



Online Free Resources

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Preparing for Your Coaching Programme

What is coaching?

The purpose of coaching is to assist you in moving from where you are now in a particular area of your life (whether that is your work, your career, your relationships or any other part of your life) to where you ideally want to be. Through coaching, this can often be achieved more quickly and effectively than just trying to do it on your own.

Coaching is most effective when it is focused on a specific goal or outcome (or set of outcomes) rather than trying to gain a non-specific general improvement in any particular area. It is far better to aim for real progress and achievement in something that is really important to you than trying to be a little bit better at everything.

It is also useful to put a time frame on the coaching so that the programme can be broken down in manageable 'chunks' of time and progress can be evaluated and measured.

What can you expect from your coach?

One of the most important things you should expect from your coach is that he/she will really focus on you and your situations and will listen attentively and reflect back to you. Your coach will feed back to you with objective assessment, helping you to gain real clarity on yourself and whatever you are working on during your coaching.

Your coach should also encourage you to recognise and respond to your challenges, find ways of overcoming obstacles and set your action plans.

You should, however, not expect your coach to solve problems for you or just give you answers to things that may be vexing you. If you feel you have problems or you're not making the level of progress you want or expect, your coach will encourage you to gain a clearer understanding of a particular situation or issue, approach things differently or formulate a plan of action. Coaching is about you being better at doing things yourself, not about someone doing things for you.

What will your coach expect from you?

There are two really important things your coach wants from you:

- 1. Your commitment to the coaching process.** This means taking personal responsibility for sticking to your coaching programme and keeping to agreed times for coaching sessions. It also means you should take your own notes during sessions and keeping to any agreements or action plans you have made.
- 2. Engage with the coaching process.** Coaching is not something that happens to you without your involvement; you must be prepared to fully engage with the process and contribute to your own development. Approach your coaching with an open mind and be prepared to be open and honest with your coach; the content of coaching sessions is confidential so you don't need to 'hold back'. Also the coach is not judging you, simply



listening, observing and responding objectively. The greater the level of openness and trust between coach and coachee, the more effective is the coaching.

What do I have to do to be ready for coaching?

In the next section there is some information that will help you prepare for your coaching. During your first coaching session, you will want to 'get the measure' of your coach and your coach will want to find out more about you and what you want to achieve. During an initial 60 minutes session you may expect around 20 minutes establishing a clear context for the coaching programme, around 30 minutes establishing and 'testing' your programme goals or outcomes and around 10 minutes setting agreements/actions for you to work on prior to your next session. (These time scales will vary slightly from coach to coach).

Preparing for your first coaching session

It is useful to do some preparation for your first coaching session and give some thought to what you want to achieve through your coaching programme.

The questions below are designed to assist you in putting your thoughts together. It's not necessary to come up with specific answers or set specific goals at this stage; use the questions to prompt thoughts, ideas or even concerns (however vague they may seem at the moment). Make notes and bring them to your first coaching session.

Please note: It's not a test and there are no 'right' or 'wrong' answers! Also only answer the questions you feel are relevant to you or to your coaching programme.

Questions for you to consider.

Section 1. What do you currently want to achieve in the following areas (note down any specific goals or outcomes).

In your work

- Your personal performance or effectiveness in your current role.
- Developing your career.
- Your ability to manage or lead other people.
- Setting new challenges, or feeling more motivated/fulfilled in your role.

In your lifestyle

- Your balance between work and other areas of your life.
- Things you want to improve or develop.

Your relationships with other people

- Relationships with people at work.
- Relationships with people outside of your workplace.

Building your knowledge / Your learning and development

- Life or career experience.
- Formal training and/or development.



Section 2: Think about the way you are right now and your present situation; in what areas of your work and life do you want to make changes?

Managing your work/life balance

- What would you like to do more of?
- What would you like to do less of?

Making changes and improvements.

- What would you most like to change, right now, if you could?
- What are you doing that's working really well and you would like to build on or make even better?

Establishing your priorities. Right now, what are the most important things to you in:

- Your work?
- Your career?
- Your life?

There is no need to spend too much time trying to come up with carefully thought out answers at this stage. If anything springs readily to mind, make a note of it – instinctive answers are best. If there are any areas where you have no thoughts or ideas – or even feel 'stuck' on – then just make a note that's how it is at the moment.