



5.5.5 Coaching Skills Training Program™

# LEARNER'S GUIDE





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# Welcome

**YOU ARE ABOUT TO EMBARK ON A LEARNING JOURNEY THAT WILL GREATLY IMPROVE YOUR EFFECTIVENESS AT WORK, YOUR INTERACTIONS WITH FRIENDS AND FAMILY AND IN FACT YOUR LIFE!**

Allow me to briefly share. It was 1996, when I found my calling, my passion, my life's work, something that I knew was truly needed in this constantly changing world - Coaching! As I began to learn how to coach and experience being coached I was profoundly amazed at the "magic" of it. I became more energized and broke through barriers in my own leadership and life and people I worked with did the same. They actually moved farther, faster, easier, quicker and smarter than they would have if they had not been coached.

My passion for coaching has been relentless: I have coached executives since 1996 and at the same time became a coaching educator as lead faculty at Royal Roads University in Canada and Charter Faculty at the University of Texas. I supported the development of the growing field of coaching, produced a documentary on coaching AND founded Coaching Out of the Box® to support wide scale coaching skill development. To date over 33,000 people have benefited from our coaching programs and products.

This learner's guide is the result of all of the above PLUS the key dedication and coaching brilliance of another pioneer in coaching, Amy Ruppert, MCC. Amy has fine-tuned and dramatically enhanced the content. You are the beneficiaries of her almost 20 years of

experience as an executive coach and coaching educator to thousands of budding coaches worldwide. Thank you Amy!

My request as you embark on this program is to bring a willingness to experiment, a sense of curiosity and a commitment to support your fellow learners.

Warmest wishes,

Alison Hendren, MCC  
Founder  
Coaching Out of the Box®





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PART ONE

# INTRODUCTION

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## PART ONE

# INTRODUCTION

The International Coaching Federation (ICF), the leading global coaching organization, which sets coaching industry standards and provides examination and professional certification to coaches throughout the world, defines coaching as:

“Partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential.”

This definition is upheld by Core Competencies, which were developed to support a greater understanding of the skills and approaches used within coaching. These Core Competencies have become the underpinnings for just about all coach training whether it is for business, executive, leadership, life or any other type of coaching. They also constitute the foundational learning that must be demonstrated in the examination process for various levels of professional coach accreditation through the ICF.

Over 40,000 professional coaches have been trained, tested and certified with this common understanding of coaching proficiency in over 130 countries. These competencies have been tried and tested for over a decade proving they cross cultural, gender and age differences with ease.

Coaching has grown at a tremendous rate since the early 1990's when the first coach training programs were introduced. It has evolved,

not only as a stand-alone profession for private practitioners, but also as a leadership competency with the demand rising in that sector.

This program, and others at Coaching Out of the Box®, were developed by a group of early pioneers in the coaching profession. Some played a key role in the development of the Core Competencies for the ICF. This program has taken the complexities of those Core Competencies and put them in an easy to understand and quickly transferable model. It has been designed specifically for busy leaders to apply to everyday leadership opportunities and challenges instantly.

As you enter into this program and acquire these new coaching skills, it is important to keep in mind that coaching is both an art and a science. While you will have concrete skills and concepts to work from, each individual you engage with in a coaching exchange is unique and will respond to coaching in a different way. They and their situations are fluid and ever changing so your coaching will need to adjust and flex to meet each individual, where they are, in that moment of time. This is indeed an art, refined over time with plenty of practice. We encourage you to be patient and observant as you cultivate your learning. Like an artist, you will begin to see the nuances and subtleties that result in profound expression of the art.





The best way to understand coaching is to look at what it is not, as well as the distinctions between several areas that may commonly be seen to overlap with coaching.

## Teaching or Training

Teaching and training are based on imparting specific learning objectives that the teacher or trainer sets forth. It most often has a linear learning path and a set curriculum.

In coaching, objectives are clarified in the process and are established by the individual or team being coached. The learning that occurs in coaching is discovery based, not linear and without a set learning plan or curriculum.

## Therapy

Therapy deals with healing pain, dysfunction and conflict associated with self or with relationship to others. The focus is around resolving difficulties from the past which affect the individual's emotional functioning in the present. The goal in therapy is to improve overall psychological functioning and ability to function in present life and work situations in an emotionally healthy way. Therapy outcomes strive for improved emotional/feeling states.

Coaching, on the other hand, supports the personal and professional growth and development based on self-initiated change relevant to specific action oriented outcomes. These outcomes are linked to personal and professional success. Coaching focuses on the present and future and is forward moving at all times.

## Consulting

Consultants are used to access a specialized expertise. Consultants use a variety of approaches however it is assumed that the consultant will investigate, assess and diagnose problems and prescribe or even implement solutions to those problems. The consultant is the expert.

In coaching, the coachee is held as the expert and capable of discovering and generating their own solutions. The coach supplies support, creating a discovery-based environment and framework for the coachee to recognize their own resourcefulness and achieve their goals.

## Mentoring

A mentor guides from their personal experience and shares their own experience(s) and knowledge as a template for best practices and best actions to meet outcomes and goals.

A coach encourages the coachee to learn and guide themselves based on their own experience and knowledge and will support the coachee in designing an optimal framework for taking action and meeting goals.

## Performance Management

Performance management is most often a structured process for individuals and teams to attain goals that are in alignment with departmental or organizational strategic objectives and priorities in the most efficient and effective manner.

While leaders can take a 'coach approach' to performance management by using certain coaching skills as part of the process, the coachee in a traditional coaching relationship would initiate the strategic objectives and priorities.

## Emergency Treatment / Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Emergency treatment and EAP's help individuals manage personal issues around things like substance abuse, emotional distress, major life events/crisis, healthcare concerns, financial and non-work related legal concerns, family/personal relationship issues/abuse, etc. Professionals in these areas provide assessment, counsel and refer to additional resources.

While many of these types of things may come up in the coaching exchange or be mentioned as an obstacle or block impeding forward movement by the coachee, the coach does not shift into counseling or resource referring in these areas. Coaching is not appropriate for or designed to help coachees navigate crisis/emergency areas and should be referred to professionals that specialize in these areas.





## Coaching

Coaches focus on goal setting, outcome creation and personal change management with individuals and teams. Coaching most often takes place when:

- ⌘ There is a desire to accelerate results
- ⌘ There is something at stake (a challenge, stretch goal or opportunity)
- ⌘ There is a high degree of change requiring rapid adjustments and additional resources or skills
- ⌘ There is a gap - in knowledge, skills, confidence, resources
- ⌘ There is a lack of clarity and complex choices need to be made
- ⌘ There is a need to identify core strengths and strategies to leverage them

Coaches are trained to listen, to observe and to customize their approach to individual needs. They seek to elicit solutions and strategies from the coachee. They operate from the premise that the coachee is naturally creative and resourceful and support the coachee to enhance the skills, resources, and creativity that the coachee already has.

Coaches provide objective feedback that is direct, yet supportive and keeps the coachee

moving forward. Coaches partner **BESIDE** the individual as they create meaningful goals and create actions to achieve those goals. The coach encourages and supports the coachee in their process of achieving those goals. And finally, a coach will almost always ask more of the coachee than the coachee would ask of themselves and stretches the coachee out of their comfort zone and into their fullest potential.

### COACHING DEMONSTRATION



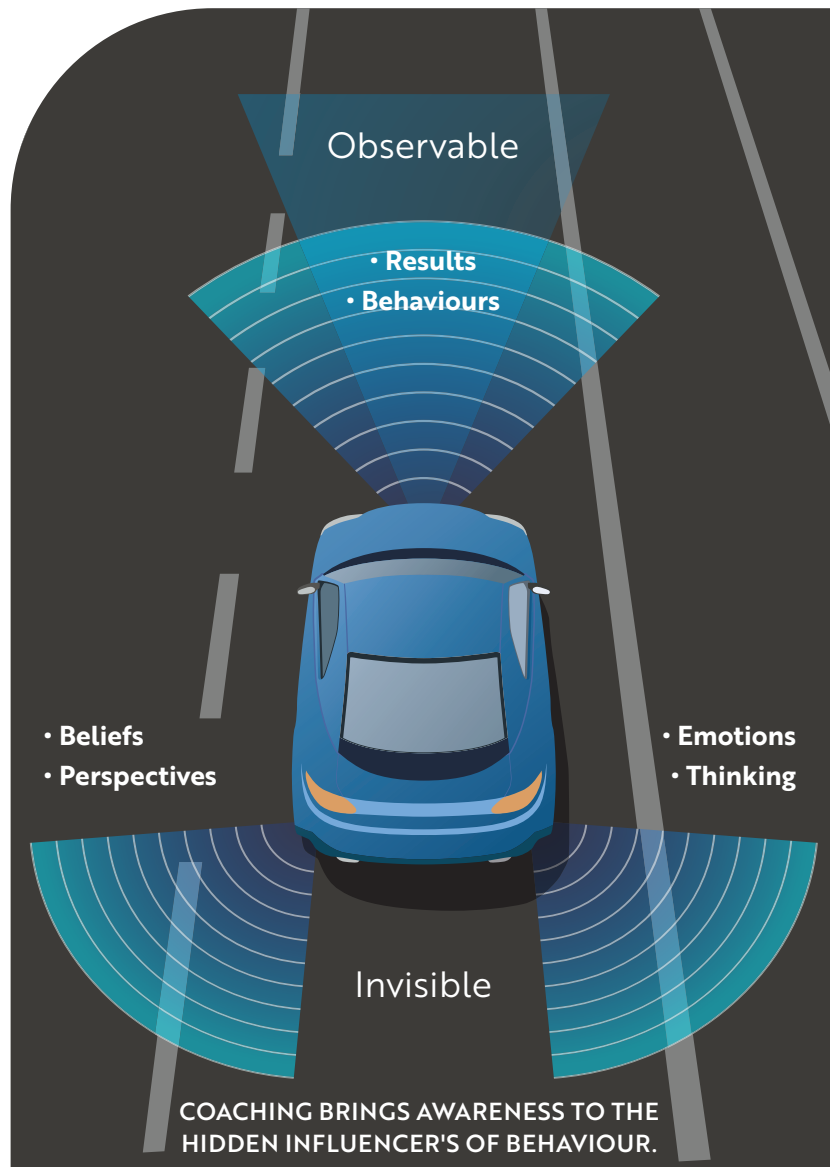
Given the description to the right, what did you notice in the coaching demonstration?

# What makes coaching a powerful tool?

Most often leaders are given tools that apply to behaviour and results, which can be observed and measured and lie above the surface for everyone to see.

But what influences those behaviours and results is often left unaddressed and allowed to lie below the surface of what can be observed and evaluated. Coaching not only addresses what is observable, but also what is invisible and lies below and directly impacts performance. For example, the process of coaching often unearths emotions that greatly influence an individual's performance such as fear, discouragement or doubt. With teams it can uncover hidden judgments, mistrust and misgivings about others. Coaching also uncovers an individual's thinking that may not be informed by facts or even reality. In coaching there is opportunity to test a person's thinking or group thinking with teams (without leading them into the coach's thinking) to help them clarify and align with facts, reality and each other. An individual's and group's beliefs can be explored with curiosity and openness from the coach allowing a fertile ground for new ideas and perspectives to grow.

Coaching is self-directed growth. Allowing an individual or team the freedom and choice to map out their own growth and development trajectory through challenges and obstacles and into what can be and is possible, empowers them with the recognition that they are creative and resourceful versus being dependent on leadership for the map. It is how leaders develop other leaders around them.



PART ONE - INTRODUCTION

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# Learning Journal



## Things to reflect on:

What surprised you?

What puzzled you?

What inspired you?

What was the most interesting to you?

What do you need to know more about?

How can you go about finding out more?

why now?



## PART TWO

# THE CASE FOR COACHING

## Why Coaching? Why Now?

**The landscape of business has changed dramatically. Expanding technology, changing populations and a much larger playing field for both opportunity and competition on a global scale.**

All industries have been challenged to keep up with the ongoing changes, while simultaneously paying attention to growth. Indeed, if you are in healthcare, government, manufacturing, education, services or non-profit you have likely already seen a host of new technology and rapidly changing systems that require your business environment to be agile, innovative, responsive and adaptable.

One of the most notable areas of change in recent decades has been the shift from algorithmic work to heuristic work. In other words, the shift from routine, repetitive measurable work, to work that involves critical thinking, analysis and creativity. It has been determined at the time of this writing that 70 percent of current job growth in North America is in heuristic work. Rapid growth in this area is also seen throughout Europe, the Middle East and parts of Asia. Experts see heuristic work only growing, given the need for a rapid and creative response to the evolving business environments.

In algorithmic work environments, the old “carrot and stick” or “reward and punishment” worked well, but researchers have found that this approach can be devastating in a heuristic environment. What is more effective for this emerging environment is competency in soft skills. This has become critical for leading a heuristic workforce. Using these skills proficiently allows leaders to tap into employee’s built-in and unique motivation systems. This catalyzes creativity and enhances the heuristic work on which agile, innovative, responsive and adaptable business environments now depend.

### Enter Coaching

Coaching is a must have leadership competency. Taking a coach approach to leadership means mining the very best from others by partnering with them to discover their unique motivation system and strategizing with them to work in alignment with it. Taking a coach approach also means asking others to stretch beyond their comfort zones and leverage their strengths in a variety of areas such as change, creativity, decision-making, communication and even conflict. Having people work in alignment with their unique motivation system and stretching beyond what they would ask of themselves is imperative to creating an organizational culture that is agile, innovative, responsive and adaptable.



## Engagement

Coaching leads to higher levels of engagement. The American Management Association and the Institute for Corporate Productivity conducted a study of over 1000 leaders from a variety of businesses and found that 41 percent had used coaching to boost employee engagement. Why? Coaching targets key areas that lead to higher levels of engagement:

- ⌘ Expectations are communicated more clearly
- ⌘ Blocks to resources are uncovered
- ⌘ Dialogues shift from what must be done to what can be done
- ⌘ Authentic acknowledgment takes place
- ⌘ The focus is on the person, not just the result
- ⌘ Shifts in awareness occur which result in sustainable behavioral and developmental change
- ⌘ Space is given for opinions and ideas
- ⌘ Connections are made between personal goals and organizational goals

## Team Building

When leaders learn coaching skills and employ them with teams, it permeates throughout the team and models a new way of communication that promotes trust, embeds accountability, allows for brilliance to rise up out of chaos and clears pathways to clarity and focus on common goals and results. Coaching also models acceptance of other's ideas, opinions and ways of being, even when there is no agreement.

## Change

When significant change comes to an organization, it is often met with resistance and confusion. No matter how well it has been planned and communicated, change can incite fear and affect behavior and performance. A leader as coach can help usher in change by working with teams and individuals to understand the connection between the coming change and their aspirations, personal goals and unique motivation system. They become "enrolled" into change versus resistant to it.

# Your Case for Coaching

A significant objective of coaching is to close the gap. We coach individuals to close the gap between where they are in the present and where they want to go in the future. We will be looking at how to do this throughout this program. To begin, we'd like you to take a look at closing the gap(s) within your group, department or entire organization. The gaps that lie between things as they are right now, and where you would like them to be once coaching becomes an embedded part of your culture.

To do this you will initially need a snapshot of where you feel your department, group or organization is with regard to how people communicate and how effective that communication is to develop and move people forward. We've supplied a list of questions to get you started. Some of them may or may not pertain to your group or business environment. If they don't apply, substitute with what would. We encourage you to think beyond our questions into your specific and unique situations, where you see communication breakdowns and blocks.

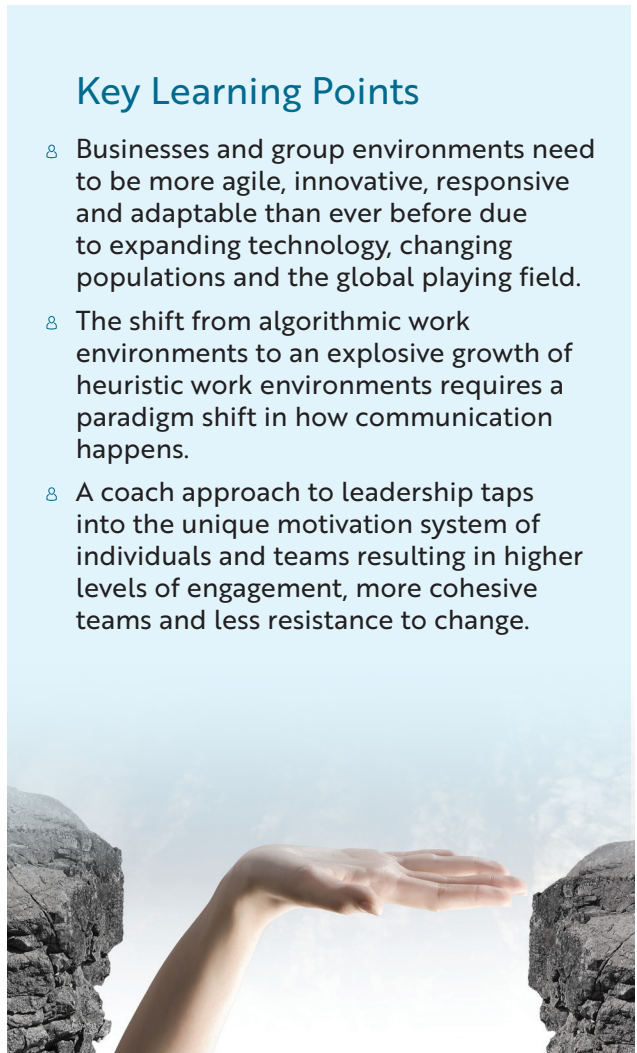
Next, we would like you to brainstorm a bit and create a snapshot of how you would LIKE the environment to be. For now, perhaps simply using descriptors like: open, curious, communicative, creative, systematic, consistent, supportive, etc., might be a way to approach this.

Once you have your snapshots of things as they are in this moment, and how you would prefer them to be, we will revisit the areas you have identified at the end of this program. This will help you to build your own case for coaching and a strategy to use coaching and a coach approach to close the gaps in some or all of the areas identified.

- ⌘ Where are the most common communication breakdowns?
- ⌘ Does performance development really work? If not, what is this costing?
- ⌘ What are the most common reasons for turnover?
- ⌘ How effectively are people developed to their potential?
- ⌘ Is change resisted or accepted? If resisted, how is this affecting the environment and the ability to move forward?
- ⌘ How effective are your performance reviews?
- ⌘ How clear are people about the big picture direction?
- ⌘ Is feedback normally constructive, well received and ultimately impactful?
- ⌘ Are teams agile, innovative, responsive and adaptable?
- ⌘ Are mistakes considered learning opportunities?
- ⌘ What percentage of your department, team or group do you feel is truly engaged?

## Key Learning Points

- ⌘ Businesses and group environments need to be more agile, innovative, responsive and adaptable than ever before due to expanding technology, changing populations and the global playing field.
- ⌘ The shift from algorithmic work environments to an explosive growth of heuristic work environments requires a paradigm shift in how communication happens.
- ⌘ A coach approach to leadership taps into the unique motivation system of individuals and teams resulting in higher levels of engagement, more cohesive teams and less resistance to change.





## Learning Journal



### Things to reflect on:

What surprised you?

What puzzled you?

What inspired you?

What was the most interesting to you?

What do you need to know more about?

How can you go about finding out more?

# THE 5.5.5 MODEL



## The Process

### The 5 Step Coaching Exchange

- Identify
- Discover
- Strategize
- Clear the Way
- Recap



## The Skills

### The 5 Core Coaching Skills

- Listening
- Questioning
- Encouraging
- Requesting
- Action Planning



## The Mindset

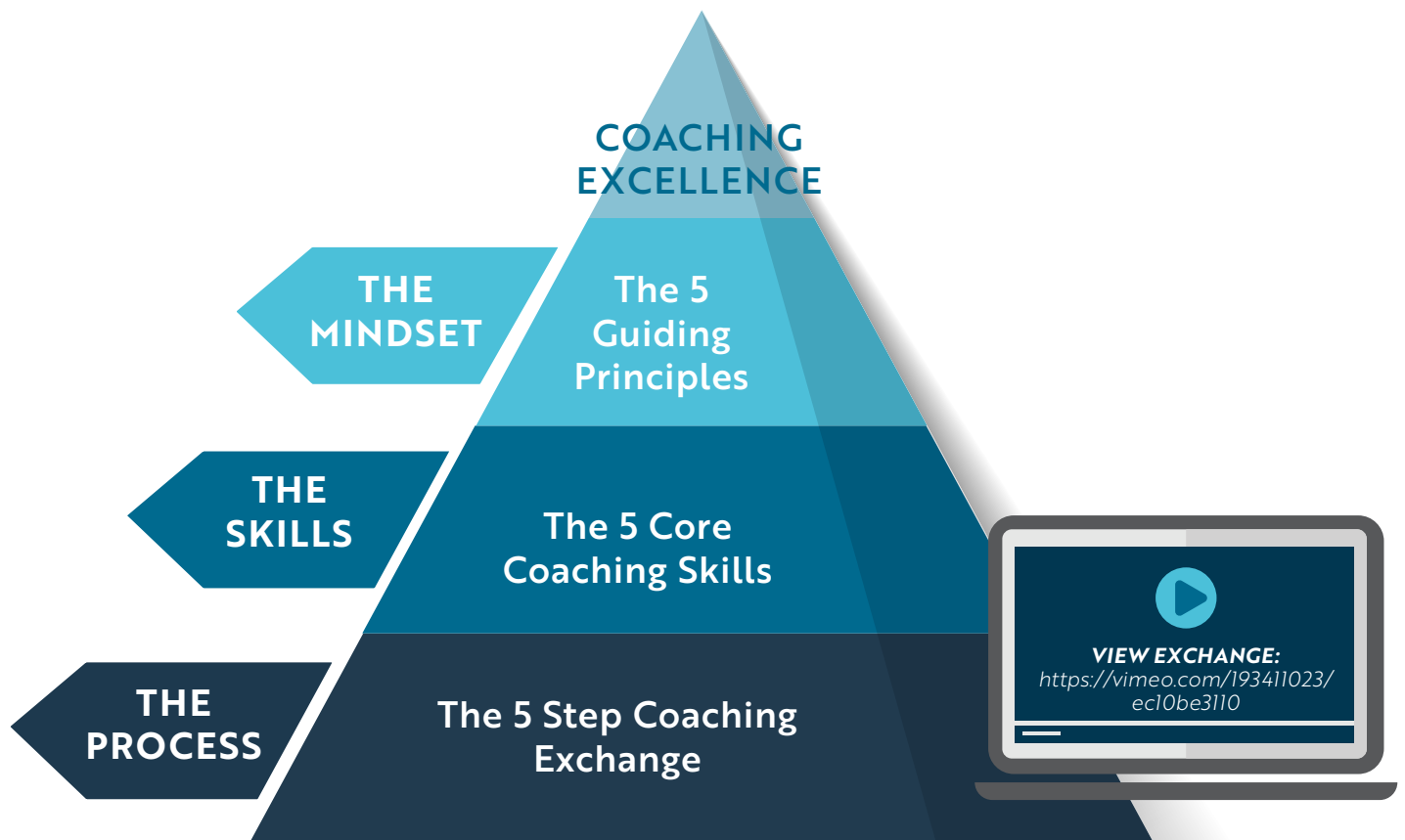
### The 5 Guiding Principles

- Be Curious
- Be Accepting
- Be Supportive
- Be Focused
- Be Committed

5 step

PART THREE

# THE 5 STEP COACHING EXCHANGE



THE 5 STEP COACHING EXCHANGE IS A FRAMEWORK FOR THE PROCESS OF THE EXCHANGE BETWEEN THE COACH AND COACHEE. WHEREAS THE SKILLS ARE HOW YOU COACH, THE EXCHANGE IS WHAT ACTUALLY OCCURS IN THE PROCESS OF COACHING.

The primary objective of the 5 Step Coaching Exchange is to move the coachee forward and into action in some way. This may be just a baby-step forward or, in some instances, a quantum leap. In the coaching exchange the measurement of efficacy is by quality, not quantity of that movement. To determine this we ask, is the coachee moving forward towards their desired goal or outcome in the most productive and least resistant way?



A multitude of things happen in the coaching exchange.

- 8 The exchange is where the coach and coachee get clear about what the coachee wants from the coaching or the conversation.
- 8 It is also where ideas are explored as the coachee begins to unpack the coachable themes throughout the exchange.
- 8 New information is brought to the surface and possibilities are seeded and grown.
- 8 New choices get made and new directions are often forged by the coachee as their perspectives are broadened having learned more just by having the exchange.
- 8 And finally, it is where obstacles get cleared out of the way for the coachee to move forward.

The exchange between the coach and coachee can happen in a variety of ways. There are **formal exchanges** where the coach and coachee have a time and place set aside with the mutual understanding that coaching is going to happen. Formal coaching is usually an ongoing relationship where the coach and coachee meet repeatedly at predetermined intervals. The coach and coachee agree upon an overarching goal(s) to be met within the duration of the coaching term. At each meeting the coachee comes into the exchange with an agenda they would like to be coached on that is related to the overarching goal(s). Formal coaching provides an opportunity for the coachee to work on a large goal or a

multitude of goals. Coachee's grow and develop over time with coachable themes changing at every meeting, but always relative to the overarching goal(s).

The coaching exchange can also be an **informal exchange**. This is not an established coach / coachee relationship and most often, the person receiving coaching may not even know they are being coached. It can occur between a manager and direct report, peer-to-peer, or even direct report to manager. These exchanges occur in what we call 'coachable moments' and can happen in the hallway, over lunch or even when someone pops their head in your office and asks, "Do you have a minute?" They are usually brief and can be continued if both parties agree.

Both types of exchanges, formal and informal, can happen in person, on the phone or sometimes even over email.

“ I don't know exactly where ideas come from, but when I'm working well ideas just appear. I've heard other people say similar things - so it's one of the ways I know there's help and guidance out there. It's just a matter of our figuring out how to receive the ideas or information that are waiting to be heard. ”

- Jim Henson



## Step 1 - Identify

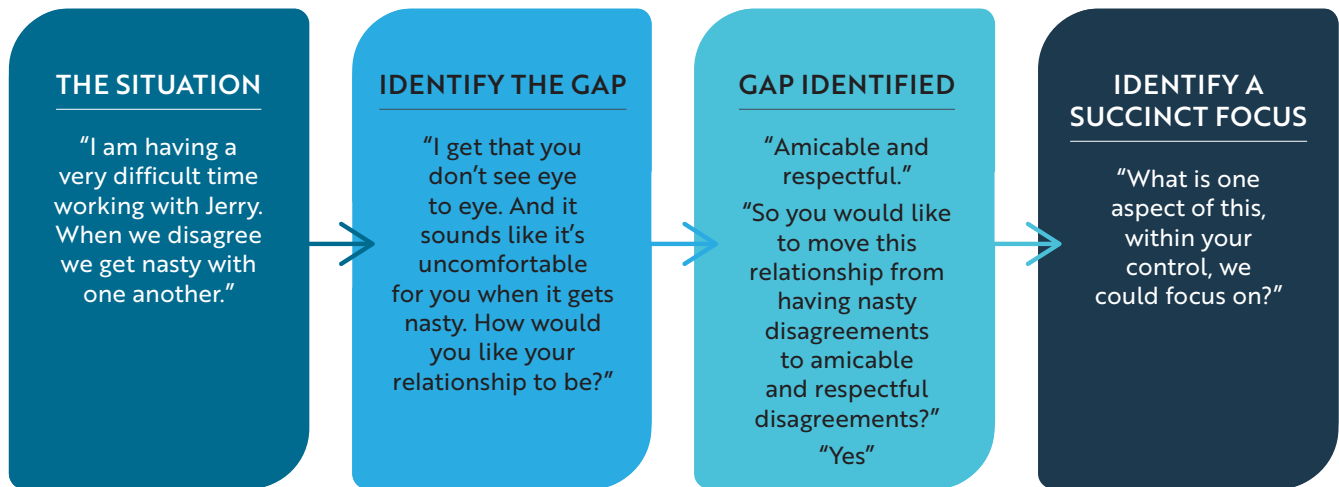


In this first step the coach draws out, with active listening skills, what is going on for the coachee and what the coachee wants for themselves. This is where the coachee unpacks the situation, opportunity or challenge. Often during this part of the coaching exchange, the coachee is trying to convey an elaborate and complex situation that forms as a story. It is the coach's responsibility to move the 'story' forward into discovery, learning and action.

After the coachee has unpacked the general overview of their coaching situation, the coach will need to let the coachee know, with active listening skills, they are getting the contextual essence of what the coachee is trying to convey. With reflective listening and paraphrasing, the coach lets the coachee know they 'get it'. While it is necessary to get a contextual idea of what is happening with the coachee, it is not necessary to know all the details. It's easy to get caught up in the story itself and miss the opportunity to move the coachee forward into action. As a busy leader, your informal coaching exchanges may only be a few minutes long due to time constraints, so it is important to get the exchange moving forward quickly.

Once the coach feels they have identified the contextual essence of the coachee's situation and the coachee feels that the coach has sufficiently understood their situation, the exchange enters into identifying a gap. This would be the gap between where the coachee is at the moment with the situation and where they would like to go. This is done using active listening and clarifying questions, which are based on and built upon what the coach is hearing.

Once the gap is identified, the coach then evokes a succinct focus and desired outcome for the coaching exchange from the coachee. That succinct focus will have to be manageable within the time frame you have available for the exchange. That may mean the desired outcome might have to be reduced down to one small step forward versus completely solving a complicated situation or fully exploring and making a decision on an impending, complex choice to be made.



*Other examples of questions that can be asked to move into a succinct focus would be:*

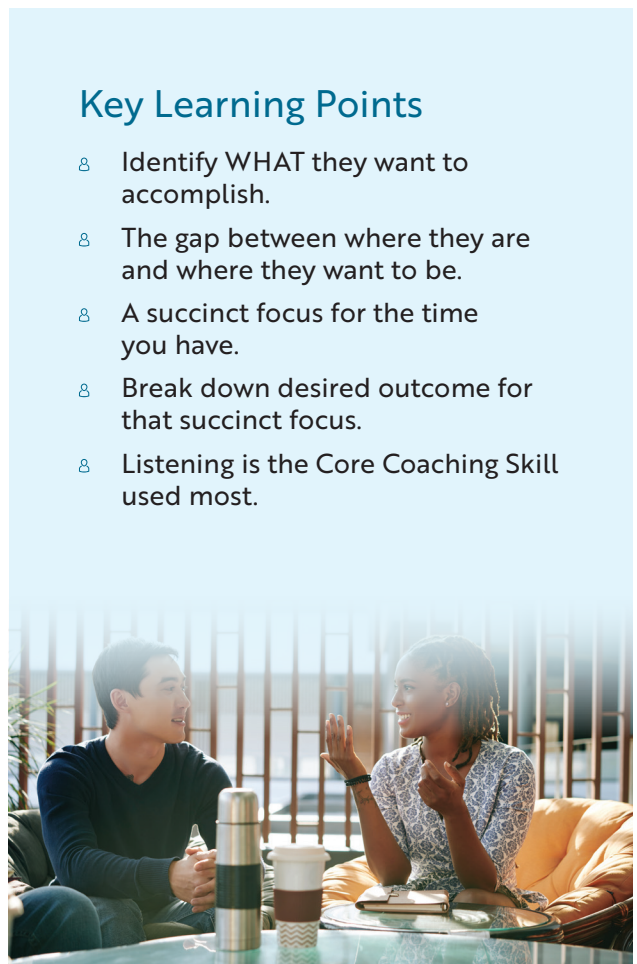
- ⌘ "What is one thing that would be most helpful to focus on first?"
- ⌘ "Where should we begin?"
- ⌘ What do you want? And how will you know when you get it?
- ⌘ What would you like to walk away with by the end of our conversation?

“Waiting is painful. Forgetting is painful. But not knowing which to do is the worst kind of suffering.”

- Paulo Coelho

## Key Learning Points

- ⌘ Identify WHAT they want to accomplish.
- ⌘ The gap between where they are and where they want to be.
- ⌘ A succinct focus for the time you have.
- ⌘ Break down desired outcome for that succinct focus.
- ⌘ Listening is the Core Coaching Skill used most.





## Learning Journal



### Things to reflect on:

What surprised you?

What puzzled you?

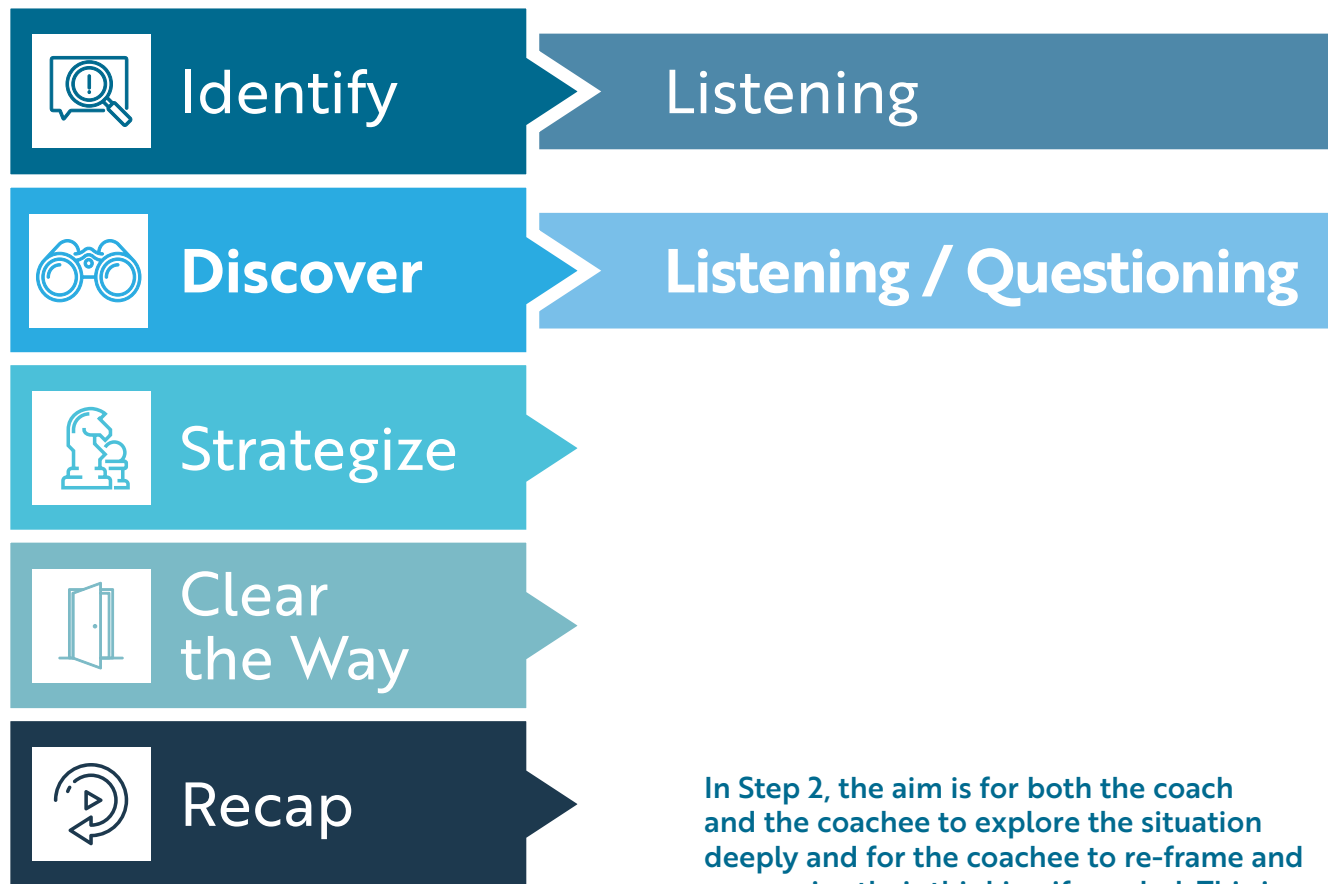
What inspired you?

What was the most interesting to you?

What do you need to know more about?

How can you go about finding out more?

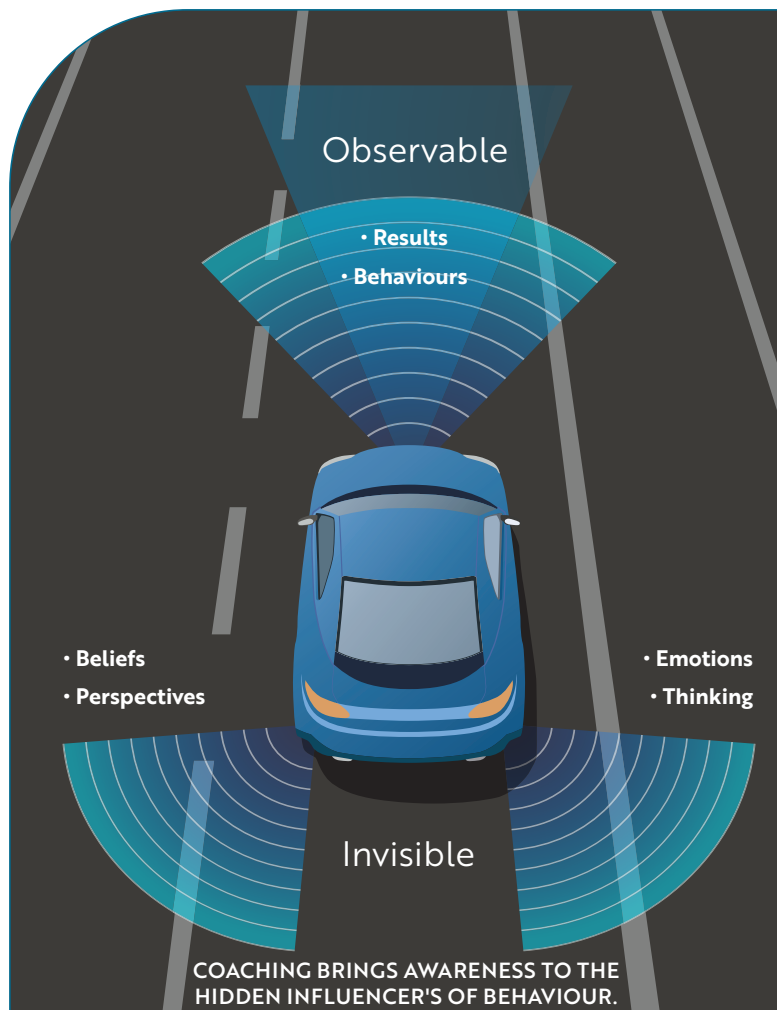
## Step 2 - Discover



In Step 2, the aim is for both the coach and the coachee to explore the situation deeply and for the coachee to re-frame and reorganize their thinking if needed. This is where the coach helps the coachee explore beyond the obvious to bring awareness to the more hidden motivators of their behaviour. The dialogue moves beyond the story, the goal, desired results and current behaviour into what is below the surface level. The coachee gains deeper and broader understanding of themselves and their situation in Discovery and arrives at a point of clarity and direction.

The Core Skills of Listening and Questioning are used predominantly in Discovery. The coach must increase the depth of their listening in this step as the coachee begins to reveal important information that has a large impact on the overall success of attaining their goals. Questions need to be well crafted to encourage the coachee to dig below the surface and into what is not being said or expressed up until that point.

“ The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new landscapes, but in having new eyes. ”  
- Marcel Proust



The coach acts as an exploration partner and begins to ask mostly clarifying and self-awareness questions to learn more about one or more of the following:

- ⌘ How the coachee feels about the situation, the goal, the individuals involved or anything else that is relevant. It is an exploration of emotions with the objective to have the coachee connect with how they are actually feeling about things and to use those feelings as a guide to understanding more.
- ⌘ What the coachee believes about the situation, the goal, the individuals involved or themselves. Beliefs are a powerful force that strongly influence behaviours, choices and the success of outcomes. Often beliefs are based on opinions and other unsubstantiated information. As coaches we examine, and sometimes challenge a coachee's beliefs to ensure that the coachee is informed and

influenced by as much fact and real evidence as they can gather.

- ⌘ Closely aligned with, but distinctive from beliefs, are perceptions. In the process of discovery, the coach aims to help the coachee broaden their perceptions. This means that the coach listens for where the coachee may be limiting themselves to a narrow view of a situation, their goal, the individuals involved or themselves. The coach asks questions that invite the coachee to look beyond the obvious and into a broader or wider way of thinking. It is important that the coach does not lead or direct the coachee into their way of thinking. Instead, the coach teaches the coachee with powerful, open-ended questions, that they can think beyond the obvious and into that deeper, more profound wisdom that the coachee already possesses.



Based on the exploration around feelings, beliefs and perspectives, the coach checks to see where the coachee's thinking is after new discoveries have been made. Through active listening during the exploration(s), the coach captures and reflects back any new thinking they may have heard from the coachee. The coachee will either agree with, correct and make adjustments to or re-frame what the coach has said to what they feel is correct.

In Discovery, the coach and coachee learn together about the coachee's:

- ⌘ Challenges
- ⌘ Motivations
- ⌘ Fears
- ⌘ Prejudices
- ⌘ Limiting beliefs
- ⌘ Assumptions
- ⌘ Attitudes

The coach then takes what has been learned and together, the coach and coachee do one or more of the following based on what's been learned in Discovery:

- ⌘ **Confirm:** That coachee is on a true/best path based on new learning
- ⌘ **Correct:** Anything that is not on a clear/best or true path based on new learning
- ⌘ **Clarify:** Anything that was unclear or ambiguous before new learning
- ⌘ **Validate:** What is clear/best/true for coachee based on what has been covered in Discovery
- ⌘ **Re-calibrate:** Anything that needs to be changed/tweaked based on new learning.

It is important for the coach to be a true and trusted exploration partner in Discovery, always holding the coachee to be resourceful and able to learn from what is below the surface.

### Additional Questions Used for Discovery

- ⌘ Why is it important?
- ⌘ What part do you play in this situation?
- ⌘ What might you take responsibility for?
- ⌘ Imagine as if you did have enough resources/ time/people/ money, what would you do differently?
- ⌘ Who do you really admire? What advice might they give you about this?
- ⌘ How would you know you are successful?

### Key Learning Points

- ⌘ Discovery sets the foundation for what the coaching is about.
- ⌘ The coach and coachee discover together, as exploration partners.
- ⌘ In Discovery the coach and coachee ensure things are clear and on course.
- ⌘ Listening and Questioning are the Core Coaching Skills used most.





## Learning Journal



### Things to reflect on:

What surprised you?

What puzzled you?

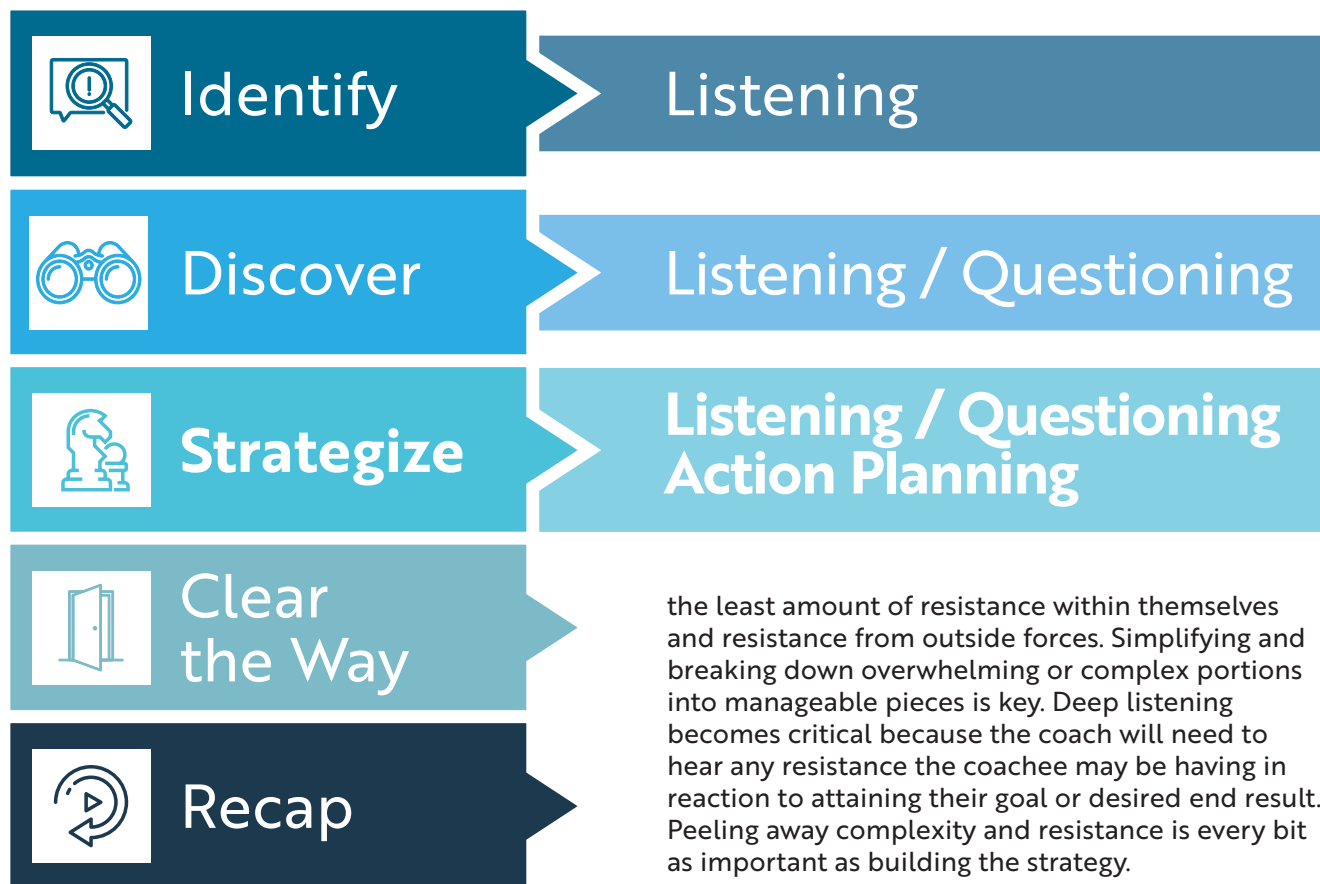
What inspired you?

What was the most  
interesting to you?

What do you need to know  
more about?

How can you go about  
finding out more?

## Step 3 - Strategize



**The coach and the coachee have identified the focus for the coaching and clarified the gap. In addition, the coachee has learned more about themselves and their situation and they are now ready to move forward. This is the time to build a strategy bridge.**

In this step, the coach and coachee partner to plan out the details that will enable the coachee to bridge the gap from where they are to where they want to get to. The conversation shifts from learning to doing, moving things above the waterline where the focus turns to solidifying actions and attaining results.

In strategizing, the coach and coachee devise a path of least resistance. By that we mean a way for the coachee to get across the bridge with

the least amount of resistance within themselves and resistance from outside forces. Simplifying and breaking down overwhelming or complex portions into manageable pieces is key. Deep listening becomes critical because the coach will need to hear any resistance the coachee may be having in reaction to attaining their goal or desired end result. Peeling away complexity and resistance is every bit as important as building the strategy.

Not all strategies are filled with details and measurable results. In Part Four this Learning Guide is the Core Coaching Skill of Action Planning where we will look at three types of actions:

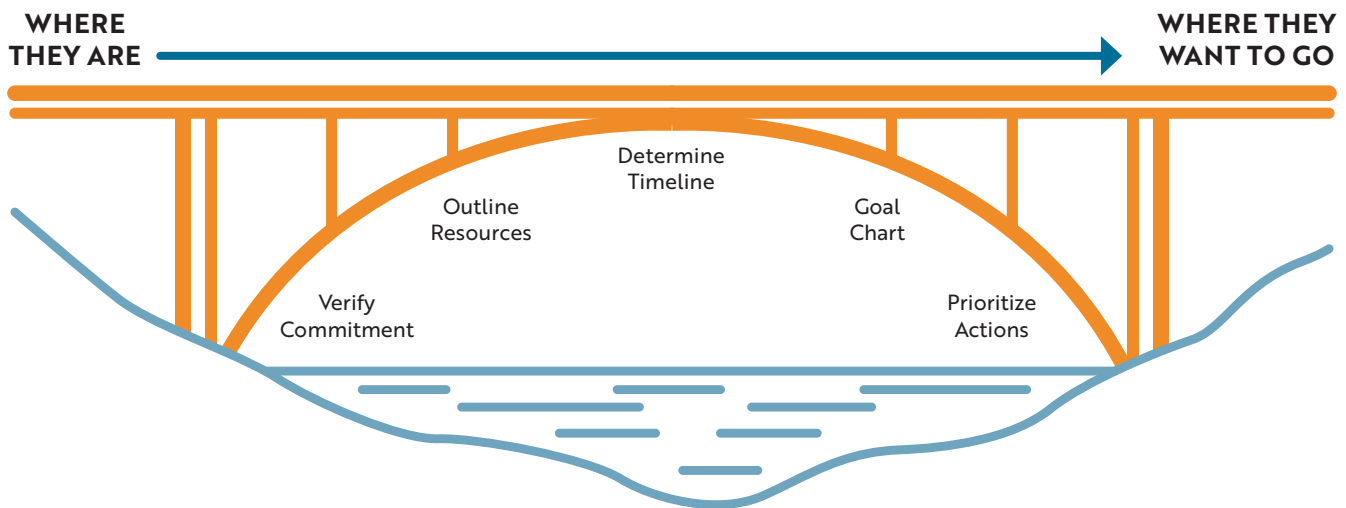
- ⌘ Tangible
- ⌘ Discovery and Learning
- ⌘ Evolutionary

Discovery and Learning, as well as Evolutionary actions may only require part of the bridge built minus the more concrete, measurable steps. Your discernment is necessary for what parts are appropriate.

“ All men can see these tactics whereby I conquer, but what none can see is the strategy out of which victory is evolved. ”

- Sun Tzu





**Building a strategy bridge signifies a commitment to move forward and take action. It is where plans get made, details are discussed and tactics are weighed and measured. This step requires the coach to use the Core Coaching Skills of listening, questioning and action planning.**

There are five components to building the strategy bridge.

## 1. Verify Commitment

The coach will clarify what the coachee is actually committing to and will check to see the level of commitment the coachee has. The coach will be listening for any lack of clarity, hesitation or uncertainty. Some questions the coach may ask in this component are:

- ⌘ In one sentence, what is your objective?
- ⌘ Are you fully committed to \_\_\_\_\_?
- ⌘ Did I just hear some uncertainty? What's that about?

## 2. Outline Resources

The coach ensures that the coachee has the resources needed to successfully accomplish what they want. Resources can be tangible such as the right people, the right place/space, the correct tools, etc. Or they can be intangible such as time, advocates or methods of influence. The coach is listening for what may be missing or under/overestimated in this component. Some questions that may get asked are:

- ⌘ What are the resources you'll need to accomplish this?
- ⌘ Who can help with that?
- ⌘ What is needed for this to be successful?

### 3. Determine Timeline

The coach and coachee will work together to determine a doable timeline that will ensure success. The coach will be listening for possible over-commitment or underestimation of how long something may take. Only the coachee knows for sure what they are capable of, but it is appropriate for the coach to check in on things that may sound off. The coach can introduce the notion of under-promising and over-delivering in this component.

Some questions the coach may ask in determining the timeline are:

- ⌘ When will you begin / achieve / deliver / complete \_\_\_\_\_?
- ⌘ Is that a realistic time frame?
- ⌘ When you say you can get this done by \_\_\_\_\_, are you accounting for the unexpected things that may come up along the way and building in some extra time?
- ⌘ Do know for sure what people's expectations are for this to be completed?

### 4. Goal Chart

Visual representations of the goal and the strategy around it is a wonderful coaching tool for more complex plans. A goal chart should capture all the moving parts of the strategy into an easy to glance at visual where the coachee can actively chart their progress as they move along their timeline. Some questions that the coach may ask to help the coachee create the most helpful goal chart for themselves are:

- ⌘ What would be the most helpful things for you to see quickly to know you are on target?
- ⌘ How will you gauge where you are in the process?
- ⌘ How will you know you are on track?
- ⌘ How will you know you have achieved your objective?

### 5. Prioritize Actions

The coach and coachee will work together to sort out what the highest priority actions are in the strategy. This may shift and change as the strategy bridge is built. The coach may need to dig deep with questions to help the coachee organize competing priorities in the process. Again, the coach is listening for uncertainty and lack of clarity around what actions come first. Some questions the coach may ask are:

- ⌘ What comes first?
- ⌘ Which action, if completed before the others, will make the others easier?

It is important to know that the five components can take place in any order and are not to be considered a linear process. As we mentioned earlier, not every component is appropriate to use for different types of actions.

#### Key Learning Points

- ⌘ Strategizing is how the coach and coachee bridge the gap from where the coachee is to where they want to be.
- ⌘ The coach and coachee co-create a path of least resistance.
- ⌘ The strategy is built by:
  - ⌘ Verifying the commitment
  - ⌘ Outlining resources
  - ⌘ Determining timeline
  - ⌘ Goal charting
  - ⌘ Prioritizing actions
- ⌘ Listening, Questioning and Action Planning are the Core Coaching Skills used most.





## Learning Journal



### Things to reflect on:

What surprised you?

What puzzled you?

What inspired you?

What was the most  
interesting to you?

What do you need to know  
more about?

How can you go about  
finding out more?

## Step 4 - Clear the Way



The focus has been clarified, the learning has occurred, the strategy set in place and now it is time to clear the way. In this step of the exchange, the coach and coachee will look for anything that may get in the way of or create resistance to the coachee moving forward toward their goal or desired outcome. It is easy to get swept up in all the ideas, planning and forward movement, yet turn a blind eye towards this part of the process. Without it, once the coachee sets out on executing their strategy, all the forward motion may come to a screeching halt.

Clearing the way means clearing resistance. It means looking for people, places and things that may put a drag on things. It also means getting unnecessary complexities out of the way. Often, complexities go unnoticed or are manufactured or assumed that they'll have to be lived with. A close examination with some probing questions can bring these to the surface and decisions can be made or a piece added to the strategy to circumvent the resistance if it shows up.

A coachee's attitude or beliefs can also slow down or shut down their forward movement. The coach will need to explore those things below the waterline (emotions, beliefs, ways of thinking and perceptions) relative to what is above the waterline (behaviours and results) and help the coachee to explore correlations between the two.

“ Often it isn't the mountains ahead that wear you out, it's the little pebble in your shoe. ”

- Muhammad Ali



## What Clearing the Way Means

### Addressing and eliminating obstacles

Some obstacles may be apparent immediately, but most will take time to bring to the surface. The coach does this by listening deeply to what may only be detectable between the lines of what the coachee is saying. Or it may be listening for what isn't being said at all. Curiosity and exploration catalyze the questions the coach will ask. Once on the surface, the coach and coachee can set up action plans to move the obstacle(s) out of the way, or eliminate them completely. Some questions the coach may ask:

- ⌘ What may get in the way?
- ⌘ I haven't heard you say anything about \_\_\_\_\_, what's going to happen with that?
- ⌘ I heard you say you were tired/frustrated/confused a few minutes ago. Is that going to impact your ability to do this in any way?
- ⌘ What's it going to take to work around/through that?

### Acquiring appropriate support

We all like to think of ourselves as independent and capable to do things on our own. Many people covet their autonomy and can become reluctant to ask for help, even in dire circumstances. The coach is always on the lookout for 'support resistance' and is always aware that support may be needed. In the Coaching Exchange, it could be enough to simply ask the coachee what support will be needed. If more exploration is necessary, the coach may have to go back into Discovery and explore beliefs and attitudes around asking for help and securing support. Some questions the coach may ask:

- ⌘ Who do you need assistance/help from to do this?
- ⌘ What support do you need to do that?
- ⌘ How do you feel about asking for help?
- ⌘ How can I support you best?
- ⌘ What would keep you from asking for help on this?

## Defining and filling in what is missing

As things unfold, even after the strategy is built, there may be something additional missing that wasn't thought of before. This is the time to check in to see what, if anything is missing. Questions the coach may ask:

- ⌘ What's missing?
- ⌘ Who do you need to talk to in order to find out what you don't know?
- ⌘ Is there anything we haven't covered?

## Navigating relationships with self, time and others

Successful strategies usually require a dose of reality. Again, it is easy to get swept up in the planning, forward motion and vision of what is ahead, but reality can derail even the best-laid plans. Those derailments often come from unexamined possibilities in our relationships with ourselves, others or time. Some questions a coach can ask are:

- ⌘ How might you get in your own way?
- ⌘ Who do you need to enroll into your strategy?

### Key Learning Points

- ⌘ Clearing the way means creating a path of least resistance.
- ⌘ When clearing the way –
  - ⌘ Address obstacles
  - ⌘ Ensure they have proper support
  - ⌘ Identify what is missing
  - ⌘ Road map relationships
  - ⌘ Let go of what needs letting go of
- ⌘ Listening, Questioning and Requesting are the Core Coaching Skills used most.



- ⌘ How will you handle push-back from others?
- ⌘ What will keep you accountable?
- ⌘ How can you make space in your calendar/diary to ensure success?
- ⌘ Is this a realistic time frame given all that needs to be done?

## Letting go of limiting beliefs, attitudes and assumptions

Clearing the way often means pushing down the walls that keep our perspectives narrow or not seeing things as they really are. We cannot accomplish what we don't believe is accomplishable. We cannot see what doesn't exist in our belief system. Without knowing what is truthfully so, we are informed by and act upon assumptions and guesses. These become invisible obstacles to success. Some questions the coach can ask:

- ⌘ How may your attitude be getting in the way of success?
- ⌘ What would it take to give that up?
- ⌘ Do you know that for sure, or are you guessing?
- ⌘ If you were to look at this from \_\_\_\_\_'s perspective, what would you see that you don't see now?
- ⌘ Do you believe this can be done?

## The Relationship Between Requesting and Clearing the Way

In Part 4 you will learn about the core coaching skill of requesting. Coaches make requests when the coachee is stuck, holding back or selling themselves short. When Clearing the Way, an opportunity for making a request will usually present itself. Know a request is designed to stretch someone out of their comfort zone and into action or forward movement in a bigger way than they may even know they are ready for.



## Learning Journal



### Things to reflect on:

What surprised you?

What puzzled you?

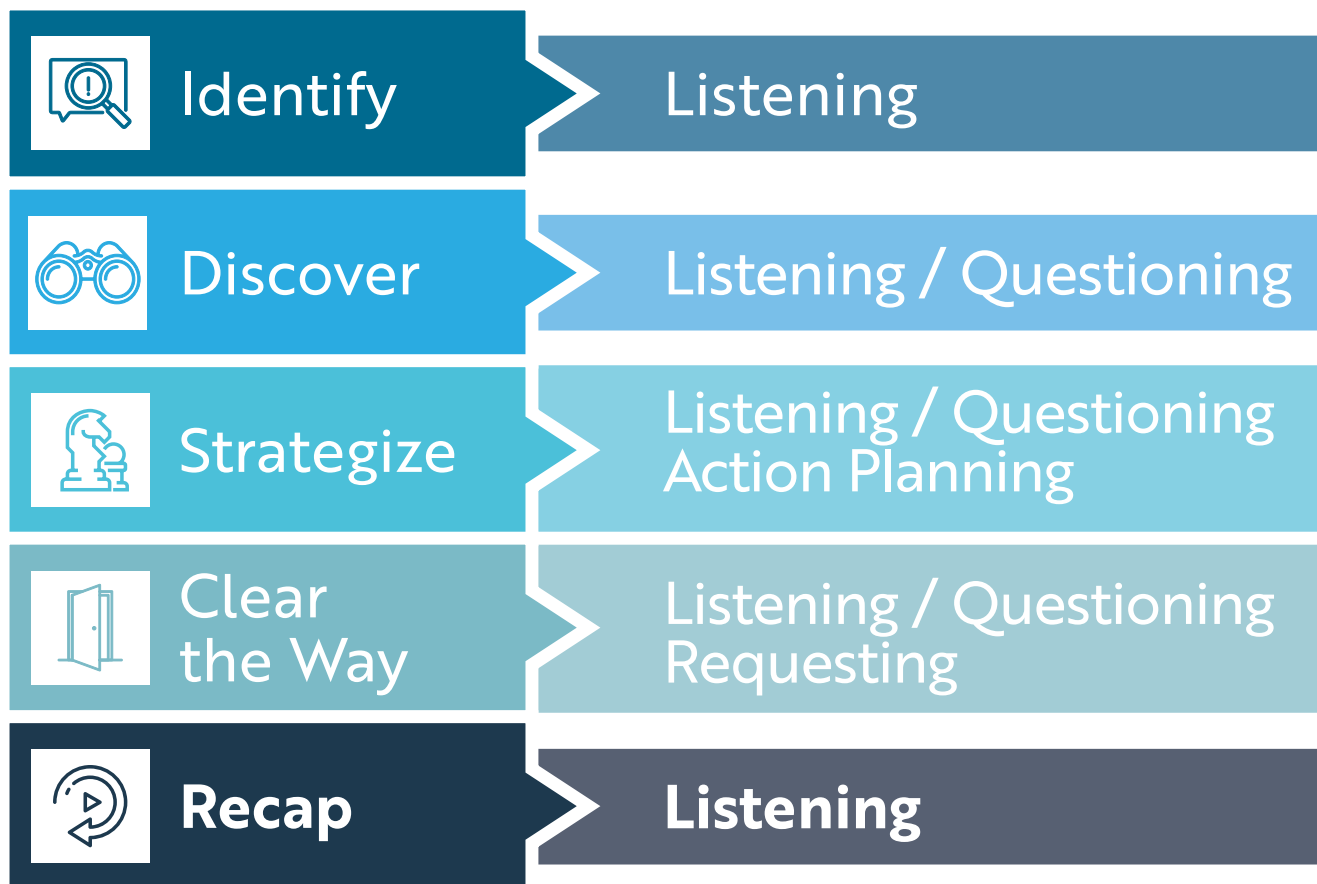
What inspired you?

What was the most  
interesting to you?

What do you need to know  
more about?

How can you go about  
finding out more?

## Step 5 - Recap



The Recap brings to light where the coachee is in their thinking. In short, it is a very succinct, clear summary of what they now know and what they are going to do. The coach and coachee solidify a mutual understanding of what is going to happen moving forward and how it will be done.

“ I find the great thing in this world is not so much where we stand, as in what direction we are moving. ”

- Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr.

The recap is also an anchoring of what has been explored, learned and committed to. It is the final tie off of any loose ends. The recap would also be considered the close of the coaching exchange.

The coachee is ALWAYS the one to give the recap. The coach simply listens and may check in on a couple of things with some clarifying questions, but listening is the primary skill used. The coach is listening for clarity, commitment and consistency. Is the coachee:

- 8 Clear with what they are doing and where they are going?
- 8 Fully committed and ready to do what they said they would do?
- 8 Consistent in what they have said up until now in the exchange?



## Why the Coachee Does the Recap

In closing, the coach asks the coachee to step up and take ownership for what they have said they want and will do by having the coachee recap all they have committed to in the coaching dialog. This is THEIR show, not the coach's. Having the coachee do the recap anchors:

### ⚓ New Learning

The coachee will usually mention the new awareness or learning they have from the coaching and it's relevance to the actions they are committing to.

### ⚓ Commitment

We all know that saying it out loud to someone else makes it real. It commits us in a way we don't commit when we are alone with our plans.

### ⚓ Accountability

In the recap, the coachee is taking responsibility for what they have said they want to be accountable for. They are making a verbal statement where their level of commitment is evident in their tone, words and energy.

### ⚓ Actions to Be Taken

When the coachee has to reflect to another the action plan they have brainstormed and created for themselves in a clear and concise way, it anchors the plan.

### ⚓ Forward Movement

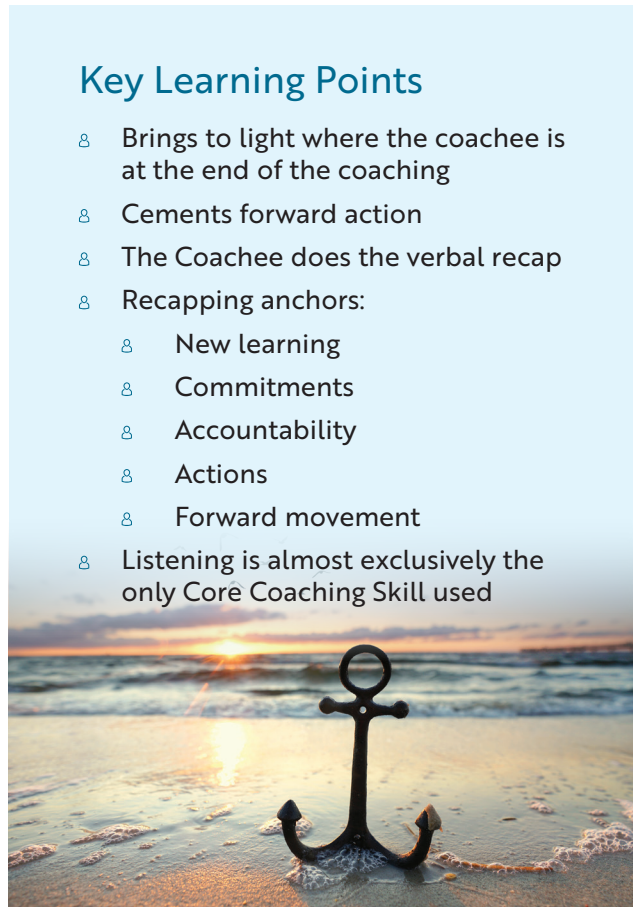
Again, articulating the plan for forward movement anchors the commitment to do so.

## Questions to Open a Recap

- ⌘ What are you willing to commit to as a result of this conversation?
- ⌘ What is your plan of action? By when?
- ⌘ What was the value of this conversation for you?
- ⌘ What are you taking away from this conversation and what will you do differently?

### Key Learning Points

- ⌘ Brings to light where the coachee is at the end of the coaching
- ⌘ Cements forward action
- ⌘ The Coachee does the verbal recap
- ⌘ Recapping anchors:
  - ⌘ New learning
  - ⌘ Commitments
  - ⌘ Accountability
  - ⌘ Actions
  - ⌘ Forward movement
- ⌘ Listening is almost exclusively the only Core Coaching Skill used





## Learning Journal



### Things to reflect on:

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5 core

# PART FOUR

# THE 5 CORE COACHING SKILLS



The 5 Core Coaching Skills are the underpinnings for conducting an effective and impactful coaching dialogue. There are many skills used in coaching, but these 5 are found at the core of all of them.

There is no end to how well you can develop these 5 skills. You can however, become proficient in using them by daily practice and remaining mindful of using them in all of your interactions.

## The 5 Core Coaching Skills are:



Listening



Questioning



Encouraging



Requesting



Action  
Planning

These 5 Core Coaching Skills are foundational and represent HOW coaching is done. In this chapter we will examine all 5 core skills. You may need to work on some more than others. We ask that you be patient with yourself as you learn these skills. Using these skills may require a whole new way of interacting for you, and may feel awkward at first. The more you use them, the more natural they will become. With practice, you will begin to see the difference and how much impact these skills can have with others.

“ Every artist was first an amateur. ”  
- Ralph Waldo Emerson



# Core Skill 1 - Listening



## Listening



## Questioning



## Encouraging



## Requesting



## Action Planning

Take a minute and think about what it is like to be listened to and really heard by someone. How do you know they are truly hearing you and getting the full context of what you are expressing? How does it feel for you when someone is really hearing all you are saying and the meaning behind it?

In the 5.5.5 model you will notice listening is at the top. Listening is where it all begins in coaching. When done with proficiency, listening can be the single most powerful skill that is used in a coaching dialogue. Never underestimate the power of just sitting with someone, fully present and completely listening. It can change everything.

The 5.5.5 model shows listening relative to the other four skills, but without listening, none of the other core skills can be employed. It is, in essence, the foundational core skill. The 5.5.5 model illustrates that the 5 Core Coaching Skills are linear, but they can jump from one to the other in the course of a coaching dialogue. Wherever the coaching goes, you will always begin with and return to listening when coaching!

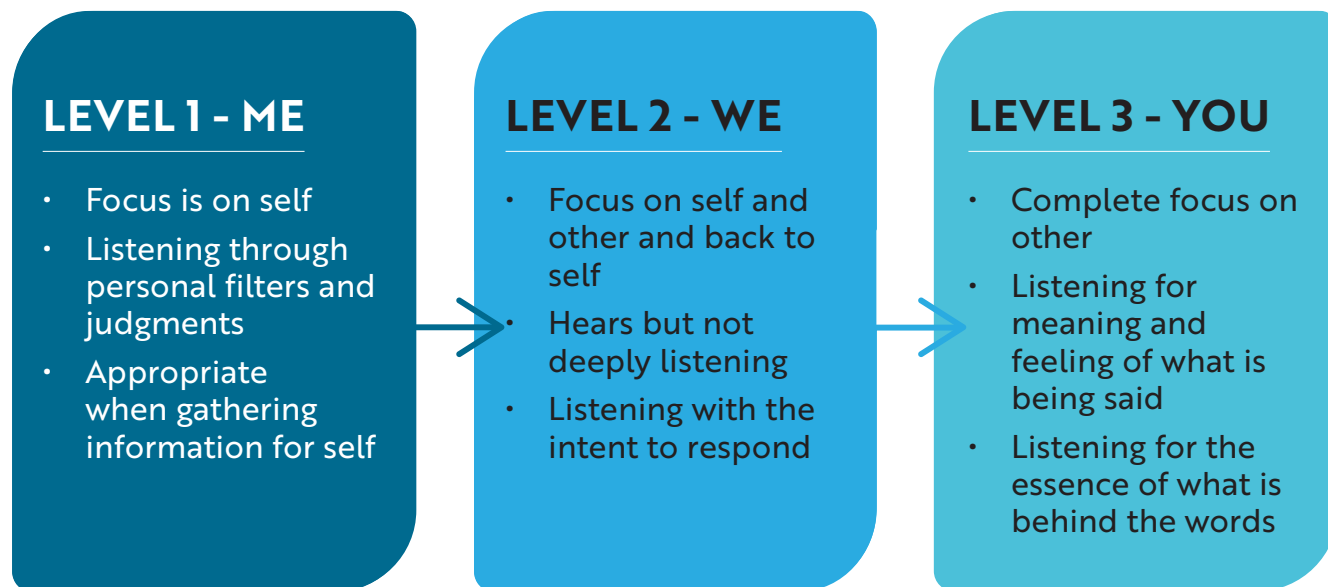
“ This is the problem with dealing with someone who is actually a good listener. They don't jump in on your sentences, saving you from actually finishing them, or talk over you, allowing what you do manage to get out to be lost or altered in transit. Instead, they wait, so you have to keep going. ”

- Author: Sarah Dessen  
- Just Listen



# The Three Levels of Listening:

The diagram illustrates the three levels of listening that we often engage in during conversation.



## Listening With the Intent to Understand

Do you listen with the intent to understand, or do you listen with the intent to reply?

Listening with the intent to understand means listening with your curiosity fully engaged. You become a student, open to learning while the other person speaks. This requires moving your own knowledge, perceptions and personal experience aside so you can truly hear what is being said and genuinely take in new information without putting it through your own filters. This also means being okay with not knowing and patiently waiting until answers, solutions and new awareness reveal themselves as the coachee speaks. Allowing the space for the coachee to come into their own learning by simply listening, teaches them to think and dip into their own well of resourcefulness.

As a leader of others with the responsibility of objectives that must be met, this may be difficult to do as those objectives are always playing in the background of the conversation. As you become more proficient at listening with complete focus, you will find it easier to temporarily suspend your stake in the outcome and open to new learning from those you are leading and coaching. Strong

leaders provide engaging environments where others are given meaningful opportunities to contribute. This begins with listening and learning from them!

## Listening Is an Active Skill

Listening does not always mean sitting still in total silence. In fact, sitting still in total silence is only one of the ways we engage actively while listening. Take a minute to think about what is actually going on actively when you are engaged with someone you feel is truly listening to you. Perhaps they are leaning in with full eye contact. Or maybe they are nodding and giving non-verbal but audible cues that they are really listening. There are a variety of ways we let others know we are fully there and getting all they are saying, even beyond the actual words they are using. Here are a few of the most powerful active listening skills used in coaching:

## Reflective Listening

Reflective listening is taking what the person has just said and reflecting it back to them. This is often used in coaching for impact and to allow the coachee to hear themselves and what they have just said. Reflective listening is also used to encourage the coachee to go deeper and



broader into what they are expressing. It shows the coachee you are listening with the desire to understand and gives them the opportunity to correct you, the coach, or themselves once you've reflected back what they've said back to them.

## Coach Approach Example of Reflective Listening:

### MIRRORING

Coachee: *My work would be better if I had no interruptions.*

Coach: *OK, I hear you. Your work would be better if you had no interruptions.*

Coachee correction: *Well, maybe just less interruptions. I know it's not possible to never have any interruptions.*

### PARAPHRASING

Coachee: *My work would be better if I had no interruptions.*

Coach: *So what you are saying is your work would improve if you could have time without being distracted?*

Coachee correction: *Well, the only distractions that really interrupt me and affect the quality of my work are the ones that come on Tuesday when new shipments are coming in and there is no one out on the dock floor to direct the incoming product and everyone comes to me.*

### FULL PRESENCE

**Remove distractions.** Listening with full presence begins with removing distractions. Get up and close the door. Turn the phone ringer off. Resist the urge to doodle. Close the blinds if you're prone to stare out the window! Prepare yourself to be fully engaged with your coachee without diversion. This also means not mentally wandering off into your own thoughts as someone is speaking.

**Make eye contact.** When engaged, make eye contact. If you're uncomfortable with that, work on it! It's imperative you look someone in the eye in order to be fully present with them and what they are saying.

**Acknowledge you are hearing them.** By nodding and by making audible gestures like "Uh-huh", "Mmmmm", "Wow!". Encourage them to

continue on by saying things like, "Say more about that" or "Keep going" or "Tell me more".

### SILENCE

One of the most potent of all active listening skills is silence. When you allow silence, your coachee will fill the space due to their own discomfort. This usually leads to profound discoveries, as the coachee has to dig deeper into what they are saying and often go into areas they have never considered.

## Your Listening Improvement Plan

Think about what is it like for you to be listened to and really heard by someone. Take a minute to list some of the things they do that lets you know you are fully heard. Of those things, mark the ones that you'd like to begin doing yourself or do more of than you are currently doing.

How do you currently let people know you are listening to them?

Are there any you'd like to improve and how will you do that?

What are the top 3 things you will need to work on to become a better listener?

## Key Learning Points

- 8 Listening is the foundational skill where coaching begins.
- 8 There are different levels of listening. In coaching we use Level 3 listening.
- 8 Listen with the intent to understand and learn.
- 8 Active listening involves reflective listening, full presence and silence.





## Learning Journal



### Things to reflect on:

What surprised you?

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interesting to you?

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more about?

How can you go about  
finding out more?

## Core Skill 2 - Questioning



Listening



Questioning



Encouraging



Requesting



Action  
Planning

Questioning is the key to unlocking a coachee's resourcefulness. It demonstrates to the coachee that they have the answers within themselves. It is also the place in coaching where more is discovered by both the coach and coachee about who the coachee is and what drives their beliefs, actions, choices and decisions.

In coaching, we aim to make questions powerful. Powerful questions evoke discovery, insight, commitment and action and awaken creative and critical thinking. When coaching questions are powerful, they cause the coachee to dig deeper in their thinking, challenging them to broaden their perspectives. Powerful questions disturb apathetic, surface thinking and call forth new and deeper awareness.

To ask powerful questions, the coach needs to engage in genuine curiosity, which means shifting from the impulse to tell, to the desire to ask and explore. This requires a mindful migration from feeling compelled to always 'know' or have the answers, to being comfortable in 'not knowing' and believing in by allowing the coachee to have the answers.

“ Indeed, the only truly serious questions are ones that even a child can formulate. Only the most naive of questions are truly serious. They are the questions with no answers.

A question with no answer is a barrier that cannot be breached. In other words, it is questions with no answers that set the limit of human possibilities, describe the boundaries of human existence. ”

- Milan Kundera - The Unbearable  
Lightness of Being



## What Makes a Question Powerful?

There are many things that make a coaching question powerful. They typically have one or more of the following components:

- ⌘ Stems from genuine curiosity
- ⌘ Stimulates reflective thinking and conversation
- ⌘ Are thought-provoking
- ⌘ Surfaces underlying assumptions and limiting beliefs
- ⌘ Invites creativity
- ⌘ Demands innovative thought
- ⌘ Unearths new possibilities
- ⌘ Generates energy and forward movement
- ⌘ Stays with the coachee
- ⌘ Evokes more questions

## Constructing Powerful Questions

How a question is constructed can make all the difference in what it evokes from the coachee and its level of impact. There are three key elements to remember in constructing powerful questions.

### 1. Use open-ended questions.

An open-ended question demands thinking. It requires the coachee to reach within to explore for an answer. In doing so, the coachee becomes acquainted with their own resourcefulness and wisdom. There is recognition that they have the answer within them. When questions are closed, the coachee can answer with a simple 'yes' or 'no' without any exploration or thinking. In coaching, questions are almost always open-ended with very few exceptions and almost always begin with

'What', 'How', 'When' and 'Who'. 'Why' is almost never used (see #2).

### OPEN-ENDED QUESTION

What changes are you prepared to make to reach this goal?

### CLOSED-ENDED QUESTION

Are you prepared to make changes to reach this goal?

### 2. Keep questions clean.

When questions are clean of assumptions and judgments, they automatically set the coachee into forward thinking and exploration. The coachee is the one doing the work of defining and clarifying answers for themselves versus explaining or justifying to the coach. This is the reason coaches rarely, if ever, begin a question with 'why'.

It's equally as important to keep questions clean from leading the coachee in a particular direction. When the coach leads the coachee into an answer with a leading question, it suggests the coach does not trust the coachee's resourcefulness. This in turn causes the coachee to question or marginalize their own resourcefulness. This diminishes the essence of encouragement and creates a dependency on the coach to lead the coachee into a way of thinking versus making the coachee do the work.

### CLEAN QUESTION

What will be your first step?

### LEADING QUESTION

Will your first step be to outline the budget?



### 3. Use different types of questions

There are many different kinds of questions with most of them falling into one of the following quadrants:



**CLARIFYING QUESTIONS** remove any element of vagueness. It requires the coach to listen carefully to the language the coachee uses and not step over anything that isn't crystal clear for the coachee.

**SELF AWARENESS QUESTIONS** require the coachee to examine their beliefs, actions, choices and decisions. These questions also root out assumptions and limiting beliefs and ask the coachee to look at who they are being in any given situation and if it aligns with their personal standards. They also require the coachee to examine their relationship with facts and reality.

**CHALLENGING QUESTIONS** dare the coachee to think bigger, act bolder or let go of something that does not serve them or their goal(s). They can challenge the coachee's thinking, assumptions, beliefs or actions enabling the coachee to get down to their absolute truth.

**ACTION QUESTIONS** ask for forward movement and definition of what actions will be taken. They come from the coach's belief that the coachee is capable of knowing what actions are appropriate and correct for them.



## Your Questioning Improvement Plan

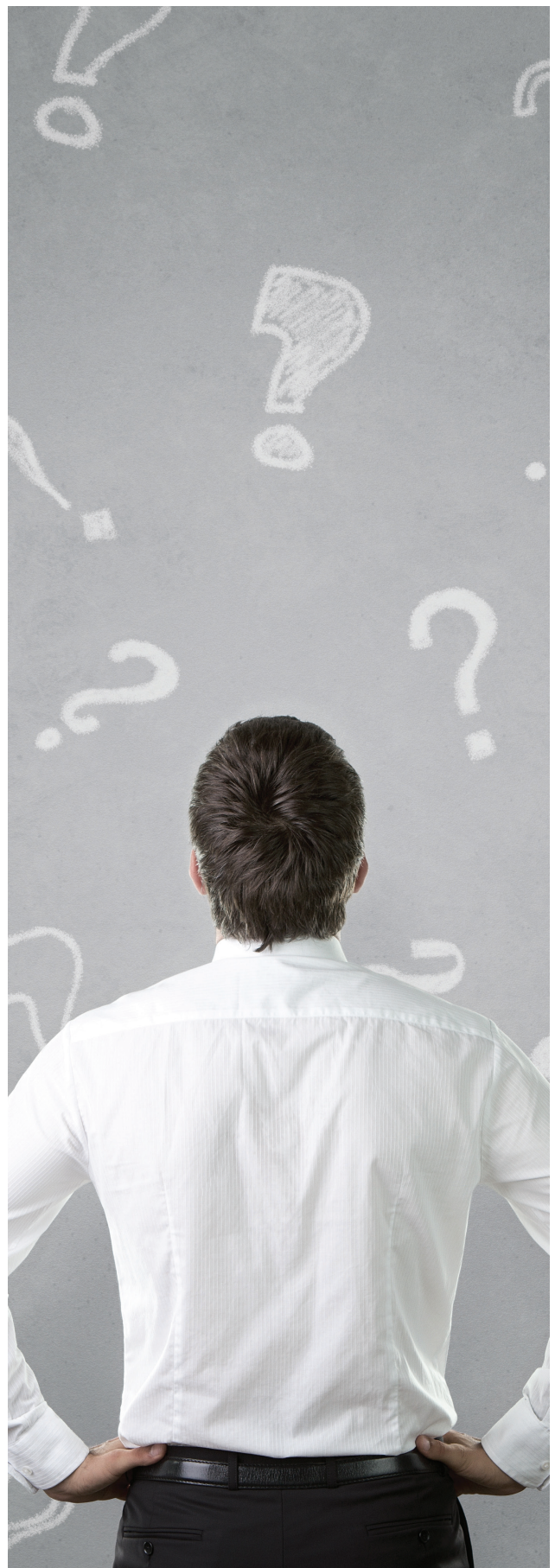
**What work will you need to do to eliminate assumptions and judgments from your coaching questions?**

**What will it take for you to shift from the impulse to 'tell' to the desire to 'ask'?**

**What can you do to become proficient in asking open-ended questions?**

### Key Learning Points

- ⌘ Powerful questions unlock a coachee's resourcefulness and teach the coachee they have the answers within them.
- ⌘ To ask powerful questions, the coach needs to ask from a place of genuine curiosity.
- ⌘ Constructing powerful questions requires the use of open-ended and clean questions with plenty of variety in the types of questions used.
- ⌘ There are four foundational kinds of questions in coaching: Clarifying, Self Awareness, Challenging and Action





## Learning Journal



### Things to reflect on:

What surprised you?

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## Core Skill 3 - Encouraging



**Encouragement, simply put, means to inspire and arouse within another courage, spirit or confidence.**

In coaching, encouragement begins right at the beginning with listening. When we actively listen, we automatically encourage the coachee to say more and dig deeper. We take interest in and give value to what they are saying which encourages them to go broader in their thinking and awareness. We give them the space to unpack their ideas and thoughts with silence, which encourages them to say even more than they knew they were thinking or feeling. And all the while, we're listening for where the coachee needs encouragement. For example, places where they sound unsure of themselves, are excited about a big opportunity, or perhaps just needing to talk through a difficult situation.

Everyone seeks encouragement in different ways. Some by words, some by actions, and some by a combination of both. It is up to the coach to learn how the coachee likes to be encouraged. This requires sensitivity on the coach's part to notice how the coachee is responding to various forms of encouragement. Sometimes it may be as simple as asking someone, "How can I best encourage you?"

Encouragement may not always be as obvious as you might think. In coaching, we have a constant presence of the essence of encouragement. This means that behind ALL of the coach's words and actions is an authentic belief that the person they are coaching is capable and resourceful. True belief in the creativity and resourcefulness of another is very encouraging. To maintain this, it takes a high level of self-awareness and development on the coach's part to know what their own personal filters are so as not to influence the coaching dialogue with limiting beliefs or opinions.

Every one of the Core Coaching Skills needs to have the essence of encouragement behind it. Even when you may not agree or fear troubling consequences may ensue. If the essence of encouragement is abandoned, forward movement and thinking comes to a halt and trust is affected. As coach, your concerns and judgments need to take a backseat as the coaching process unfolds. You will learn how to explore those concerns as an exploration partner in coming chapters.

“Our chief want is someone who will inspire us to be what we know we could be.”  
- Ralph Waldo Emerson



# A Coach Approach to Encouraging

## Encourage the Person, Not the Results

When we encourage in coaching, we encourage the person, not the results. Again, when the coach holds the belief that the coachee is capable and resourceful, there is a trust on the coach's part that great results are a by-product when the full capabilities and strengths of the coachee are encouraged into action.

### AN EXAMPLE OF ENCOURAGING RESULTS WOULD BE;

I know you can complete this project on time and within budget.

### AN EXAMPLE OF ENCOURAGING THE PERSON WOULD BE;

Your strengths in organization and leadership are sure to contribute enormously to the overall success of this project.

## Acknowledging

A powerful component when using the coach approach to encouraging is the use of acknowledgment. Acknowledging the coachee means recognizing a truth about them and who they are as a person. The goal of acknowledging is to enable the coachee to recognize and own this part of themselves. When done authentically, it leaves the coachee with a sense of strength and confidence and can last as a new, positive aspect of their self-awareness.

When coaching, there is a vast distinction between acknowledgment, praise and compliments. Praise carries a tone of approval and is an expression of your benevolence. Compliments have your personal judgment or the judgment of others stamped on them. They are an expression and reflection of your preferences. Acknowledgment carries a tone of recognition and respect. A recognition for who the person is and the value they bring.

PRAISE	COMPLIMENT	ACKNOWLEDGMENT
<i>I like the way you get things done.</i>	<i>You are so good at getting things done.</i>	<i>It's very apparent that you really care. It shows in your commitment to get the job done.</i>
<i>I am proud of the way you handled that.</i>	<i>You handled that really well.</i>	<i>Your communication skills were amazing in the way that you handled that.</i>
<i>I think you did a great job.</i>	<i>Everybody thinks you did a great job.</i>	<i>You inspire everyone around you with your dedication to excellence.</i>
<i>All about "me" the coach. I as coach approve of your actions. "You did a great job." Coach stamp of approval.</i>	<i>About "me" the coach coming from a place of judgement. "I am so impressed how you handled that"</i>	<i>Comes from a place of observation. Always about the client. "It really sounds like you understand the different now."</i>

Mindfulness of how you say things, what your filters are and your level of belief in the ability and resourcefulness of your coachee, along with practice, can greatly improve the type of encouragement you give in your coaching.

## Different Ways to Encourage

### Language

Verbal acknowledgment and words of belief and recognition are one of the most often used methods of encouragement. What we say and how we say it can make all the difference in whether someone is inspired to move forward with confidence or shut down cold with self-doubt. Take notice of your language and what hits a note that sparks your coachee's energy.

### Recognition

Recognizing someone's accomplishments, dedication or any other outstanding behaviour publicly can be an enormous encouragement. A mention in a newsletter or trade magazine can make all the difference for someone. A quick call out to the group about an individual's accomplishment before a meeting starts can leave someone with a lasting sense of encouragement. Caution: Before doing any type of public encouragement, be certain this would be encouraging for the coachee. Some people actually shut down with public recognition, preferring that recognition be done privately, one-on-one.

Another form of recognition is to acknowledge the difficulty or challenge the coachee may be facing or has faced. Knowing they aren't alone in their difficulty or challenge can greatly encourage the coachee to keep moving forward.

### Focused Time

Taking the time to listen to someone's ideas, solicit their opinion or just to be with them in a different setting such as going out to lunch can be a wonderful encouragement. It leaves them with the message that they matter and are valued.

### Trusting

Giving authority and trusting their decisions can be an enormous encouragement. Asking for input and being genuinely curious about their perspectives, beliefs and ideas says you trust they have value to add. This message can encourage coachee's to think and act well beyond where they might have without that encouragement.

## Your Encouraging Inventory and Improvement Plan

How can you learn what approaches work best to encourage individuals?

What gets in the way of you encouraging others?

How will you recognize your personal filters getting in the way of encouragement?

### Key Learning Points

- ⌘ Encouragement starts with listening.
- ⌘ Everyone responds differently to different types of encouragement. It is important to have the essence of encouragement in all of your coaching.
- ⌘ In coaching, we encourage the person, not the results.
- ⌘ Acknowledgment is a powerful component of encouraging and is not to be confused with praise or compliments.
- ⌘ Language, recognition, focused time and trust are four of the most common ways we can encourage someone.





## Learning Journal



### Things to reflect on:

What surprised you?

What puzzled you?

What inspired you?

What was the most  
interesting to you?

What do you need to know  
more about?

How can you go about  
finding out more?

## Core Skill 4 - Requesting



Requesting is what a coach does when they feel the coachee is ready to be stretched into thinking bigger, acting bolder or liberating themselves from something that is holding them back. It is a call-out to the coachee's highest potential.

Requesting is an advanced skill and is not used in every coaching exchange. It is used when the coach senses the coachee is stuck, holding back, or selling themselves short or when the coach feels the coachee is ready to move forward in a bigger way than the coachee may be ready to ask of themselves. The timing is important and relies on the coach's discernment of the coachee's readiness and the level of trust in the coach and coaching process.

Requests can be extremely powerful for the coachee as there is a strong underlying message that the coach sees more in the coachee than they might see in themselves. It also suggests that the coach believes the coachee to be capable of more than they may feel capable of themselves. It's the "big ask" that says, "I know you can do this!" And it challenges a coachee's perception of themselves and what is possible.

“Challenges make you discover things about yourself that you never really knew. They're what make the instrument stretch - what makes you go beyond the norm.”

- Cicely Tyson



## Core Skill 4 - Requesting



To illustrate each step we will use a case study of a Coach Approach dialogue between a manager (the coach) and her direct report (the coachee).

*The context of the dialogue is about the coachee feeling overwhelmed with a number of competing priorities. The coachee confides that he does not even know where to begin in finding which thing he should direct his attention to first. He says he is just reacting to whatever demands the most attention in the moment and has no idea what may be slipping through the cracks.*

### Opportunity Identified

The coach has identified an opportunity to ask the coachee to stretch his thinking.

*When the coach has listened deeply to the coachee's concerns and asked questions that help clarify those concerns, the coachee returns to his feelings of being overwhelmed. This is a*

*signal that he is stuck in his thinking and truly believes there is no way out. His frustration has clouded his ability to see any possibility of change.*

### Request is Made

The request itself should be done in very clear and succinct language and be extended in the tone of an invitation, inviting the coachee into a new possibility.

**THE REQUEST:** "I have a request. I want you to know you can accept, reject or negotiate this with me."

**COACHEE GIVES AGREEMENT:** "My request is that you stop looking at this as a chronic condition and begin to look at it as an opportunity to learn."

Allowing a moment of silence for this to sink in, the coach awaits the coachee's answer.

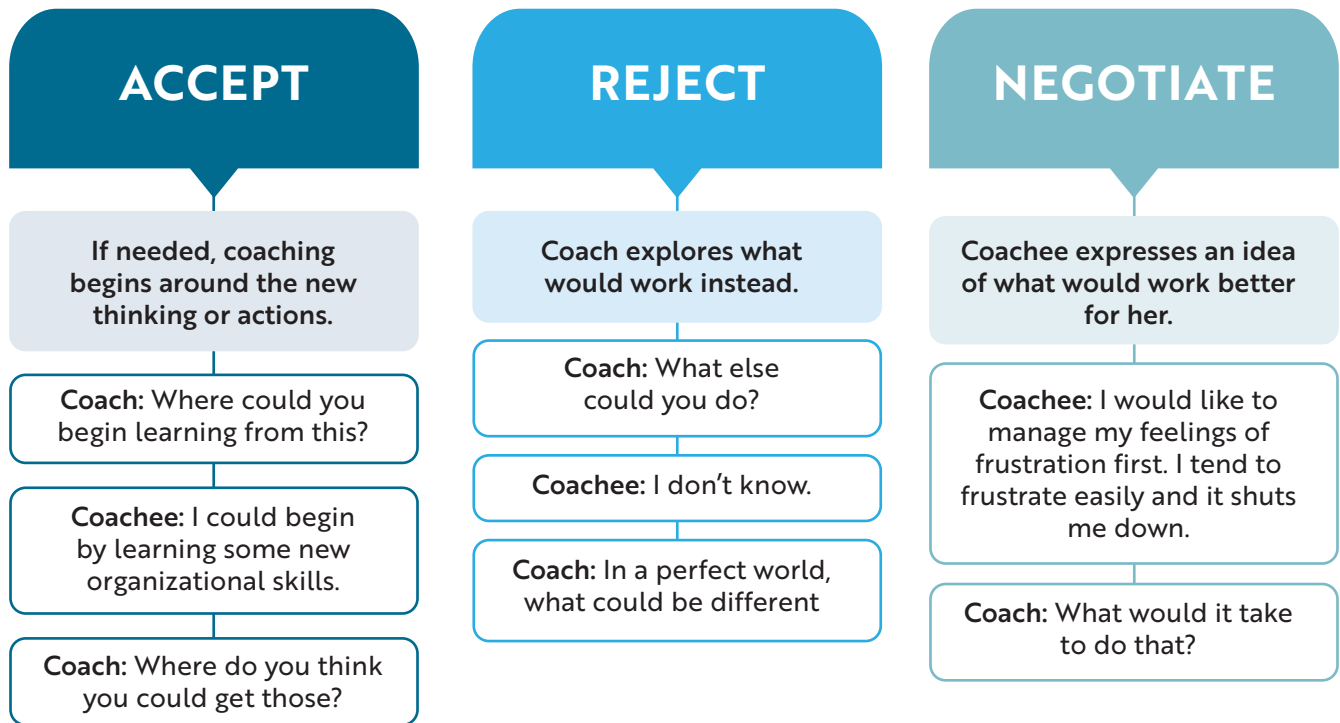
## Accept, Reject or Negotiate

It is important that the coach does not get attached to any direction the coachee takes after the request is made and instead offers an open platform of choice for the coachee. Whether the coachee chooses to accept, reject or negotiate the request makes no difference. What does make a difference is that the coachee shifts away from their stuck or limited thinking and into a new awareness of what is possible or into a new learning about their way of thinking. It creates

an opening for the coaching to begin moving forward in a new direction.

With that said, it is important that requests do not stem from mandatory deliverables or measurements of performance. Rather, they stem from a coach's sense of bigger, broader possibilities and potential they see in the coachee that go beyond deliverables and performance.

Continuing to use this case study, let's look at the three possible directions this can take and how it creates an opening for forward movement.



As you can see, in all three choices there is an opening to move the coaching forward. New directions for coaching are presented in each choice. In the nature of the request, the coach has demonstrated that she is confident the coachee can rise above his current situation in some way, incorporating the essence of encouragement, and redirecting the movement forward.

## Anchoring The Commitment

When making a request, it is important for the coach to anchor the commitment the coachee is

making if the request is accepted or negotiated. The coach does this by asking for a deadline date ("by when?") or a timeline of execution by extracting specific action items and assigning each one a deadline ("and when can you do that by?"). In addition, the coach asks for specific actions instead of just getting a simple yes or no in accepting the request. The examples above illustrate how the coach moves from the moment the coachee accepts or negotiates the request into anchoring the commitment by asking specifically what the coachee will do to honor that request.

## Your Requesting Improvement Plan

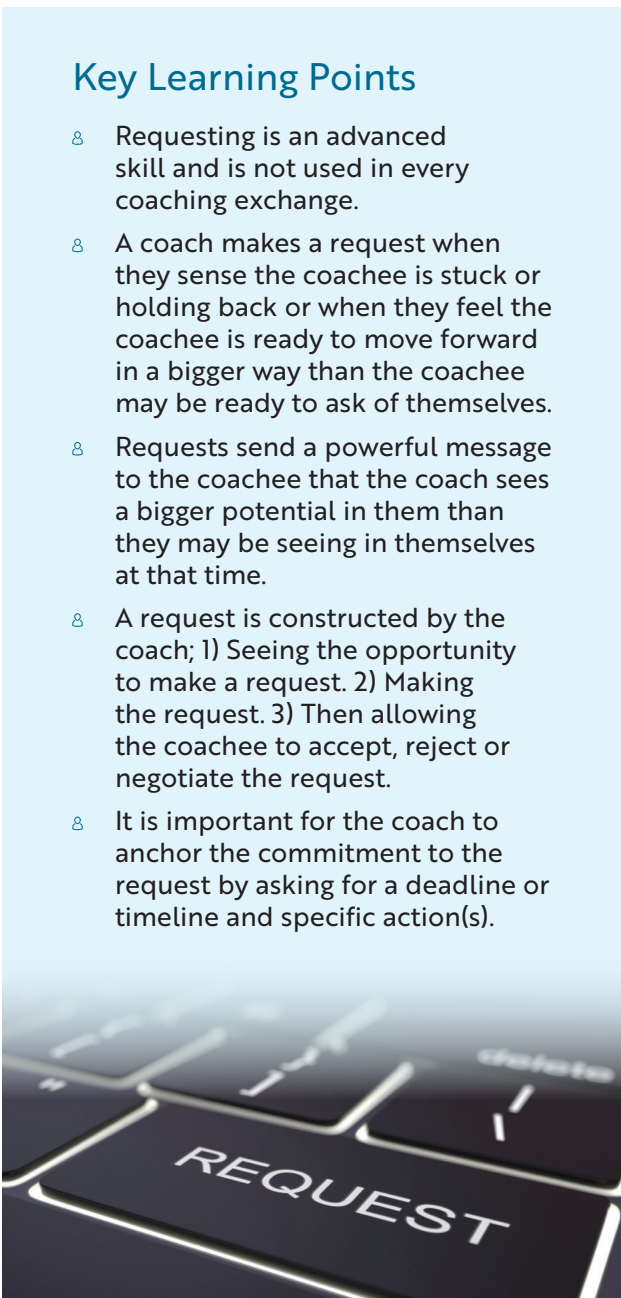
Is there a specific situation going on with someone around you right now who may be stuck, holding back or not seeing their full potential in something they are facing?

What request could you make to them?

What huge request could someone make of you to get you unstuck or keep you from holding back any longer?

### Key Learning Points

- ⌘ Requesting is an advanced skill and is not used in every coaching exchange.
- ⌘ A coach makes a request when they sense the coachee is stuck or holding back or when they feel the coachee is ready to move forward in a bigger way than the coachee may be ready to ask of themselves.
- ⌘ Requests send a powerful message to the coachee that the coach sees a bigger potential in them than they may be seeing in themselves at that time.
- ⌘ A request is constructed by the coach; 1) Seeing the opportunity to make a request. 2) Making the request. 3) Then allowing the coachee to accept, reject or negotiate the request.
- ⌘ It is important for the coach to anchor the commitment to the request by asking for a deadline or timeline and specific action(s).





## Learning Journal



### Things to reflect on:

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## Core Skill 5 - Action Planning



Listening



Questioning



Encouraging



Requesting



**Action  
Planning**

The coach has listened and both the coach and coachee have learned more about how the coachee wants to move forward. Many things associated with that such as attitudes, beliefs and perceived obstacles have surfaced through questioning. The coachee has been encouraged to keep thinking forward and expressing more and perhaps the coach has challenged the coachee with a request to stretch in some way. Now it's time to put it all into action.

Action Planning requires the coach to become a co-creative partner in designing relevant and pragmatic actions with the coachee. Relevant, in that they are appropriately aligned with the goal, outcome or solution that has been identified and clarified in the coaching dialogue. Pragmatic, in that they are achievable, attainable and practical considerations have been explored and weighed.

Becoming a co-creative partner means that the coach enters into the creative process with the coachee as:

- ⌘ An elicitor of ideas
- ⌘ A brainstorming partner
- ⌘ An advocate
- ⌘ A challenger
- ⌘ A champion of their resourcefulness
- ⌘ An accountability partner

At no point in Action Planning does the coach tell the coachee what to do and how to do it. Instead, the coach using Listening and Questioning, allows the coachee to discover that they have the ability to create relevant and practical action steps that can get them from where they are to where they want to go.

“ You are what you do,  
not what you say you'll do. ”

- Carl Jung



# The Three Types of Action In Coaching

There are typically three types of action a coachee can take.

## 1. Tangible Actions

Tangible action can be seen, measured and verified. It's concrete action that is easily recognizable and has a defined beginning and end (completion).

## 2. Discovery and Learning Actions

Often a coachee recognizes within the coaching dialogue that they don't know enough or have enough resources to move forward in the way they want. They are stalled or completely stopped by the unknown. This is when the coach and coachee brainstorm to identify what is not known and create an action plan for the coachee to find out all they can in order to make an informed choice on how they want to move forward. That action plan can include investigation, fact gathering or simply being inquisitive while keeping receptors wide open.

## 3. Evolutionary Actions

Sometimes the most profound action a coachee can take may appear to be no action at all. Yet, in reality this type of action can be pivotal in that it calls upon the coachee to simply "be with" an emerging new awareness or perspective of

themselves, others or their situation. It asks them to examine what is below the surface and reflect on what they have learned or the new way they are seeing something. It can also allow for the mental space needed to just work something out that is complex or to let thoughts, feelings and beliefs unfold by giving them conscious attention. Often, evolutionary actions result in sustainable change that fundamentally shifts behaviour.

Again, coaches partner with their coachees to determine the best actions although coachees will usually defer to tangible and discovery/ learning actions as their choice. The evolutionary actions will often come from the coach in the form of a Request as the coachee is being stretched out of their comfort zone and into the depths below the surface. Most people are more comfortable with "doing" and least comfortable with just "being". This can be a stretch for many.

## Setting Up Accountability

In coaching, accountability is a vital component to Action Planning. Without this, the coachee is left on their own where even the best laid plans can get lost in a world of competing priorities. When setting up the accountability structure within the action plan, the coach asks the coachee to establish and clarify;

- 8 Who they are accountable to.  
Setting up accountability partners OUTSIDE of the coaching relationship creates a template



for the coachee to recreate in the future when not being coached.

- ⌘ **What they are accountable for.**  
It's important the coach and coachee do not assume they know this and it gets articulated in the Action Planning stage of the coaching.
- ⌘ **When it will be done.**  
Putting a date on things makes it real and anchors accountability.
- ⌘ **Staying Accountable.**  
If the action plan spans over a period of time, how will they stay accountable? How will they set things up with the person they are accountable to in order to remain accountable?

## Embedding Accountability

While clarifying who, what, when and how are crucial to setting up accountability, it's only half of what keeps people accountable. The other half involves connecting to WHY it's important to take the action(s) and exploring what might interfere with the commitment they've made. The following steps will embed the accountability by clarifying these areas;

- ⌘ **Explore consequences**  
What are the consequences/costs of not taking the action(s)
- ⌘ **Ensure the action is meaningful or relevant to them**  
If they can't see where or why it is in their best interest, people tend to get slippery with their accountability
- ⌘ **Explore resistance**  
This is where the coach probes for and addresses feelings and attitudes about the action i.e. fears, resentment, confidence, etc.
- ⌘ **Explore commitment level**  
On a scale of 1 to 10 how committed are they? If not above 8, what would make this a 9 or a 10?
- ⌘ **Connect to future possibilities**  
If the action(s) is/are taken, what becomes possible?

All of these steps for embedding accountability may not be appropriate for every situation. You will need to determine which steps are suitable.

## Your Action Planning Improvement Plan

What will need to shift within you to be an Action Planning partner versus managing or telling?

How will you handle differences of opinion between Action Plans the coachee wants to make versus Action Plans you feel is better, more realistic or serves the coachee's purpose or agenda better?

How will you coach someone who doesn't take the actions they've committed to?

## Key Learning Points

- ⌘ Without action, it isn't coaching
- ⌘ Partner with your coachee to co-create action plans
- ⌘ Three types of action:
  1. Tangible
  2. Discovery & learning
  3. Evolutionary
- ⌘ Set up accountability with WHO, WHAT, WHEN, HOW
- ⌘ Embed accountability by exploring consequences, meaning/relevance, resistance, commitment level and future possibilities





## Learning Journal



### Things to reflect on:

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# 5 guiding

# PART FIVE

# THE 5 GUIDING PRINCIPLES



Thus far, the core skills and coaching exchange have given us a clear framework on what to do and how to have a coaching conversation. However, there is another very important ingredient to excellence in coaching.

What distinguishes professional coaching and the coach approach to communication is the way we engage and relate with others during the process. Who we are being, as we communicate with others, has a huge impact on the effectiveness of the process and the ultimate outcome of the work.

We have outlined 5 Guiding Principles that we believe are the key elements in creating an effective, transformational environment for growth and learning. These guiding principles, when partnered with the 5 Core Skills and the 5 Step Coaching Exchange can create a fertile environment for effective communication and strong partnering. When we have integrated these effectively we are using what we call “coach-like behaviour” or using a “coach approach”.

## What Does Being Coach-like Mean?

‘Being coach-like’ means having a mindset that allows us to be open to the process. It involves being very conscious and aware of how we are showing up. In our busy lives we are quite often not aware of how we show up in a situation and how that lands with people with whom we interact. Thus, becoming more and more conscious of what we are thinking and feeling, as well as how we are responding to others in our conversations has strong influence on an outcome.

Ideally, our goal is to move from “doing coaching” to “being a coach”.







## Learning Journal



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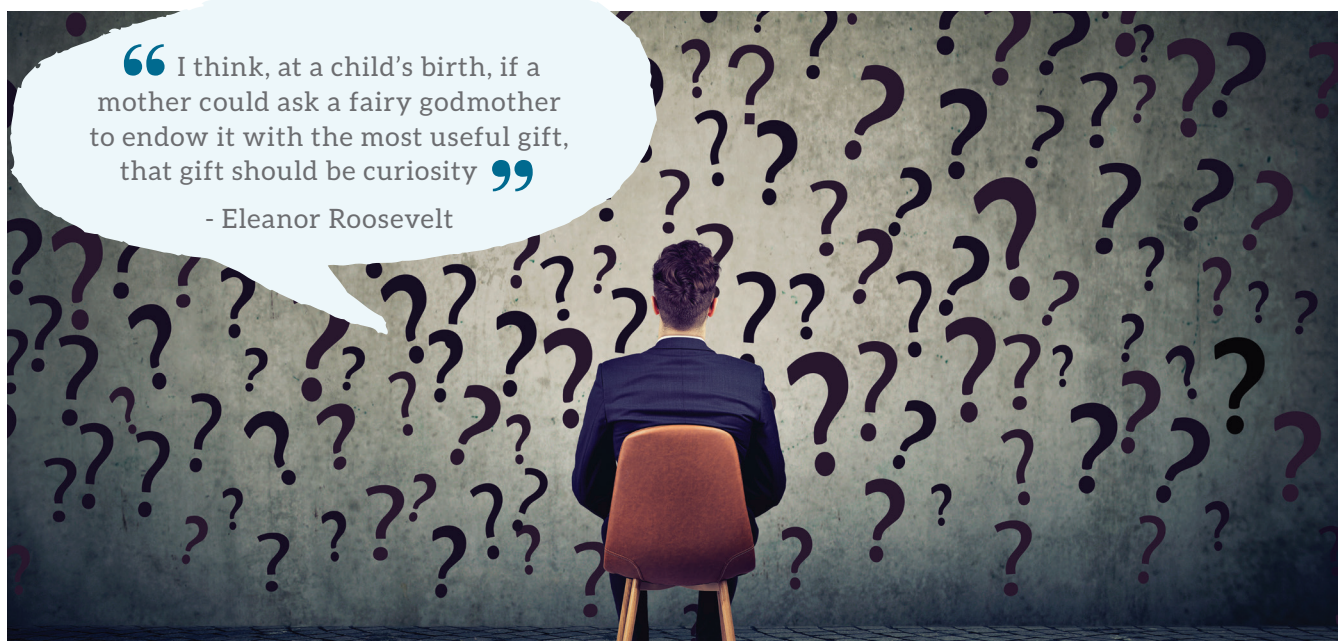
How can you go about finding out more?

# Principle 1 - Be Curious



“ I think, at a child’s birth, if a mother could ask a fairy godmother to endow it with the most useful gift, that gift should be curiosity ”

- Eleanor Roosevelt





**Being curious means that we genuinely want to know more about someone or something. This desire to know naturally compels us to become inquisitive. We must be curious in our work as coaches or while using a coach approach when communicating in order to have the most impactful results.**

Assuming this is true, if we direct our attention fully to our coachees and become explorers, (curious as to what we will discover together), we can actually stimulate discovery, new awareness and ultimately results in the coaching process.

Being a detective or an explorer can be challenging. Often our need to solve a challenge or share our ideas can get in the way of stretching our curiosity muscle. This shows up in the workplace or when there are goals needing to be met in an expedient fashion. We often default to 'tell first ask later' (or not at all). It is important that we cultivate a habit of 'asking first' when someone comes to us looking for answers, new direction, support, problem solving, planning, etc.

There is a great opportunity in being curious to stretch questioning skills even further. Be in curious inquiry, ask and explore the expertise of the coachee. After all, they are the expert in their own situation and thinking, and have wisdom and experience that often goes untapped and may even offer a more creative solution than we can offer as the coach.

Curiosity then, is a key that nurtures creativity, resourcefulness and self-reflection. It is often the driving force behind personal growth and career satisfaction, even for senior executives. Bottom line, building our capacity to be curious is a must for excellence in relating as a coach or in using a 'coach approach' in any situation.

## Tips for Building Your Curiosity Muscle

### Be a learner.

Be curious about things you don't know and even more curious about what you believe you already know.

### Be comfortable saying "I don't know".

Being in a state of not knowing can naturally stimulate curiosity and exploration. Couple this with an intention to explore!

### Seek, and be open to, other perspectives.

Ours is only one way of looking at things.

Model and reward curiosity. Inspire others to reach into new perspective and ideas, simply by 'being curious' yourself. Model curiosity in problem solving or brainstorming conversations.

### Ask first, versus tell.

Explore outside of your own thinking, solutions, beliefs, ideas and hold others as the expert in their own lives.

### Try new things.

Stretch into exploring outside of what you know and are comfortable with and experience new things.

## Your Improvement Plan to Being Curious

### Be Curious With Yourself First

Think about a situation where you were angry, irritated or frustrated with someone within the past week. It can be anyone – even a perfect stranger who cut you off in traffic. Take a few minutes to explore these questions regarding that person/ situation and write down your initial thoughts.

**What is a different way of looking at this?**

**What did this trigger in me to have this reaction?**

**What might be going on for this person to cause them to behave this way?**

**How can I grow from this situation?**

### Key Learning Points

- ⌘ Curiosity is often the driving force behind personal growth and career satisfaction, even for senior executives.
- ⌘ Being curious with self and others is a key that can nurture creativity, resourcefulness, self-reflection and create results.
- ⌘ It's important to 'not know' (even if we think we do know) and to consider the coachee the expert. This can stimulate creativity, exploration and new ideas.





## Learning Journal



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## Principle 2 - Be Accepting



**The desire for acceptance is inherent in all of us. We are tribal creatures that wither in isolation. In our modern culture, many can feel isolated yet be amongst their “tribe” all day. Workplace environments can foster this feeling of isolation by discouraging bold expression and marginalizing those that express opinions outside the status quo. It is precisely the acceptance and encouragement of unique expression and perspectives that catalyzes innovation, creativity and thought leadership.**

The leader as coach will need to learn acceptance as ideas develop and thoughts emerge from others. It requires a suspended state of ‘not knowing’ and holding assumption at bay. Innovation and development is often a process versus an event, and the ability to receive and accept viewpoints, expressions, opinions and perspectives as they materialize and grow into innovative results or personal or professional development is vital.

In coaching, acceptance is not to be confused with agreement. When taking a coach approach we are building a container of trust where the coachee can feel safe to express what they think and who they are without worry of being judged, corrected or having to defend themselves. The leader/coach may not necessarily agree with what is being said or expressed, instead they are allowing for the expression of it and encouraging that expression. With curiosity, the coach can then begin to explore WITH the coachee the validity and reality of what is being expressed to see if it is indeed truth, assumption or a misguided or misinformed belief or perspective without leading the coachee into that discovery. Instead, the coach provides an environment for the coachee to come into their own discovery by listening and asking evocative questions.

By the coach accepting who they are and where they are, the coachee begins to find a greater sense of self-acceptance. Coachees are inclined to stretch themselves further, risk more and ask more of themselves with this greater sense of self-acceptance.

## Being Accepting Means:

### Being Open Minded

An open mind allows for the possibility of new information, perspectives and facts to enter before conclusions are made. The metaphoric door is open and welcomes new information.

### Being Removed From Your Filters

Many of us have a tendency to want to put things into neat, little boxes of understanding. We work quickly in our minds to herd all the information we are taking in into something we are familiar and comfortable with. We pass the information through our own frames of reference, or filters – defining things using our own experiences, feelings, beliefs and attitudes. Being removed from our filters means consciously choosing not to engage in that dynamic. It means allowing the discomfort of not knowing to settle in and remaining curious.

### Honoring and Encouraging Uniqueness

We all have behaviours, idiosyncrasies, strengths and characteristics that are unique to us. These are the things that make us who we are and make us different from anyone else. We get messages all through life to be more like everyone else and to water down that which makes us unique. In coaching, we encourage that uniqueness and by encouraging it, show acceptance of it.

### Realizing Coachees are in a Process of Discovering

When being coached, even if it’s only for a few minutes, coachees enter into a process of discovering new things about themselves, their situation and others. In this process there is sometimes uncertainty, self-doubt, confusion or resistance. A good coach accepts this and is patient while the coachee moves through this process.

## Your Improvement Plan to Being Accepting

What steps will you take to keep from jumping to conclusions with others?

What type of people/ behaviours / situations are most difficult for you to accept? And what can you do to be more accepting in those areas?

List one unique characteristic about three people you work closely with that you would like to encourage. How will you encourage them to express that unique characteristic in a bigger way?

In what situations do you become impatient with others? How can you find patience and understanding in those situations?

## Key Learning Points

- ⌘ Acceptance and encouragement of unique expression and perspectives catalyzes innovation, creativity and thought leadership.
- ⌘ Being accepting requires a suspended state of 'not knowing' and holding assumption at bay.
- ⌘ Acceptance is not to be confused with agreement.
- ⌘ Being accepting fosters self acceptance by coachees and they are inclined to stretch themselves further, risk more and ask more of themselves with a greater sense of self-acceptance.
- ⌘ When being accepting the coach:
  - ⌘ Is open minded
  - ⌘ Removed from their own filters
  - ⌘ Honors and encourages uniqueness
  - ⌘ Realizes coachee is in a process of discovery







## Learning Journal



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## Principle 3 - Be Supportive



**Being supportive as a coach goes well beyond being there if needed. It means the coach remains a constant icon of support. Someone who is always in the background wanting the most for their coachee and willing to metaphorically walk along side them the whole way. It also means the coach will be there to encourage them when they stumble or stall and shine the light when things become unclear and foggy.**

Patience and tolerance are two hallmarks of being supportive. Allowing someone the time and space to work things out and arrange things in their way and in their time demonstrates genuine support of their unique way of working, thinking and acting. Tolerance for who they are as a person and their unique way of being supports people to shed their self consciousness and the need to manage perceptions. Without the pressure of

feeling judged, people tend to open up to new possibilities and behaviours that moves them into being at their best.



# The Supportive Coach

## Demonstrates patience

In a busy work environment with high demands, patience can be a rare commodity. There is sometimes a perception of weakness if a leader is patient in a fast paced, high demand environment, but patience is often the key ingredient to developing others. Allowing time and space to sort things out for themselves, with gentle encouragement telling them they can, often brings about sustainable change in thinking and behaviour.

## Is consistent

Consistency in words and actions allows others to feel safe and supported. Consistency lets others know they won't get blindsided or left feeling confused by an exchange. This means that the coach has to have a high degree of awareness as to how their words and actions may be interpreted. Mixed messages and contrary actions create an environment of mistrust and can cause others to pull in and close up. It is important that the coach has an awareness of all they do and say and that it aligns consistently and dependably with others.

## Is encouraging and acknowledging

We talked about encouraging and acknowledging in Part 4 of this program. They are both vital to understand and incorporate into the coaching exchange as they both represent support in a very profound way.

## Is available and accessible

Again, in a busy and fast paced environment with competing priorities, being available and accessible may not always be possible or realistic. Even if that is the case, it is important to remain mindful of this as an important element of support. When people are in a development phase, they often feel there is no place to turn when support is needed. Just letting them know you are available can make an enormous difference. It keeps them from feeling isolated in their development process.

## Is a collaborative partner

As a partner, the coach provides a collaborative environment where there is mutual respect, trust, a willingness to share (both ways), and a safe space to express needs, wants and desires. There is consistent and clear communication that revolves around success for the coachee.



## Your Improvement Plan to Being Supportive

What changes do you have to make within yourself to have more patience with others?

Where might you be inconsistent to others?

What needs to change to become more consistent?

What are some ways you can encourage one person who is not working to their full potential?

What needs to change in order to be more accessible to others?

### Key Learning Points

- ⌘ A coach needs to become an icon of support.
- ⌘ Patience and tolerance are hallmarks of being supportive.
- ⌘ Consistency is an invisible means of support because it provides safety.
- ⌘ Encouraging and acknowledging are vital to being supportive.
- ⌘ Availability and accessibility provide ongoing supportiveness.
- ⌘ A supportive coach positions themselves as a collaborative partner that walks alongside the coachee the whole way.





## Learning Journal



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## Principle 4 - Be Focused



**When a coach is focused, it means all of their attention is aimed at the coachee. There are many obvious ways to focus such as removing distractions and looking someone in the eye while you intently listen, but real focus also means noticing and eliminating all the subtle ways focus can be lost.**

Most of those subtle ways involve what is happening in our own head. It could be a quick thought about what you may have for lunch, wondering if that question you just asked was the right one or even thinking about what to say next. When completely focused, we step completely outside of ourselves and our heads, directing our entire attention toward the other person. This is not easy to do and to do it for any length of time can be nearly impossible, yet there are many ways to improve and extend your ability to focus. We can build our ability to focus like a muscle.

“ The first rule of focus is this: “Wherever you are, be there. ”

- Unknown Source

# Improve Your Focus

## Direct Your Attention

Throughout the day, pick one thing to direct your attention to and try to hold your attention on it completely for three minutes. Allow only the thoughts that pertain to what you are focused on to remain in your head and gently move all others out. Notice when thoughts begin to lead you away from what you are focused on and consciously move yourself back to focus.

## Be Fully Present

Another way to say this is to be completely immersed in the moment. The best way to practice this is to move through each of your senses and inventory what each one is experiencing in that moment. What are you seeing, feeling, smelling, hearing, tasting, right in that moment? Our minds like to drift to the past and the future and need to be disciplined. Like a small child, the mind wanders in curious exploration and needs to be brought back.

## Notice Common Distractions

In a study on distractions at Carnegie Mellon's Human-Computer Interaction Lab, it was found that subjects were 20% less effective in their ability to focus on tasks. Each of us has our unique distraction triggers. Again, our senses come into play. Some are highly distracted by certain sounds or some by things that catch our eye. Notice what distracts you and then make note which of your senses are engaged.

## Quiet Things Down

What goes on inside of us deeply affects our ability to focus. As the day wears on, what is happening inside can become quite frenetic, even without crisis or threat. Stilling the mind is the last thing we're thinking about in our fast paced day, so it is important to consciously move it to the forefront of all those other thoughts and find a practice that can be done a few times a day to clear things and quiet things down. It could be as simple as just breathing deeply for five minutes or learning some meditation techniques. When you are able to be quiet on the inside it becomes much easier to focus on the outside.

## Increase Your Reception

The ability to fully focus connects to your capacity to take things in without filtering, censoring or reacting. Like a radio, the better the reception, the clearer we hear it. Judging, reacting and reorganizing what is coming towards us to fit our comfort level or perceptions is like static. It takes away crystal clear focus. Listen to your self-talk as you are communicating with someone you feel is difficult or frustrating. Then make a conscious effort to stop all that chatter and just take in what the person is trying to express without struggling to formulate your own idea of what that is.



## *Your Improvement Plan to Being Focused*

At what point do you become distracted in a conversation?

What are your trigger distractions? (Examples: cell phone, overhearing others in conversation, gazing out the window )

What practices will you put in your day to still yourself inside?

### Key Learning Points

- ⌘ Most of what takes away focus is what happens inside our heads versus outside of us.
- ⌘ The key elements to being focused are:
  - ⌘ Being attentive
  - ⌘ Being fully present
  - ⌘ Removing distractions
  - ⌘ Being still inside
  - ⌘ Being receptive







## Learning Journal



### Things to reflect on:

What surprised you?

What puzzled you?

What inspired you?

What was the most interesting to you?

What do you need to know more about?

How can you go about finding out more?

## Principle 5 - Be Committed



**To be committed as a coach means to fully honor and respect the nature of the coaching relationship and the person you are coaching. When someone allows you into a personal exploration and journey, it is a privilege and that privilege is upheld by commitment.**

A committed coach is a consistent coach. The consistency demonstrates to the coachee that the coach can be trusted to do what they say they will do and will provide a safe and reliable environment for open and candid discussion and for learning, growth and discovery.

Commitment is what transforms an agreement into reality. It is the words that speak boldly of your intentions followed by actions which speak louder than the words. It is making the time when there is none. Coming through time after time, week after week. Commitment is the stuff character is made of and a fundamental expression of personal integrity.

“ There are only two options regarding commitment. You’re either in or out. There’s no such thing as a life in-between. ”

- Pat Riley

# The Committed Coach

## Shows Up On Time

Often coaching is done through pre-established meeting times. If a coach is consistently late or postpones meetings, it speaks volumes about the respect they have for the coaching relationship and their level of commitment.

If a coachee feels like they have to hold back because they don't want to upset the coach, it stymies exploration and growth. Similarly, if a coachee feels they have to manage or placate a variety of moods the coach has, again, it blocks forward thinking and motion.

## Does What They Say They Will Do

How a coach follows through on mutually agreed upon actions such as appointments, sharing resources, honoring confidentiality and being a collaborative partner is a definitive demonstration of commitment.

## Keeps It About the Coachee

In the container of the coaching relationship, focus needs to consistently remain on the coachee. Sharing personal stories and experiences is fine but only when it is relative and creates a learning analogy for the coachee's situation.

## Is Consistent In Their Way of Being

A coachee needs to know that they have safety in the coaching relationship. This means that the coach has to remain even-keeled and neutral in the expression of their own moods and emotions.

## Is Accessible

A committed coach consistently remains approachable, open minded and without judgment. The door is always open for support and to be a quick touchstone for reassurance.



## Your Improvement Plan to Being Committed

Where do you feel you may be inconsistent with others and send mixed messages about your level of commitment and how can you improve?

What personal standards (behaviours you hold yourself to) would you like to upgrade regarding:

Timeliness:

Follow through with others:

Controlling your moods/emotions:

Accessibility to others:

### Key Learning Points

- ⌘ Commitment is a demonstration of honoring and respecting the coaching relationship.
- ⌘ A committed coach is a consistent coach.
- ⌘ Commitment transforms an agreement into a reality.
- ⌘ Coaches demonstrate commitment by
  - ⌘ Showing up on time
  - ⌘ Follow through
  - ⌘ Consistency in their moods/emotions
  - ⌘ Keeps it about them
  - ⌘ Is accessible





## Learning Journal



### Things to reflect on:

What surprised you?

What puzzled you?

What inspired you?

What was the most interesting to you?

What do you need to know more about?

How can you go about finding out more?

together

# PART SIX

# PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

**Now that you have learned the 5.5.5 Model, it's time to see how it all fits together. We have two diagrams that show the interconnectivity between The 5 Core Coaching Skills, The 5 Step Coaching Exchange and The 5 Guiding Principles.**

The first diagram illustrates a linear relationship. These relationships are what we see most often in coaching, but not always. Because we are coaching unique individuals and their unique situations, it's important to remain flexible in how we use the model to meet the person and their situation. For example, the coach obviously needs to remain curious when they are in the process of Identifying and Discovery and using the skills of Listening and Questioning although Curiosity can serve the coach well when Requesting. If the coach remains Curious, they will be able to sense subtle indications from the coachee on how they are taking in and responding to the Request.

The second diagram illustrates how the Guiding Principles infuse and surround ALL of the Coaching Skills and the Coaching Exchange. Who the coach is being will always influence the effectiveness of how the Skills are used and the depth and degree to which the Coaching Exchange goes.

The overall goal of the 5.5.5 Model is to give you a framework and methodology for coaching. It will be up to you to step into the art of coaching. This means to bring your personal communication style, way of connecting and insight abilities to the coaching and to respond to the subtleties and nuances of the unique individual that you are working with. It also means integrating a coach approach into all you do.

Coaching is much more than something you do. It becomes a way of being and is a foundational element of powerful and influential leadership.



# Putting It All Together - Diagram 1





# Putting It All Together - Diagram 2



action

## PART SEVEN

# YOUR ACTION PLAN

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This program is just the beginning of your coaching education. Now it's time to turn your daily interactions with others into a living laboratory. In this laboratory you will use and experiment with what you have learned. With that said, planning and accountability are key to transferring what you have learned into your laboratory. Please take a few minutes to organize your thoughts and create a plan for this using the following questions.

What parts of the 5.5.5 Model do you need to review and deepen your understanding?

How will you practice coaching daily?

How will you do that and by when?

What three people would you like to approach to coach in a formal coaching relationship over the next three months?

What will you commit to and be accountable for relevant to what you have learned in this program?

What other coach can you meet with regularly to discuss coaching challenges and wins? How often would you like to meet?

Who will you assign as your accountability partner to what you want to commit to and be accountable for?

# Five Week Focus Plan and Observations

Pick one Skill, one Step from the Exchange and one Guiding Principle to focus on each week in your coaching. Write down your observations of what you did well, where you need to improve or increase your knowledge and any questions that come up for you.

	WEEK 1	WEEK 2	WEEK 3	WEEK 4	WEEK 5
Coaching Skill					
Step from the Exchange					
Guiding Principle					

# What is Next in Your Coaching Journey?

You have now completed our Flagship 5.5.5 Coaching Skills Training Program.™ Congratulations!

Our Additional Programs can support the development of organizational coaching capacity in organizations as well as support individuals who wish to pursue further coaching education and/or support achieving an International Coaching Federation credential.

## *Coaching Fundamentals™*

A live online program over 10 weeks where participants learn the core coaching competencies taught to professional certified coaches throughout the world. Coaching demonstrations, case studies and engaging exercises ensure that participants embed the concepts they are learning. All classes are led by certified coaches with the International Coaching Federation (ICF) who have extensive coaching experience.

Participants will leave the program with a deep understanding of effective powerful coaching, the ICF Core Competencies, as well as feedback on their coaching by a professional certified coach. Participants earn 28.7 Coach Specific Training Hours which can be used toward ICF certification or certification renewal.

## *Personal Groundwork for Coaching*

A live online program over 8 weeks. When coaching, the only place a coachee should be led by a coach is into deep discovery about themselves and their situation. Leading a coachee into the coach's way of thinking is strictly off limits. The chasm between the two is often a murky and gray area for many coaches. How do you bring someone into new awareness and discovery without tossing something out that comes from the coach's line of thinking?

For years, the Personal Groundwork for Coaching Assessment and accompanying workbook has been a widely used tool to help coaches move their clients past daily symptoms and into the deeper source of what gets in their way when moving toward bigger and broader goals. Participants earn 24.6 Coach Specific Training Hours which can be used toward ICF certification or certification renewal.

## *Advanced Coaching Skills Practicum*

A live online program over 8 weeks. Participants of this program will refine their coaching skills by coaching others and hearing others coach. Learners will have their coaching audited and receive feedback from an ICF Certified Coach who will provide tips and techniques in addition to the personalized feedback. The environment will foster real-time learning for those doing the coaching and also for those who will be listening and providing their own feedback on what they saw and heard in the coaching. Focus will be on assisting learners to gain a higher degree of confidence in their coaching skills and a deeper understanding of coaching skills and methodology. Participants will earn 19.4 Coach Specific Training Hours and 7 Group Mentor coaching hours which can be used toward ICF certification or certification renewal.

## *Credentialing Assessment (CAP) Prep Class*

A live online program over 6 weeks. This program is designed to prepare coaches who will be applying for an International Coaching Federation (ICF) Credential. As part of receiving an ICF Credential coaches will be required to successfully complete the ICF Coach Knowledge Assessment exam. This prep class will present several questions each week that are specifically related to the ICF Core Competencies and the ICF Ethics and Standards. Participants earn 15.7 Coach Specific Training Hours which can be used toward ICF certification or certification renewal.

*Please note: this information is subject to change, for the latest information please contact us at [inquiries@cotbx.com](mailto:inquiries@cotbx.com)*

### Mentor Coaching Program

The Mentor Coaching Program includes three 1:1 mentor coaching sessions with an ICF credentialed coach. This program satisfies the ICF requirement that credentialing candidates on the ACC ACSTH and Portfolio paths complete three hours of direct 1:1 mentor coaching prior to submitting their ACC credential application. Prerequisite: Successful completion of Advanced Coaching Skills Practicum or equivalent. It is to be completed within 3 months from the purchase date. Each participant will have their coaching audited by an ICF Certified Coach. The mentor-coach will offer specific and sometimes challenging feedback relative to the learners' personal development in context of the coach demonstrating the ICF Core Competencies.

### Train the Trainer Program

For organizations who want to develop their own internal capacity and prefer to do in-house training, Coaching Out of the Box® offers a licensed trainer program for the 5.5.5 Coaching Skills Training Program™. This program is taught in an online self-study format, an eight-week virtual format or can be done on-site in a two-day live format for organizations wanting to train eight or more trainers. Prerequisites for this program can be found on our website.



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**WHAT IF EVERYONE  
HAD COACHING SKILLS?**

**OUR VISION  
IS THAT THEY WILL.**

**OUR MISSION  
IS TO SEE THAT  
THEY DO.**

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