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**The GROW Model**

There are a number of different models for coaching. This model was developed by Sir John Whitmore and provides a structure for a coaching session which, in turn, helps a coach to determine the most effective questions to ask.

**G for goal setting**

Set goals for the session as well as for the long term. A long term goal could be described as the end goal and shorter term goals could be described as performance goals – that level of performance which will help to achieve the end goal.

**Useful questions for goal setting**

* What would you like to get out of this session?
* What would be the best outcome for you from this session?
* What is the topic or issue on which you would like to work?
* In the long term what is your goal (related to the issue/topic)?
* What would be useful intermediate steps to identify?

**R for reality**

This is concerned with exploring the current situation and is concerned with objective description and factual answers rather than opinions, judgemental evaluations, prejudices, hopes and fears. The coach needs to encourage the coachee to use descriptive language to reduce the counter-productive effects of self-criticism. The more specific and descriptive language the coachee uses the more productive the session is likely to be. Help the coachee to avoid vague generalisations and judgemental language like good/bad; success/failure; right/wrong.

**Useful reality questions**

* What is the present situation, in more detail?
* What is your concern about it? How great is your concern?
* How much control do you have over the outcome?
* Does this affect others apart from you? Who?
* What actions have you taken so far?
* What were the effects of this?
* What stopped you from going further with this?
* What barriers are there that will need to be overcome?
* What really is the issue here? What’s the bottom line?

**O for options**

At this stage of the coaching we are looking to create and list as many options or alternative courses of action as possible. The quantity is more important at this stage than quality and feasibility. It is a creative and stimulating process which is often more valuable than the options themselves. Options need to be identified initially without any expression of preference, assumptions, ridicule, censorship, obstacles or completeness. Once the list is produced, specific action steps can be developed.

**Useful Options Questions**

* What are the different ways you could approach this?
* What would you do if…….?
* What would you do if you could start with a blank sheet of paper?
* What else?
* Would you like a suggestion from me?
* What are the advantages and disadvantages of…?
* Which of these solutions appeals to you most?
* Which would give you the best result?

**W is for what is to be done?**

when, by whom and the will to do it

At this final coaching phase we are looking to convert the discussion into decision. It is about building an action plan to take the coachee towards the goal. The coachee needs to retain choice and ownership even to the extent of deciding to do nothing.

**Useful What will you do questions**

* What are you going to do? (Not - what could you do? That is a different question).
* Which option(s) are you going to select?
* When are you going to do it?
* Will this option meet your goal?
* What are your success criteria for this option?
* What obstacles might you meet?
* Who needs to know about this?
* What support do you need? From whom?
* How and when will you get that support?
* What other considerations do you have?
* On a scale of 1-10, how certain are you that you will carry out the actions agreed?
* What prevents it from being 10?

GROW Model Questions

**GOAL:**

* What is the aim of this discussion?
* What is it that you ultimately want to achieve?
* How will you know when you have achieved it?
* What might be a short-term goal along the way?
* When do you want to have achieved it by?

**REALITY:**

* What is happening right now?
* Who else is involved?
* How do you feel about the situation?
* What is the effect on other people?
* What have you tried so far?
* What happened as a result?
* What stopped you from doing more?
* What's missing in this situation?
* What do you have that you're not using?
* What's *really* going on here?

**OPTIONS:**

* What options do you have?
* What else could you do
* What would you do if you had complete control?
* What would you do if you had more time, money, resources…?
* If you could only change one thing in this situation, what would it be?
* What would an expert do in this situation?
* (Would you like a suggestion from me?)
* What are the pros and cons of each option?

**WILL:**

* So what are you going to do?
* How does that contribute to achieving your goal?
* When are you going to do it (be specific)?
* What might stop you from doing it?
* How will you avoid that from happening?
* What support do you need?
* How will you make sure that you get it?
* On a 1-10 scale, how willing are you to take this action?

**Additional Tools and Techniques**

**Direction Setting**

**Using the Metaphor of a Roundabout**

Development involves looking at all possible options and choosing the most appropriate one. The metaphor many people talk about in terms of their career is about being at a crossroads. This only offers us four options and can be limiting. The metaphor of a roundabout offers many more possibilities and gives more scope for opening up many more potential routes.

Process:

A large piece of paper (at least A3) will encourage the mentee to complete the following process.

1. Ask them to imagine standing at a roundabout. Get them to draw the number of possible exits (opportunities) that they consider are available to them at the moment – even the most unlikely.

There may be a road linked to what they wanted to do when young but their parents/ carers thought this was impractical or impossible

There may be a road linked to recurring dreams or fantasies

There may be a road that involves them in more risk or unknown factors than they face at present

There may be a well defined road which they have been on for some time which feels ‘as comfy as an old pair of slippers’

There may be a road that their intuition is urging them to follow, but which other people says is not in their interests.

1. Explore each possible road/exit and in turn in discussion together. Metaphorically walk up each road and identify the possibilities of this route forward. Reassure your mentee that they do not need to move forward on any of the routes. It is sufficient at present to recognise that they have alternatives open to them.
2. Get them to note down the positives and negatives of each potential route.
3. Ask your mentee for their gut reaction to each route – a route may feel safe or sensible but does it feel exciting? What stirs their energy?
4. Now get them to place a large cross at the beginning of all the roads they don’t want to go down.
5. When they are left with two or more routes, develop the appropriate number of different possible future scenarios and encourage your mentee to research each of them further.
6. Suggest your mentee takes their drawing of their roundabout and put it in a place where they can look at it frequently. Encourage them to share with their partner or family, if appropriate to gain their reactions and feedback.

**Separate Selves**

Separate selves is a simple but practical tool for helping people understand the complexity of their own thinking and to move into concerted action. This tool invites the learner to observe consciously their different expressions of personality. For example:

* Your optimistic self vs. your pessimistic self
* Your active/assertive self vs. your passive self
* Your adventurous self vs. your cautious self
* Your serious self vs. your fun self
* Your private self vs. your public self

Understanding the range of a mentees situational behaviours can be highly beneficial in developing alternative solutions to issues.

From the initial discussion, the mentor identifies where there is a potential or actual conflict between the opposing personality traits. The mentor can then offer to work through the issue by taking on the role of one half of the pair of opposites. So, for example, the mentor might address the issue as the mentee’s optimistic self, while the mentee focuses on how their pessimistic self would react. If required, they can then reverse roles.

**Capacity Management**

The Capacity management model is a simple way of helping someone to review how usefully they are using their resources of time, energy, money and materials. It builds on the urgent/important model by looking at the element of an individual's capacity and need. By adding this dimension to the urgent/important model the Capacity Management model provides a valuable tool for assessing what tasks and responsibilities to let go of and where to concentrate mental energy.

Good at

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Not  Strongly | A  Displacement activity | B  Do willingly | Strongly |
| Needed | C  Likely to damage reputation/ distract attention from D | D  Individual should invest resources/time in | Needed |

Not good at

**Head, Heart and Guts**

Whenever we consider a course of action we can engage thinking, feeling and willing – head, hearts and guts. It may be that these different faculties give us different answers, and the unacknowledged war between them can fill us with anxiety and impede taking action.

This technique suggests that you ask your mentee to see what message they are getting from these three aspects of themselves. As they speak, it is useful to note non-verbal cues and to feed these back. Having explored all three aspects of their perception of the choice, the next step is to explore contradictions or alternatives.

**Progress Making**

**Competing Commitments**

Often, even though we’re committed to change the change never happens. If this is going on, then there may be a stronger, competing commitment to which we are unknowingly committed.

The process for uncovering this stronger competing commitment is simple and effective and can be used with both individuals and groups.

1. *Commitment*: Identify something that is important to you to have or that you value which you don’t yet have in your life. Make this commitment explicit by completing the stem **I am committed to….**
2. Behaviour*:* Given that the commitment just identified is not being fulfilled in your life, complete the stem, “**What I am doing, or not doing, that is preventing my commitment to being fully realised is….”**
3. *Competing commitment* : Given what you’re doing, or not doing, what does this suggest you’re actually committed to? That is, identify the stronger more compelling outcome that you are actually committed to (the competing commitment). Complete the stem **“I may also be committed to….”**
4. *Big Assumption*: Driving your competing commitment will be an assumption that you treat as true. To uncover this big assumption, complete the stem **“I assume that if my competing commitment is (not) met…….”** with you how you might feel then. (If you come up with something that unnerves you a little, then you are probably on track. If you come up with something noble, you probably need to try again!).

For example:

*Commitment*: **I am committed to** managing my time better and having a better work-life balance.

*Behaviour*: **What I’m doing that prevents my commitment from being more fully realised is** working weekends, over-preparing and procrastinating.

*Competing commitment:* **I may also be committed** **to** doing perfect work.

*Big Assumptioin:* **I assume that if** I’m not perfect, I’ll be rejected.

If this sequence is read backwards, it is possible, given the big assumption to pursue the competing commitment and, in turn, to behave in a way that prevents achievement of the actual goal.

Sometimes, merely being aware of the conflicting commitments allows us to change behaviour. If not, one way forward is to find ways to challenge the big assumption that drives the dynamic. For example:

* Noticing evidence that challenges it (when I mess up I actually don’t get thrown out)
* Exploring its’ origins, and whether it is still relevant
* Finding opportunities to test it and see how it feels (do a good enough job rather than a perfect piece of work)

**The Meaning of 'Yes'**

The meaning of ‘yes’ is a simple technique to test commitment. It asks the mentee to be as candid as possible about where their level of commitment lies. Based on the response, they can explore with the mentor how much effort should be put into the issue.

10 I am totally determined to achieve this whatever the cost

9 I am very determined to do this and I’m prepared to make major sacrifices to do so

8 I will make this my number one priority

7 This will be one of my key priorities

6 It’s very important to me

5 It’s quite important to me

4 I feel obligated to do this

3 I’m not sure this is what I really want

2 I’m quite reluctant

1 Over my dead body!

**A Store of Good Questions**

It is recommended that mentors collect a personal library of MDQs – massively difficult questions. These questions can be used to force the mentee to pause and reflect, and examine issues, at a level well below the normal surface response. The following is a sample of such questions.

1. By how much do you want to improve, by when
2. Could you treat this as an experiment and see what happens between now and our next meeting?
3. Do you dread the conversation with X? What’s causing that feeling? How might that emotion affect whether you achieve the outcome you want?
4. Do you need to control this situation? If so, why?
5. How committed are you to achieving this?
6. How could you find the courage to do what you think is right?
7. How could you have done this better?
8. How does this fit with your personal values?
9. How open to constructive criticism are you? What could you do to improve this?
10. How much could you have contributed to the problem?
11. How much is enough/ good enough?
12. How will you feel about this decision when you look back at it in 2 years’ time?
13. If all the obstacles disappeared, what would you do?
14. If our roles were reversed, what would you be asking me now?
15. If this is really what you want to do, why haven’t you started?
16. If this issue were an animal/car, can you describe what it would be like?
17. If you get that outcome will that give you what you want?
18. If you weren’t here for a month what wouldn’t get done?
19. If your direct reports could really say what they think, without fear of offending, what might they tell you?
20. What are your responsibilities here?
21. What could you do to obtain timelier, more constructive feedback?
22. What could you stop doing that would help your situation?
23. What do you fear the most?
24. What do you notice about your part in this?
25. What do you want the outcome to be?
26. What does this mean to you?
27. What does this situation/ experience tell you about yourself?
28. What first steps could you take that would give you the confidence to make real progress?
29. What happens if you do nothing?
30. What is the quick-fix solution? The permanent solution? What are the plusses and minuses of each?
31. What two or three things would make a difference to how you feel, if you focussed on doing them and ignored everything else?
32. What unintended messages might you be sending in this situation?
33. What would a fly on the wall say was going on?
34. What would put you back in control?
35. What would your best-self say or do here?
36. What’s the consequence of not doing that?
37. What’s the danger here?
38. What’s your greatest fear?
39. Where’s the enjoyment in what you do?
40. Who could/should you ask for help? What’s stopping you doing so?
41. Who do you compare yourself with? Who would you like to compare yourself with? Why?
42. Who else share’s ownership of this issue with you?
43. Who is in control of the situation?
44. Who knows? Who can? Who will?
45. Whose opinion do you value?
46. Why do you think people say/ think that about you?
47. Why does this matter?
48. Why might that not be the right way forward?



Mentoring

**Egan’s Skilled Helper Model**

This is a model used a lot in counselling or coaching situations where the object is to achieve lasting change and to empower people to manage their own problems more effectively and develop unused opportunities more fully*.*1 As much of a personal tutor’s role is to help students help themselves, this is a particularly useful framework.

The model has three stages which can be summarised as

Exploration - What is going on?

Challenging - What do I want instead?

How might I achieve what I want?

**Stage 1: Exploration**

The first task is to find out your mentee’s story about what is happening in their own words and then to reflect it back to them, without judgement. This involves:

attention giving - positive body language, eye contact, etc.

active listening - learning forward, nodding, focusing on what is being said not what you plan to say in response

acceptance and empathy - it is vital to detach from your judgement about what you are being told. Keep your views to yourself if want to find out what’s really going on. Nobody opens up in a situation where they feel judged

paraphrasing and summarising - to check your own understanding of what has been said

focusing - which of the issues discussed seems the most important to the mentee? Reflecting feelings - help mentees to uncover blind spots or gaps in their perceptions and assessment of the situation

questioning - useful questions are: How did you feel about that? What were you thinking? What was that like? What else is there about that? For some people, this is enough. Reflecting and clarifying makes the way forward obvious. However, when upset or confronted, it is often difficult to see things clearly and find one’s own way out of the mire. The skilled helper can assist in identifying the blind spots, motes in eye, misperceptions.

**Stage 2: Challenging**

This stage involves challenging existing views - one issue at a time. Encourage the mentee to think

about whether there is another way of looking at the issue. Some useful questions to do this are:

what might this look like from another person’s point of view?

what in particular about this is a problem for you?

if you were describing someone else in this situation, how would you describe them?

what does she/he think/feel?

goal setting - this is where you seek to move the mentee forward from being stuck, by identifying an area in which progress can be made

Mentoring

**Stage 3: Action Planning**

Useful questions here include:

what are the possible ways forward in this situation?

what of these feel best for you?

what will you achieve if you do this?

what will you do first and by when?

Your goal is to turn good intentions into actual results, so it is important to help your mentee to set realistic, practical and achievable targets. Make sure the targets are specific and measurable so the student can know they have been achieved. Agree a time period. Always follow up at next meeting - did the mentee do what they said they were going to? Do not judge if they haven’t achieved the goal, but remind them why they committed themselves to it when you spoke before.

1. Gerald Egan, *The Skilled Helper: a problem management and opportunity development approach* *to helping* (7th edition, Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks Cole, 2002) and Gerald Egan, *Essentials of Skilled* *Helping: managing problems, developing opportunities* (Pacific Grove, CA: Brooks Cole, 2006).