

# Mindset

A recent book about coaching is called *The Advice Trap* by Michael Bungay Stanier. In the book he tackles the coaching mindset and how to change your behaviour and avoid your natural urge to give advice, so that you stay curious longer. Stanier describes the three 'advice monster' personas.

**Tell-it:** As leaders we think that it's our job to have all the answers, and giving people the answers that you think they are looking for makes you feel good.

**Save-it:** Another thinking trap of many leaders is that we have to be the hero and come to people's rescue, taking responsibility for fixing all the problems of the team.

**Control it:** This monster reflects how difficult we often find it just to let go and allow other people to share control of the situation.

# The power of listening

In coaching, deep listening helps you and your colleague to engage fully, get to the heart and root of the issue, and achieve the right levels of challenge and support.

It can be helpful to consider four distinct levels of listening and to ask yourself how often, during conversations with your colleagues you are able to pay attention on all four levels.

Listening for understanding is a critical capability in any situation.

LISTENING FOR: FACTS

LISTENING FOR: FEELINGS

LISTENING FOR: INTENTIONS

LISTENING FOR: FILTERS/ASSUMPTIONS

# 4 levels of listening

## **1 Listening for facts**

Picking up the core information – the who, what, when, how, why etc.

We usually listen quite well at this level, especially when someone is talking about something that we either know a lot about or are interested in.

We can ask questions to get even more facts and information e.g. “Tell me more about that” or “What happened next?”

## **2 Listening for feelings**

Here we are noticing body language, tone of voice and the nature of the words being used.

The signals aren't necessarily obvious – many are subtle and all are very open to interpretation, so sometimes we need to ask open questions like “how are you feeling about that?” “to really understand.

In general, we're looking out for things like how openly they are sitting, their facial expressions, their voice in comparison with its usual volume and tone, and any emotion-based words we hear.

# 4 levels of listening

## **3 Listening for intention**

We are NOT trying to psychoanalyse the person speaking!

We just want to understand what they are trying to achieve, both in the future and especially in the conversation they are having with us.

Are they asking for help? Are they trying to impress us? Are they trying to get something across that they haven't said explicitly? Questions like "what would help you?" can be very useful when we are trying to understand peoples intentions.

## **4 Listening for filters**

At this level, we are aware of the judgements we are making as we are absorbing and assimilating the information we hear.

These judgements are based on our values and beliefs. We are working at a conscious level to recognise how our prejudices influence the way we interact.

# Questioning technique

Coaching is about helping the coachee to come up with a solution themselves; a key way you can do that, as a coach, is to ask deliberate and considered questions.

The following outlines what makes a great question and followed by lots of examples for you to use and expand as your guide a college through a coaching conversation in the future.

In coaching, the best questions are those which.....

- Increase the coachee's understanding and awareness, not just yours.
- Help the coachee think for themselves and form new perspectives
- They may not be courageous enough to ask themselves
- Are typically open – seeking information, e.g. "what?" or "how?" rather than closed questions that can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no"
- Start broad (to explore new territory) and then narrow down to focus on a key point (to nail down action)
- Are NOT a sneaky way of giving advice or telling someone what to do, e.g., "you always send a covering e-mail, don't you?"

# Types of questions

## Question categories/types

Open – What did you learn from that meeting?

Closed – Did you learn anything from that meeting?

Leading – Don't you think you should have taken a different approach

Clarifying – Tell me more about... What do you mean by?

Art of the possible/'what if' – If there were more money, what would you do?

Mirror responses – Angry? Never? Always?

High challenge – What is really stopping you? / What is really holding you back? / What are you not accepting/facing up to?

# The GROW model

## **Goal**

Establish the GOAL of the coaching conversation and agreement for working together.

Initiate or respond to the situation: build rapport; demonstrate willingness to help.

Agree on scope and specific coaching objectives.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO DISCUSS? WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO ACCOMPLISH?

## **Reality**

Assess the REALITY of the situation.

Encourage self-assessment. Focus on facts – be objective.

Uncover assumptions

Acknowledge strengths and development needs.

WHAT IS HAPPENING NOW? WHAT ARE THE ISSUES? WHAT HAVE YOU TRIED ALREADY?

WHAT DO YOU THINK WILL HAPPEN

# The GROW model

## **Options**

Partner with the person being coached to discuss a range of OPTIONS

Explore possibilities and options

Talk through the consequences of action and inaction

Aske before offering options and evaluate options.

IF YOU COULD DO ANYTHING WHAT WOULD YOU DO?

WOULD YOU LIKE A SUGGESTION FROM ME?

WHICH WOULD GIVE YOU THE BEST RESULT

## **Will**

Agree what WILL be done

Identify obstacles and commit to action

Outline action steps and timelines

Identify support needed

Check motivation and commitment

WHAT ACTIONS ARE YOU GOING TO TAKE? WHEN? WHAT SUPPORT DO YOU NEED?

HOW COMMITTED ARE YOU TO EXECUTING THIS PLAN?



# Questions for establishing Goals

What is it you want to achieve or change?

If the situation was as you would like it to be, what would it be like?

What is the ideal situation?

What would be the benefits of achieving this goal?

How will you know when you have achieved your goal?

What measurement could you use to know that you have achieved it?

What do you really want?

# Questions for exploring Reality

Tell me more about this

What is happening at the moment?

What did that achieve?

What have you tried to do so far?

What would be another way of looking at it?

Who else has had this experience? How do they see it?

Having said all this, is the goal you wanted to reach still relevant?

How do you feel when that happens?

# Questions for exploring Options

What options do you have?

What else could you do?

What would be the first step forward solving this big problem?

Would you like me to make a suggestion?

Anything else...? And keep on until there is nothing left to explore

If anything was possible, what would you like to do?

Would you like to brainstorm this?

Which of these options do you think is most likely to succeed?

# Questions for assessing Will / Way ahead

Of all the options we have talked about, which will you choose?

On a scale of 0 to 10, how strong is your intention to do this?

If less than 7, is it likely to happen?

Who do you need support/permission/help from?

# Fast GROW – coaching in the moment

IF TIME IS PRESSING, OR PERHAPS YOU FIND YOURSELF HAVING A SHORT ‘CORRIDOR CONVERSATION’ WITH A COLLEAGUE, YOU COULD TAKE THE ESSENCE OF THE GROW MODEL TO HELP YOU USE A COACHING APPROACH. THIS MAY BE AS SIMPLE AS ASKING FOUND BASIC QUESTIONS:

What do you want? G

What have you tried? R

What could you do? O

What will you do? W

# Magic questions

SOMETIMES, THE SOLUTION TO A CHALLENGE IS MOST EASILY FOUND BY THINKING 'OUT OF THE BOX'. IMAGINE YOU HAD SOME MAGIC QUESTIONS WHICH ARE OPEN – SEEKING INFORMATION, E.G., 'WHAT?' OR 'HOW?', RATHER THAN CLOSED QUESTIONS THAT CAN BE ANSWERED WITH A SIMPLE 'YES' OR 'NO'.

- 1 "What would you do if you could do anything?"
- 2 "If I gave you a magic wand, how would you solve this problem?"
- 3 "Imagine you are the CEO, what would you do?"
- 4 "What would a 'perfect person' do in this situation?"

# Coaching tips

'Practise makes perfect'.

Coaching requires patience, so don't expect to solve every problem in a single coaching session

Remember that coaching builds trust, and trust increases and motivation and performance

Seize coaching opportunities in the moment

Coach your string performers as much as you coach your weaker ones

# Preparing to take a coaching approach

WHEN YOU ARE CHOOSING TO TAKE A COACHING APPROACH WITH A COLLEAGE, PERHAPS FOR THE FIRST TIME, TAKE A FEW MOMENTS TO PREPARE.

THE FOLLOWING PROMPTS WILL HELP YOU TO MAKE THE MOST OF CONVERSATIONS:

How will you open/set up the session?

How will you make sure you do your best listening?

How will you manage time and ensure there is a commitment to action by the end of the conversation?

Make a list of some open questions you would like to try out.



# Questions for Observer to consider

- What did the coach do to establish rapport with coachee?
- What is the goal that has been agreed by the coach and the coachee?
- What questions are being asked by the coach?
- How effective would you describe the listening that is happening?
- What assumptions (if any) are being made?
- How did the coach wrap up the session and was agreed?
- How well was the GROW Model followed? Strengths and opportunities?
- What went really well? (Mindset/Toolset/Skillset)
- What could be Even Better If? (EBI)

# Coaching observer prompt tool

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What questions are being asked by the coach?

How effective would you describe the listening that is happening?

What assumptions (if any) are being made?

How did the coach wrap up the session and was agreed?

What is the goal that has been agreed by the coach and the coachee?

How well was the GROW Model followed? Strengths and opportunities?

What went really well? (Mindset/Toolset/Skillset)

What could be Even Better If? (EBI)