

Starting your coaching journey

What is coaching?

Coaching is a learning process where a coach helps someone (the coachee) make progress, such as achieving goals, solving problems, or facilitating change. It typically involves conversations designed to support the coachee's objectives. These conversations can occur in various formats, like in person, over the phone, or via Skype.

The core principle of coaching is that the coachee already holds the answers to their own questions. As the expert in their own life and work, they have the insight needed to navigate their challenges. The coach's role is to use skillful questioning to help the coachee uncover these answers and achieve their desired outcomes.

How does coaching work?

Effective coaching combines questioning, listening, observation, and feedback to create conversations that offer deep insight and learning. This process allows the coachee to gain a clearer understanding of their situation, discover new ways to solve problems, and achieve their goals more efficiently. Common benefits of coaching include:

- Improved direction and focus
- Accelerated learning on specific topics, like managing relationships or influence
- Enhanced performance in areas like work, health, or finances
- Greater self-awareness
- Increased personal effectiveness and prioritisation
- Boosted motivation and engagement
- Enhanced resourcefulness and resilience in handling change

What coaching is not

Mentoring or training

Structured training follows a fixed agenda and a planned approach to achieve specific learning goals within a set time frame, like classroom training for computer skills. In contrast, coaching is more flexible, shaped by the coachee's objectives and the coach's guidance. It places the responsibility for learning on the individual, encouraging continued growth through agreed-upon actions after the session.

Counselling or therapy

Some issues are best addressed by professionals trained in specific skills and approaches, such as addiction or mental health concerns like depression or compulsive disorders. While coaching is not therapy, it can be a valuable alternative for those who might consider counselling. Milder issues like anxiety, confidence crises, or self-doubt can often be effectively



managed by a qualified coach. Coaching fosters greater self-awareness and helps individuals better understand their situations, supporting them in implementing their own solutions.

Coaching should not be used as a substitution for therapy. If you feel that you need mental health support you should reach out to your GP or healthcare provider.

Someone else solving problems or issues for you

Coaching is based on the idea that individuals are ultimately responsible for the results they achieve. While this may not always seem true, it's a powerful mindset to adopt. Recognizing our responsibility means acknowledging our power and influence over outcomes.

For instance, if you're not achieving desired results at work, a coach might help you:

- Gain a clearer understanding of the situation.
- Develop new strategies or approaches.
- Take constructive actions to achieve your goals.

An effective coach won't tell you what to do or do it for you. Instead, they empower you to take action, ensuring the responsibility and power remain with you.



Expectations

What to expect from me

A coaching relationship is unique due to its blend of objective detachment and dedication to your goals. It offers a rare form of support, where someone focuses on your situation with an attention and commitment that's hard to find elsewhere. An effective coach listens with genuine curiosity to understand who you are, how you think, and how you experience the world. They also provide objective feedback and challenges, helping you gain real clarity.

This means that I follow a number of key principles:

- Listening to understand without making assumptions
- Remaining free from judgement so that you may speak openly
- Where relevant, challenging your thought process to help you grow

Confidentiality

All of our conversations will remain confidential. If a third party, such as an employer, has requested the coaching, I will work with you to determine the best way to keep them informed or updated. Where you mention something that may suggest harm to yourself or others I may be obliged to inform a third party to ensure your safety and that of others.

What is expected of you

I encourage you to stay committed to the coaching process by attending sessions, taking notes when needed, and honouring the agreements made. It's also important to be open to the potential of coaching, contributing to conversations with honesty and transparency. The effectiveness of coaching depends on the level of trust and openness in the relationship.

Preparing for coaching

Before meeting your coach, it's helpful to clarify your own objectives and think about how to maximise the effectiveness of your sessions. Consider the following questions:

1. What areas or topics would be most beneficial to address with a coach—personal, professional, or general development?
2. What simple goals are you currently pursuing that you'd like to make more progress on, such as achieving a specific outcome?
3. What learning or self-development goals do you have, like improving a skill or expressing certain qualities more (or less) often?
4. What factors within your control could hinder your success with coaching, such as distractions or procrastination?
5. What are your current thoughts about working with a coach?

These questions are meant to spark your initial thoughts. If any ideas, questions, or actions come to mind, jot them down and bring them to your first session.

