

## **Reflective Coaching Journal: Embracing the GROW Model and Generative Coaching** *By Zakia Qureshi, Housing Project Manager, Westminster City Council*

### **Listening: The Foundation of Effective Coaching**

At the initiation of my coaching journey, I encountered the common struggle of finding balance between active listening and the formulation of thoughtful questions. It struck me that the very essence of coaching hinges on the art of listening. Realizing the paramount importance of connecting with my coachees and genuinely comprehending their thoughts marked a transformative phase in my coaching practice. As I consistently worked on practicing my skills in active listening, a visible improvement in the flow of my coaching sessions unfolded. Establishing a profound connection through attentive listening not only facilitated a deeper understanding but also organically paved the way for questions to emerge, particularly within the structured framework of the GROW model.



### **The Power of the GROW Model**

The GROW model, with its structured and systematic approach, emerged as an invaluable compass in navigating the coaching landscape. It provided a roadmap that seamlessly guided conversations, offering a clear trajectory for goal setting and achievement. What stood out were instances where a single session employing the GROW model sufficed for my coachees to make substantial progress. Amazingly, coachees frequently returned for additional sessions not due to unmet initial goals but because the GROW process had unearthed new objectives and areas for exploration. This underscored the adaptability and flexibility of the GROW model in addressing the ever-evolving needs of those I coach. That is when I noticed the power of the GROW model in coaching sessions.

### **Generative Coaching in Action**

In my leadership role within the champions network, a realm that thrives on innovation and collaboration, I decided to experiment with the generative coaching approach during three of our pivotal meetings. The impact was profound and far-reaching. By deliberately fostering an environment where all participants were empowered to contribute their ideas, we experienced an unprecedented surge in creativity and collaboration. The collective brainstorming resulted in a surplus of innovative suggestions and solutions that surpassed our expectations. What truly stood out during these sessions was the substantial enthusiasm and engagement from all participants, culminating in a broader, richer pool of ideas that would go on to shape the future of our champions network in ways we hadn't previously imagined.

### **Unlocking Volunteer Engagement**

The application of generative coaching principles not only enriched our idea pool but also had a tangible and transformative effect on volunteer engagement. Participants, once perhaps hesitant, now not only willingly but eagerly stepped forward to take on leadership roles and tasks. This powerful demonstration showcased the empowering effect of inclusive coaching approaches, infusing the champions network with a renewed sense of ownership and commitment. The increased volunteerism, far from merely lightening my workload, injected a fresh vitality into the entire network, creating a dynamic ecosystem of collaboration and shared purpose. Going forward this would be one tool I will be using in all meetings I host.

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## **Building Trust and Rapport**

The realization of the pivotal role trust plays in coaching relationships prompted a deeper examination of the coaching process. It became evident that not everyone possesses a clear understanding of what a coaching session entails or what they can expect. Reflecting on my initial coaching experiences before undertaking this course, I noted the conspicuous absence of a formal coaching contract. In response to this realization, I've adopted a practice where, before commencing any coaching session, I conscientiously guide my coachees through the coaching contract. This deliberate step explains that our interaction takes place within a secure and confidential space, encouraging them to openly share their thoughts and aspirations. The result has been a profound transformation in the rapport established with my coachees. This intentional act not only sets the stage for a trusting and collaborative coaching alliance but also contributes significantly to the overall effectiveness of the coaching process.

## **Personal Growth and Development**

My involvement in the coaching course has not only enriched my coaching practice but has also had a profound impact on my role as a project manager. The instinctive application of the GROW model at the initiation of all my projects has become a foundation of my approach. This newfound perspective has empowered me to approach project sponsors with increased confidence, delving deeper into understanding their goals and aspirations. The seamless integration of project management skills with coaching techniques acquired from this course has equipped me with a complex toolkit for project success. This dynamic combination not only fosters a more collaborative and goal-oriented atmosphere within my professional endeavours but also opens up new avenues for creative problem-solving and stakeholder engagement.

In my journey as a learner under the support of my coach, a valuable lesson that stands out is the significance of reflective listening. I have come to appreciate the art of introspection, which aids in attaining a deeper comprehension of various situations. Observing my coach's adeptness at reflection during our discussions was truly enlightening. Witnessing this skill in action motivated me to integrate it into my own learning process.

Through consistent practice with my dedicated regular coach, I have cultivated the habit of reflective listening skills. This practice involves contemplating and summarizing key points as we engage in discussions. The process not only enhances my understanding of the subject matter but also serves as a powerful tool for self-discovery.

## **Application of Coaching Outside Sessions**

Beyond the confines of formal coaching sessions, I've experienced a profound shift in my approach as coaching principles seamlessly integrate into my daily life. This newfound perspective has organically permeated my interactions with my husband and other family members. The incorporation of more open-ended questions into our conversations has proven to be a transformative approach. It has deepened my understanding of their thoughts, perspectives, and aspirations. Recognising the effectiveness of this approach, I am committed to sustaining this positive change. Moving forward, I intend to persist in asking more open questions, fostering a communicative environment that encourages greater sharing and understanding within my personal relationships.

Reflecting on these multifaceted experiences, I am inspired to continuously refine and expand my coaching skills, ensuring that listening remains at the core of my practice. The success with the GROW model and generative coaching motivates me to explore and integrate additional coaching techniques into my toolkit. As I continue leading the champions network, these insights will undoubtedly be instrumental in fostering a culture of collaboration, innovation, and sustained engagement among all participants. The journey of embracing coaching principles transcends the confines of formal sessions, becoming a holistic approach that enriches both my professional and personal circles.