

What is Coaching?

Coaching is a relationship where the coach will ask questions and use models that help the client (or coachee) maximize their personal and professional development. It is about what is happening now and what the client wants to work towards the future - it acknowledges the past as being important in our understanding of self and works towards the future. Coaching is less directive than teaching, advising or mentoring and more action orientated than reflective practices such as counseling as illustrated below:



Coaching is about paying precise attention to the detail of the external patterns of behaviour that we all run as well as our internal thinking patterns. It helps bring what is often unconscious into the conscious realm—so helping us understand ourselves better. By managing how we are in different situations we are better able to achieve our goals and outcomes.

Principles of Coaching

The overriding principle in coaching is that of choice. The assumption is that we can always choose how we respond to any of life's challenges. We may not be able to choose what happens to us (although to a large extent we choose this as well), but we can always choose how we respond.

'Whether you think you can or you think you can't, you're right' Henry Ford

There are 6 foundation principles¹:

- **The client is resourceful.** The client has all the resources they need to resolve or achieve their outcomes – coaching is not about getting 'fixed' and being told what to do.
- **The coach helps develop resourcefulness.** The coach is not an advice giver (which implies that the client a lesser person and can lead to dependency or blame 'she told me to do it'). The coach's role is to ask questions to help increase the client's own resourcefulness.
- **Coaching addresses the whole person.** Coaching considers wider life influences beyond the work outcome in order to create a rounded view as the client develops their goals.
- **The client sets the agenda.** There is no set agenda for coaching, although some structure can be agreed with the client. The client presents their own issues, not those directed by the coach.
- **The coach and client are equals.** This is a partnership of equals; adult to adult and is based on total respect and complete confidentiality.
- **Coaching is about change and action.** The purpose is based around change: increased self awareness, ability to make choices explicit and close the gap between what the client is capable of doing and what they are currently doing.

'We are what we repeatedly do. Excellence then, is not an act, but a habit' Aristotle

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