

The Coach Approach

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facilitating people, teams, and organizations forward

Powerful Questions

The Co-Active Coaching Model refers to robust, deep open-ended questions as **Powerful Questions**.

The following are examples of Powerful Questions:

Anticipation

What is possible?
What if it works exactly as you want it?
What is exciting to you about this?
What is the urge? What does your intuition tell you?

Assessment

What do you make of it?
What do you think is best?
How does it look to you?
What resonates for you?

Clarification

What do you mean?
What is the part that is not yet clear?
Can you say more?
What do you want?

Evaluation

What is the opportunity here? What is the challenge?
How does this fit with your goals?
What do you think that means?
What is your assessment?

Exploration

What part of the situation have you not explored?
What other angles can you think of?
What is just one more possibility?
What are your other options?

Learning

If your life depended on taking action, what would you do?
If you had free choice in the matter, what would you do?
If we could wipe the slate clean, what would you do?
If you had it to do over again, what would you do?

Options

What are the possibilities?
If you had your choice, what would you do?
What will happen if you do, and what will happen if you don't?
What options can you create?

Predictions

What will that get you?
Where will this lead?
What are the chances of success?

Resources

What resources do you need to help you decide?
What do you know about it now?
How do you suppose you can find out more about it?
What resources are available to you?

Summary

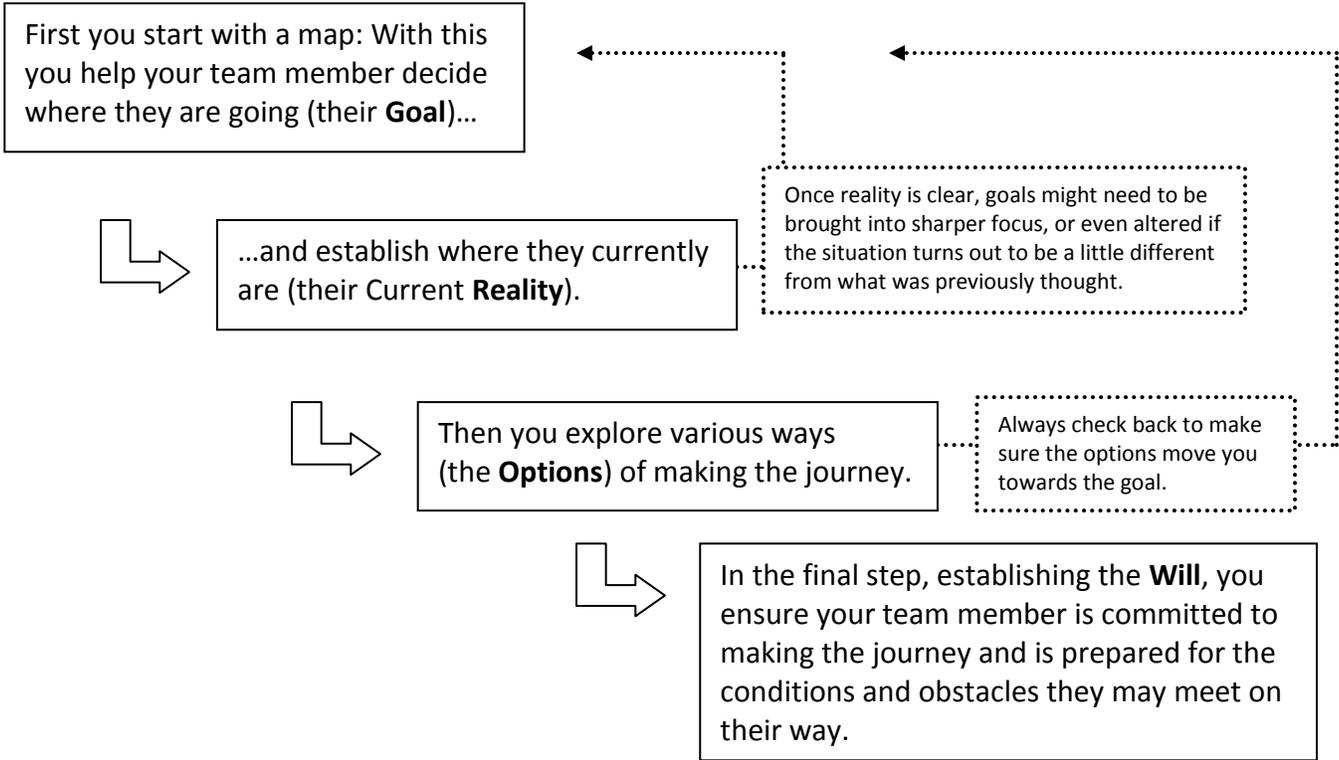
What is your conclusion?
How is this working?
What do you think this all amounts to?
How would you summarize the effort so far?



GROW Coaching Model

GROW is an acronym standing for **Goal – Current Reality – Options – Will**. The model is a simple yet powerful framework for structuring a coaching session with a team member, colleague, employee, or can be adapted to other situations as well.

A useful metaphor for the GROW model is the plan you might make for an important journey.



GROW Coaching Model

Use the following steps to structure a coaching session using the GROW model:

1. Establish the **Goal**:

- First, with your team member, you must define and agree the goal or outcome to be achieved. You should help your team member define a goal that is specific, measurable and realistic.
- In doing this, it is useful to ask questions like:
"How will you know that you have achieved that goal?"
"How will you know the problem is solved?"

2. Examine Current **Reality**:

- Next, ask your team member to describe their Current Reality. This is a very important step: Too often, people try to solve a problem without fully considering their starting point, and often they are missing some of the information they need to solve the problem effectively.
- As the team member tells you about his or her Current Reality, the solution may start to emerge. The goal might also need to be refined or further explored.
- Useful coaching questions include:
"What is happening now?"
"What, who, when, how often"
"What is the effect or result of that?"

3. Explore the **Options**:

- Once you and your team member have explored the Current Reality, it's time to explore what is possible – meaning, all the many possible options you have for solving the problem. Help your team member generate as many good options as possible, and discuss these.
- Typical questions used to establish the options are:
"What else could you do?"
"What if this or that constraint were removed?"
"What are the benefits and downsides of each option?"
"What factors will you use to weigh up the options?"

4. Establish the **Will**:

- By examining Current Reality and exploring the Options, your team member will now have a good idea of how he or she can achieve their Goal. That's great – but in itself, this may not be enough! So your final step as coach is to get you team member to commit to specific action. In so doing, you will help the team member establish his or her will and motivation.
- Useful questions:
"So what will you do now and when?" "What could stop you moving forward?"
"And how will you overcome it?" "Will this address your goal?"
"How likely is this option to succeed?" "What else will you do?"

GROW Coaching Model



Tips for using the GROW model

Tip #1: Know Your Own Role

In its traditional application, the GROW model assumes that the coach is not an expert in the "client's" situation, and therefore must act as an objective facilitator, helping the client select the best options and not offering advice or direction. However, when a leader coaches his or her team members other dynamics are in play: As a leader you will usually have some expert knowledge to offer. Also, it's your job to guide the selection of options which are best for your organization, and veto options that are harmful.

Tip #2: Practice by Coaching Yourself

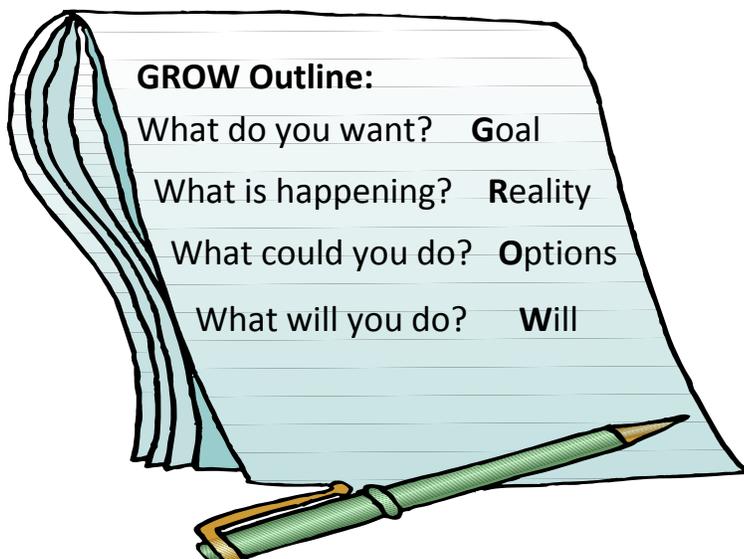
A great way to practice using the model is to address your own challenges and issues. When you are 'stuck' with something, you can use the technique to coach yourself. By practicing on your own challenges and issues, you will learn how to ask the most helpful questions.

Tip #3: Awareness and Responsibility

The goal of this coaching model is to create awareness and responsibility. Awareness is the product of focused attention, concentration, and clarity. It is knowing what is happening around you and what you are experiencing (self-awareness). In the role of coach, you are helping to raise and sustain the awareness level of your team member. Responsibility comes from choice. Actively support your team member's ownership of the actions that will lead them towards achieving their goals by not telling them what to do.

Tip #4: Ask Great Questions and Listen Well

The two most important skills for a coach and the best way to raise awareness and create responsibility are the ability to ask good questions, and effective listening. Don't ask closed questions: "Did that cause a problem?" Do ask open ones: "What affect did that have?" Listen well and let your "client" do most of the talking. Remember that silence is valuable thinking time: You don't always have to fill silence with the next question.





“Coaching is not merely a technique to be wheeled out and rigidly applied to certain prescribed circumstances. It is a way of managing, a way of treating people, a way of thinking, a way of being. Roll on the day when the word coaching disappears from our lexicon altogether and it just becomes the way we relate to one another at work, and elsewhere too.”

- Coaching for Performance: GROWing Human Potential and Purpose



“Coaching is a form of conversation with unspoken ground rules regarding certain qualities that must be present: respect, openness, compassion, empathy, and a rigorous commitment to speaking the truth. There are certain assumptions underlying the conversation as well. We assume strength, not weakness, helplessness, or dependence. We assume a deep desire to give the best and achieve potential. A coaching conversation has certain beliefs built into it: that every situation has possibilities and that people really do have the power of choice in their lives.”

- Co-Active Coaching: New Skills for Coaching People Toward Success in Work and Life



Bibliography

Coaching for Performance: GROWing Human Potential and Purpose (The principles and practice of coaching and leadership); John Whitmore; Nicholas Brealy Publishing, 2009.

Coaching Skills For Nonprofit Managers and Leaders: Developing People to Achieve Your Mission, Michelle Gislason and Judith Wilson; Jossey-Bass; 2010.

Coaching with the Brain in Mind, David Rock and Linda Page; John Wiley and Sons; 2009.

Co-Active Coaching: New Skills for Coaching People Towards Success in Work and Life, Karen Kimsey- House, Henry Kimsey-House, Phillip Sandahl, Laura Whitworth; Davies Black Publishing; 2007.

Online Resources

International Coach Federation Research Portal:

<http://www.coachfederation.org/icf-research/icf-research-portal/>

Marshall Goldsmith Library

<http://www.marshallgoldsmithlibrary.com/>

The Coaches Training Institute

<http://www.thecoaches.com/>