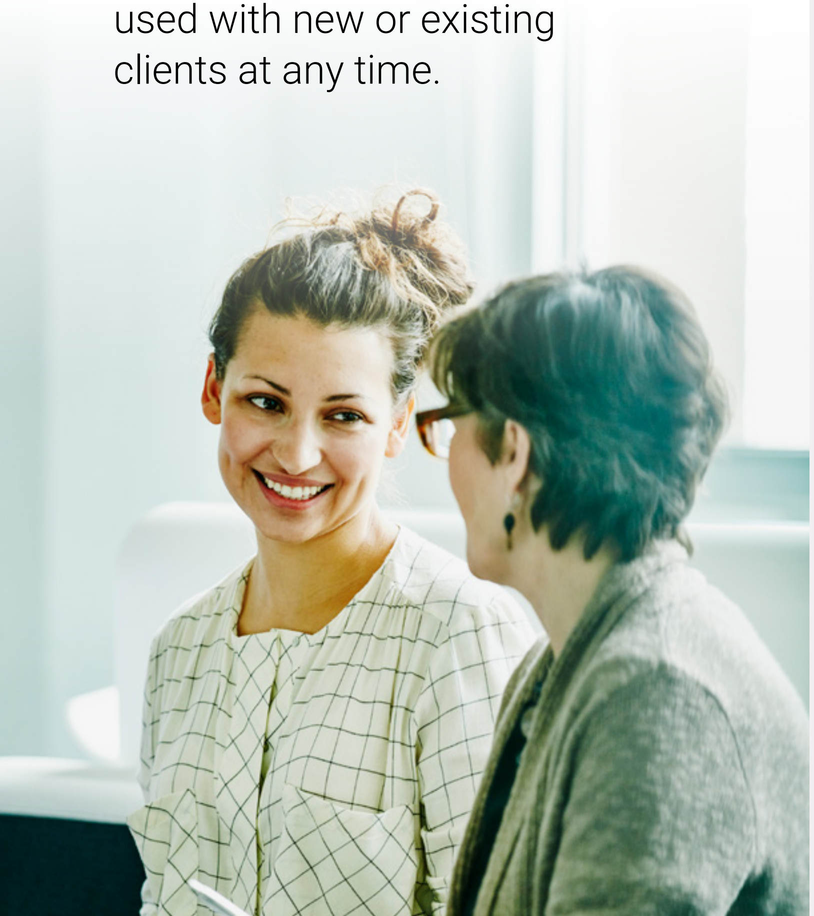
How would achieving financial independence affect your quality of life and peace of mind?

Can you recall a significant life event that influenced your attitude towards investing, and how did it affect you?

What are your hopes for financial security, and how do you see investing playing a role?

When should you use emotional questions?

Emotional questions can be used with new or existing clients at any time.



During meetings

- Open-ended questions build rapport and trust.
- Explore client's values, aspirations, fears and circumstances.
- Active listening and follow-up questions demonstrate empathy and ensure clients feel heard and understood.

During decision-making

- Understand how clients feel about different choices and potential impact on their lives.
- For couples, check the dynamics to see who makes the decisions and how they come to agreement.

Closure and next steps

- Gauge client's satisfaction.
- Check their understanding of topics discussed, and advice provided.
- Address any lingering concerns.

Active listening

Are you genuinely listening, or simply waiting for your turn to speak?

The Rule of 3

The Rule of 3 is a simple yet powerful technique to help deepen your understanding of clients. **It involves starting with an initial question and then three follow-up questions based on their response.** This approach can take practice but will help you uncover important client emotions, values and motivations.

Asking multiple questions on the same topic doesn't come naturally to everyone. It can be easy to get excited or distracted and move on, or simply not know what else to ask. But by moving on too quickly, you'll miss valuable opportunities to get to know clients on a deeper level.

Initial Question

Start with a broad, open-ended question.

Follow-Up Questions

For each initial question, ask at least three follow-up questions to explore different facets of the client's response. This helps uncover deeper insights into their emotions, values, and motivations.

Tip

The Rule of 3 is both a questioning and listening technique: without active listening, it will be difficult to know which question to ask next.

Applying the Rule of 3

You can see from this conversation that actively listening to the client's responses can lead to a deeper understanding of their needs.

Adviser: When it comes to your day-to-day finances, what sort of things are important to you?

Client: I like to keep a budget in a spreadsheet.

Adviser: 1 Great! How often do you update your budget?

Client: At the start of each year, when I get a pay rise or when my expenses change. It helps me to stay on track and not overspend.

Adviser: 2 Can you share why this kind of structure and organisation is important to you?

Client: When I was growing up, my parents weren't very good with money and we often ran out for basic things like groceries or petrol. I want to make sure I'm never in that situation.

Adviser: 3 Is there anything else you would like to do differently for your children, when it comes to how you spend your money, or your lifestyle choices?

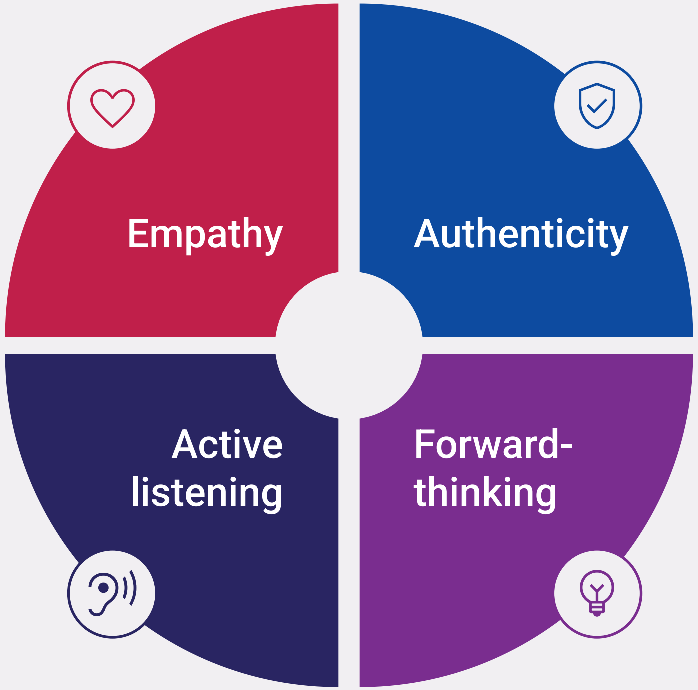
Client: Yes, as long as I know all the bills can be paid and I've got my savings as a safety net, I'd like to send them to private school from year 7 to 12.

Four traits that make all the difference

Great advice might be the core of your service, but it’s not what truly sets you apart. **It’s how you connect with people that makes all the difference.**

The ability to genuinely understand and relate to your client’s emotions and motivations. Empathy helps you see things from their perspective, fostering trust and a stronger connection.

Understanding what your client is saying, in both words and emotions, allows you to respond thoughtfully and uncover the deeper motivations and needs behind their decisions.



Being real, consistent, and trustworthy creates a safe space where clients feel comfortable sharing their goals and concerns, knowing you’re invested in their success.

Anticipating your clients’ needs and identifying opportunities or challenges before they arise shows you’re always thinking ahead and working in their best interest.

Learn more

CFS 10x partnered with client psychology and engagement expert, Kylie Denton from Performance Advisory Group, to bring you these insights and strategies.

Client experience and connection [webinar]

Achieve more with [CFS 10x]

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If you only ask surface-level questions, you’ll only get surface-level trust. Connection begins when you stop talking about money and start asking about what truly matters.

Kylie Denton