



Photo by Christina@wocintechchat.com on [Unsplash](#)

Coaching and Motivating Your Employees



**CLAIRE
LAUGHLIN**
CONSULTING

“Clear is kind.
Unclear is unkind.”
-Brené Brown

Coaching and Motivating: Program Objectives

Are you a coach?

Developing others is one of our primary responsibilities as leaders. It allows us to delegate effectively, plan for succession, and grow. To do so, we need to identify the strengths and challenges of our team members and then create opportunities for them to grow and develop. All the while, we need to coach and motivate them.

In today's class, you will...

- Explore the impact of being a coaching manager
- Introduce the GROW coaching model
- Practice key skills important for being a great coach including listening and asking powerful questions
- Learn to set clear and actionable goals
- Practice and receive feedback using relevant scenarios

Opening Activity

Think of a coach who made a positive impact on you. What did the person *do and say* that made him/her a great coach? Describe the impact that her/his coaching had on your performance and confidence. Capture your ideas below

Using a Framework: The GROW Model

Coaching is a powerful practice that will help you build trust, manage performance, and build collaborative engagement! Start with a framework to help you stay on course. The GROW model is an intuitive guide!



GOAL

First, ask about your coachee's goal, and discuss *your* goal if needed. Talk about the desired behavior and ask about the motivation associated with achieving the goal.



REALITY

Next, talk about what is happening now. Find out what your coachee is experiencing, and how *they* see the gap between reality and the goal. Talk about reality from your perspective if needed.

Determine if there are any competing or conflicting priorities that might get in the way of the goal.



OPTIONS

You might think you know exactly how to proceed but encouraging your coachee to generate options will help build ownership and can generate new plans. Offer your opinions and suggestions only after they have shared theirs.



WHAT'S NEXT / WAY FORWARD

Seal the deal by determining next steps and planning for overcoming barriers. Make a plan for measurement, follow-up and check-ins.

Tips

- Ask good questions
- Emphasize listening (No lectures!)
- Establish safety
- Ask permission to share
- Maintain or enhance esteem
- Don't judge
- Build trust
- Declare your positive intent

Powerful GROW Questions

Powerful Questions are the basis of a healthy coaching practice! Stay curious and see what you can discover!

Goal:

- What goal around (task) have you set for yourself?
- Why do you want to achieve this goal?
- What are the benefits to you and the organization?
- How will you know you're successful?
- How important is it for you to achieve this goal?
- What energizes you about this?
- What is the opportunity here?

Reality:

- Where are you now in relation to your goal?
- What barriers or obstacles have you faced, or do you anticipate?
- How does this situation affect you?
- What if we kept things the way they were?
- What are the advantages to changing?
- What would be the disadvantage of NOT moving forward with the goal?

Options:

- How can I help move you from where you are now to where you want to be?
- What's the best/worst thing about that option?
- If you didn't have any constraints (time, budget, etc.) what would you do?
- What other approaches might bring you success?
- What have you tried so far?
- Would you like my perspective?

What's Next / Way Forward:

- When will you start?
- Whose help do you need?
- How can you hold yourself accountable?
- How can I help hold you accountable?
- On a scale of 1-10, how motivated are you to achieve this?
- On a scale of 1-10, how confident are you of achieving this?
- What are the next steps?
- What are the chances of success?
- What challenges do you expect?
- What do you need to know?
- What skills do you need to have?
- What tools do you need?
- What angles haven't we considered?
- What will you do if you get stuck?

A Simple GROW Flow

Sometimes having a few powerful questions in your pocket is all you need! Use the questions below to explore your coachee's goal and provide motivation.

Goal:

- What is your goal?
- Why is it important for you to achieve this goal?
- How will you know you're successful?

Reality:

- Where are you now in relation to your goal?
- What barriers or obstacles have you faced, or do you anticipate?

Options:

- What have you tried so far?
- What other approaches might bring you success?

What's Next / Way Forward:

- What will you do next?
- When will you start?
- On a scale of 1-10, how motivated are you to achieve this?
- How can you hold yourself accountable?

More Powerful Questions

Now, put your powerful questions to work! Use the powerful questions patterns below to build creative, collaborative solutions!

What is a powerful question?

A powerful question is one that...

- Illuminates thinking patterns
- Allows the coachee to think and discover for themselves
- Hypothesizes about positive futures
- Doesn't allow the "same old script"
- Illuminates the values and needs that are being served
- Illuminates barriers (real and perceived) that modify our actions

1) Corrective coaching

Imagine you are meeting with a team member who has not completed a task that you agreed would be done. What might you want to ask?

"Have you done it?" Or, "Why haven't you done it?" are two obvious questions.

But both of these questions are likely to provoke defensiveness and will not create an opportunity for the coachee to learn about his or her own patterns.

Instead, try a powerful question...

- What got in the way of you completing the task?
- What might get in your way if you try again?
- What kind of support would you need in order to try again?
- What will it feel like when it is complete?
- How important is it to complete the task?

2) Aspirational coaching

If a team member wants to talk about an aspiration, you might want to ask all kind of details, but this can feel like an interrogation. Instead, help them examine their own motivations and create a clear mental model of the future and a plan for action.

- Share with me in detail how it will feel to have done it.
- What skills will you be building? What core values and needs will you be meeting?
- What might deter you from achieving your goal?
- What will you do to minimize the barriers?
- What next step will you take?

Asking Powerful Questions (cont'd)

3) Coaching for skill development

Imagine you are hoping to help a team member build a skill. Building a skill means **DOING** something, and the best way for a person to build a skill is for them to build self-awareness and focus on linking actions to consequences.

If they try a skill for the first time and do not perform it very well, we often want to simply **TELL** them again how to do it, and what is wrong with the way it was done. This is not helpful, and it puts the coachee's attention on the wrong focal point.

Instead, ask powerful questions that help the coachee develop self-awareness and cause-effect awareness.

- How did it feel when you tried to _____?
- What happened to the _____ when you tried _____?
- Tell me the steps you took and what happened at each step.
- Which step was the most successful? In what way was it successful?
- Which step didn't work? What happened? Walk me through it.
- If you were to try again, what would you do differently? What would you do the same?

4) Coaching to help illuminate thinking

We live in a knowledge economy. Much of our work requires us to think and solve problems. Therefore, do not rob anyone of an opportunity to learn more about their own thinking patterns! When someone comes to you with any sort of an issue, help them reveal their own thinking.

- How long have you been thinking about this issue?
- How important is this issue to you, on a scale of 1 – 10?
- What priority is this issue for you right now? (Top 5? Top 3? Number 1?)
- What are you noticing about your thinking?
- What part are you thinking the most about? The least?
- How clear is your thinking about this issue?

How can you put **Powerful Questions** to work for you? Use this space to make a plan!

Coaching Scenarios

Choose one of the scenarios below for your coaching practice:

1) Your employee (who is a supervisor) is nearing retirement (about 2 years out) and seems to be “checking out” of their leadership role. They constantly talk about how they are “getting ready to retire” so they don’t want to take on anything new or challenging. When one of their direct reports has a serious issue, this person now kicks it up the chain to you to deal with, saying, “since I’ll be gone fairly soon, I think you better take the lead on this.”

2) You have an employee who refuses to speak directly to their manager, and instead comes to you with their issues. (You are also a manager, and you get along quite well with the employee’s manager.) The employee says, “I just can’t talk to my manager,” or, “I just don’t trust my manager,” and then proceeds to tell you all about their challenges. You feel obligated to help, but you have decided it’s time for the employee to stop using you as a conduit for their issues.

3) Your employee has trouble making decisions that are well within the scope of their job. They come to you with an endless list of questions that you believe they should be making themselves.

4) You have one employee on your team who causes drama constantly. You work for a small department, and everyone knows everyone else- a little too well. This employee has “issues” with almost every other employee, and just can’t seem to get along with anyone. That said, the employee is wonderful with students and has a long history with the college.

Coaching Planner

1. What situation have you selected?
2. Who will you coach?
3. What is ***your goal*** for the coaching situation? (What are you coaching towards?)
4. What kind of outcome(s) do you have in mind?
5. What might be a “win” for your coachee?
6. How will you open the session?
7. What will you ask? (Use the space below to write some questions)
8. What twists and turns do you anticipate? And how will you handle them?
9. Ideally, what kind of a plan would you like to have in place at the end of the session? (Be realistic)

Next Steps

Coaching for Accountability

Who will you coach, and toward what end?

What are you most curious about when it comes to the performance of your employee?

What barriers might get in the way of your earnest desire to provide coaching and support?

What did you learn about yourself as a coach today? What are your strengths? What do you need to improve?

Building Success as a Coach

- Get curious. This is KEY. Imagine that you don't already know the answer. Imagine that you are eager to understand a bigger picture.
- Practice listening and reflecting in every conversation, This is a great habit that helps people open up to you.
- Practice asking powerful questions. Think differently.
- Prepare for a coaching conversation. Pause and try to see the world through your coachee's eyes. Think about the real barriers to performance.
- Remember that being a good coach will enable and engage your team and create a connected culture! It's worth the effort!