

*“ A great, little book that gives you the inside track on coaching and what makes it work! ”*

*Harry Bundred - Director of ITOL*

# The Smart Guide to the What, Who, How and Why of Coaching

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Well, first and foremost, thanks for reading this book. I've enjoyed writing it and reflecting upon what makes coaching so unique. I have tried to produce a short book that will answer most of your questions.

So, let me get straight to the point. This book is all about...

## Coaching!

It seems to be everywhere, doesn't it? In newspapers, on bookshelves, on morning TV, on the Internet...you name it, coaching is there.

But why? And what is it? And who does it and who wants it?

And how's it done?

These are the questions that this Smart Guide will explore for you.

The aim of this book is simple. To outline in a brief, easy to understand fashion what coaching really is so that you can decide if you want to become a coach or gain coaching skills to use in the workplace.

Learning coaching skills will change the way you deal with people, improve your ability to communicate effectively and help you think more constructively about the choices you make in life. It can help you manage better, lead better, and develop your people better. Heck, it can change your life if that's what you're looking for.

Now, I'm not claiming it's a panacea for all ills. However, because of its focus on excellent communication, forward looking change and clear action it really does have an impact on many areas of life. In my time training coaches, I have seen a top chief executive radically alter his perception of how to best manage people, I've seen someone who described herself as "proudly impatient" become calmer and more considered and I've seen a "natural born procrastinator", as she labelled herself, become motivated, determined and successful.

And that's just the impact on the coach! Imagine what they can do with their clients. The testimonials I have seen from my coaches' clients wonderfully describe the changes brought about time and again by the patient, focused process of coaching.

Let me be upfront about this. I'm passionate about what I do. I am a coach and I train coaches...so I guess you can say I'm pretty biased about it. I think it's great. So this isn't a piece of investigative research. It's a guide from a practitioner's point of view.

It's intended to be brief, snappy and grounded in common sense. I try to avoid hyperbole and keep to what I know can work for anyone, anytime. But if I stray from that, please forgive me, I guess I can get a little enthusiastic sometimes!

So, whatever your reason for reading this book, I hope you find it helpful. If you're left with any questions or want to find out about being a coach, please feel free to drop me a line at [nick.bolton@thesmartschool.co.uk](mailto:nick.bolton@thesmartschool.co.uk)

Happy reading.

*Nick Bolton*

## A personal story

We're about to explore the nuts and bolts of coaching. But before we dive into the deep end, first let me tell you a little of my story of how I became a coach.

I think it's relevant and I hope you'll identify with some of it.

Many years ago, fresh from my degree in the "History of Philosophy" (yes, one of those degrees), I ended up in retail banking, as one does with a bucketful of Plato and Kant swilling around my head! I had achieved at the age of 21, the heady and prestigious position of trainee bank manager!

Now let me be honest (and I hope that I won't hurt the feelings of my former colleagues when I say this) - I didn't like being a bank manager. I'm a rubbish employee. I like to do things my way and I don't like feeling my life is not in my own hands. So although I went about my daily tasks, I knew that I wouldn't retire with a carriage clock and a certificate for 40 years service.

I wanted to be in control of my own destiny, creating a life that meant something to me. I had a vision of running my own business and facing the challenges that this involved... but in what, I had no idea!

One day, in the midst of wondering why on earth I left Nietzsche and Aristotle for banking, something struck me which has stayed with me ever since. I had what I guess could only be called an epiphany! I realized that everything that happened to me was my own responsibility. It wasn't that I thought everything was in my control but I understood that I could decide how I dealt with it and take ownership of my life. I was in control of "me".

This isn't claiming I was suddenly a Socratic, ethical guru who made all the right decisions! Oh no! But I did understand that I was the decision maker – good or bad.

Victimization, blame, complaint, excusitis – they became things of the past. I faced my life with a renewed sense of empowerment.

A few years later I was head-hunted by a customer who asked me to work for his small company. I agreed and left banking for good. This gave me a great opportunity to see how a company like his worked at all levels and two years later I created my own company working on social issues such as homelessness and crime.

I started with a little office, a fax machine and a few hundred pounds and took the risk that it would work. It did! And it was fun. Hard work but fun! Days, evenings and weekends were spent researching and designing events, marketing them and managing every aspect of their organisation.

This was fairy tale stuff for me! The company changed my life beyond recognition. It was wonderful. I was in love with my business!

I had always known that I could make it happen. It was my unwavering conviction that I had control of my life and my own solutions that enabled me to focus on the steps to take and the belief to take them.

Some years later my personal trainer suggested I should be a life coach. Hmmm, I thought. That was something I'd never thought of. I used coaching in my business for years both with clients and my staff...but become a coach? I was intrigued.

To be faithful to my promise that this is a quick tale...reader, I became a coach.

All those years I had been coaching in my business but I didn't think of myself as a coach. I was just facilitating people's self-discovery and self-learning. And that is precisely what coaching is. It made complete sense to me. It matched my way of thinking about life and personal responsibility.

It springs from the very heart of being in charge of your life and your responses to the things which happen. It comes from a desire to understand yourself and understand other people. It comes from realizing that life is full of change and opportunity and we can manage our way of dealing with it.

For me, in my business, it was about letting my staff take risks so that they could learn from their successes or failures and explore how they could improve. It was also about finding out what the blocks to their better performance were and what would unlock them. In short, it was uncovering the genuine challenges, the real motivations and the solutions for engaging people in their role. It was about good management, leadership and finding the nugget of truth at the centre of "all the stuff".

In my life-coaching practice, it has become about working with entrepreneurs to help them gain the self-belief and take the practical steps to make their business vision come true. I love it when other people gain the benefits that I feel are tied up on being their own boss. But coaching can work at so many levels and the coaches

I have since trained have helped people lives in every conceivable area of life (well, nearly!).

It was that passion for helping people find their own solutions and their own truths and ultimately to make the changes they want to in their lives that led me to set up a school to create brilliant coaches.

And so I present this short book on what coaching is. Oh, did I mention I get a bit enthusiastic about it sometimes? I hope you can see why now.

So now, let's look at what coaching is all about...

So what is this thing that people keep talking about?

It's a question that I hear in different forms all the time. People usually have a sense of what coaching is but their ideas are usually hazy, mixed up with other ways of helping people or sometimes just plain wrong! I still recall very well a lovely guy who said to me he had reached a stage of life where he wanted to give his wisdom to other people. A fine sentiment but not a coaching one!

In this chapter I'll address:

- What coaching is
- What coaching isn't
- The underlying principles of coaching
- What different kinds of coaching there are
- The regulatory and training framework for coaching

## What coaching is

**Put simply:** Coaching enables a person, group or team to move from where they are to where they want to be through a process of exploration and action.

Coaching helps identify people, where they are now, what the real challenges are that need to be faced and what mental hurdles need to be overcome. Finally, it creates clear sighted decisions, specific plans and committed action. All of this is achieved through a process of focused questioning, objective feedback and powerful techniques.

As just mentioned coaching can be used for an individual, group or team but from now on, for ease of use, I will simply refer to the coachee, the person being coached.

So, what does coaching achieve for the coachee?

- Establish clear, motivating goals
- Identify blocks to achieving the goals
- Explore and resolve mental barriers
- Overcome particular emotional or practical challenges
- Enhance self-awareness and interpersonal interactions
- Develop greater skills to manage decisions and actions more effectively
- Increase ownership of feelings and self-responsibility
- Build confidence in existing achievements
- Identify next steps and clear plans

And much more!

## What coaching isn't

The table that follows plots the main differences between coaching and counselling, mentoring and consulting.

<p><b>Counselling &amp; Therapy</b>            Focused on the past            Focused on understanding or healing            Often open-ended            Clients come with problems usually of an emotional nature</p>	<p><b>Coaching</b>            Focused on the future            Goal oriented            Normally uses fixed duration            Clients come with both positive and problematic issues</p>
<p><b>Mentoring</b>            Requires experience and knowledge in the area being mentored            Often uses advice            Usually related to a profession            Usually employed by same company</p>	<p><b>Coaching</b>            Doesn't require any experience or knowledge of the area being coached            Non-advisory            Not profession-specific            Usually self-employed</p>
<p><b>Training</b>            Largely pre-defined agenda set by trainer            Higher trainer involvement            Knowledge and solutions mainly held by trainer.</p>	<p><b>Coaching</b>            Open agenda based around the client            Higher client involvement            Knowledge and solutions are to be found in the client</p>
<p><b>Consultancy</b>            Highly advisory            Knowledge and solutions mainly held by consultant in collaboration            Usually related to a profession or industry</p>	<p><b>Coaching</b>            Non-advisory            Knowledge and solutions are to be found in the client            Non-profession and non-industry specific</p>

As you can see from the table, the approach that coaching uses is very different from the other intervention styles. However, it's not that coaching is better than the others. It is just different. One thing we can say is that coaching does have wider application with a positive focus on people's lives and business where the other approaches tend to be limited to a particular field.

So for example, counselling will only be used where there is an emotional crisis or discomfort whilst coaching could be used for emotional issues or for practical performance development. Mentoring will usually focus on a career issues whilst coaching can encompass career but also any other aspects of life. Consultancy will be sought for a specific issue in which the consultant has expertise whilst coaching can be brought to bear on any issue by any coach.

So what enables coaching to be so adaptable and widely used compared to these other approaches?

## Principles of coaching

The difference lies in the principles that underpin it. These are not principles held as a matter of faith or dogma, but because they have been shown to work time and again.

Let's look at some of these principles:

- **Action-oriented:** coaching aims to create change and practical results outside of the coaching environment
- **Empowering:** coaching should ultimately leave the coachee with greater skills of self-management for future success
- **Results-driven:** coaching needs to be measurable by focusing on clearly defined goals and outcomes
- **Non-advisory:** coaching encourages the client/coachee to dig deeper for their own solutions recognizing that the coach does not have the right answers
- **Non-judgemental:** once the coach agrees to work with the coachee, then the coach ceases to judge the decisions or actions of the coachee but instead creates a conversation that enables self-scrutiny
- **Equal:** the relationship between coach and coachee is one of mutual respect and trust with a shared ambition to generate the desired results from coaching

These are just a few of the guiding principles and there are others which are equally important.

The unique combination of principles is what makes coaching so powerful and so adaptable compared to other approaches. For example, a core skill of consultancy will be to give advice and solutions. Counselling doesn't have to seek next steps or solutions but can be a place to simply discuss feelings. Mentoring requires specific experience of the mentee's field of work, leading usually to guidance. The principles of coaching shown above mean that a coach can work in all of the environments in a different way.

In particular, the principle of not giving advice empowers the coachee to find their own solutions and creates the flexibility for a coach to work with any goal given – as we've seen they don't need to be subject experts. There is sometimes a sense of surprise that coaches don't give advice but in practice it makes huge sense. Think about this: if you took a complex challenge and presented it to ten people, how many answers and solutions do you think would be exactly the same? Probably none!

Well, complex challenges are what coaches deal with all the time and there's no reason why the coach's solution would be the right one. So instead coaching helps the coachee find their own – one that they believe in. After all, we all know that we are far more committed to solutions that we arrive at ourselves than those we are given by others. Coaching works to enhance the ability and determination of the coachee to find their own solutions and put them in to action.

The underlying principles of coaching then help us define what makes coaching what it is rather than something else. But within those guidelines, there are a range of styles of coaching which use different techniques, models or approaches to get the best results for their coachee.

# Different styles of coaching

Below are some of the key approaches to coaching:

- **Behavioural Coaching**
- **Solutions-focused Coaching or Brief Coaching**
- **Cognitive Behavioural Coaching**
- **Emotional Intelligence Coaching**
- **NLP Coaching**
- **Transpersonal Coaching**
- **Appreciative Coaching**

There is not enough space here to explain these in lots of detail – indeed, there are books written on each kind of coaching. So for now, I will just outline how they differ in their aims and methods.

**Behavioural Coaching** Behavioural coaching as its name implies focuses on the actions of an individual to a greater extent than the emotional state (although this certainly plays a part). It works on identifying goals and options for achieving them and usually leaves the coachee with specific, clearly worked through actions and follow up points.

**Solutions-focused Coaching or Brief Coaching** Solutions-focused coaching focuses primarily on existing strengths and resources rather than the deficits that need to be rectified. It aims to achieve rapid change through creating small manageable steps which build on what has gone before and reinforce past success.

**Cognitive Behavioural Coaching (CBC)** Cognitive Behavioural Coaching focuses on the connections people make between external events, internal responses to those events and the actions that this leads to. It recognises that these emotional associations and responses are within our own control particularly when brought to light and consciously managed.

**NLP Coaching** NLP Coaching often resembles CBC and shares much in terms of its model of how we construct patterns of thought. However, it has its own toolkit of techniques which can be applied for rapid change. NLP is not strictly coaching as defined by the principles above but a great deal from NLP can be used in coaching including particularly powerful goal setting.

**Emotional Intelligence Coaching** Emerging from the work of Daniel Goleman's book "Emotional Intelligence", this style of coaching focuses on managing emotions in order to reach one's potential. It promotes a strong focus on self-awareness, empathy and emotional self-management.

**Transpersonal Coaching** Transpersonal Coaching focuses its attention on the person's spiritual dimension. It is used most effectively for people wishing to gain a sense of their place in the bigger picture or wanting to explore a specific issue in a way that treats it as a part of their broader purpose and meaning.

**Appreciative Coaching** Appreciative Coaching is centred on helping the coachee rediscover the joy of living and focuses on strengths and positive aspects of life. It explores coachee's visions and dreams for life in order to encourage a transformational experience.

There are other variations and styles and no doubt many which are completely unique to individual coaches. The key though is that they all maintain the principles of being non-advisory, goal focused, non-judgemental etc.

Each of these styles of coaching will have environments where they are most effective so whether you are looking to hire a coach or become one, it is worth deciding what you want the coaching to achieve.

For instance, it would usually make sense to use behavioural coaching when working with a telesales person who needs to increase their performance. However, using performance coaching techniques with a client who is seeking a greater sense of purpose and meaning would almost certainly fall short of reaching its objectives.

When considering training as a life coach or executive coach (styles of coaching which will involve the whole range of human concerns), make sure that you are exposed to many different approaches and given tools which can help you become truly effective. The ability to integrate a wide range of skills, models and tools will help you stand out from other coaches.

## Regulation

One of the questions people ask about coaching is whether it is regulated. From a legal point of view, the answer is quite simply “no”. There is no formal regulatory framework for coaching. However, there are a number of bodies which oversee the quality, ethics and training of coaching.

These bodies can roughly be divided into self-regulating coaching bodies and professional institutes which include coaching within their remit.

The self-regulating coaching bodies have emerged from the coaching industry itself and are made up of coaches who set a clear standard for coaching and coach-training. These includes such organisations as ICF (International Coach Federation), ECI (European Coaching Institute), EMCC (European Mentoring and Coaching Council and AoC (Association of Coaching)

The institutes involved in this field encompass coaching as part of their strategic overview around management, training and HR. In the UK, these include ITOL (Institute of Training and Occupational Learning), ILM (Institute of Leadership and Management) and CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development).

## Accreditation or Qualification

The final issue to look at in this chapter is that of the training provided to create coaches.

As you can imagine, there are a variety of approaches to training to be a coach varying from distance learning with little or no practical coaching, sometimes simply purchased online and self taught using CDs from, through to fully taught Diplomas with evidenced practice and one-to-one mentoring.

Ultimately the proof of coaching success is not in a certificate but in the results that a coach gets with his or her coachees. Indeed, I know some coaches who have no qualifications at all in coaching but who get great results.

That said, as the industry matures clients are becoming keener to see credentials, experience and real know-how. It makes sense to be fully skilled as a coach using approaches which have been shown to work through studies of effectiveness and return on investment.

Similarly, it makes sense to know that you're coaching properly. I'm afraid I have seen a number of unqualified coaches who don't know even some of the most commonly used formal coaching tools.

Of course, even within the training providers where face-to-face training, mentoring and support are given, there are different levels of skills and knowledge offered. Some training companies may focus on just one or two models which may be sufficient most of the time but could leave a coach short of key skills to meet the expectations of corporate clients or life-coach clients whose needs go beyond mere task planning.

So it pays to be conscious of what is on offer and what made the school or training company select the models they are using.

As a last point, it useful to understand the difference between accredited courses and qualifications.

Many training companies offer accredited courses. These are perfectly acceptable as coaching credentials and some clients won't know or care about the difference. However, it is worth understanding that they differ from qualifications.

An accreditation means that the training company itself will award the certificate and it will be endorsed or accredited by a third party overseeing body such as one of the self-regulating bodies or institutes.

To be a qualification, it must be awarded by the 'awarding body' itself – this is an organisation which has received permission from the government to award qualifications – the institutes will usually be awarding bodies. Only then will it be a formal qualification in coaching.

I hope that this has clarified what coaching is and what it aims to achieve along with some of the formalities of the framework for regulation and training.

Now let's look at who uses coaching and who trains to be a coach.

So just who uses coaching and who trains to be a coach?

In this chapter I'll explore:

- Who trains as a coach
- What qualities coaches need
- What coaches do once qualified
- Who hires coaches and why

## Who trains as a coach?

Actually, this is an interesting question because there is such a wide diversity that it is very difficult to answer. From a coaching school's perspective, it's not always easy to know what your next trainee coach will be like! What we do know is the kind of qualities they will have as this is usually what brings them to coaching (more of this later).

One thing we can do is to divide people who train as coaches into two types:

- Those who want to be a full time, (usually) self-employed coach
- Those who want to add coaching skills to their existing job

## Full time coach

For some, coaching goes beyond the organisation and becomes a great opportunity for a new business and new life. There are a growing number of people who wish to make a living from coaching full time either with a private practice or as a full time employed coach.

This growing number of people see coaching as the place where they can fulfill their potential and live their values of helping people achieve success and personal change or supporting businesses to meet their objectives.

They will usually train for a professional coaching course and then build their practice through a number of routes of personal, business or executive coaching.

There are many reasons why full time coaching is attractive:

- Control over your time
- Using your skills to help others
- Meeting variety of people
- Running your own business
- Combining coaching for a wider business plan
- Working from home
- Relatively high hourly rate
- Opportunity to coach in businesses and with individuals
- Networking in different groups
- A personal journey of self-development
- Feeling of reaching your potential
- Using existing skills, confidence and experience of life

Many reasons, then, why people want to become a professional coach.

What about coaching skills for business?

### **Adding coaching skills to an existing job**

This group of people could include any of the following and more:

- Senior managers
- Line managers
- HR officers and managers
- Team leaders
- Sales managers
- Customer service managers
- Learning and development managers
- Trainers
- Consultants and advisers
- Business owners§

What do they all have in common? A desire to improve the performance, motivation and outcomes of the people they manage or develop.

Coaching is now recognised as a highly effective approach to people management and development in the workplace because it deals with people at a different level from traditional management and training approaches.

Let's look at what it brings to people management:

- It asks instead of tells
- It empowers rather than manages
- It generates self-learning instead of imposing instruction
- It improves decision making and initiative
- It finds what is really going to motivate the individual or team
- It enables the employee to feel heard and respected
- It encourages the individual to challenge themselves further
- It connects personal goals with corporate goals
- It identifies possible hurdles to success
- It defuses personal conflicts

And there are many more benefits. The fact is, coaching has become an invaluable approach to people development in organisations because of its focus on empowerment and self-management. This makes a lot of sense to organisations as they find that half an hour spent on coaching will save hours of constant line-management in the long run. Empowerment brings huge rewards when successfully achieved.

So there is a whole group of people who are adding coaching to their existing skills. They usually don't want to spend months and months training formally but instead want to gain the basic skills quickly and then develop them on the job knowing that the workplace is a relatively safe environment to practise and that the coaching will be a piece of the jigsaw of their work skills.

Using coaching, a manager, team leader or employer could achieve significant change in performance with little ongoing expense other than time and a change of approach.

For instance, coaching could be used to:

- Develop leadership potential for succession planning
- Support a new executive
- Improve sales performance
- Manage effective skills development
- Explore and implement ways to improve customer service
- Unearth issues around low retention and establish positive ways forward
- Manage inter-departmental conflict or cooperation
- Improve team performance through improve communication

Wherever change is required, coaching can produce excellent results and engage the employees and managers in developing and implementing effective responses and solutions.

Coaching has become embedded in many corporate cultures now and looks set to lead the way in the new ways of people management.

I mentioned at the start of this chapter that it is not easy to say who will become a coach but that it is easier to say what qualities they are likely to possess. This is especially so in the case of people who choose coaching as a full time profession.

So what can we expect a coach to be like?

## Who makes a great coach?

Although not exhaustive the following list is a pretty good indication of the character of most coaches.

### Could you be a great coach?

Desire to help people achieve their potential: the passion of coaches to help people underpins everything they do – they hold a belief that we can all be more than we are and achieve more.

**Great active listener:** coaching is about listening to all the subtle signs and messages in order to understand what is going on for the coachee.

**Empathic:** being able to see the world from the client's perspective

**Not needing to know the answer:** coaching is all about facilitating the client to their own answer. That means coaches don't always have to be right or know the solution

**Non-judgemental:** we are all human and we all make judgements to some degree but coaching is about managing those judgements and allowing the coachee to explore their world

**Curious about people:** coaching is all about asking questions so it helps to have a questioning mind

**Challenging:** Great coaches challenge the coachee in many ways to create clarity, honesty and a focus on the reality

**Observant:** a great coach can spot the subtle signs of ambivalence, inconsistency or lack of commitment but equally see the spark of excitement, the "aha" moment or the moment that turns on a coachee's motivation

**Positive:** coaching is a process of empowerment which means the coachee needs to be inspired by your belief in them and your own passion for what you do

**Good communicator:** communication at many levels underpins coaching and the ability to do this effectively and clearly is vital

**Honest and great integrity:** coaching thrives when honesty and integrity is present so coaches must learn the art of open communication free from hidden agendas

These are just some of the qualities that a coach needs. As a skill that spans the range of human emotions and action, coaching requires a person determined to learn and grow. Coaching presents the perfect environment for you to draw upon the well of emotional intelligence you've developed over your lifetime.

# The coaching market

It's no secret that the coaching industry is growing. And it is growing for a good reason: it gets results.

That's why the majority of companies in the UK now use coaching at some level to develop their staff and improve leadership.

As a coach, there is an expanding market for your services and a range of ways in which you can practise. Many coaches become self-employed building a private practice either as their sole income or to supplement their income. Other coaches, work within an organisation either as a full time coach or as part of their work to develop staff.

Here are just some of the ways you can choose to coach:

**Life coach/Personal Coach:** Working with your private clients on any aspect of an individual's private life

**Niche Coach:** Again, with a private practice but specialising in a particular field such as "finance coach" or "parenting coach"

**Small Business Coach:** Working with entrepreneurs and business owners to facilitate business success, profitability through purposeful action and clarity of aims and outcomes.

**Corporate Coach:** Working with businesses to achieve performance or staffing outcomes ranging from sales performance, succession management, change management or team coaching.

**Executive Coach:** Working with senior managers and executives on personal performance and leadership. This will often focus on the person's mental attributes and state rather than just tasks

**Group Coach/Team Coach:** You may be a corporate or personal coach but the skill of taking coaching from one-to-one to one-to-many is an art in itself and lends a new way to coach.

There are, then, many ways to build a successful career or business as a coach.

So what makes someone seek out a coach?

# Why people hire coaches

In terms of why people hire coaches, there is a distance between corporate coaching and personal coaching.

Organisations know about coaching and will seek out coaches to develop their staff. Their needs will vary but they understand that coaching is the right way forward.

In life-coaching, this is not so often the case – people want change and results but they will rarely know it's a coach that could help. That's why life-coaches need to be out meeting people and exploring their concerns, ambitions and desires rather than advertising as a life-coach in the Yellow Pages!

People hire coaches for many reasons but ultimately it comes down to one thing: positive change.

- People want change in their life or their business.
- Perhaps they've struggled for years to lose weight or get fitter
- Maybe the time is right to focus on building a career that really excites them
- Or perhaps they are fed up of being in debt or want to become financially independent
- They might want to create and nurture a wonderful relationship which makes them happy, satisfied and loved
- Or they want to develop a great social life, spiritual life or find purpose

There are so many other areas of life that coaching can add massive value

In business it could be:

- Increasing profitability and pushing on to big growth
- It could be improving staff retention, promotion and management
- Perhaps it is developing a new style of leadership
- Maybe the business wants to focus on skills development and embedding new skills in practice
- It might be team building or individual performance
- It might be sales, customer service, operations, human resources

Again many areas can benefit from coaching, the lists are endless.

What people actually want is not coaching but the result that coaching brings: the increased fitness; the happiness; the increase in staff retention; the reduction in expenses etc

The result is why people buy the coaching. And the coach uses the most effective approach to help the client get their result.

And that brings us to the “how”. How does coaching actually work?

We've looked at what coaching is and the principles that underpin it. We've also looked at some of the different kinds of coaching styles.

But we haven't really looked at how it works in practice.

In this chapter, I will introduce you to two coaching models and show how they work in practice. Of course, whilst there is a huge difference between theory and using in practice, why not give them a go with friends or colleagues. You can't do any harm and you may do some good!

The two models are: GROW & STAR

## GROW Model

GROW stands for...

**Goal**

**Reality**

**Options**

**Way forward**

Although very well known and almost synonymous with coaching, the GROW Model is what its name implies: a model. It is not the definitive coaching method. It's a simple and effective structure for helping a coachee explore where they are now, where they want to be and how they are going to get there.

GROW essentially plots out a journey from where the coachee wants to be (the Goal), where they are right now (the Reality), the many ways the coachee has for getting to the goal (the Options) and the specific options the coachee chooses (the Way forward).

### Goal

The first thing a coach will do (once they have got to know the coachee a little) is to establish the coachee's goal. Very helpful here is the well-known acronym: SMART stands for Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic and Time-bound.

This is the crucial starting point without which the coaching process would feel aimless and confused. Ensuring clarity and commitment to the goal is a prime stage of any coaching.

Once the goal has been established, the coach can proceed to finding out where the coachee currently is compared the goal.

### **Finding the existing reality**

Before the coachee can look to the future, the coach needs help them find out where they are right now.

Many people have their heads firmly planted in the sand to avoid looking at where they are. This is particularly clear in situations of financial difficulties - it is all too common that people only approach a debt counsellor after years of avoiding the reality in the hope that it will go away. It rarely does!

But it is not only financial. It may be health, or a relationship, an unsatisfying career or a poor social life. Whatever the issue, many coachees will often not be fully aware of where they are at that time in terms of the reality around it. They may be overly pessimistic, they may be overly optimistic – perhaps they are simply ignoring it all together.

On the positive side, the coachee may have great aspirations to achieve a particular goal. He or she still needs to know where they are starting from in order to take the next step.

It is the coach's task to enable the coachee to find exactly where they are, take stock and then move forward.

The aims of the Reality stage are many but chiefly it should develop the following information:

- The current situation regarding the issue
- The coachee's strengths and resources that can support progress
- The coachee's concern, fear, insecurities etc around the topic
- What has been tried and achieved so far
- What hasn't been done so far
- What support exists
- What barriers exist
- What has stopped the coachee tackling the issue previously

With this information explored the coachee will achieve clarity on where they are right now and this in itself is often a very liberating experience.

### **Developing options for action**

The coach will then explore with the coachee the options forward for the coachee.

If Reality is where they are now and Goal is where they want to be; Options are all the solutions that could possibly work for the coachee.

Some may be commonplace and obvious, others may be a little farfetched and others again may be creative - potentially these are the ones that make the difference from doing the same old thing time and again.

The coach's job here is to help extend the coachee's thinking to be more creative, to look outside of their normal pattern of behaviour and to get as many ideas in the open as possible.

The coach pushes for more and more solutions and supports the coachee to keep thinking where normally they might stop and try their usual approach.

### **Agreeing the way forward**

Coaching is not just about exploration. It is about action, movement and change. If the coach doesn't help a coachee create change then the coachee is unlikely to have benefited fully from coaching.

In the Way Forward stage of GROW, the coachee commits to actions and the coach explores the level of commitment, residual doubt/ambivalence and any final things that could stop the agreed action from happening.

Having developed a range of options, the client can decide which of the options he or she will actually do. The word do is crucial. This is not about which options are most interesting, probable or comfortable. The end result of coaching is doing.

The coachee may choose more than one but the coach will ensure that they explore every stumbling block that could get in the way of those chosen options.

The coach will look to pin the coachee down on the following:

- Which options they choose
- How committed on a scale of 1-10 are they for each option chosen
- If not 10, where is the seed of doubt or ambivalence?
- What could turn that lower number into a higher level of commitment?
- By when will they achieve the action they commit to – precisely!
- What could stop them doing it
- What would happen or not happen if they didn't do it
- Who, if anyone, could they be accountable to for the action

With this done, the coach can wrap up the session and the client leaves with greater clarity of their next steps.

## STAR Model

The STAR Model is an excellent approach to supporting a coachee to find alternative approaches to situations which consistently cause them problems or concerns.

STAR works by looking at the...

- Situation**
- Thoughts and Feelings**
- Actions and**
- Results**

...and seeking alternative responses in each instance.

Firstly, the coach will identify the situation which is causing concern and then list the thoughts and feelings that this situation creates for the coachee. The coach will explore the actions that are a consequence of the thoughts and feelings and finally the results which are a consequence of the actions.

- So, in effect, the coach helps the client plot out the existing path from a situation to unhelpful or non-optimal results.
- Once this is done, the coach can use the same structure to explore more positive options.

- What other positive options are there around the situation – what can the coachee change?
- What other options around the thoughts and feelings – how would they prefer to think and feel?
- What other options around the actions – how would they like to behave?
- What other options around the results – what would be more useful outcomes?

Once various options have been identified the coachee can choose which options they will adopt and then test them out.

The results of the selected options are then monitored and recorded with the any refinements and changes to the new strategy noted and refined to gain even better outcomes.

So, let's see it in summary:

- Identify the actual STAR (situation, thoughts and feelings, actions and results)
- Identify the new, more positive options
- Select which options will be acted upon
- Measure the results, agree ongoing actions and make changes as necessary

### Example: Initial situation

Here the coachee's concern around speaking to the board and presenting sales figures is certainly causing him stress and upset and quite possibly holding him back in his career, especially give the feedback from the boss.

Situation	Thoughts and feelings	Actions	Results
Speaking to the board about sales results	<p>I feel nervous, sick and wish I could stay at home</p> <p>I feel inferior as though I am going to be caught out</p> <p>I worry that they will think I am useless and I won't get a promotion...or even keep my job</p>	<p>I stammer and fumble over my notes</p> <p>I get through the presentation but usually very fast and not very effectively</p>	<p><b>Practical:</b> My boss keeps telling me I need to get over it, calm down and impress the board</p> <p>My lack of promotion may be related to this</p> <p><b>Feelings:</b> I end up feeling rubbish again!</p>

Using STAR, the coach explores what other positive options the coachee has to address the issue more effectively.

At this stage, they are merely exploring options not necessarily creating an action plan.

They use the same table structure to record the new options.

Situation options	Thoughts and feelings options	Actions options	Results options
<p>Speak less often only when I am fully required by the board</p> <p>Be better prepared and calmer through various means</p> <p>Get boss to do the presentation</p>	<p>Realise that “worse things happen at sea” – keep things in perspective</p> <p>Feel good about having this responsibility since it means I have a purpose in the company</p> <p>Enjoy the fact that I am improving</p> <p>Feel good about what I do well</p>	<p>“Meditate” – get calm before the meeting</p> <p>Seek out feedback</p> <p>Make a note of what I do well and focus on that</p> <p>Look at what I do less well as a chance to learn and be better at my job</p> <p>Gain my bosses support</p>	<p><b>Practical:</b> I get my promotion</p> <p>My board or boss congratulate me on my improved skills</p> <p><b>Feelings:</b> I feel really good to have improved!</p> <p>I look forward to the next time!</p>

### Choose the options

In this case, the coachee chooses:

- Be better prepared and calmer through various means
- Realise that “worse things happen at sea” – keep things in perspective
- Enjoy the fact that I am improving
- “Meditate” – get calm before the meeting
- Make a note of what I do well and focus on that
- Look at what I do less well as a chance to learn and be better at my job

They then agree how the coachee will implement these new options looking at when, how, what could stop them, etc

## Monitoring the results

During the review, the coach will monitor results and look at how it is taken forward.

Options chosen	Result	Taking it forward
<p>Be better prepared and calmer through various means</p> <p>Realise that “worse things happen at sea” – keep thing in perspective</p> <p>Enjoy the fact that I am improving</p> <p>“Meditate” – get calm before the meeting</p> <p>Make a note of what I do well and focus on that</p>	<p>I have used meditation for 5 minutes before each meeting to get calm and have been able to speak more slowly and calmly. This has meant that I haven’t stammered and dropped my notes etc as I used to</p> <p>I have made a note of all the good things I have done and realised that I am good at my job. I have worked on the strengths to make these even better.</p>	<p>I will continue to “meditate” for 5 minutes as this is helpful</p> <p>I will continue to make a note of all my good things but will do this as a journal to chart my growing skills</p> <p>I have identified my weaknesses and will now book onto a special training course for using PowerPoint and presenting.</p>

## Summary

These two models are just tasters of the tools and resources that coaching offers. Behind the models however lay a host of skills that need to be constantly exercised: listening, feedback, clarification, rapport, critical thinking, invention, humour, flexibility and so much more.

So, we're nearly at the end of our journey through the What, Who, How and Why of coaching.

We're left with the Why!

By now you've seen how coaching works and how it creates its effect through self-learning and discovery. So to finish off this book, let's recap on some reasons why coaching is so powerful and what it achieves.

I'm going to suggest ten reasons why...

- Coaching is so powerful
- Someone becomes a coach
- An individual hires a coach
- An organisation hires a coach

Here goes:

## 10 reasons why coaching is so powerful

- Coaching encourages us to reach our full potential
- Coaching challenges us to face reality that we often ignore
- Coaching reminds us of the great thing we've already done
- Coaching focuses us on high-motivation goals
- Coaching makes us look how we do things differently
- Coaching creates self-belief and determination
- Coaching doesn't accept excuses but doesn't judge
- Coaching focuses on the future not the past
- Coaching allows for dreams and passions to be explored
- Coaching gets results

## 10 reasons why you would become a coach

- To follow your dreams of helping people succeed
- To make a difference to the world
- To use your people skills
- To start a business
- To gain freedom and independence
- To go on a journey of personal development
- To reach your true potential
- To keep growing and learning
- To work flexibly within business
- To build the life of your dreams

## 10 reasons why someone hires a coach

- To change a long standing stubborn behaviour
- To explore new ways of doing something
- To gain clarity on what they want
- To gain accountability around their goal
- To generate momentum behind their ambitions and dreams
- Because they feel stuck and want take a fresh look at their life
- To challenge themselves to new heights
- To gain focus and renewed energy
- To overcome emotional barriers to success
- To succeed

## 10 reasons why organisations hire coaches

- To develop leadership
- To manage succession
- To support executives in new roles
- To increase performance
- To align personal goals with corporate goals
- To increase motivation to new levels
- To improve staff retention
- To manage the impact of change on people
- To build clarity of business vision and values
- For tangible results

## Summary

So that brings us to the end of this Smart Guide to the What, Who, How and Why of coaching.

I hope it has proven useful as a starting point for you.

I can vouch for what a great choice I made all those years ago when I decided to coach within my own business and as a life-coach. I have since seen many coaches train and begin the same journey of building a private practice or coaching within their current role.

If you would like to train as a coach for business or life, then read on and find out a bit more about the Smart School. I have deliberately kept my coaching school out of the main body of the book as I want to offer you truly useful information not a sales pitch! But if you want to know more about the Smart School, then the next section will give you a brief picture of what we do, our qualifications and the support we offer.

Thanks for reading this book and enjoy your journey – wherever you decide you are going!

## About the Smart School of Coaching

So, you've made it to the end of the book and you know a bit more about coaching. Perhaps now you want to look at being a coach. Well, let me tell you a little about the Smart School of Coaching and invite you to come and speak to us when you're ready.

First and foremost, the Smart School is a place where we let our passion for coaching do the talking – all of our people are coaches who walk the talk!

We committed to creating coaches who have really great skills and are able to make a difference for themselves and for the people they work with. When I started the Smart School it was to create a school where we didn't only teach the coaching skills but also the ability and confidence to go and use them in the real world.

So whether it's about training full time coaches or giving coaching skills to managers, we focus our attention on delivering tools and knowledge that work.

I also wanted to create a school that added value with the nature of the qualification. That's why I formed a strategic alliance with the Institute of Training and Occupational Learning and the Smart School. Together, we have created a framework of coaching qualifications awarded independently by ITOL which set a new standard in coach training. All of our qualifications offer the professional status of institute membership and the award of postnominal letters.

The qualifications range from a short introductory course for team leaders and managers to a full Diploma spread over six months with mentoring, real-life coaching and practice building support.

Our Diploma is second to none in offering a seamless integration of coaching styles to ensure that our coaches become masters of their profession. The Diploma brings the very best of behavioural coaching, cognitive behavioural coaching and NLP coaching together along with other skills and theory emerging from psychology and cutting edge coaching.

The first step for anyone thinking to be a coach is to decide if coaching is the right thing for them. That's why we offer free consultations and run a free seminar at least once per month which introduces you to coaching.

So, thanks again for reading. If you would like to explore becoming a coach and want to find out how the Smart School can help get you there, then drop me a line at [nick.bolton@thesmartschool.co.uk](mailto:nick.bolton@thesmartschool.co.uk) or go along to our website at [www.thesmartschool.co.uk](http://www.thesmartschool.co.uk)

Best wishes,

*Nick Bolton*



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