

# How to Coach

**A Manager's Guide to Coaching**



# How to Coach: a Manager's Guide

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# How to Coach: a Manager's Guide

Coaching is a powerful way to increase happiness, engagement and productivity in your team.

If you've ever had a manager who nurtured your abilities and worked with you to set challenging but realistic goals, you'll know how much difference coaching can make to your career – and to the success of your organization.

Coaching can help your team to communicate better, to overcome conflict, to accept change, to think creatively, and to work together more effectively.

But most managers are given no formal training in coaching, and many feel daunted by the prospect of doing it. So, they allow this essential tool for personal and team development to fall by the wayside.

That's why we created this **How to Coach** toolkit. It can enable you to fulfill one of your key responsibilities as a manager: helping your team members to grow, and to realize their full potential. What's more, you'll likely find that you benefit from the process just as much as they do.

I hope you enjoy it!



James Manktelow  
CEO, MindTools.com





# Introduction

**“I haven’t got time for coaching! And who needs it, anyway?” If this is your first reaction to what might feel like just another burdensome task, read on.**

Coaching skills are a valuable asset for any manager. A [study](#) by Deloitte found that leaders who frequently coached their teams improved their business results by 21 percent.

So, it’s no surprise that an increasing number of workplaces consider coaching to be a worthwhile investment. In a survey by the [Conference Board Council](#), 61 percent of the participating organizations used some form of internal coaching.

One reason for this increase is that people who receive coaching can reap considerable benefits. [Research](#) by PwC found that, of the participants who had received coaching:

- 80 percent had increased self-confidence.
- 73 percent had improved relationships.
- 72 percent had improved communication skills.
- 67 percent reported a better work-life balance.

Numbers like these will likely appeal to any leader, in any industry!

But, despite the evidence that effective coaching can make a difference, most managers have very little training in **how** to do it. The good news is that coaching is a skill that you can learn.





## What Will Coaching Do for Me?

We'll tell you right now, coaching isn't easy – at least, not if you want to do it well. However, it can be a rewarding and inspiring experience, especially when you see your team racing ahead as a result.

When you coach your team members, you may find that your own job satisfaction increases, too, and that you have a deeper sense of [purpose](#) and meaning at work. What's more, you'll likely strengthen your relationship with your team. But first, you need to gain the knowledge and confidence to be an effective coach.

This workbook will guide you through the essential coaching skills.

You will learn:

- How to develop good listening skills, emotional intelligence and trust, so that you can establish strong coaching relationships.
- How to coach individual team members.
- How to coach your whole team.
- How to coach yourself.

And, by working through the exercises in each chapter, you'll gain a deeper understanding of the topic and reinforce what you've learned.

But first, let's deal with those time pressures and [To-Do Lists](#) that dominate your life. Consider how a small investment now in effective, targeted coaching can save you and your team large amounts of time and effort in the future.

Purpose and enthusiasm will grow, errors will decrease, and loyalty and collaboration will build. And you'll likely find yourself dealing with less conflict, and delegating more.

### ACTION

Take a look at our [Time Management resources](#) for help with heavy workloads, prioritizing, having better meetings, and more. Practice protecting your time for the really important stuff – including coaching!

### TIP

For more insight into your coaching skills, and for advice and guidance on how to develop your people effectively, take our quiz, [How Good Are Your Coaching Skills?](#)

**What makes a great coach? Write down your ideas, below.**

**Which of these skills do you already have?**

**Which of these skills do you need to develop?**

# 1. Coaching Skills

Feedback from people who have received coaching suggests that a coach's most important attributes are personal rapport, confidence, and a sense of humor.

A report by the [International Coaching Federation](#) shows that thousands of coaching clients valued rapport and compatibility more highly than a coach's formal education, or his or her years of experience.

This gives you an advantage – because, as a manager, you already have good working relationships with your team members.

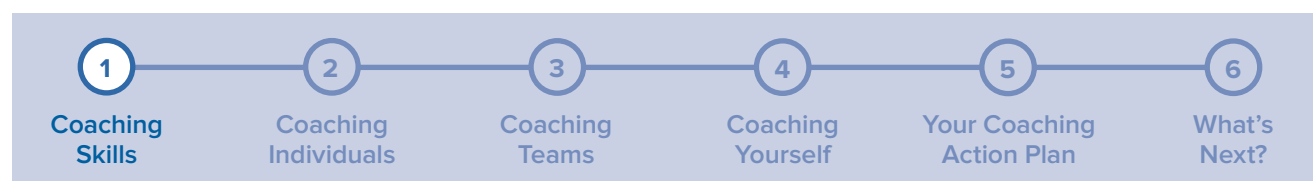
But coaching requires other important skills, too. These include:

- Listening.
- Communicating.
- Questioning.
- Emotional intelligence.
- Developing trust.

In this chapter, we'll look at these skills in more detail, and discuss how you can improve each one.

*“A coach is someone who tells you what you don't want to hear, and has you see what you don't want to see, so you can be who you have always known you can be.”*

Tom Landry, NFL coach







## 1.1. Improving Your Listening Skills

The ability to listen well is the most important coaching skill. It's key to understanding what the other person is saying on the surface, and to finding out what he or she means on a deeper level.

Specifically, you need good [active listening skills](#). This means that you give your full attention to the other person, and that you're not distracted by thinking of follow-up questions or counter-arguments. You also need to be aware of the person's [body language](#), and how it aligns with (or differs from) what he says.

When you're listening actively, give subtle clues to show that you're paying attention. For example, nod your head and use words like "Yes," or agree with an "Uh huh," when the person is talking. You can also paraphrase what you've just heard to confirm that you've understood it. For example, you might say, "What I'm hearing is..." or, "If I understand what you're saying..."

Another useful skill is [empathic listening](#). This is similar to active listening, but it also requires you to make a concerted effort to understand what the speaker is saying on an emotional level, as well as an intellectual level.

To listen empathically, pay attention to what's being said – and what isn't. Keep in mind that what the speaker holds back is sometimes as important as what she communicates.

Try to keep your own thoughts and opinions out of the conversation, and to focus on the other person. Listen carefully to his vocal tone and inflection, and watch his facial expressions closely. Ask yourself, "How is this person feeling about what he's telling me?"

[Mindful listening](#) takes this a stage further, as it enables you to listen without judgment or criticism. The key is to listen "in the moment" – to be aware of your own thoughts and reactions to what is being said without allowing them to distract you from the speaker's message. This ensures that you remain open and receptive to other people's ideas.

### TIP

Take our quiz, [How Good Are Your Listening Skills?](#), to gain a better understanding of how well you listen, and to learn ways to improve.

## ACTION

Practice active listening with a friend or colleague, and answer the questions below.

**1. Did the other person's body language align with what she said?**

**2. Did active listening help you to understand the other person? If so, how?**

**3. How could active listening improve your relationships in your personal and professional lives?**

## 1.2. Developing Good Communication Skills

To be an effective coach, you need to know how to [communicate](#) your thoughts and ideas clearly. The other person will rely on your expertise and guidance, so it's vital that you get your message across without causing confusion.

Part of effective communication is keeping your opinions and assumptions out of the conversation. This is especially true in coaching, where the focus is always on the coachee. But it's easier said than done, and many of us insert our opinions into a discussion without even realizing it!

Here's an example. Javier is talking to his coach, Susan, about how he's not been able to devote any time to leadership development – a goal that both of them agreed was important for his career.

Susan: *So tell me what has happened this week.*

Javier: *I just couldn't find the time to read that leadership development book, or work on the exercises you gave me.*

Susan: *Was it your boss again? Did he add more to your workload?*

Javier: *Yes, he did.*

Susan: *That probably made you feel stressed and unappreciated, right?*

Javier: *Yes, it doesn't make me feel good when he does that. I already have too much to do.*

At first, it might seem that Susan correctly identified that Javier's problem was his boss. But, if you look more closely, you'll see that Susan **assumed** that this was the case. Then, she steered the conversation in a particular direction with her suggestion that the increased workload made Javier feel "stressed and unappreciated."

By asking a different set of questions, Susan could have helped Javier to come to his own realization about his time management – which might have had nothing to do with his boss!

This simple example shows how easy it is to influence a conversation with your choice of words, phrases and questions.

You can avoid this in your coaching conversations by learning to use [Clean Language](#). This technique was developed by David Groves in the 1980s, and it enables coaches to avoid using words and metaphors that might affect their clients' thoughts and feelings.

The Clean Language technique is useful because it helps the coachee to arrive at his own realizations, without being influenced by you. This allows him to develop greater self-awareness, and means that he will more likely identify the real cause of his problems correctly.

Try to limit your own use of metaphors when you're coaching. But do pay close attention to the metaphors that your coachee uses, as they can offer powerful clues to how he feels about the subject you're discussing.

### TIP

Take our self-test, [How Good Are Your Communication Skills?](#), to discover your communication strengths and weaknesses, and to learn how you can improve them.

Here are a few examples of common metaphors:

- I can't digest what you're telling me.
- I need to build my leadership skills.
- I'm trapped in my job.
- She's sticking her head in the sand.
- I'm over the moon about my promotion.

It can be a challenge to identify metaphors, because we use them so often. Some are so ingrained in the way we talk that we don't even realize we're using them! But listen out for them in your coaching sessions, as they might help you to identify your team member's hidden or subconscious thoughts.

### ACTION

For the next few days, pay attention to the metaphors that you use in your everyday speech. Write them down in the table, below.

Metaphors
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.

When your coachee uses a metaphor, you can ask a series of Clean Language questions that will help you to understand his meaning. These are:

- And is there anything else about...?
- And what kind of... is that...?
- And where is...?
- And whereabouts?
- And what happens next?
- And then what happens?
- And what happens just before...?
- And where could... come from?
- And that's like... what?

When you use Clean Language, speak more slowly and in a slightly deeper voice than your team member, and try to mimic her intonation and body language as much as possible. This can help her to relax and open up to you.

Using Clean Language takes practice, and some of the questions may sound a bit awkward at first. If so, role-playing can help you to get used to them.

#### ACTION

Practice the Clean Language technique with a friend or colleague. Pay attention to his metaphors, and to any words or phrases that might indicate how he feels. Ask Clean Language questions to get to the root of any issues.

## 1.3. Asking Better Questions

Great coaches listen more than they talk. And they ask the right questions at the right times – this helps their coachees to understand themselves better.

When you ask questions, your goal is to find out information that can help your team member. Don't take it as an opportunity to voice your own opinions!

Concentrate on asking open-ended questions. These are questions that the other person can't just reply "Yes" or "No" to, and which require her to give a more thoughtful answer. They usually begin with "What?" "Why?" or "How?"

Then, probe for more information with follow-up questions. Ask your coachee for more detail, to provide an example, or to clarify what he has said.

Good questioners also give people adequate time to respond. When you're coaching, make sure that you pause after you ask a question to give your coachee time to think. Don't be tempted to fill the silence!

#### TIP

The 5 Whys technique is a simple and effective way to ask probing questions. And our article, [Questioning Techniques](#), helps you to understand which method is suitable for each situation.



## 1.4. Learning Emotional Intelligence

[Emotional intelligence](#) is about recognizing your emotions, understanding why you feel a certain way, and knowing how your behavior affects those around you. It's also about sensing others' wants and needs.

When you have emotional intelligence, you can develop stronger relationships, control your emotions more effectively, and know yourself better. All of these elements allow you become a better coach.

Emotional intelligence is made up of five elements:

1. [Self-Awareness](#) – The ability to look inward, to think deeply about your behavior, and to consider how it aligns with your ethics and values.
2. [Self-Regulation](#) – This determines the extent to which you can control your emotions, feelings and impulses.

3. [Motivation](#) – People who have high emotional intelligence know how to exchange immediate gratification for long-term success. If you focus on building this skill, you can coach others to do the same.

4. [Empathy](#) – Putting yourself in other people's shoes, and gaining a better understanding of their perspectives. This trait is incredibly important in coaching.

5. [Social Skills](#) – People with high emotional intelligence know how to build and maintain [good relationships](#).

### ACTION

Use the exercises below to increase your emotional intelligence.

**1. Think about how you react to other people in stressful situations. Are you quick to judge, or do you wait until you have all the facts? How could you improve your behavior?**

---

**2. Think back to the last time you lost control of your emotions at work. What happened? How did your actions affect the people around you? How will you make sure it doesn't happen again? Reflect on your experience, below.**

**3. Conduct a Personal SWOT Analysis to learn about your strengths and weaknesses. First, list your strengths, below.**

Strengths:

**Take a look at your list. How could you use these skills in your coaching relationships? Write down your ideas, below.**

**Now, list your weaknesses.**

Weaknesses:

How might these weaknesses affect you as a coach? What could you do to improve them? Write down your thoughts, below.

### ACTION

Daily [journaling](#) can help you to develop self-awareness. Commit to keeping a journal for the next month. Write about what you've done each day, and, more importantly, reflect on how you felt and reacted to different situations.

When you take the time to think about your experiences, you will learn more about yourself, and this will make you a more empathic and effective coach.

### TIP

You might be daunted by an important but difficult conversation. Turn this into an opportunity for a [Savvy Conversation](#) by balancing being candid and direct with respect, engagement and sensitivity.

## 1.5. Building Trust

Your coaching relationships with your team members are built on confidentiality and trust. The process only works if your coachee is comfortable sharing his thoughts and feelings with you. If you don't have trust, this won't happen.

There are several ways to [build trust](#) in a relationship:

- Be honest. People will trust you if they know that they can count on you to tell the truth.
- Share your experiences. Tell them about the time you made a mistake, or experienced a failure. You can also talk about your values or beliefs.
- Keep your word. If you make a promise to someone, do whatever it takes (within reason!) to stick to it. If you can't, be upfront and explain why.
- Inspire others. Demonstrate behaviors such as integrity, respect, loyalty, fairness, and [authenticity](#).

We'll learn more about how to develop trust in the next chapter.

## ACTION

Take a moment to think about the topics that we've covered in this chapter. Then, answer the questions in the table, below.

Which of the skills (listening, communicating, questioning, developing emotional intelligence, and building trust) do you think you struggle with the most? Why?

What can you do to improve these skills?

## 1.6. Drawing This Together

In this chapter, we learned about the skills that you need to be a great coach, including how to listen, communicate, question, develop emotional intelligence, and build trust. These are all important for connecting with other people, and to maintain positive relationships.

In the next chapter, we'll look at the coaching process itself.



## 2. Coaching Individuals

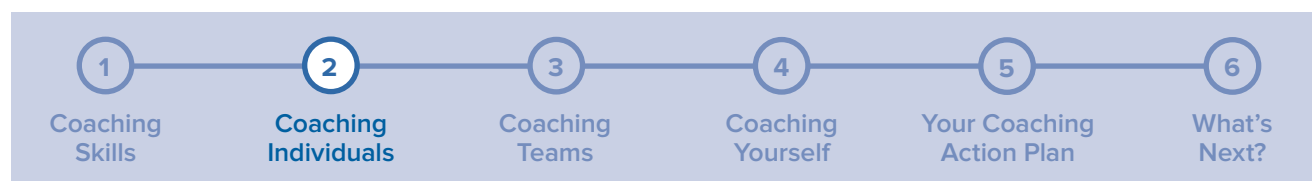
Deep down, your team members likely already know the answers to their problems. As a coach, your job is to guide them toward this realization.

One-on-one coaching is a great way to provide this guidance. It's the most common form of coaching, and it's valuable in many ways. For example, it can help your team members to:

- Identify career goals, and develop plans to achieve them.
- Improve their time-management and organizational skills.
- Find the right work-life balance.
- Make better decisions.
- Develop skills to work more effectively.
- Reduce stress.
- Build more productive work relationships.
- Think positively.

In an individual coaching relationship, it's important that you are humble, and that you always respect the other person's opinions. Never assume that you have the "right" answer. Make suggestions, but think of yourself as a partner, not a teacher. Remember that most of the time, the solutions to whatever issues your team members have lie within themselves.

In this chapter, we'll look at some useful models that you can use to frame your one-on-one coaching conversations. We'll also discuss how to build successful coaching relationships, and how you can use coaching techniques informally, as well as in structured sessions.





## 2.1. Useful Coaching Models

You may feel a little daunted by the prospect of coaching another person. After all, if you're like most leaders, you probably haven't received any formal coaching training. So, how do you know what to do or say to guide your team member effectively?

Fortunately, there are many established models, techniques and approaches that you can use to structure your coaching sessions.

### 1. The GROW Model

[The GROW Model](#) is a simple, yet powerful, coaching tool. GROW stands for:

- **G**oal.
- **C**urrent **R**eality.
- **O**ptions (or Obstacles).
- **W**ill (or Way Forward).

As a manager, you've likely already identified many of your team member's issues, and that's OK. You can still use the GROW Model as a guide that can help her to explore ideas, to come to her own conclusions, and to identify what she wants to achieve.

To use the GROW Model, follow these steps:

1. Establish a goal.
2. Examine the person's situation.
3. Explore the options (or obstacles).
4. Agree a plan. The coachee identifies the steps that he needs to take, and commits to specific actions that will move him toward his goal. At this point it's useful to discuss how he will stay motivated, and the strategies that he'll use to overcome any obstacles that arise. Finally, set a date to review his progress, and to revise the plan if necessary.

#### ACTION

Use the GROW Model to identify your own challenges and issues. In the table, below, write down the questions you ask yourself as you work through the process. These can be a useful starting point for coaching other people.

#### Questions

1.

2.

3.

4.

## 2. The Skill/Will Matrix

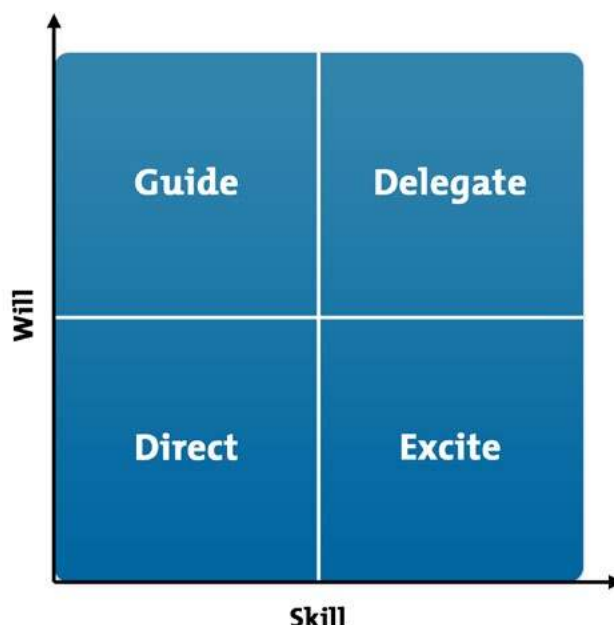
Your team members all have their own needs, personalities, skills and abilities. This means that you will need to tailor your approach to fit each individual.

The [Skill/Will Matrix](#), developed by coach and author Max Landsberg in 2003, can enable you to find the appropriate coaching style for every situation.

The matrix (see figure 1, right) is divided into four quadrants. Each quadrant represents a different coaching style:



Figure 1 – The Skill/Will Matrix



From "The Tao of Coaching" by Max Landsberg. Published by Profile Books, 2003. Reproduced with permission.

- **Guide** – This approach is best for people who have high will, but low skill.
- **Delegate** – Use this with people who have high skill and high motivation.
- **Direct** – Use this approach with people who have low skill and low will.
- **Excite** – Use this for people who have high skill, but low motivation.

For example, if you are working with someone in the Direct quadrant, you might want to set clear guidelines, manage her progress closely, and encourage her to discuss any deadlines with you.

But you could take a more "hands off" approach to coaching a team member who falls into the Delegate quadrant.

## ACTION

Think about the people in your team. Where would you place each of them on the Skill/Will Matrix? Plot each one in the table, below.

Name of Team Member	Quadrant
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	

## 3. Solution-Focused Coaching

The [Solution-Focused Coaching](#) approach helps you to identify what your team member wants, and how he can achieve it. Your aim is not to examine **why** a specific problem is occurring, but to find a **solution**. This helps you to avoid dwelling on the negatives. It's a simple and positive way to coach someone.

There are four steps in a solution-focused approach:

1. Identify a goal or solution.
2. Create a plan.
3. Take action and monitor progress.
4. Change what isn't working.

This model is effective for most people, in most situations. However, if your team member wants to explore the deeper issues behind her behavior or actions, you might want to take a different approach.



## 2.2. Setting up a Coaching Relationship

Trust and rapport are two of the most important aspects of a successful coaching relationship. Without them, your team member is unlikely to share his thoughts and feelings with you.

### Building Trust

There are several ways to develop trust with your team member:

#### Demonstrate Your Credibility

Your coachee needs to feel that you have the knowledge and skills to help her. That is why [credibility](#) is so important.

Your existing relationship with your colleague likely makes you a credible coach, but remember that your role as a coach is very different from your role as a manager.

In your coaching sessions, show confidence by avoiding hesitation, making eye contact, and smiling. But, if you don't have all the answers, don't be afraid to admit it. If you're open and honest with your team member, your credibility will increase. What's more important is that you have the resources to find the answers together.

#### Show Your Reliability

Another important aspect of building trust is reliability. Your team member needs to know that he can depend on you, in every situation.

To show that you're reliable, make sure that you do what you say you'll do, without fail. Be sure to turn up for your coaching sessions on time, to return messages and calls promptly, and to remain sensitive to your coachee's preferences and expectations.

#### Make the Other Person Comfortable

When your team member feels secure and comfortable, she's more likely to open up and share what she's really thinking. This only tends to develop once you know someone well.

You can help this process along by sharing some personal information about yourself, too. This doesn't mean that you have to [self-disclose](#) every detail about your life! But telling stories from your past, or talking about your values and beliefs, will show that you trust her with your personal information.

You need to find the right balance between how much to tell her and how much you keep to yourself. Use the [Johari Window](#) model to help with this.

#### Show That You Care

Your coachee needs to feel that you have his best interests at heart, and that your relationship isn't just about improving the quality of his work or increasing his productivity.

So, take an active interest in his life. Be clear that you are available at short notice if he needs to talk to you. And, if your coaching plan takes longer than you expect to bear fruit, be patient and demonstrate your commitment to the process.

## Building Rapport

At the start of a coaching relationship, it's important to build a [rapport](#) with your team member. But this can be more difficult than it sounds!

To help the process along, find out what the two of you have in common. You can do this by asking her questions about herself, and about what's happening in her life.

The six levels of rapport were originally identified by Gregory Bateson in 1964, and developed further by Robert Dilts in 1990. They are:

1. Environment – What do you have in common (work, location, background, and so on)?
2. Behavior – Do you do similar things out of work?
3. Capability – Do you share any skills or abilities?
4. Beliefs – Do you have the same values or beliefs?
5. Identity – Do you share a sense of who you are?
6. Spirit – Do you have a similar spiritual outlook on life?





## **ACTION**

Answer the questions below to learn how to build trust and rapport with your team member.

**1. Brainstorm three ways in which you can demonstrate your credibility as a coach.**

**2. As a manager, how do you show that you're reliable? How could you improve?**

**3. One of the best ways to put your team member at ease is by self-disclosing. List some examples of personal information that you're comfortable sharing.**

---

**4. Brainstorm how you could show your team member that you care. Write down your ideas, below.**

**5. Talk to other managers who coach people in your organization. Ask them how they start their sessions, and how they establish rapport. Write down their responses, below.**

**6. Think about what you've learned from these managers. Do any of their approaches or techniques seem appropriate for you? If so, which ones, and why?**

## 2.3. Informal Coaching

You don't have to wait for a structured session to use your coaching skills. Good coaches engage with their team members daily, or weekly.

These informal coaching sessions might be quick, but they can make a huge difference to your team's effectiveness and morale. They can also help you to create stronger and more trusting relationships with your people.

You can identify informal coaching opportunities in several ways:

### 1. Keep on Top of Workloads

Stay in touch with your team members' workloads. When people are overloaded, or they're trying to juggle too many responsibilities, an informal coaching session can help them to prioritize their tasks, or to gain a clearer understanding of what's most important.

Adjust your schedule during busy times so that you're available to help when your team members need you.

### 2. Be Aware of People's Moods

A change in a person's mood might prompt you to start an informal coaching conversation.

For example, imagine that you've walked by a team member's desk. His shoulders are slumped, his head is down, and he's staring blankly at his computer screen. Sure, he may just be recovering from a big lunch! Or, he might have just learned that his most promising client went to your competitor.

The point is, his body language is telling you that something is wrong. If he's just eaten too much, you could encourage him to take a quick walk outside. But, if it's something more serious, you're in the right place at the right time for a quick coaching session.

There are many situations where people can benefit from an informal coaching conversation – for example, when they've received feedback, or after a performance review. Team members might also need support if they experience an anticlimax after achieving a major goal, or if a project or presentation didn't go as well as they'd hoped.

### 3. Ask for Permission

Informal coaching can be a valuable experience for your team member. However, she might not appreciate it if she's in the middle of doing something important!

Be sure to check that it's a good time to have a coaching conversation.



#### 4. Don't Tell People What to Do

Remember, your goal as a coach is not to offer advice or to give specific instructions. The best coaches ask questions, and listen more than they talk.

If you find yourself using the words “I think...” during a coaching session, you may need to re-examine your approach.

#### 5. Use Informal Moments

The best time to have an informal coaching conversation is when you both feel relaxed. Rather than organize a formal meeting, you could talk to your team member over a cup of coffee in your break room, or during lunch, instead.

The goal here is to be relaxed, while remaining professional.

#### ACTION

Consider what you’ve learned about informal coaching sessions, and then check in with your team members on the “shop floor.” (Read our article, [Management by Wandering Around](#), if you are concerned about how to do this without appearing to interfere or “spy on” your team.) Then, answer the questions below.

##### 1. How did you initiate the conversation?

##### 2. How did you know that the person would benefit from an informal coaching session? What were the clues?

---

**3. Was your team member receptive to you?**

**4. What do you think you did well?**

**5. What could you have done better?**

### ACTION

Think about what excites you the most about coaching your team members. What do you think is your biggest challenge? And how will you overcome it? Write down your answers in the box, below.

## 2.4. Drawing This Together

In this chapter, we discussed how to coach an individual member of your team. We outlined several models to guide your approach, and found out how to get your coaching relationships off to a great start. We also explored building trust and rapport with your team members.

The next chapter focuses on how to coach a team. We'll look at how group coaching works, and examine several models and processes that you can use to do it.





# 3. Coaching Teams

**It's not easy to get a team to work to its full potential. Conflicts, power struggles and miscommunication can cause a group to start, stumble and stop.**

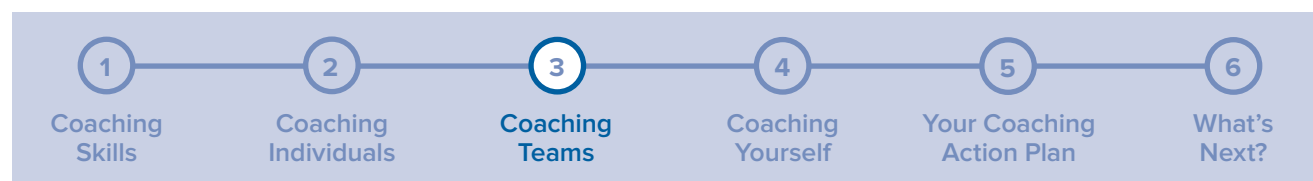
When your people aren't working together as effectively as they could, team coaching can help. Instead of focusing on individual development, your attention with group coaching is on improving relationships and interactions within the team as a whole.

[Team coaching](#) is useful in many situations. For example, it can help people to:

- Work through interpersonal conflicts.
- Understand their roles within the group.
- Improve relationships.
- Understand team goals.

You can coach your people at a specific place and time – at a team-building event, for example – or you can do it spontaneously.

In this chapter, we discuss some of the causes of conflict within teams, and the tools that you can use to resolve it. We also examine the importance of defining your expectations, and how to manage clashes of values in cross-functional teams.



## 3.1. Understanding Team Dynamics

Before you start your group coaching session, you need to know how your people relate to one another.

Each person has a unique personality and way of communicating. But, when people are in a group, they have to work closely with one another. Their different styles can cause frustration and conflict, which may prevent them from working together effectively.

By understanding team dynamics, you can help people to recognize how they relate to one another, and to identify ways to improve their relationships.

### Recognizing Unique Personalities

Personality tests such as [Myers-Briggs®](#), the [Big Five Personality Traits Model](#), and [The DiSC Model](#) can help you and your team members to learn more about how you prefer to communicate and process information.

If your team members agree to take these tests, and to share the results, they may learn to understand one another better, and that it's OK for individuals to have different preferences. This can enable them to work together more effectively.

Let's look at an example. Patrick is detail-oriented, and enjoys compiling facts and doing research. This sometimes annoys his colleagues, because they think he can be too slow to finish his work. But, when they realize the benefit that the team gets from his attention to detail, they begin to see it as a strength rather than a weakness.

It can also help if each team member understands her "role" within the group, and whether it's Action Oriented, People Oriented or Thought Oriented. The nine specific roles that underpin team success were identified in the 1970s by Dr Meredith Belbin, and you can learn about them in our article, [Belbin's Team Roles](#).



## ACTION

Ask your team members to identify their strengths in relation to the team as a whole. Then, read about Belbin's team roles and pick the role that you think each team member plays within your group. List them in the table, below.

Team Member	Strengths	Role
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		
7.		
8.		
9.		
10.		

Another useful technique for matching and balancing team roles and individual preferences is the [Margerison-McCann Team Management Profile](#). This tool is similar to Belbin's Team Roles, and is based on the same principles: that people have different strengths, and that a well-balanced team includes a variety of preference types.

## 3.2. Defining Your Expectations

When your team members understand one another better, they will likely work together more effectively. But they may also benefit from a set of ground rules that guides the way that they behave and communicate.

For instance, let's say that Rudi finds high-energy meetings exhausting and intimidating. He's also the technical expert. The group needs to know when it's veering off course, and Rudi's input is crucial. But, it's difficult for him to speak up against the group. In the past, he has stayed silent when he could have raised the alarm, and this has damaged the team's reputation.

This highlights the importance of defining your expectations regarding behavior and communication. In our example, you would tell Rudi that he needs to give clearer guidance to the group, and to speak up when he knows that things are going wrong.

You can set out your expectations in a [team charter](#). This is a document that defines the behavior and communication "rules" that everyone in the group is expected to follow and support.

If a written charter isn't appropriate, you can discuss and agree acceptable standards of behavior for different situations with your team members. For example, you might talk about how to manage conflict, and what to do if someone isn't pulling her weight.

### ACTION

Prepare a team charter by answering the questions below and on the next page.

#### 1. What are your team's mission and objectives? What is your most important goal?

---

**2. What is each person's role on your team? What is his unique expertise or skill?**

**3. Who is the team leader?**

**4. What kind of behavior do you expect from your people? What will you not tolerate? Outline your expectations, below.**

**5. List each person's responsibilities and what he is expected to deliver, below:**

Name	Responsibility	Outcome	Priority
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			

**6. Give each responsibility listed above a score between one and five, with one as the highest priority and five as the lowest.**

**7. What power does your team have on its own? What does it need permission to do? Write this below.**

**8. What is your team's budget? What do you do if you need additional funds? Write this process, below.**



---

### 9. What resources and support are available to your team?

#### ACTION

When you have completed your team charter, give everyone a copy and schedule a meeting to talk about its contents. Ask for your team's input, and write down these ideas in the box, below.

#### Team Members' Feedback

### 3.3. Evaluating Rewards and Recognition

At times, people in your team might have competing priorities, and this can lead to serious dysfunction within the group.

For instance, your organization might promote teamwork but reward individual performance. So, what happens when some people put their personal goals before those of the team, to get recognition or a bonus?

Here's another example: in a cross-functional team, each member has goals and priorities within the group, as well as from their "home" departments. Conflict can arise if these objectives are at odds.

As a manager, it's important to identify any competing [values](#) or goals in your team, and to address them before they cause problems.



---

## ACTION

Answer the questions below to determine whether your team is facing any competing priorities.

**1. Look at how your organization recognizes and rewards good performance. Does the system clash with the goals and objectives of your own team? If so, how can you resolve this conflict?**

**2. If you're leading a cross-functional team, look at the reward system within each department. Are there any conflicts?**

**3. Make a list of your team goals, as well as each person's objectives. Are they aligned? If not, where is the mismatch?**

## 3.4. Team Coaching Processes

There are various models that you can use when you coach a group, and some of the models that we outlined in Chapter 2 can also apply to team coaching. Here are some further suggestions:

### 1. The **POSITIVE** Model of Coaching

The [POSITIVE Model of Coaching](#) was developed by Vincenzo Libri in 2004. You can use it to establish highly motivating goals for your team.

The model has eight steps:

- **Purpose** – Decide what you want to achieve. What is your goal?
- **Observations** – Think about your situation. What is going well? What isn't?
- **SMART** – Set a [SMART goal](#) (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time Bound).
- **Insight** – Consider your goal. Are you excited about it? Is it challenging?
- **Team** – Look at the people around you. Who else will support you in achieving your goal?
- **Initiate** – When will you start to work on your goal? How will you begin? How long will you spend on it each week?
- **Value** – Break the goal down into smaller steps and quick wins. How will the team celebrate success?
- **Encourage** – Meet your team members regularly to encourage them, and to address any difficulties that they encounter.

Use the POSITIVE Model when your team needs to stay motivated to achieve long-term goals. Note, however, that the framework is less effective for dealing with issues such as interpersonal conflicts.

### 2. The **PRACTICE** Model of Coaching

The [PRACTICE Model of Coaching](#) was published by psychologist Stephen Palmer in 2008, and is based on an earlier approach developed by Barbara Wasik.

You can use this simple framework to enable your team to identify a problem, and to decide on a solution. The seven steps are:

1. Identify a **P**roblem.
2. Develop **R**ealistic and relevant goals.
3. Generate **A**lternative solutions.
4. **C**onsider the consequences.
5. **T**arget the most feasible solution.
6. Implement your **C**hosen solution.
7. **E**valuate.

The biggest advantage of this model is that it's solution-focused. Unlike the POSITIVE Model, it's best for dealing with specific problems.

#### TIP

Use the **PRACTICE** model next time your team has a particular issue or problem that you want to address.

## ACTION

What issues do you have with your team that you could resolve with coaching? How could it help? Write down your ideas, below.

Issue	Resolution
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	
6.	
7.	
8.	

## 3.5. Drawing This Together

In this chapter, we learned how coaching can enable your team to perform to its full potential. Team coaching concentrates on interactions and relationships that help people to work better together, rather than on individual development.

Keep in mind that coaching is really nothing more than a focused conversation. And, while it

can be helpful to plan a group coaching session, don't forget to take advantage of "on the fly" conversations at the end of a team meeting, or during a group lunch, for example.

The next chapter focuses on another good use for many of the skills and techniques that you've learned so far – coaching yourself!

## 4. Coaching Yourself

**A coach's role is to solve problems, identify goals and put action plans into place. Once you've learned to use these skills, you can apply them to yourself, too.**

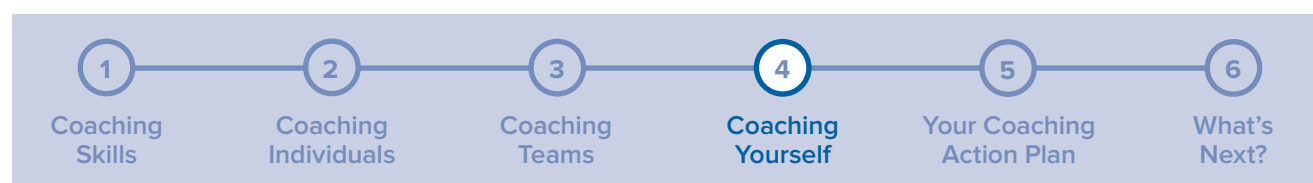
As we've seen, the coaching process can boost your team members' confidence, build their self-awareness, and help to keep them motivated. So why stop there?

Using the skills you've learned to coach yourself is a great way to "practice what you preach" with your team. And, as a [role model](#), your people will be inspired to achieve their goals when they see you fulfilling yours.

### 4.1. Identifying Your Strengths and Weaknesses

Before you begin any journey, you need to know your starting point. It's the same with coaching. When you begin to coach yourself, you have to understand your strengths and weaknesses.

When you know what you're good at, you can use those strengths to achieve your goals. And when you identify your weakest areas, you can come up with strategies to address them, or to minimize their impact.



## ACTION

Perform a [Personal SWOT Analysis](#). List your biggest strengths and weaknesses in the table, below.

My Strengths	My Weaknesses
1.	
2.	
3.	

## 4.2. The GROW Model

In Chapter 2, we discussed how to use [The GROW Model](#) in one-on-one coaching sessions. But you can use it to coach yourself, too.

The GROW Model can help you to identify a goal and to decide on a plan of action to achieve it. If you use this model, be sure to set aside time each week to “check in” with yourself and assess your progress.

### Step 1: Identify Your Goal

Your first step is to identify the goal that you want to achieve. This could be a behavior that you want to change, or a new skill that you want to develop.

Make sure your goal is SMART: Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, and Time-Bound.

### Step 2: Identify Your Current Reality

Next, look at your situation. This is your starting point. Examine the factors that might help or hinder your progress toward this goal.

### Step 3: Explore the Options

Now, you need to think about how you will reach your goal. Identify as many different ways as possible to do so.

### Step 4: Establish the Will

Create a strategy to achieve your goal. Having a plan of action will boost your confidence and motivation. Check your progress regularly.



---

## ACTION

Use the table, below, to work through each step in the GROW Model.

### Identify Your Goal

Decide on a **SMART** goal that you'd like to achieve.

Goal:

### Identify Your Current Reality

What is happening right now? How does your situation affect you achieving your goal?

Have you already taken steps toward this goal? If so, what happened?

---

**Does the goal conflict with any of your other objectives?**

### Explore the Options

**What can you do to achieve your goal? How can you utilize your strengths? List your ideas, below.**

**What are the advantages and disadvantages of each option?**

---

**Which option seems best? Why?**

**What obstacles do you face? How might your weaknesses hinder your progress? What can you do to address them?**

**What do you need to start doing to achieve your goal?**

---

**What do you need to stop doing to achieve your goal?**

### **Establish the Will**

**What is your first step? When will you start?**

**Once you begin, what could hinder your progress? What will you do to overcome it?**

---

**How will you review your progress? And how often?**

**What will you do to make sure that you stay on track?**

## 5. Your Coaching Action Plan

**You've covered a lot of ground in this toolkit – well done! But what practical difference will it make to you and your team?**

We've seen that coaching can vary from a quick exchange in the moment, through regular one-on-ones, or a substantial series of team sessions.

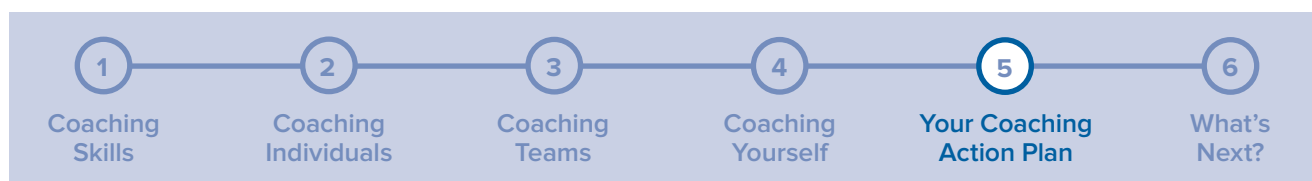
But, in all cases, you'll need to be able and willing to give it the time and thought it deserves.

**So, think back to the Introduction and complete the following sentences.**

Coaching excites me because...

I could personally gain...

It's worthwhile investing time and energy in coaching my team, because...



---

You'll likely need to make some changes to your day-to-day schedule, to help you to find time for coaching. So, be honest with yourself about your situation and complete the following sentences.

I need to give more time to coaching my people, so the habit or process that I need to stop or change first, is...

The blockers to change that I might have to deal with are...

and my first step to tackling them is to...

I need the support of...

to make and sustain these changes, so I'm going to discuss this with him or her by...

The Mind Tools Time Management resource(s) that might help me the most is/are...



---

In Chapter 1, we focused on the key skills that make a great coach. Summarize your findings and actions by completing the following sentences.

Listening well is crucial to good coaching. My strongest skill in this area is...

I'll develop my active listening, empathic listening, or mindful listening by applying these top two tips in my next one-on-one...

and...

When I notice myself making an assumption about what my coachee means, I'll...

I'll add new, non-leading questions to my usual list, including...

and...

---

Sometimes I find my coachees' emotions difficult to deal with. When they express...

or...

I feel...

And my own preoccupations or mood can get in the way of an open conversation. I'm often thinking about/feeling...

So, I'll start managing such situations better by...

My coaching will be more effective if my coachees trust me. I can help to build trust by...

My particular strengths at work are...

and...

I can apply these to my coaching by...

You'll make best use of your and your coachee's valuable time if you follow a structured approach. So, compare the three coaching models described in Chapter 2 and consider which you could apply first, and how.

<p>I plan to use the...</p>  <p>because...</p>  <p>I'll need to prepare by...</p>	<p>model one-on-one with...</p>
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---

Whichever model you apply, be careful to build rapport as well as trust, and to help your coachee to feel at ease before you start.

I can show my coachee that I have his or her best interests in mind by...

I will demonstrate my integrity and humility as a coach by...

Tips from successful coaches in my organization that I'd feel comfortable applying include...

and...

Remember that you can also coach informally, day to day, as the need arises. But your success will depend on your awareness of your team

members' workload and their preferred learning styles, as well as being sensitive to the wider working environment and culture.

I'll avoid being isolated from life on the shop floor by...

I can improve my judgment about when to intervene by...



---

Most people think of coaching as an exclusive, one-on-one activity, but you can apply it to groups too, as we saw in Chapter 3.

I plan to use coaching with this team/group...

to help it to work on this topic or issue...

I'll prepare by finding out about team members' personality styles using the following model or test...

and by helping people to appreciate one another's strengths and preferences.

Together, we'll draw up a team charter so that we can work effectively toward a common goal. The steps that we'll follow are...

I will discuss conflicting priorities with...

---

As with one-on-one coaching, a formal structure can help to keep your team coaching on track.

I plan to try out the POSITIVE model at this upcoming meeting...

and the PRACTICE model in this session...

Helping people to explore their ideas, goals, strengths, and weaknesses will likely inspire you to think about your own situation, too. In fact, you'll need to demonstrate that you're willing and able

to do this if you are to be a good role model. When you've looked back at Chapter 4, record your initial findings and decisions, below.

My SWOT analysis highlighted...

As a result, I will...

The goal I'm working toward using GROW is...

and my first action is...



Finally, come back to this workbook in a month's time and write down what difference you've seen in your and your team's performance following your coaching. Then, review your plan and put the rest of it into action!

I've set myself a reminder to look back at this toolkit on...

Changes that I've seen in myself and my work include...

Changes that I've seen in my team's behavior and performance include...



## 6. What's Next?

Now that you've reached the end of this toolkit, you're well on your way to becoming an effective coach. Congratulations!

We've outlined the key skills that you need to coach individuals, your team, and yourself. But it's important that you continue to practice what you've learned in the weeks and months to come. This is the only way for you to reach your full potential as a coach. Remember, the more coaching you do, the better you'll get!

And, don't forget that you can get individual help and support from Mind Tools' own professional coaches, and from other members of the Mind Tools Club, in our [forums](#). And you can share your experiences more widely when you follow Mind Tools on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [LinkedIn](#).

If you have any suggestions for how we can improve our resources, please let us know at [customer.helpdesk@mindtools.com](mailto:customer.helpdesk@mindtools.com).

I hope that you enjoy applying what you've learned in this toolkit, and that the skills you've developed continue to help you and your team to accomplish your goals. Coaching can be very fulfilling. Enjoy it!

Best wishes,



**James Manktelow,**  
CEO, MindTools.com

