



1 What is effective coaching and mentoring at work?

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Some client experiences

Jim: I was rambling on about my inability to cope with a work challenge. My coach said, 'We've worked together for quite a while now and I know that you are someone who can cope, actually, can do more than that, someone who can rise to the occasion.' I was stopped in my tracks. Here was someone who truly believed in me, more than I could believe in myself at that moment, someone who could see my strengths when I couldn't.

Eva: What I have appreciated about you as my mentor has been your professional acuity and care. It has sustained me in the middle of change. I have always felt stronger having spoken to you. I have known that while showing me kindness, you retain objectivity and your keen eye is ever vigilant! Your generosity of spirit and action has kept me afloat.

Alistair: As my coach, you're the one person I can rely on to tell me the truth about myself. You don't beat about the bush. You say it how it is. But I trust you to have my interests at heart. It has made me realize that it's OK to be straight with people, rather than bottling things up, and it has changed the way I manage at work. It's made a big improvement. I'm clearer with people and they with me, and the team is much stronger.





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Sue: I was talking about the future, as I often did, and my mentor suddenly looked up and said, rather wistfully, 'You know, I'm wondering when you are going to get started on the future.'

Introduction

Our aim in writing this book is to capture the essence of coaching and mentoring, and to energize and equip the reader, whether as coach, mentor or client, and whether coaching or mentoring formally or informally.

Many managers and professionals offer coaching and mentoring within their organization or professional group. Even more of them use the skills in leading and managing individuals and teams. In addition, there are an increasing number of full-time coaches and mentors who are providing coaching and mentoring to people at work. This book is addressed to all these groups, and to those who are not yet actively involved in coaching and mentoring. It is for those who want to find out more about what is effective coaching and mentoring and who:

- are already coaching or mentoring;
- are seeking coaching or mentoring;
- want to become a coach or mentor;
- use coaching or mentoring skills or approaches at work;
- are participants on coaching or mentoring programmes or courses;
- are in coaching or mentoring networks;
- train or supervise coaches and mentors;
- want to establish or review the provision of coaching and mentoring in their organization or profession;
- are engaged in leadership, management or professional development.

Terminology can be problematic and so in this book we generally use the term 'client' to refer to the person with whom the coach or mentor is working. We acknowledge that in real life they may be called, for example, mentee or colleague.

There has been considerable debate in the literature about the differences and similarities between coaching and mentoring. It is evident that what is described in one organization as mentoring might be known in another as coaching. Recently, with acknowledgement that use of the terms varies widely, attention has turned to the common ground, and it is to this that our book is addressed.

What is this kind of helping, this kind of learning, which is not teaching or telling or advising or instructing? Whatever it is, it is certainly in demand, and the number of coaching and mentoring articles, journals, special interest groups and courses has risen, seemingly exponentially, in recent years.





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Box 1.1 A definition of coaching and mentoring

Coaching and mentoring are learning relationships which help people to take charge of their own development, to release their potential and to achieve results which they value.

We argue that a learning relationship is central to both coaching and mentoring, which are more than just a set of activities or skills. Through the relationship, the client develops and changes, as, indeed, does the coach or mentor.

We see coaching and mentoring as complementary activities. Both help people to take charge of their own development. The coaching or mentoring relationship facilitates insight, learning and change. Through this relationship, potential is identified, possibilities become reality and tangible results are delivered. Coaching and mentoring help a person to see the present as a springboard to the future, and to be strategic about their own development. Whether the person seeks help with a specific work issue of current concern, or a longer-term career question, the coach or mentor will facilitate exploration, help in the formulation of goals and provide support while action is implemented.

Nine key principles for effective practice

Effective coaching and mentoring are underpinned by nine key principles (summarized in Figure 1.1). These principles, derived from our experience, have informed and guided our coaching and mentoring work. We introduce them here. In subsequent chapters, they are explored in greater depth and linked to case examples and interactive exercises.

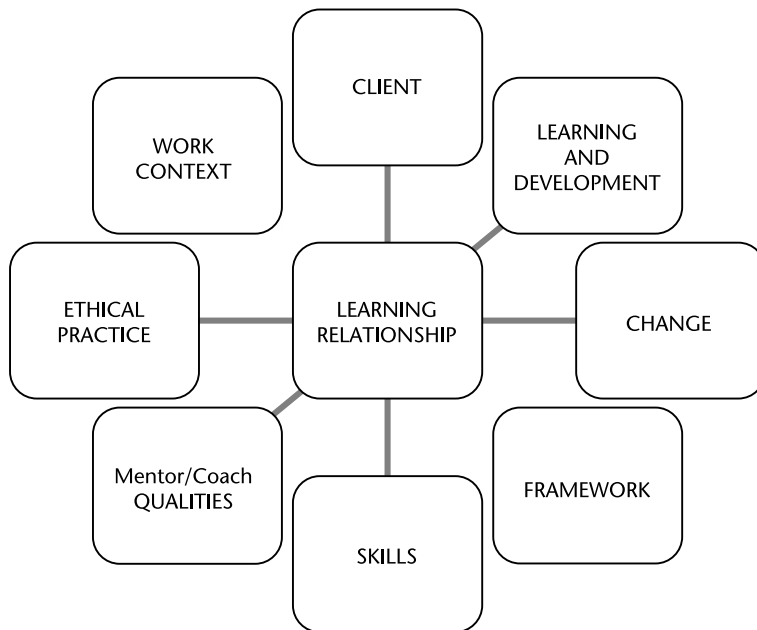
1 *The learning relationship is at the heart of change*

The central principle is that learning and change occur through the relationship with a coach or mentor. Coaching and mentoring are not just an interaction, an event, an opportunity. Two people meet. They share knowledge, values, attitudes, skills and experience. They engage with one another, they relate to one another and if the coaching and mentoring is effective, they *connect* with one another. Dialogue is important in establishing and maintaining the connection. In a learning dialogue there is, on both sides, a willingness to share perspectives, to listen, to understand, to be open to new ideas and to take joint responsibility for the conversation and the outcomes.





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- 1 The LEARNING RELATIONSHIP is at the heart of change
- 2 The CONTEXT is work
- 3 The CLIENT sets the agenda and is resourceful
- 4 The COACH OR MENTOR facilitates LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT
- 5 The OUTCOME is CHANGE
- 6 The FRAMEWORK for the change process provides movement and direction
- 7 The SKILLS develop insight, release potential and deliver results
- 8 The QUALITIES of the coach or mentor affirm, enable and sustain the client
- 9 ETHICAL PRACTICE safeguards and enhances coaching and mentoring

Figure 1.1 Nine key principles for effective practice

Dialogue sustains the connection and the relationship, and leads to learning and change. It follows, therefore, that the learning relationship is a partnership, and not an activity imposed by one person on another.

2 The context is work

This book is about coaching and mentoring at work. The focus is on the relationship with an individual client, although the principles apply also to team coaching. The client may want or need to improve their work performance in the short term, or they may be concerned with broader issues of





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personal, professional and career development. Short- and long-term issues are often interrelated. The effective coach or mentor values the client as a whole person within their work context. The focus of coaching and mentoring is the client's present and future experiences, problems, opportunities and development. The best results are produced when the focus is on developing strengths and resources, rather than on remedying deficits.

The effective coach or mentor knows enough about the work context to be able to facilitate exploration of issues and is aware that opportunities and resources in the workplace differ from person to person. Because effective coaching and mentoring release potential and deliver results, they can be enabling for those who have experienced being marginalized or disadvantaged at work.

Coaching and mentoring are not career patronage, neither are they counselling or therapy. The effective coach or mentor agrees with the client the boundaries of their coaching or mentoring work, and is aware of other resources and networks beyond these boundaries.

3 The client sets the agenda and is resourceful

Centre stage in the learning relationship is the client and their agenda. Being centre stage and being the focus of attention can be both challenging and empowering for the client. Some clients are reluctant, some are eager. Where a client is referred, there is an agenda with which the client may or may not agree. Some clients have clear goals, some only vague ideas. In all cases, the start point of the effective coach or mentor is to work with the client to help them figure out what they want. This process, the first step in facilitating the client's learning and development, may be relatively straightforward, or perhaps one of the most demanding parts of the coaching and mentoring relationship. However, unless the client chooses to be a partner in the learning relationship, and has a sense of purpose, the relationship cannot be successful.

Once the agenda is clear, the task of the coach or mentor is to help the client to identify and use the resources, both internal and external, that will enable them to change and develop. Affirming the client's resourcefulness, and communicating this affirmation to the client, is an important role. When the client seems to lack energy or focus, or bright ideas or direction, or creative alternatives, the coach or mentor can communicate hope and possibility, and work with the client to make these real. A coach or mentor can enable a client by believing in them at times when the client's self-belief falters.





4 The coach or mentor facilitates learning and development

The coach or mentor is a facilitator, not an instructor. They support and challenge the client to learn and to develop. The client learns by acquiring new awareness, insight, skills, ideas and knowledge. Development involves integrating their learning into the way they are. It is more important that a facilitator asks good questions than that they have 'right' answers. Good questions provoke new perspectives and change in the client.

The effective facilitator reviews the learning relationship and the learning process, and does not take these for granted. The client is asked about what they are learning and how they are learning it, and what might help their learning and development. The effective facilitator finds learning methods that suit the client. They help the client to clarify how they learn best, and how to make coaching or mentoring work for them.

Finally, the effective facilitator understands the importance of what happens between sessions. They know that coaching and mentoring sessions should be the catalyst for learning and action, not the substitute.

5 The outcome is change

Coaching and mentoring are about change. The client achieves something that they care about, that makes a positive difference in their working life or career. The real significance of change should be judged in relation to the client agenda and their goal. A change in attitude for one client may be just as important as a major job promotion for another. Insight and understanding are important in coaching and mentoring in so far as they lead to change. Of course, change is hard work. Change provokes resistance, a normal reaction to facing up to difficult issues. Resistance can be viewed as a sign that the coaching or mentoring dialogue is on track and that it is touching on important issues for the client. Effective coaches and mentors work with client resistance, rather than try to overcome it. They use resistance to help the client to clarify their values and their goals, and to explore what will help or hinder them in making changes.

6 The framework for the change process provides movement and direction

The coaching or mentoring journey is about change in relation to the client agenda. The framework provides a map for the journey, for both client and coach or mentor. It does not fully describe the landscape of the coaching or mentoring journey, but rather it provides reference points and a sense of





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direction. It can help if either party gets stuck or loses direction. The coaching or mentoring framework should be used with a light touch, or even set aside, if that is what would be most helpful for the client in their journey. It should not be used to constrain or limit exploration of the landscape.

7 The skills develop insight, release potential and deliver results

The effective coach or mentor uses skills which bring to life the coaching framework and enable the client to develop insight and release their potential. The effective coach or mentor is competent, using the skills in an integrated way within the learning relationship, not merely applying a set of competences. The skills communicate the coach or mentor belief in, and valuing of, the client. Wise and judicious use of the skills ensures a balance of support and challenge, of reflection and action. The effective coach or mentor has a repertoire of tools and techniques which they offer appropriately to the client to support their learning and development.

8 The qualities of the coach or mentor affirm, enable and sustain the client

The distinctive style, personality and values of the coach or mentor are prized by the client. This unique blend of attitudes, values, knowledge and experience can be shared as 'self'. Moreover, when the chemistry between coach or mentor and client really works, there is a sense of deep connection. The paradox of this connection is that it is not tangible and yet it is powerfully present and effective in bringing about client self-belief, hope, courage and action.

Effective coaches and mentors are not only smart, but also wise. They have the wisdom to make sound judgements on what they see, hear, and experience in the learning relationship. They communicate caring, valuing, respect and empathy. They model a way of being which is both human and professional. This is not deliberately 'taught' but is often 'caught'. Learning is not just 'from' the coach or mentor, but also 'with' and 'through' them. It is this third type of learning, 'through the coach or mentor' that is often overlooked. Yet it may be the most powerful learning of all! The client who experiences affirmation and positive challenge from a coach or mentor is likely to value themselves more. The more a client values themselves, the more they value others. This then impacts on both personal and professional relationships.





9 *Ethical practice safeguards and enhances coaching and mentoring*

The client is safeguarded if ethical principles inform and guide practice. Such principles might include: respect for client autonomy; faithfulness to promises made; acting in ways which are beneficial to the client; not doing harm; and acting fairly. When these principles are in operation there will be an openness and transparency in the coaching and mentoring relationship. This not only safeguards the interests of both parties, but also enhances the quality of their work together. Effective coaching and mentoring start with clear expectations, continue with a negotiated working agreement, include ongoing evaluation and finish with well-prepared endings. Ethical coaching and mentoring are informed by legal requirements and professional codes of practice. Working within agreed limits and boundaries helps the client to feel secure, for example in relation to issues of confidentiality or conflicts of interest.

Coaching and mentoring: similarities and differences

Our definition of coaching and mentoring is that:

both coaching and mentoring are learning relationships which help people to take charge of their own development, to release their potential and to achieve results which they value.

In this book, we view coaching and mentoring as complementary. Both activities help people to take charge of their own development. The coaching or mentoring relationship facilitates insight, learning and change. Through this relationship, potential is identified, possibilities become reality and tangible results are delivered. The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) notes the many similarities between coaching and mentoring, not least in the 'one-to-one relationship that provides an opportunity for individuals to reflect, learn and develop' (Jarvis 2004: 19). Both coach and mentor want to improve performance and deliver results, but the coach may be more hands-on in achieving specific skill development and change.

Some of the similarities between coaching and mentoring have been identified by Zeus and Skiffington (2000) (see Figure 1.2). Both activities base their assumptions on basic values and beliefs: that humans have the ability to change; that they make the best choices available to them; that coaching is not a quick fix: 'it is a journey where the process of learning is as important as the knowledge and skills gained' (p. xv). Zeus and Skiffington talk about coaching and mentoring as essentially a conversation where learning takes place through asking the right questions rather than providing answers. This leads to personal and professional transformation and reinventing oneself.



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- Both require well-developed interpersonal skills
- Both require the ability to generate trust, support commitment, generate new actions through listening and speaking skills
- Both shorten the learning curve
- Both aim for the individual to improve his or her performance and be more productive
- Both encourage the individual to stretch, but can provide support if the person falters or gets out of his or her depth
- Both provide support without removing responsibility
- Both require a degree of organisational know-how
- Both focus on learning and development to enhance skills and competencies
- Both stimulate personal growth to develop new expertise
- Both can function as a career guide to review career goals and identify values, vision, and career strengths
- Both are role models

Figure 1.2 Similarities between coaching and mentoring

Source: Zeus and Skiffington (2000: 18)

If coaching and mentoring have much in common, then what are the differences?

Mentoring is often viewed as ‘off-line help by one person to another in making significant transitions in knowledge, work or thinking’ (Megginson *et al.* 2006: 4). The mentor may be someone more experienced or senior in the organization or profession, and often their services are offered, and taken up, voluntarily. Mentoring may be either short term or long term. It will usually involve personal, professional and career development. The mentor may be internal or external to the organization. Megginson *et al.* (2006) highlight two contrasting models of mentoring: sponsorship versus developmental. In sponsorship they note that the mentor actively champions the client with the primary motive of career or professional success. In developmental mentoring the mentor may be experienced but not necessarily more senior and the aim is to facilitate learning rather than provide answers. Parsloe and Wray (2000: 82) summarize mentoring as ‘a process which supports learning and development, and thus performance improvements, either for an individual, team or business. Mentoring is usually understood as a special kind of relationship where objectivity, credibility, honesty, trustworthiness and confidentiality are critical’.

Within coaching the emphasis is changing. Experience is showing that the positive approach of helping clients to ‘astound themselves’ is far more beneficial than the type of managerial coaching which focused upon remedying performance deficits. Rogers (2004: 7) puts it this way: ‘The coach works with clients to achieve speedy, increased and sustainable effectiveness in their lives and careers through focused learning. The coach’s sole aim is to work with the client to achieve all of the client’s potential – as defined by the client’.



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Table 1.1 Differences between coaching and mentoring

<i>Mentoring</i>	<i>Coaching</i>
Ongoing relationship that can last for a long period of time	Relationship generally has a set duration
More informal and meetings can take place as and when the mentee needs some advice, guidance and support	Generally more structured in nature and meetings are scheduled on a regular basis
More long term and takes a broader view of the person	Short term (sometimes time-bounded) and focused on specific development areas/issues
Mentor is usually more experienced and qualified than the client. Often a senior person in the organization who can pass on knowledge, experience and open doors to otherwise out-of-reach opportunities	Coaching is generally not performed on the basis that the coach needs to have direct experience of their client's formal occupational role, unless the coaching is specific and skills-focused
Focus is on career and personal development	Focus is generally on development/issues at work
Agenda is set by the client, with the mentor providing support and guidance to prepare them for future roles	The agenda is focused on achieving specific, immediate goals
Mentoring revolves more around developing the mentee professionally	Coaching revolves more around specific development areas/issues

Coaching is increasingly being used by organizations to promote a learning culture, where leaders and managers are expected, as part of their role, to coach their own staff, who in turn learn coaching skills so that they can coach others. Coaching may be used as a tool for managing performance. Executive coaching is often provided externally and may be linked with leadership and management development programmes. The CIPD (Jarvis 2004: 19) has produced a useful summary of some differences between coaching and mentoring, as shown in Table 1.1.

We broadly agree with these distinctions although we are aware that, in real life, 'specific development issues' (coaching) and 'developing the client professionally' (mentoring) are often inextricably linked.

Several writers distinguish between the coach and mentor in terms of short- and long-term goals: 'A mentor is someone appointed or chosen to help another with the achievement of their long-term goals and career rather than immediate performance issues' (Downey 2003: 202). Downey portrays the effective coach as one who can turn potential into performance to achieve fulfilment and satisfaction at work. But this 'effective' coaching is not necessarily instruction; it is more like facilitation. He argues for a 'predominantly





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non-directive approach, an approach that evokes excellence, in which learning is intrinsic and satisfaction derives from the pursuit and achievement of meaningful goals' (p. 19).

Coaching and mentoring: some approaches and frameworks

There are several different approaches and frameworks used in coaching and mentoring. Most are useful with individuals and with teams. Some of these are derived from psychological approaches to motivation, learning, goal-setting and behaviour change. Those derived from Gestalt (Bluckert 2006), NLP (Vickers and Bavister 2005) and cognitive-behavioural approaches (Neenan and Dryden 2002) are examples of this. Some have developed from sports psychology, particularly in relation to understanding behaviour and performance (Bandura 1969). Recent approaches emphasize two elements. Firstly, the approach needs to be easily understood and used by busy leaders and managers who are expected to be internal coaches and mentors in organizations. Secondly, the focus should be on the talents and resources of the client and the possibilities in their work context, rather than on problems and deficiencies. Here are some frameworks which reflect these emphases.

The GROW model

Whitmore (2002: 173) writes about coaching for performance. His emphasis is GROWing people, performance and purpose. He argues that performance coaching is based on context, skills and sequence. He unpacks this framework thus:

- Context: awareness and responsibility
- Skills: effective questioning; active listening
- Sequence:

Goals	What do you want?
Reality	What is happening now?
Options	What could you do?
Will	What will you do?

This is a straightforward model starting with eliciting client wants and expectations and assuming that the client can articulate a goal or goals for a specific session or for several sessions. This is followed by reality checking, including others perspectives and auditing resources available to the client, to achieve the goal. This helps the client and coach to assess whether it is a workable goal. Options for change and action are then considered and finally commitment to





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the goal is examined. Downey (2003) has a useful diagram of the GROW model which includes an added first stage called 'topic', where the client says what it is that they want to talk about.

The Skilled Helper

This model of helping (Egan 2006) has been adapted for coaching and mentoring. It is a solution-focused framework for the coaching and mentoring process. There are three stages: What's going on? What solutions make sense for me? How do I get what I need and want? The aim is to help the client to identify valued outcomes and then to decide how to make them happen. The model is underpinned by core values of respect and genuine concern for the client. Basic communication skills are used to offer a balance of support and challenge throughout. The model is designed to be easily understood and used by the client, with the coach or mentor as facilitator of the learning and change process. We describe this framework in more detail in Chapter 4.

There are several features in common between Whitmore's GROW model and The Skilled Helper model (Egan 2006). Both approaches highlight the important relationship between wanting and acting. Both focus on articulating specific goals for change. Both test commitment to the goal. However, the differences are in the sequencing of events. In Egan's approach, for example, commitment is tested before options and action plans are drawn up. In both models it is important for the coach to be flexible and not to follow the model rigidly.

The Inner Game

Several writers on performance coaching and executive coaching base their ideas on the 'inner game'. Much of the thinking in performance coaching originated from ideas that worked in sports coaching, including the difference between the outer game of performance and the inner game of attitude and psychology. Gallwey (2000) states that the outer game of improved performance will only be possible if there are changes in the inner game of thinking and feeling. The power of positive thinking is at the heart of the inner game approach. Downey (2003:11) explains further. The important concept is:

potential minus interference is equal to performance

He explains that what prevents performance is the interference that comes between potential and achievement. He cites the following examples of





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interference that gets in the way and stops us focusing on the goal: fear, lack of confidence, the 'be perfect' driver, anger, boredom and frustration. The coach helps the client to identify interference and then to work with it to minimize its impact. This leads to 'relaxed concentration' which in turn leads to performance that flows. The relationship between this approach and sports coaching is obvious. We all recognize that 'flow' in excellent performance, whether it be tennis, playing the piano or producing an academic essay. This approach benefits from psychological understandings in relation to motivation, reinforcement, cognitive-behavioural understanding, rational-emotive behaviour and applied social psychology.

Non-directive approach

The non-directive approach has developed from research into the characteristics of effective helping relationships carried out in contexts such as health, therapy and education. In this approach, the coach or mentor is viewed as a facilitator of learning. The emphasis here is on providing the right conditions to enable the client to become their own coach. The conditions for effective facilitation are belief in the client and communication of genuine interest, respect and empathy. Some non-directive coaches and mentors do not use models and frameworks because they view these as not completely 'client-centred'.

In contrast, Downey is one writer who discusses using a non-directive approach with a model. He calls his approach non-directive coaching: 'Coaching is the art of facilitating the performance, learning and development of another' (2003: 21). He advocates the non-directive approach in relation to both the inner game and the GROW model. With regard to the GROW model he suggests adding the letter T. One axis of the letter T signifies expanding and one axis signifies focusing. He recommends the use of these two activities in relation to the GROW sequence. Both expanding and focusing would be done in a non-directive way. The method described next is another example of a non-directive approach.

Co-Active coaching

An interesting model which is different from those above is co-active coaching. It is based on four cornerstones which the coach uses to inform practice, rather than stages and steps to move through in sequence. This approach emphasizes client fulfilment, balance and process, and the way these contribute to success in work and life, and does not focus solely on work performance. The helping relationship is described as a designed alliance which requires





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listening, intuition, curiosity, action learning and self-management. The approach is non-directive. These are the four cornerstones (Whitworth *et al.* 1998: 3):

- 1 The client is creative, resourceful and whole.
- 2 Co-active coaching addresses the client's whole life.
- 3 The agenda comes from the client.
- 4 The relationship is a designed alliance.

When using this model the coach or mentor can focus all their attention on listening to the client and moving in whatever direction the client wants, rather than being distracted by having to check where they are in the prescribed steps or stages of other models. Experience and skill are needed to 'freewheel' in this way with the client.

Solution-focused coaching

This approach focuses on practicality and simplicity. It is positive and pragmatic (Jackson 2002). The methodology is based on: finding what works and doing more of it; finding what doesn't work and doing something different; finding and using resources; building on successes; and 'taking great care to simplify issues as far as possible, but no further' (www.thesolutionsfocus.com). The website gives six SIMPLE principles:

- 1 Solutions – not problems.
- 2 In-between, not individual – the action is in the interaction.
- 3 Make use of what's there – not what isn't.
- 4 Possibilities – from past, present and future.
- 5 Language – simply said.
- 6 Every case is different – beware ill-fitting theory.

The website also gives six solutions tools:

- 1 Platform – where are we starting from?
- 2 Future perfect – what if the problem went away overnight?
- 3 Scaling – where are we now?
- 4 Counters – whatever helps us forward.
- 5 Affirm – what's already going well?
- 6 Small actions – tiny steps that make the big difference.

Leaders and managers are finding this approach to be a straightforward way of helping colleagues to change and develop. It moves beyond looking at





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problems in the present situation to a focus on solutions which are within client resources.

Team coaching

While this book is primarily about the learning relationship between the individual client and the coach or mentor, in team coaching the client is the team. Team coaching is growing in popularity as a way of developing high-performing teams, which are often found to: have a high level of agreement about their common purpose; work closely together; be 'mutually accountable'; and value and respect individual differences (Katzenbach and Smith 1993). Team coaching helps to align individual, team and business goals.

Definitions of team coaching vary; however, many authors agree that task performance and team development are both important components of successful coaching. Therefore, a team coach might be expected to have an understanding of group dynamics (Bion 1961), group development (Tuckman 1965) and team roles (Belbin 2003), as well as an awareness of organization culture and its impact on team learning (Pokora and Briner 1999).

Team coaching may be used to: encourage more effective team-working in an existing group; accelerate the development of a newly-formed group into a working team; enhance the coaching skills of team leaders; and develop cross-boundary teams which address organization-wide issues. Barden (2006: 6) outlines how team coaching may be useful with a team which already works together:

a team may be coached when it is no longer aligned with its purpose. That can occur when: the organisation has changed its focus and a key team is having difficulty in following suit. The team leader has – perhaps through individual coaching – become aware of the need for a new purpose and the team needs to revisit its key elements. When the team members are no longer acting towards a single purpose because of, for example, conflicting interests or systemic imperatives.

In practice, the team coach will often work with one or more management sponsors, as well as with the team, and may coach individual team members to enhance their participation in the team. Executive coaches may start work with an individual executive client and then be asked to coach the client's team. In this scenario, boundary issues and conflicts of interest need to be clarified.

The skill of the team coach includes: firstly, aligning team outcomes and achievements with business expectations and targets; secondly, maximizing the distinctive contributions of individuals to ensure high performance of the





team as a whole. Although team coaching can be cost-effective and rewarding, it is not an easy option. It requires sensitivity, skill and adaptability on the part of the team coach who manages a variety of individual and organizational expectations and interests.

Competence and professionalism

This section will be of particular interest to those who are working full-time as coaches or mentors and to those who may be considering purchasing coaching or mentoring services.

Competence, capability and capacity

The effective coach or mentor not only possesses specific skills or competences, but is also reflective in their practice and aware of their ongoing learning and development needs.

The term 'competence' refers to the ability to perform to recognized standards. It implies successful performance against specific criteria: that, for example, a coach or mentor is 'fit for purpose'. While competence approaches have become popular in recent years, questions about their limitations have been raised, particularly in the context of management development. One of the issues highlighted by Burgoyne is 'whether performance can be divided into competencies and then re-integrated' (1990: 20), and the same question may be asked about coach and mentor competences. The undoubted usefulness of competence frameworks in coaching and mentoring must be weighed against the risks of reductionism through the adoption of a 'tick box' approach to professional competence. One way of addressing this concern is to ensure that accreditation processes assess capability and capacity as well as competences.

Fraser and Greenhalgh (2001: 799) note the focus on competence in traditional approaches to education and training and assert that 'in today's complex world we must educate not merely for competence but for capability (the ability to adapt to change, generate new knowledge and continuously improve performance)'. This is a challenge for coach and mentor training, and accreditation. Robust training and accreditation procedures should reflect not only competence at a given moment, but also capability, including the individual's willingness to monitor their own performance and development, and to be self-reflective. In addition to competences and capability there is the importance of developing the capacity of each coach or mentor. This will vary according to individual resources at any given time. Supervision and support, alongside continuing professional development, are the





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processes which enhance the ongoing capacity to learn, enabling the coach or mentor to maintain professional effectiveness:

when competencies are assessed as observable behaviours or skills, successful performance depends on the capacity and capability of that coach or mentor to learn. This capacity develops continuously and so good accreditation procedures will require that the coach or mentor is not accredited on one occasion only, but that there will be evidence of ongoing learning and development in order for accreditation of professional registration to be valid.

(Easterby-Smith *et al.* 1999: 150)

Competence frameworks

Some of the professional bodies concerned with coaching and mentoring have developed competence frameworks, and examples are listed below. Our nine key principles reflect these competences.

- The International Coaching Federation (ICF) has outlined four clusters of core competences: setting the foundation; co-creating the relationship; communicating effectively; facilitating learning and results (www.coachfederation.org).
- The European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) highlights eight areas of competence: process; domain-specific knowledge; expertise and focus; professionalism and building a practice; values and approach; communication; facilitating; and self. This list has been taken from a report of the EMCC Competency Research Project Phase Two Output, June 2005 (www.emccouncil.org).
- The Employment National Training Organization (ENTO) is developing a new occupational standards framework for coaching and mentoring. This will identify the key values and principles of practitioners, key purposes and key functions of coaching and mentoring at work. It will provide a basis for vocational qualifications for coaching and mentoring in the workplace and in the community (www.ento.co.uk).

Accreditation

There is currently considerable interest in the accreditation of both coach and mentor training programmes, and of individual coaches and mentors. This reflects a concern that those hiring or receiving coaching and mentoring





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services should know how to judge the competence and professionalism of the individual coach or mentor. In the UK, the CIPD has produced guidance (Jarvis 2004) for organizations wishing to develop coaching and mentoring and wishing to know what to look for when hiring coaches or mentors.

Some professional organizations offer accreditation: either for individual coaches and mentors, or for training programmes, or both. An example of training accreditation is the EMCC UK Quality Award for coach and mentor training, which has four award categories: Foundation; Intermediate; Practitioner; and Master. An example of individual accreditation is the ICF credentialing programme, with three designations: Associate Certified Coach; Professional Certified Coach; and Master Certified Coach. There are website addresses of some professional organizations in the Appendix.

Beyond competence: the wise coach or mentor

The wise coach or mentor is competent, but continuously strives to increase the capacity to learn: about themselves; about their clients; and about the organizations and contexts in which clients live and work. Every experience is viewed as a learning opportunity and this ensures continuous incremental improvement.

When we have experienced as clients the help of a 'wise' coach or mentor, what has made the difference? For one of us, it was like this:

My mentor didn't yet have any formal qualification, but he was just a natural. So natural that I didn't even notice his skills, but they were certainly there. He wore his experience lightly, keeping himself in the background. But he was himself, he showed me that he cared, he gave me enough time to talk and think. He could be very challenging too, but he seemed to consider carefully when to be like this, watching me closely for my reactions. I was continually surprised at how well he seemed to know me. He would know just when to push and just when to hold back. I felt like I was moving along with my issues and targets and he seemed to intuitively understand when to say something and when to just stay quiet.

I wanted to learn from him. I chose him because he knew how my organization worked and he knew the politics there. He shared his own experiences with me so that I felt I was with a real person and not just some 'professional front'. He gave me time. That was a big thing. I needed to make some changes at work, but wasn't ready at first. He never tried to move me too quickly into making those changes. There were moments when something would click. I may have suddenly





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opened my eyes to something and we would share that eureka moment together, he would be as pleased as I was! There were other difficult moments when we seemed temporarily to be not connecting and he would take his time, give me time, and then ask if I would like to look at what was happening, together. This we would do and each time, although difficult, it brought our relationship to a new level of trust. The times when I sensed he had really understood, he didn't need to say anything, there was just a certain twinkle in his eye, a smile, a quizzical expression and in that moment I knew he was 'with' me.

So, what is this wisdom? Competences are tangible, wisdom less so. Wisdom seems to be about discerning what is needed at any one time and using sound judgement. To make such wise choices, the coach or mentor needs to be able to tune into the client on several levels at once. Such sensitivity, combined with caring, seems to give a special quality to the relationship. People talk about 'connecting', being 'in tune with one another', moving together 'in harmony'. These expressions attempt to capture the essence of being with a coach or mentor who is wise as well as competent, who trusts their instincts and intuition as much as their knowledge and skills, who knows when to hold back and do nothing, and when to move forward and actively engage, who uses all their senses to communicate a real belief in the worth and capacity of the client to achieve what they want and value.

Summary

In this chapter we have:

- Explored the similarities and differences between coaching and mentoring and reviewed how they are described in the literature.
- Proposed a definition of coaching and mentoring as learning relationships which help people to take charge of their own development, to release their potential and to achieve results which they value.
- Explored nine key principles which underpin effective coaching and mentoring.
- Introduced several coaching and mentoring frameworks which focus on developing client talents and resources.
- Described some approaches to defining and assessing coach and mentor effectiveness.

