
SME BUSINESS TRAINING AND COACHING LOOP

COACHING GUIDE



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REFERENCE

This document is based on « The Coaching Manual» from Julie Starr¹ and the « Coaching Manual, Deepening Economic Development for Peace and Stability in Plateau State (Nigeria) Programme” from Bianca Jänecke².

In terms of content and language, chapters 2, 3, 5, 7 and 8 are strongly related to “The Coaching Manual”. Chapter 4 is adapted from “Coaching Manual, Deepening Economic Development for Peace and Stability in Plateau State (Nigeria) Programme”. All relevant passages are marked at the beginning of every chapter. Quotations and adapted tables and graphics are marked separately.

¹ Starr, Julie (2016) : « The Coaching Manual : The definitive guide to the process, principles and skills of personal coaching ».

² Jänecke, Bianca (2016): „Coaching Manual, Deepening Economic Development for Peace and Stability in Plateau State (Nigeria) Programme”.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Coaching Guide on the SME Business Training and Coaching Loop (SME Loop) aims to give guidance to present and future coaches intervening in the framework within the SME Loop. It informs you about:

- What coaching is about and what makes it different from “training” and “counselling”
- Directive and less directive style of coaching
- Coaching principles
- Attributes of a good coach
- Your roles and responsibilities as coach
- The key skills and competencies required to be a successful coach
- The specific requirements in SME Loop coaching
- An exemplary structure of a typical coaching session
- Stages of the overall coaching cycle

2. WHAT IS COACHING?³

“The word “coaching” literally means to transport someone from one place to another. One thing that all forms of coaching seem to have in common is that people are using it to help them move forward or create change.”⁴

Coaching is a process in which the coachee is supported by the coach. In this process, the coach strengthens the coachee by using suitable questions, techniques and instruments as well as reflecting observation to reinforce the coachee’s capacities for (widely) self-reliant problem solving, enterprise and personality development. The needs, priorities and capacities of the coachee determine content and methodology of coaching. In a coaching relationship, the coach and the coachee are equal partners. It is based on the idea that the coachee has all required resources, skills, and experiences to improve their situation and to fix a problem themselves.

A coach is a facilitator who helps the coachee to critically reflect upon actions and decisions taken or behaviours demonstrated. He/she guides the coachee to set goals and attain them. As a coach you take the role of a “mirror” or sounding board for your coachee. The coachees themselves are responsible for the results of the coaching process and the attainment of their goal(s).

This sort of help is sometimes called “showing a hungry man how to fish” - rather than simply giving him a fish. We call it: Helping the coachee discover and learn how to fish!

When problems arise, a coach does not automatically jump in and solve them. Instead, the coach challenges the coachees to resolve situations. The coach provides support, challenge, feedback and guidance – but rarely answers.

2.1. What is the difference between training, counselling and coaching?

In order to be a coach it is important to understand what coaching actually is (see above for first ideas) and in how far it differs from training and counselling. Trainers, counsellors and coaches have different attitudes, pursue different goals and apply different methods. The following chart sums up some basic differences:

³ Starr 2016: p.3 et seqq.
⁴ Starr 2016: p.3

Table 1: Different aspects of training, counselling and coaching⁵

	TRAINING	COUNSELLING	COACHING
Who is involved?	Trainer and trainees (participants)	Consultant/advisor and client (a person or organisation).	Coach and coachee (a person or a group of people)
What is the overall aim?	Transfer of knowledge and development of skills and (professional) competencies	Problem solving or prevention (expert counselling); Use of synergies; optimisation of individual or organisational performance (process counselling)	«Help to self-help « Support to self-learning and self-development; Improvement of the coachee’s personal situation; increase of life satisfaction and quality
What is the key question?	What to know, be able to do and what behaviour to demonstrate after successful training? (= competence-based learning objectives)	What to do to fix a specific problem (or to avoid that it will occur)? (expert counselling); How to improve/ optimise a specific situation or make use of an opportunity (process counselling)	How can I improve my personal (and family’s) life and gain more life satisfaction and quality?
Who has a demand for this type of service?	A person or a group of people in adult education; employers if staff training is a business need; Regulator for professions that require certification, e.g. Chartered Accountant	Organisations (companies, NGOs, state agencies etc.); Persons or groups of people (e.g. when seeking advice on tax issues or other legal topics)	A person or a group of people.
Who sets the agenda?	Trainer/training provider, corporate customer, or third party (e.g. curricula accreditation body).	Client (natural person or organisation).	Coachee (no one else!)
To what extent does the service provider need to be an expert in the relevant subject/ business sector?	The trainer has to demonstrate a profound knowledge of the content covered in the training program/ curriculum.	In expert counselling, the consultant has to demonstrate a profound knowledge of the relevant sector/area and practical work experiences from this and related areas. In process counselling, the consultant has to demonstrate good cross- cutting knowledge of different (related) areas and profound facilitation skills.	The coach has to demonstrate a profound knowledge of coaching concepts and techniques and practical skills in facilitating others. Furthermore, it is beneficial to have personal experience in the working or business area of the coachee.
Who is the «owner» of the process? How is it being implemented?	Trainer/training provider (in adult learning trainees also have a say). Usually within the framework of clearly defined standards and formats (in formal education).	Consultant and client together. Depending on the goal and type of the consultancy, quite open, in diverse formats, according to sector-based standards and rules of good governance.	Coach and coachee together. Depending on the goal and type of the coaching agreement, quite open, in diverse formats and according to professional ethics of coaches (e.g. «do-no-harm approach»).
Who determines the pace of progress?	In conventional training: trainer/training provider; In modular training: trainees also have a say.	Client	Coachee
Who assesses the attainment of the goal?	Trainer, examination board, employers and/or certification body.	Client	Coachee
What role does autonomous and continuous learning play?	May vary, depending on the format of training - from «little» (conventional classroom training) to «large» (e.g. e-learning or distance learning).	May vary, depending on the organisational culture and people’s intent - from «little» (expert counselling) to «large» (process counselling).	Cannot be overestimated! Coaching can only succeed if the coachee is willing and able to continuously learn and grow.

⁵ Jänecke 2016: p.4 et seqq.

2.2. Coaching principles or beliefs⁶

By deciding to become a (collaborative) coach, you are intervening according to a number of principles or beliefs that guide you, some of them have been touched upon in the previous chapter. These principles underpin your actions and behaviour when you communicate with the coachee. This does not mean that all coaches have given up their personalities to become copies of one another according to these principles. Coaches still have their own different characters and personalities, and it is important that you keep yours; it will coin your personal style of coaching.

Coaching principles are just a set of common guidelines or values for your work with the coachee. What are these coaching principles then?

1. I will maintain my commitment to support the individual in his/her entrepreneurial endeavour in a non-judgemental way.

As someone's coach, your support must be noticeable, perceivable to yourself as to your vis-à-vis. In the beginning when your coachee starts describing his/her situation (problems/ challenges/achievements) your sense and will for support will be fairly evident. But in the course of the coaching process, you may hear, experience or observe factors that may reduce your sense of support. As a coach your role is to be non-judgemental regarding the coachee's issues. You should support the coachee in his/her own self-development no matter what the issue and how minor it might seem to you. So there is no wrong or right, good or bad – you perceive but don't judge; you just help the coachee seeing how his/her behaviour or thinking impacts on the entrepreneurial performance and help performing better in the business.

2. I will build my coaching relationships on truth, openness and trust.

When coaching, you are deciding to serve the coachee in an open, straightforward and honest way. Your commitment to your coachee is the absolute priority – no matter who is paying you for your services. So, here are two simple rules that may guide you:

- Never say anything about your coachee that you would not want them to hear about afterwards.
- Basically any word uttered between you and the coachee remains confidential information unless your coachee has given you permission to do differently.

3. I will always remember that the coachee is responsible for the results he/she is generating – but I will provide support with as much energy and dedication that I can offer.

If we acknowledge that we are responsible for something, consequently we have power and influence over it. For example, if I acknowledge that I am responsible for my business, I am also acknowledging that I am the one who is responsible for the revenue that is generated by it, for the way it is conducted and for my own satisfaction with it. And it is up to me to do something about it if I am not happy with it. However, I am not a victim of circumstances.

So, we are coaching from the principle that individuals are entirely responsible for their own experience, decisions and the results they are getting. This then opens up the perspective for the plentifulness of the coachee's own resources.

4. I am fully aware that the coachee is capable of achieving much better results in their business than they are currently doing.

To be an effective and impactful coach, you need to believe in the individual and his/her capabilities to doing better and achieving more (what exactly this 'more' is, will be previously defined by the coachee – together with the coach). If a coach secretly believes that the coachee is not capable of changing, of doing better then this will undermine the coaching process. If you say one thing but think another, this somehow but certainly communicates.

5. I will maintain my focus on what the coachee thinks and experiences.

The focus in coaching conversation is on what the coachee thinks – not the coach. That might sound obvious but it is utterly important. You are working with someone to help them get where they want to go. The principal focus remains on the coachee's objectives and thoughts.

6. My coaching conversation will be based on equality.

Your relationship with the coachee should feel like a partnership of equals rather than anything parental or advisory. The person you are coaching must feel they are receiving constant and unconditional support; they must feel free to make requests, to open up and make contributions to the discussion that they themselves regard as shameful. Where the coach adopts a posture of superiority they can alienate the coachee, give poor or irrelevant advice and will consequently undermine the coachee's confidence in the coach.

⁶ Starr 2016: p.25 et seqq.

2.3. Directive versus less directive style⁷

As a coach, your language and conversation style are main instruments of your work – language and conversation style in their importance for a coach are comparable to a hammer for a carpenter. In order to promote self-development and self-reflection your conversation style ought to be mainly less directive, as opposed to directive. What does this mean?

Figure 1: Directive versus less directive style⁸



The following chart further illustrates the attitude and conversation type that underpins these two styles.

Table 2: Directive and less directive style⁹

DIRECTIVE STYLE	LESS DIRECTIVE STYLE
"You definitely need to act on this feedback!"	"How are you going to respond to the feedback?"
"Let us focus first on sorting the personal issues you say you've been having with your business partner Mahmoud and then we'll go through the change of direction on the marketing."	"What seems more important to focus on first, what is happening with your business partner Mahmoud or the changes in direction on the marketing?"
"I'm thinking that this is caused by a lack of planning."	"What do you think is causing this?"
"If you want to improve your entrepreneurial relations you need to join a business club or chamber."	"What options might you have for improving your entrepreneurial relations?"
"I know, go see a business consultant – they are really helpful."	"What other ideas have you had around this?" or "What other options are there?"
"I think you need to revisit your original commitment to see a business consultant and act from that."	"What do you think is stopping you from seeing a business consultant?"

A coach with a directive style assumes that they have better knowledge in a specific situation and that they need to use it. So they communicate in a way that expects the coachee to follow their instructions or advice. The coachee might feel as they are being told what to do or receiving advice that they are expected to act upon. This way, the coachee is not treated as a person at equal level but rather seen as a heeler of the coach's instructions. A rather directive coach often feels responsible to produce ideas and recommendations in the conversation, hence, undermining the coachees' creativity and self-responsibility.

A rather collaborative style of coach trusts that the coachee has their own answers and simply needs support for their learning process.

2.4. Coach and Coachee - Two Experts

In other words in a less directive style of coaching there are two experts making conversation: One is the expert of the process (i.e. how to learn, how to make someone develop their own solutions, how to deal with problems, etc.) whereas the other one is the expert of his/her own situation, for his/her own specific context.

^{7,8,9} Starr 2016: p.14.



3. ATTRIBUTES OF A GOOD COACH¹⁰

When using the services of a coach or planning to become a coach, it is helpful to have some guidance how to distinguish a good or effective coach from a less effective one. A coach who is working according to the above-mentioned coaching principles using a less directive conversation style is key and fundamental to positive long-lasting change in the individual.

Additionally, the following table orients us in getting a clearer idea of the behavioural nature good/effective coaches by providing us with some helpful attributes of good coaches. Adopting these attributes, respecting them in coaching situations will largely enhance your effectiveness and, thus, the probability for desired and targeted change in the coachee.

Table 3: Attributes of an effective and a less effective coach¹¹

EFFECTIVE COACH	LESS EFFECTIVE COACH
Is open and honest : e.g. 'Look, I think this isn't working, is it – can we look at why?'	May withhold thoughts or information, e.g. thinks: 'I think that's a crazy idea but I don't want to appear unsupportive.'
Makes someone feel listened to, valued and understood . Coachees feel buoyant, positive and optimistic following sessions.	Makes someone feel weird or strange, e.g. 'Hmm, you're a bit of an unusual case, really, aren't you?'
Helps someone tap into his/her own inspiration , by questioning, listening, or simply using silence.	Works hard to find the answers or solutions to the coachee's situation themselves, leaving the coachee feeling 'redundant' or 'stifled'.
Makes the coaching conversation seem effortless , i.e. maintains the conversation using appropriate responses to the coachee.	Labours to keep the conversation going or talks too much, or simply 'tries too hard'.
Remains impartial and objective throughout, e.g. 'I can see why you might think that, and I'm also interested to look at other causes of your friend's behaviour'.	Introduces judgement or prejudice into the coaching conversation, e.g. 'I agree, the trader obviously wanted to teach you a lesson – you're right to be angry'.
Gently probes into a situation effectively, gaining all the relevant facts, e.g. 'What specifically is it about winter-time that you don't enjoy?'	Assumes they understand what the coachee means, perhaps to 'keep the conversation moving', e.g. 'Yes, I hate winter, it's the dark nights isn't it?'
Builds a sense of 'relatedness' or rapport with the coachee, in order to create openness and trust.	Causes the coachee to remain guarded, or tense throughout the conversation, e.g. feeling that they have nothing in common.
Supports someone to achieve more than they would normally, i.e. without focused coaching support.	Makes little difference to the on-going performance or results of an individual.
Is able to clarify the thoughts and goals of the coachee, e.g. 'What specifically does "more money" mean, and what is it about that that you really want?'	Leaves key thoughts or objectives vague or unclear in the mind of the coachee, e.g. 'OK, so you want more money, let's look at how we're going to get you that'.
Is happier to achieve lasting results over time , than fast results that don't last.	Feels like they've failed if they don't see immediate results from the coaching.
Uses words and phrases that influence the individual positively , e.g. 'So imagine yourself speaking to an audience and this time you really enjoyed it – what would that feel like?'	Uses words clumsily and causes the coachee to feel negative or uncomfortable, e.g. 'Yes, your lack of confidence does seem to be a problem'.
Places real importance on the coachee's comfort and well-being during the session, e.g. 'Look, this has been fairly intense – do you need a break, can I get you a coffee?'	Mixes considerations about the coachee with other priorities, e.g. leaves their mobile phone switched on during a session.
Leads by example , e.g. shows up on time, calls when they said they would, keeps any commitments made, or makes amends when they don't.	Displays double standards, e.g. shows up late, uses weak excuses, isn't prepared for the session, etc.

¹⁰ Starr 2016: p.20 et seqq.
¹¹ Starr 2016: p.21

4. ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES¹²

"As coach you are expected to fulfil different roles. The coachee expects you to have a good understanding of their living environment, the challenges they are facing and that you know how to best manage these challenges (role of an expert consultant).

The coachee also expects you to energize and motivate them, to give encouraging feedback and provide moral support when they encounter obstacles (role of a mentor/ advisor).

However, **the most important role you are expected to take is the "person of trust"**. A coaching process always requires a trustful relationship between the coach and the coachee. The coachee needs to be ready to trust you and share their personal issues and problems with you. However, you are obliged to keep silence about any information you receive from your coachee and to guarantee full confidentiality."¹³



Figure 2: Roles¹⁴

As a coach you need to feel at ease in different roles that are all equally important for a successful coaching process:

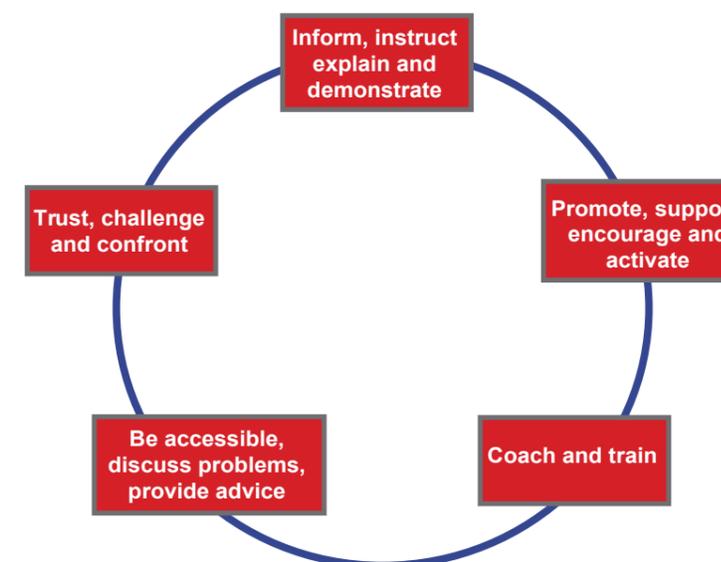


Figure 3: Responsibilities¹⁵

Note that these five elements are not displayed in a chronological order, knowing that at any stage of the coaching process any of these activities may be used. However, a coaching process does certainly not start by challenging and confronting a coachee, but rather by informing, explaining and encouraging. The following chart provides more information and explanation on what these five blocks precisely mean and what kind of behaviour is appropriate in these five blocks.

^{12, 13, 14, 15} Jänecke 2016: p.6 et seqq.

Table 4: Roles & Responsibilities¹⁶

HOW	WHAT IT IS <u>NOT</u>	WHAT ARE THE RESULTS	WHAT COACHING SKILLS AND PERSONAL QUALITIES ARE REQUIRED
1. INFORM, INSTRUCT, EXPLAIN AND DEMONSTRATE			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be positive, constructive and supportive ▪ Carefully plan the learning and training process ▪ Help the coachee set clear, transparent and consistent goals and expectations ▪ Set an authentic learning environment (learning partnerships, low-risk projects for experience-based learning) ▪ Provide constructive, specific, authentic and timely feedback ▪ Provide information and access to information ▪ Stress the difference between a “good performance” and an “excellent performance” – give examples ▪ Spend enough time in direct contact with your coachees ▪ Demand flexibility and explain the role of rules (how strictly to stick to them) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Doing it yourself if the first results don't meet the standards/your expectations ▪ Questioning the coachees' general motivation and/or capability to succeed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ New knowledge and skills are acquired ▪ Coachees are ready to take risks and mutual trust has grown ▪ The coachees' common understanding of their situation, their business, their roles and responsibilities as family and community members has increased ▪ Narrow-mindedness has been overcome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clear communication (setting of indicators for measurement of goal attainment and expectations) ▪ Be a good role model with regard to self-education, professional development and compliance with laws and regulations ▪ Knowledge of principles of adult learning, psychology and didactics ▪ Knowledge of the concept of lifelong learning ▪ Patience, tolerance and respect
2. PROMOTE, SUPPORT, ENCOURAGE AND ACTIVATE			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be positive and enthusiastic ▪ Stress the long-term perspective of people's growth and development ▪ Focus on the future (and future perspectives) ▪ Work on details ▪ Treat coachees as peers ▪ Look for learning and experience opportunities for coachees ▪ Clearly communicate (and “live”) the respective values and code of conduct (“walk what you talk”) ▪ Provide coachees with regular and detailed feedback about their goals, expectations and progress ▪ Do everything to let your coachees succeed! Their success is your success as coach! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Making coachees dependent on you – no patronising! ▪ Misusing promotion to take more control over them ▪ Preventing coachees from making mistakes ▪ Taking coachees' responsibility for decision-making and doing ▪ Promoting only people who are ticking like you ▪ Provoking conflicts in the group/ community to let coachees “compete” for your promotion 	<p>The coachees</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have become a role model for good entrepreneurial decisions and management skills ▪ Have broadened their horizon ▪ Have personally grown ▪ Actively share their knowledge and experiences within their families and communities. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Reduce barriers to active information and experience share ▪ Create and maintain a supportive working and learning climate in their own business and community (association) ▪ Reduce/give up direct control ▪ Provide information and feedback in a timely, proactive manner
3. COACH AND TRAIN			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be supportive and enthusiastic ▪ Prepare for new challenges and tasks ▪ Challenge coachees to do the utmost ▪ Be a good role model – address high demands to yourself ▪ Argue your position, explain to coachees why changes are needed and what are the potential benefits of change for their enterprise and them personally ▪ Give reasons for decisions, procedures etc. ▪ Help coachees reflect about their ideas and concerns, argue their positions etc. before discussing them with other stakeholders ▪ Let coachees make their own decisions ▪ Offer support and advice – but don't patronise them ▪ Demonstrate empathy, show that you can understand their position/concerns ▪ Provide coachees with honest, authentic and constructive feedback ▪ Listen carefully and ask (open-ended) questions ▪ Set clear deadlines and milestones, be clear about monitoring activities ▪ Be accessible for your coachees ▪ Acknowledge success (progress) and celebrate it together with your coachees ▪ Spend enough time with them and like doing so. Love what you do! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Taking the position of a “Critical Parent” ▪ Taking the position of a “Nurturing Parent” ▪ Doing the coachees' job ▪ Lecturing and pontificating about “how things should be (or should have been) done” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strong trust in the coach has been built ▪ Newly knowledge and skills are acquired ▪ Coached people show better business performance ▪ Coached people have a higher life satisfaction ▪ Coached people demonstrate a stronger team spirit and interest in community issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrate sophisticated communication skills (active listening and question techniques) ▪ Provide authentic and honest feedback ▪ Treat coachees with respect and acknowledge their progress ▪ Be part of them (learn from each other)

16 Jänecke 2016: p. 6 et seqq.

HOW	WHAT IT IS <u>NOT</u>	WHAT ARE THE RESULTS	WHAT COACHING SKILLS AND PERSONAL QUALITIES ARE REQUIRED
4. BE ACCESSIBLE IF REQUIRED, DISCUSS PROBLEMS, PROVIDE ADVICE			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be positive, supportive, encouraging, structured and disciplined ▪ Focus on the solution, rather than on the problem ▪ Ensure a balanced and objective discussion (weighing pros and cons) ▪ Be accessible for the coachees, respond quickly, offer your help if you see they are facing difficulties or trouble ▪ Plan enough time and a quiet place for the conversation ▪ Start conversation with a short purpose-benefit statement, then let the coachees talk and listen carefully ▪ Try to identify your role and mistakes that led to the problem ▪ Activate to look for solutions by asking process-oriented questions ▪ Stress that you accept the coachee's personality, and you don't question them, you just address the problems ▪ Assure the coachees of your support ▪ Show possible consequences if the problem is not solved ▪ Jointly develop an action plan and agree about follow-up conversation (for reviewing results and monitoring progress) ▪ Ensure the coachees are committed to fulfill their action plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not a lab for psychological experiments ▪ Not a snapshot ▪ Not a punishment ▪ Not a lecture about "how things should be handled" ▪ Not an appraisal or performance review meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Strong trust ▪ Coached people's self-confidence and readiness to take initiative and responsibility have been increased 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrate sophisticated communication skills (active listening and question techniques) ▪ Take the role of a facilitator (whose main responsibility is for the quality and target-orientation of the process, not the outcome itself!) ▪ Lead your coachees through the problem-solving process; don't "push" them towards your solution ▪ Be committed, respect and accept their feelings and concerns ▪ Ensure confidentiality ▪ Be interested in hearing coachees' views – not in "selling" your position
5. TRUST, CHALLENGE AND CONFRONT			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Be positive and supportive ▪ Be precise, specific, confident, calm, persistent, but fair ▪ Check your role as a coach with regard to the specific problems with specific coachees (Did some of your decisions, actions or statements provoke the situation? What could you have done differently?) ▪ Focus on the decision to make ▪ Don't attack the coachee, don't step into heated discussions, don't blame them ▪ Tell about your observations and concerns ▪ Confront the coachee with the consequences of their behavior (non-compliance) ▪ Avoid surprise: if you confront a person, you should have addressed the issue beforehand in a softer way ▪ Focus on the most important points ▪ Keep eye contact ▪ Show positive perspectives and potential for further development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Not a general reckoning with a disagreeable coachee. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Disruptive people who participated in the coaching have changed their behavior. ▪ They stopped negatively influencing others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Demonstrate sophisticated communication skills (active listening and question techniques) ▪ Provide direct, but constructive feedback ▪ Discuss to the point ▪ Control your emotions and keep calm

5. FUNDAMENTAL SKILLS¹⁷

There are some basic skills that can be learned and developed that will distinguish coaches of different levels. We all have some level of ability related to the skills required, e.g. we all have some ability to develop rapport. Other skills come less naturally, such as effective questioning, and may require learning and practice. Please be aware that once skills are acquired, they need to be practised.

As a coach you need to

1. Build rapport and relationship
2. Practice attentive and deep listening in the coaching sessions
3. Ask good questions
4. Provide constructive and encouraging feedback

5.1. Build rapport and relationship¹⁸

In the coaching relationship, your aim as coach is to create a level of rapport that lets the coachee feel confident to talk honestly about their challenges, decisions, or actions in a particular area. However, this does not mean that you need to have a friendly relationship with the coachee. On the contrary, a friendly relationship may hinder you to be objective in your judgments and make you avoid challenging the coachee when required.

As a coaching skill, the ability to influence levels of rapport during conversations enables a coach to gain trust, engagement and influence during coaching conversations. Good rapport refers to the quality of relationship happening in the conversation, as the conversation is happening. It is directly affected by our thoughts or feelings being in some way the same or different from the other person. Where we are alike, we like, but where we are different, we feel detachment or even dislike. Traditional techniques of simple physical matching might have a level of influence. However, other factors may be much more important. Our sense of shared values, common aims and intentions can be the underlying factors that create real relatedness within the conversation.

Over time, the positive development of a coaching relationship is affected by principles such as integrity, consistency, openness and trust. Our ability to act consistently from these principles influences the coaching relationship and the coachee's behaviour. The demands on the coach for high standards of personal behaviour require both commitment and self-discipline. The rewards of great coaching relationships and a clear conscience are worth the effort!

What creates rapport?

Rapport builds itself on features of 'sameness'. Where there is a high degree of 'sameness' between two individuals, we build rapport more easily. Perhaps instinctively we feel less threatened by someone we feel is like us and more easily able to relax and open up to them. Categories of 'sameness' can include many different aspects, for example:

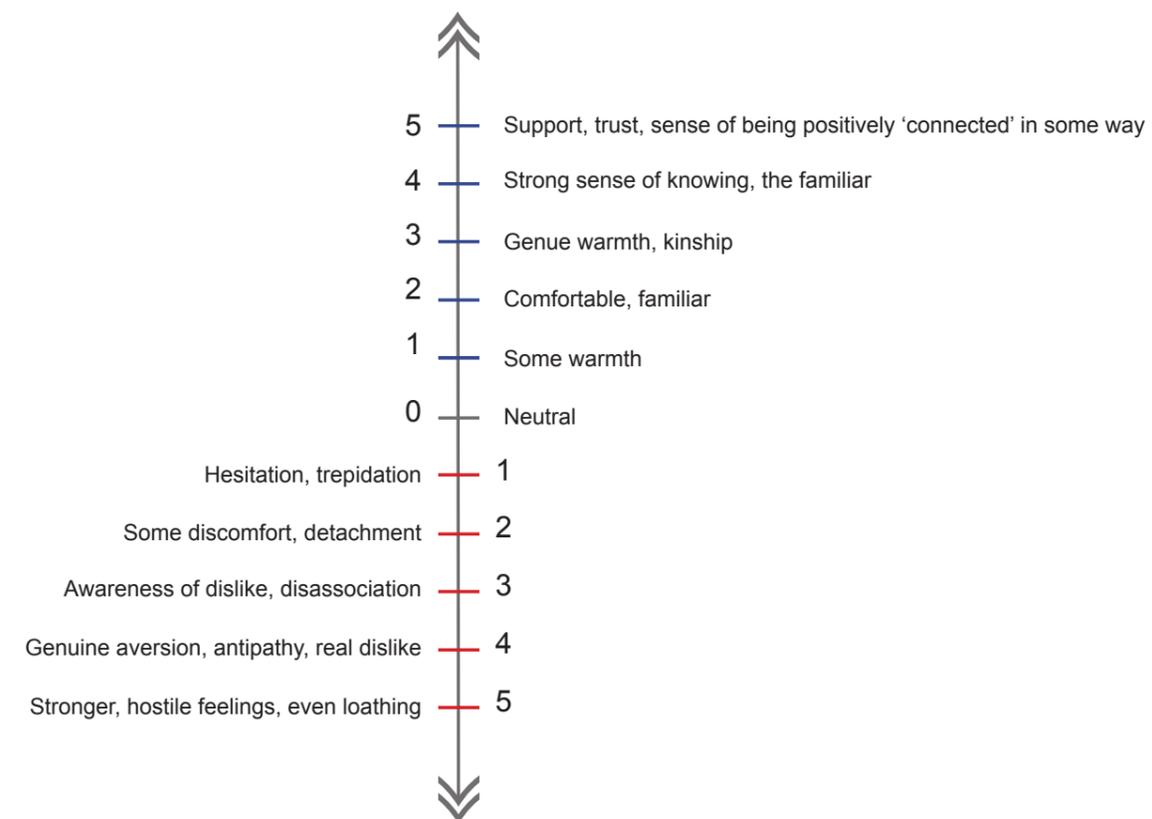
- "Physical appearance/clothes
- Body language/physical gestures
- Qualities of voice
- Language/words used
- Beliefs and values"¹⁹

To build rapport, the safest approach is to talk about or the community and in which the coachee has a genuine interest in. The aim is to keep the conversation topic-based, natural and non-intrusive. Talking about business topics naturally leads to addressing the coachee's goals, whereas moving from a non-related "small talk" to a business topic might not be all to easy.

¹⁷ Starr 2016: p.51
¹⁸ Starr 2016: p.52 et seqq.
¹⁹ Starr 2016: p.55

The ability to be empathetic is critical for a good coach, as it not only helps you to accept the coachee on his/her own terms, but also to "tune in" to things that are important to them. Empathy begins with being aware of another person's feelings. Being empathetic develops naturally out of active listening and will have an impact on the level of rapport you are able to create. Unless you are dealing with someone who is unusually open-minded you will need to interpret specific language and non-verbal cues to understand how the person feels. You can demonstrate empathy by acknowledging their positive or negative emotions: "I can see why you are angry; I can understand why that made you feel good; I can understand why you are frustrated with your present situation."

Figure 4:
Scale of rapport²⁰



5.2. Attentive and deep listening²¹

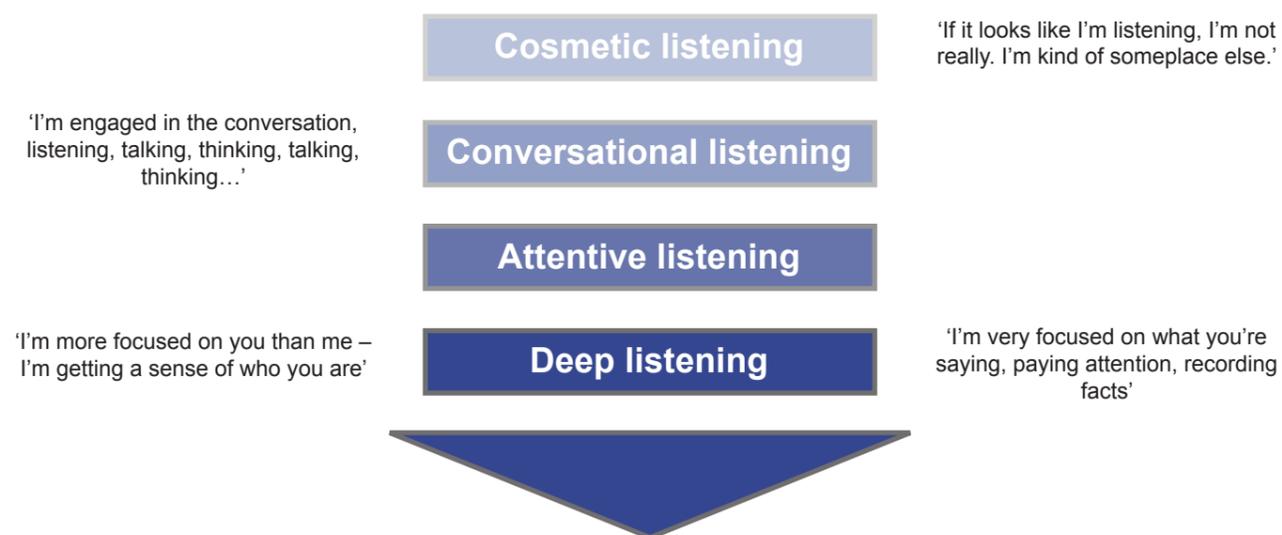
Coaches usually listen "more closely and effectively than the average listener. A really good coach will have an ability to listen that often goes beyond the point at which most people are actually able to listen. As a result of their listening, a coach is able to pass beyond what is actually said and begin to notice the 'unsaid'."

There are several different forms of listening, although generally we discuss the topic as though there were only one. We ask, 'Are you listening?' and we expect the answer to be 'Yes' or 'No', as if there's a listening switch that we can turn on or off. Perhaps a more accurate response would be 'Sort of ...' or 'Yes but just to your words' or 'All the way to behind what you're actually saying!' Our listening changes with the amount of focused effort we direct towards what (or who) we are listening to.

The next figure shows different forms or levels of listening. As our level of listening deepens, so does our focus and attention on the person we are listening to – and vice versa.

²⁰ Starr 2016: p.55
²¹ Starr 2016: p.73 et seqq.

Figure 5:
Levels of listening²²



Cosmetic listening

This you would probably recognise as 'pretending to listen'. That is, you're looking at someone and you might be nodding and adding 'listening noises' such as 'Hmmm' or 'Yes'. The person speaking may not be aware of the way you are listening to them and may be continuing to speak regardless.

What is often happening is that the listener's attention and thoughts are elsewhere. You might be thinking about something completely separate from what the other person is talking about.

"Cosmetic listening may be appropriate when you sense that the other person isn't actually talking to you – they're just enjoying talking, letting off steam perhaps and require little input from you. (...) But this type of listening does not work in coaching, as your objectives for the conversation rely on you gathering information from the other person. I would acknowledge, however, most coaches occasionally drift off into their own thoughts from time to time and it's difficult to avoid. If it happens to a coach and they miss a key point of information, it is best to be as open as possible, e.g. 'I'm sorry, I'm still thinking about your ideas for the new job – can you repeat that last thought?' By declaring that you stopped fully listening, you reaffirm your commitment to listen; that is, the person speaking knows that what they say is still important to you. Also, most people would acknowledge that they sometimes do the same thing."

Conversational listening

This is the kind of listening that we do most of the time. In general conversation with others, we listen, talk, think, listen, think, talk and so on. Our focus is on the other person, what they're saying and also on what we're saying, thinking of saying, etc. The balance between talking, listening and internally processing information varies from person to person. This balance relates to several factors, including our basic personality type, the nature of the conversation, how we're feeling, etc. Some people talk much more than they listen, some people prefer to speak less and listen more, and some appear to have a pretty even balance of both.

Again, your objectives for the conversation will affect your listening. A police officer gathering facts at the scene of a road traffic accident is more likely to listen and internally process information before asking further questions or making observations. A person giving a stranger direction is more likely to be doing more of the talking and much less listening or processing of information.

Conversational listening is a natural activity for most people. It requires little effort, is present in most of our normal, daily conversations, and it can be fun and quite energizing. Coaching conversations are not the same as these day-to-day conversations, however, simply because of their purpose.

Within coaching, we must develop a deeper form of listening.

Attentive listening

This is a level of listening that a coach ought to master. To give you an idea of what this kind of listening is like, here are some characteristics:

- The listener is using more effort to listen and process information than speaking themselves.
- The listener has the intention of staying focused on what the other person is saying, in order to understand fully what they are saying.
- The listener is mentally registering and recording facts so they can potentially use them later (they might also take notes).
- The listener continually confirms that they are still listening, by making appropriate sounds, gestures or expressions.
- The listener will actively seek to understand what the person is telling them, by using clarifying questions, repeating or summarising information back to the speaker and offering observations or conclusions.
- The listener is not spending a lot of energy to give their own views, not telling anecdotes or stories of previous interviews they have had and not offering opinions or solutions – that would rather be conversational listening.

Deep listening

This category of listening is unlike any other. It goes beyond what it is logically possible to achieve by listening to someone. Some people may describe this capacity as 'almost telepathic' because of the coach's ability to listen to and understand another person from insights into what they have said, or even understand what they have not said. But there is a highly perceptive level of understanding and insight that becomes possible when a coach is in a state of deep listening.

When a coach is able to generate this quality of listening, they are able to experience the other person with a sense of who they are, as well as what they're saying. This state of listening happens in a slightly altered mental state, maybe its characteristics could be described as follows:

- The awareness of the listener is entirely focused on the other person.
- The listener has little or no sense or awareness of his/herself.
- The listener is totally lucid and present to the person speaking.
- This state can easily be broken or disturbed, e.g. by the speaker asking the listener a question, or seeking acknowledgement of some sort.

This state of listening feels almost elusive in nature, in that once you realize you have it and are in it the thought registers and it's gone again! This seemingly 'higher' state of listening has similar characteristics to meditation, in that the listener's mind is essentially quiet, with occasional thoughts or insights passing through.

5.3. Asking Questions²³

The most effective way to elicit the coachee's ideas of how to address a challenge facing them is to ask the right questions. Developing the ability to ask questions that set free the information you need to facilitate your coachee's understanding of a topic and thus help them to find a solution is crucial to your success.

As coach you need to use questions to direct the focus on particular aspects of a problem or issue that you want to encourage the coachee to explore in detail. This exploration provides the coachee with the opportunity and time to delve into options, processes, practices, commonly held views, and ideas that in the normal course of event they would ignore. Asking the good questions will help the coachee to consider potential problems that might result from a particular decision or action as well as they will help to find the appropriate solution for them.

Asking good, purposeful questions is actually a skill that can be developed, with concentration and practice. In coaching, a beautifully timed, perfectly worded question can remove barriers, unlock hidden information and surface potentially life-changing insights. In other words, to be a good coach you need to be able to ask good questions.

“What does a good question look like or sound like? Well, it will have the following characteristics:

1. It’s simple.

Simple questions often have the greatest impact, because they allow the coachee to use energy for forming their response, rather than trying to understand the wording of the question. In addition, they often get ‘to the heart of the matter’ more easily, simply because of their direct nature.²⁴ Complex questions rather confuse people.

2. It has a purpose.

When we ask a question of someone, or even of ourselves, the question normally has purpose. For example, some questions gather information; some questions influence a person’s thinking. In coaching, the questions that a coach uses often do both.”²⁵

Table 5: Examples for effective coaching questions²⁶

PURPOSE OF THE QUESTION	COACHING EXAMPLES
Gather general information	‘Can you tell me more about what happened with her?’ ‘Could you say more about that?’ ‘What else is there to say about that?’
Gather specific information	‘Specifically, what was it about her that you didn’t like?’ ‘Can you tell me what she actually said?’ ‘What words did she use that upset you?’
Understand someone’s values	‘What was it about her words that upset you?’ ‘What is important to you about that?’ ‘What would you have wanted her to say?’ ‘What do you value in this relationship?’
Get someone to link two thoughts, or situations, together.	‘How does the location you described relate to what happened?’ ‘How does this situation affect how you are at work now?’
Help someone appreciate something from someone else’s perspective.	What do you think her experience was?’ ‘What might she be feeling at that point?’ ‘What might her intention have been?’
Help someone come to a conclusion	‘What are your thoughts about that now?’ ‘What is the conclusion you are drawing about that now?’
Influence someone to action	‘What could you do about that right now?’
Prepare someone to overcome barriers to taking action.	‘What might stop you from doing that?’ (Follow-up) ‘So how will you overcome that?’
Influence someone to think about a situation positively.	How have you benefited from this?’ ‘What will you get by sorting this whole matter out now?’ ‘What’s the positive/up side of this?’
Influence someone to think about the effects of an action.	‘What are the risks associated with your action?’ ‘How will this affect your other colleagues?’ ‘Who else is affected by this?’
Help someone gain learning from an event or circumstance.	‘How has talking this through affected your views on the situation?’ ‘What learning have you taken from this?’ ‘How would you react if that kind of situation happened again?’

24 Starr 2016: p.90
25 Starr 2016: p.92
26 Starr 2016: p.93 et seqq.

3. It will be influencing without being controlling.

Asking someone a question automatically influences the direction of his/her thoughts. For example, ‘What was the best holiday you ever had?’ causes you to think about holidays in the past. Although it subtly implies that you have had a great holiday at some point in your life, the question is fairly neutral, i.e. it doesn’t tell you what you should think. Within coaching, a collaborative (less directive) coach tries to maintain the balance between influence and control. Controlling questions can narrow down options, imply judgement, or create pressure on someone else to come up with the ‘right’ response. In rare cases when there’s a time limit on a coach to reach a conclusion, these kinds of questions might be appropriate.” Mostly, though, coaches do not use controlling questions. Since they inhibit the coachee’s thought and self-expression, and the coach risks missing information, losing rapport, or both.

Table 6: Examples for controlling questions²⁷

CONTROLLING QUESTION	PROBLEM / ISSUE
‘And what did you feel about that – frustrated?’	Narrows down options of what the person may have felt, plus subtly assumes what they ‘should’ have felt, i.e. frustrated.
‘What made you act in such a hostile manner towards her?’	Implies both criticism and a requirement for the other person to justify their actions.
‘How is that going to put things right if your business partner still so upset?’	Again, implies disagreement and requests justification.
‘What could you do to completely resolve the situation for everyone affected?’	Places pressure on the individual to get the question ‘right’ while implying subtle blame.
‘What is it about your business partner that you aren’t able to deal with?’	Assumes that the other person isn’t able to deal with the business partner, and that’s a bad thing.

Table 7: Examples for neutral questions²⁸

NEUTRAL QUESTION	BENEFIT
‘How did you feel about that?’	Open question enables the coachee to decide how they felt.
‘What caused you to react like that?’	Helps the coachee disassociate in order to identify reasons for their behaviour.
‘What was behind the way you acted towards her?’	As a follow-up to the above question, might uncover further information, e.g. values.
‘What do you want to happen now?’	Helps someone disassociate from the past and associate with the future. Creates a focus on goals, a desired outcome, progress.
‘What effect will doing that have upon your business partner do you think?’	Helps the coachee see the implications of their actions for others.
‘What could you do to improve things now?’	Allows the coachee to consider options to improve things, plus imagining themselves doing them.
‘What is it about your business partner’s behaviour that’s important to you?’	Distinguishes the business partner’s behaviour from his/her person. Also, uses the word ‘important’ in a way that implies no judgement.

27 Starr 2016: p.97
28 Starr 2016: p.98

It requires some experience to know when to use what type of question and how to formulate it to maximize your effectiveness. The chart below provides more coaching question examples that might guide you in the coaching process:

Questions to uncover details of the situation

- Given all we have talked about, what do you think you should do?
- Which approach do you think will work best?
- What actions are you going to take? What is your first step?
- How will you handle the obstacles we discussed (name them)?
- What do you need to make this plan work?
- What support do you need and from whom? How will you get it?
- How committed do you feel to taking this approach?
- How confident do you feel that you are doing the right thing?
- What would increase your confidence?
- Whom do you trust to reality test this plan?

Questions to focus on action

- Given all we have talked about, what do you think you should do?
- Which approach do you think will work best?
- What actions are you going to take? What is your first step?
- How will you handle the obstacles we discussed (name them)?
- What do you need to make this plan work?
- What support do you need and from whom? How will you get it?
- How committed do you feel to taking this approach?
- How confident do you feel that you are doing the right thing?
- What would increase your confidence?
- Whom do you trust to reality test this plan?

Questions to expand options

- If you were completely successful in handling this, what would things look like?
- What would be the best possible outcome?
- What have you tried in the past that worked? What elements can you apply here?
- What past experience(s) can you draw on here?
- What are all the possible ways you could approach this?
- What if you had more time, money, or control? What would you do?
- If you could start over, what would you do differently?
- Can you describe the options as you see them?
- What do you see as the pluses and minuses of each?
- Which would give you the best result?
- Which appeals to you most, or feels the best?
- I have a couple of thoughts. Would you be interested in hearing them?
- What do you think about this approach?
- Six months from now, what do you want to be able to say about this situation? What will help you get there?
- What is the craziest thing you could do to fix this situation?

Be aware that silence is a powerful but unfortunately underused tool in coaching!

5.4. Provide constructive and encouraging feedback³⁰

What is feedback? – Feedback is a message to a person, which informs that person on how the feedback-giver perceives, understands and experiences their behaviour.

The ability of a coach to give their own views of a coachee constructively is important to the coaching experience. Effective feedback can accelerate a coachee’s learning, inspire them, motivate them, help them feel valued and literally catapult them into action. So it’s important that a coach learns to deliver feedback that is

1. **Given with a positive intention** – Once our intention is clear and positive towards the individual, we are more likely to deliver a message that they experience as respectful and supportive. If it’s a difficult message to deliver, sometimes by first speaking our intention we can help the individual to appreciate the potential benefit of listening to it. Basically, if the coach’s intention is clearly positive towards the individual and they are being very open about that the coachee is likely to hear any information that follows with a degree of positive expectation.
2. **Based on fact or behaviour** – Feedback is more likely to be effective if it is factual and based on something the individual can do something about or change. Usually it’s best to comment on behaviour, as a person can appreciate that they have choices about how they behave. Feedback that’s non-specific or vague leaves them guessing, e.g. ‘You’re not doing that right, are you?’, or ‘You need to get better at that’. Feedback that relates to who someone is, i.e. their identity, is also difficult. While changing behaviour is fairly straightforward, changing who we are seems impossible.
3. **Constructive and beneficial** – If a piece of feedback is effective, then it will benefit the coachee in some way. The feedback may create deeper understanding, build an idea, encourage productive action or simply increase someone’s sense of well-being. Being constructive also relates to how the coachee experiences the feedback. One of the signs of a good coach is their ability to make a potentially difficult or awkward message easier for the coachee to hear and experience. In order to make this happen, the coach must maintain the emotional state of the coachee throughout the feedback conversation.

Within coaching, there are no fixed rules as to when to give feedback but there are guidelines. An opportunity for feedback may be prompted either by the coach or the coachee. In either instance, the coach should offer feedback only in the genuine belief that it would benefit the coachee. Potential benefits for the coachee when they receive feedback include:

- It has a positive impact on their learning.
- It offers useful information or perspectives.
- It encourages or motivates the coachee.
- It confirms or compares views and opinions.
- It prompts insights or ideas.

Corrective vs. developmental feedback

Not every feedback is constructive. People commonly give corrective feedback. Your task as a coach is to develop the skills of giving developmental feedback that will help the coachee to grow.

Table 8: Feedback³¹

DEVELOPMENTAL FEEDBACK	CORRECTIVE FEEDBACK
Focuses on the coachee’s strengths.	Focuses on the coachee’s weaknesses.
Helps the coachee to identify space for further personal and professional growth.	Addresses the coachee’s mistakes to correct and attitudes to change. The coachee is being blamed.
Is encouraging and motivating.	Discouraging

³⁰ Starr 2016: p.107 et seqq.
³¹ Jänicke 2016: p.19.

Is neutral, non-judgmental.	Judgmental
Uses open-ended questions to guide the coachee to gain insights and make personal conclusions.	Uses statements to demonstrate the coachee's deficits and mistakes.
The coachee is respected as a partner.	The coachee is seen as an object that needs education.
Uses "I"-messages.	Uses "You"-messages.
Balances difficult messages with positive statements	Only state the difficult message
Takes personal responsibility for the expressed views e.g. 'I think...' or 'I notice...'	Tries to generalise the expressed views, e.g. 'One thinks...' or 'One notices...'
Uses open questions to encourage a shift of perspective or exploration of new paths	Does not use questions (or at best closed questions)
Communicates supportively using non-verbal signs e.g. facial expression, eye contact, tonality, etc.	Overall communication not supportive, e.g. avoids eye contact; hard, down-talking tonality

Remember the importance of maintaining the coachee's emotional state. "This includes not upsetting them unnecessarily or putting them on their guard. In general, an understatement is more likely to be accepted than an exaggeration. Within coaching it is supportive to use caution when describing situations. It's easier and more encouraging for a coachee to hear 'You have a situation that you want to change' than 'You have got a serious problem here'." ³²

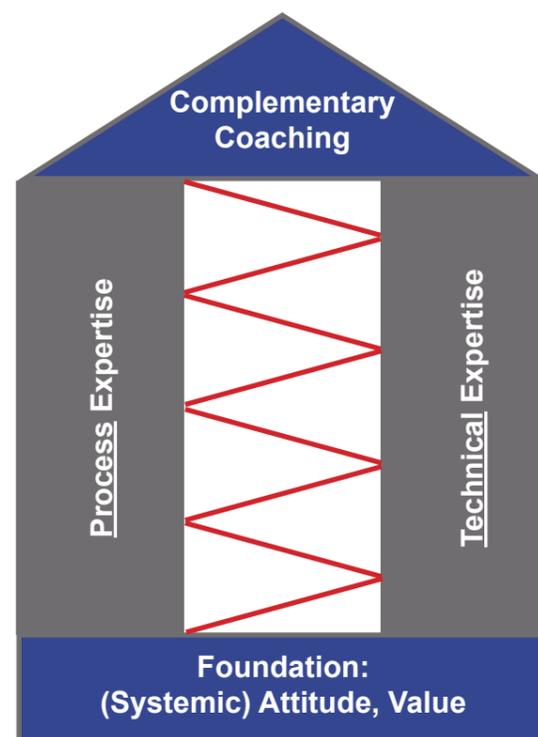
A good way to learn about giving feedback is for you to experience receiving some. That way you will know first-hand what works and what doesn't.

6. Coaching in the SME Loop: Complementary Coaching

You may have noticed in the previous chapters, coaching in an ideal, non-directive way is a process that puts coach and coachee on the same place as experts of different areas (HOW and WHAT). The coach leaves it up to the coachee or helps him/her to widely determine the subjects of the process, fields where they need support. So, the coach has—in the pure sense of the term—much more a facilitator function than an instructor, exemplified by the art of asking questions that will help the coachees finding their own solutions for a given problem. This approach roots in the humanistic and pedagogic ideal that the problem bearer is at the same time the solution bearer. Hence, the coach's role is "just" to facilitate the finding of a solution that in the coachee's perception will turn an unwanted situation into a desirable one by using appropriate methods and techniques described above.

The coach in the SME Loop will notice that at some point in the coaching process this "pure" or ideal application of the described coaching methodology might at some point be laborious and will not always lead to a situation in which the coachee will develop a business-wise satisfying and advantageous solution. Being an entrepreneur receiving coaching for business (and personal) development sometimes technical or business advice or simple skills development is required to help the the coachee get to the next level. Giving advice requires a certain knowledge which can not be developed by way of non-directive facilitation of solution-finding but needs instruction and/or training.

Figure 6: Complementary Coaching



With reference to chapter 2.1 (Table 1: "Different aspects of Training, Counselling and Coaching"), it becomes clearer at this point that the SME Loop coach operates in a space between counselling and non-directive coaching. In fact, the coach oscillates between expert advice (or acting from technical expertise) and non-directive coaching (acting from process expertise), see Figure 3. This oscillation between technical advice and non-directive coaching will happen numerous times within the entire process, might happen quite often within one single session, and even within one specific situation that may only last three or four minutes.

The coach uses his/her technical expertise to complement the process or facilitative coaching expertise on the basis of values and attitudes that underpin all interventions (Figure 3). We could, thus, call the SME Loop coach's intervention "Complementary Coaching" - coaching that is complemented by technical business advice.

The goal of complementary coaching is to make the coachee holistically benefit from the coach's intervention ; it is a service that aims at improving the rather short-term operational business performance as well as the rather long-term strategic performance and process competency. Both, the quality of outcome of the coaching as well as the quality of the process are taken into account and are of importance here.

As a consequence, the coach needs to be capable of flexibly and reflexively switch between the outcome perspective and the process perspective, i.e. technical expertise and process expertise. The coach, therefore, as a technical expert promotes the acquisition of knowledge and skills through knowledge transfer; and as a process consultant promotes process competency and self-reliant problem-solving of the coachee.

Hence, the coach needs to master subjects and topics that have been treated in the trainings (if the coach's business knowledge even goes beyond the training content it will definitely be an asset); on the other hand, the coach needs to be an expert in non-directive coaching, attentive listening, asking questions, solution-oriented approaches, etc.

More concretely, with a focus on the rather technical and business aspects of the specific SME Loop coaching, the coach will have to:

- Support assimilation of training content
- Support the application of training content to the coachee's individual (business) reality
- Support financial decision-making and, if applicable, access to financial services
- Introduce and support implementation of relevant topics e.g.
 - In-depth analysis of the enterprise
 - Organisational development & management of the enterprise (incl. human resources)
 - Information management (incl. use of ICT)
 - Business formalisation
- Where helpful and appropriate e.g. support implementation of learnt or discussed topics; training sessions may also take place outside the agreed coaching space (e.g. joint visits to banks, internet cafés, service providers, etc.)
- Support peer-to-peer learning
- Support the coachee in the completion of the final assignment (see below)
- Support the coachee in establishing an individual development plan for the time after coaching

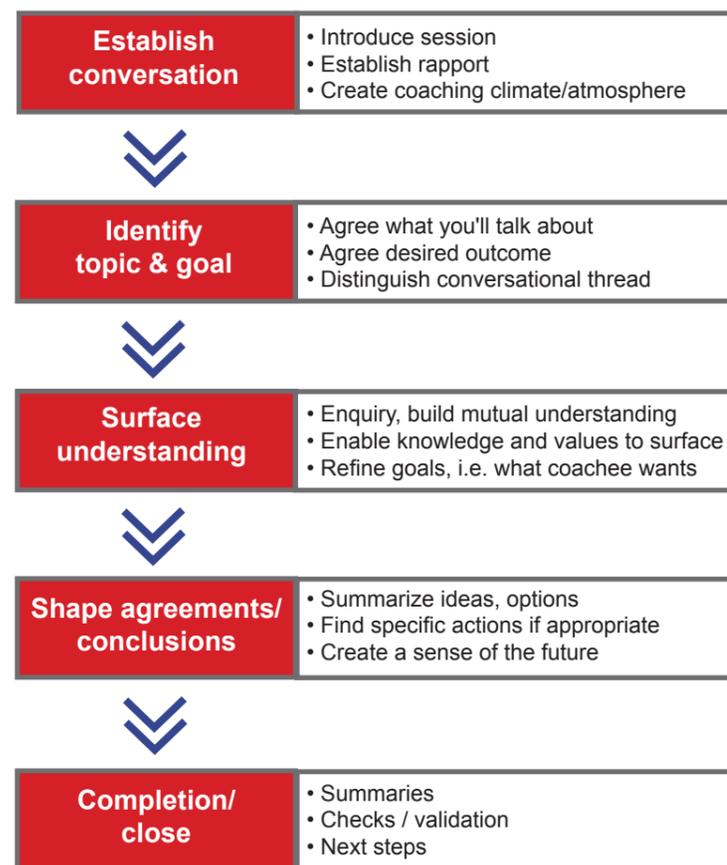
Additional tasks of coaches:

- Support the conduct of the assessment if required
- Participation in the two 3-day-training sessions of entrepreneurs
- Writing reports, completing evaluation sheets, etc., as required by the employer and GIZ
- Exchange with other coaches by way of formally organised meetings and informally where necessary and appropriate
- Exchange with other coaches (formally) by participating in organised meetings

The coach, thus, needs to be an expert in quite a number of technical, business subjects as well as a supportive, non-directive process expert – and be able to flexibly switch between these two positions according to the needs of the coachee.

7. THE 'TYPICAL' COACHING SESSION³³

Figure 4: Outline of a 'typical' coaching session³⁴



The following explanations offer a potential guide for a typical coaching conversation. The coaching session structure is intended to help any coach navigate through a conversation and to provide useful frames of activity. It is not intended to provide a formula for every conversation, or inhibit your natural creativity and flexibility. Please understand the following as a support and feel encouraged by it, rather than restricted by it.

Figure 4 illustrates the basic path that a typical coaching conversation might follow. While there are obviously five stages illustrated, the first and last are very basic in terms of the skills you'll need to use. For example, you are already familiar with greeting people and ending conversations effectively. The 'middle' three stages are what actually distinguish this as a coaching conversation, rather than any other type of conversation.

Be reminded that the different stages are rather places to dwell, or perhaps places where coaches ask, listen, reflect, think about how to continue, review, come back to one issue, etc. Consequently, the explanation given at each stage are far from being tasks but can rather be referred to as activities. They may be returned to and also combined. For example, you will build rapport at the beginning of the session, and this will flow through the session.

You may agree on what topic the coachee wants to work on upfront and then need to revise that when you surface a more important issue or topic. When you're agreeing actions, you may continue to surface insights or ideas. Occasionally, you'll find yourself 'looping back through', e.g. going back into enquiry as you find that something towards the end of a discussion is incomplete.

7.1 Establish conversation³⁵

This stage is about the coach building "the basics of a conversation, e.g. saying hello, having the other person feel comfortable, welcoming them into the conversation and creating a good balance between warmth and formality."³⁶ The first sessions will certainly require a more prepared and cautious entering into the conversation whereas to people who have already known each other for some time (i.e. coaching sessions) can and will start differently. Familiarity will usually make it easier to get onto the level of coaching conversation.

7.2 Identify topic and goal³⁷

In this activity both coach and coachee agree on a place to begin and a desired destination. It's a gentle orientation for the session, rather than a rigorous, detailed assessment. We're balancing clarity and a sense of direction, while maintaining pace with the coachee. The coach's role is to surface a desirable goal for the conversation, without putting pressure on the coachee to 'know everything'. For example, the coachee is likely to arrive with a general idea of what they want to talk about, i.e. a topic. Maybe they also have an idea of what they want to get from the session, i.e. results. The coach needs to help refine these a little at this stage, to distil one or more threads for the conversation. With gentle questioning, some clarity can be gained at this point, while more might arise later. Again, a light touch is often best.

33, 34 Starr 2016: p.165
35, 36 Starr 2016: p.168
37 Starr 2016: p.171

7.3 Surface understanding and insight³⁸

At this stage begins the real process of enquiry, in order to surface real understanding and insight for the coachee. At this stage is where the magic of coaching is happening. As the coach gently surfaces someone's thoughts, feelings and realisations, an insight that proves invaluable may be freed up. As someone's head is emptied of what's been filling it, coach and coachee may uncover a perfect idea that moved unnoticed in the swirl of other thoughts surrounding it.

Especially relevant to this stage is the listening exercise (see above), which helps practising the coach's own style and approach. It is important to avoid fixing, advising or jumping to quick conclusions. Instead the coach should seek to understand, look for 'gaps' or contradictions, and gently probe into what seems to be happening.

Note that there's a subtle trap to fall into at the beginning of this stage, which is to hear a familiar situation and the coach imagines understanding it. The coach needs to continue by asking for some simple, factual information about the situation (whatever the situation might be). The coach is allowed to be curious, give him/herself permission not to know everything, and ask questions that build a clearer picture of what's going on. While laying out the facts for the coach to understand, the coach will be helping the coachee become clearer about both the situation and how they feel about it – and this is a lot!

Note, also, that a conversation has different elements to it. A coach wants to be as natural as possible to the coachee, so smiling, nodding, gesturing, etc. is a natural repertoire: Asking questions, checking facts, summarising, pausing, being silent, reflecting, etc. are activities of great use here. Above all, it needs to feel natural for the coach. That may not be true for the first coaching, but certainly over time a coach will develop an individual and natural style.

This stage of the coaching session is also the phase when technical or business advice is given - or rather, where the coach oscillates between process and technical expertise - depending on what the coachee needs. However, like said above, try not to jump in with advice too early, try to surface understanding and learning within the coachee. Do everything in order to make the coachee help him-/herself before coming up with advice or teaching. And even when giving advice, start with little appetisers instead of revealing the entire "solution" or "fix". With a little hint at the solution the coachee might already be in a position to come up with the missing elements to the solution him-/herself.

7.4 Shape agreements and conclusions³⁹

Hopefully, this will feel like a natural progression from the previous activity. Here the coach is shaping the previous elements of the conversation into conclusions, or raised awareness, or maybe actions to encourage further progress. The key to this stage is actually the previous stage. Where the coach has effectively surfaced the relevant information, feelings, contradictions, comparisons, etc. this stage is normally straightforward. The previous discussion has helped the coachee clarify what's actually happening, what they think about what's happening and also what they might want to do about it. The coach's role now is to help refine the coachee's thoughts so that they can maintain progress after the session.

When the coach feels that they "have mutual clarity about what the coachee has decided and also what they are going to do, it's time to summarise and agree on the next steps. As mentioned previously, a summary may actually release further thoughts, so please be ready for that."⁴⁰

These conclusions and next steps should be written down (and shared among the two in case only one takes notes). These may then be the starting point for the next session (stage two "identify topic and goal").

7.5 Completion / Close⁴¹

This final step is about drawing the conversation to a professional close. As in the first stage, a coach will have experience with how to complete a conversation; beginner coaches will have to make these experiences, however, note that there's no 'right' or 'wrong' way to close a session. The coach's own personal style will 'dictate' how it is done. A close that lets the coachee leave with a good and committed feeling (i.e. something has been moved, 'I have really taken a step today', etc.) will strengthen their overall will for the change process and the commitment for the upcoming next steps.

38 Starr 2016: p.177
39 Starr 2016: p.186
40 Starr 2016: p.189
41 Starr 2016: p.194

8. COACHING CYCLE - THE BIGGER PICTURE⁴²

Coaching is a target-oriented method. How to get to the target is the coach's responsibility. After building rapport and establishing a trustful relationship with the coachee, (**establish the context for coaching**) you can get started with jointly setting goals and developing an action plan defining activities to achieve the goals (**create understanding and direction**).

Goals guide and focus the coachee's energies and thinking on a clear objective. Whilst the coachee is responsible for setting the goal, it is the coach's responsibility to know how to set clear, attractive, challenging yet attainable goals, i.e. SMART goals. Setting SMART goals is important in every coaching process as it motivates the coachee and makes it easy to recognize progress. Once progress is clearly defined and measurable, the coachee is more committed and more likely to continue a certain path of action. To facilitate target-oriented thinking, the coach may ask questions such as: How does cutting your expenses on... may help you reach your goal? How will you track your ability to repay this loan on time? How realistic do you think is it to intend saving this sum of your income every week?

At this point, it will be important to be clear about the goal, that's why you need to add more detail. For example, 'I want more income' is too vague. You need to understand when, where, and how much, e.g. 'I want more income to lay the foundations for a bigger family and afford a more reliable car'. If there's a timing involved, find out what the given time horizon is.

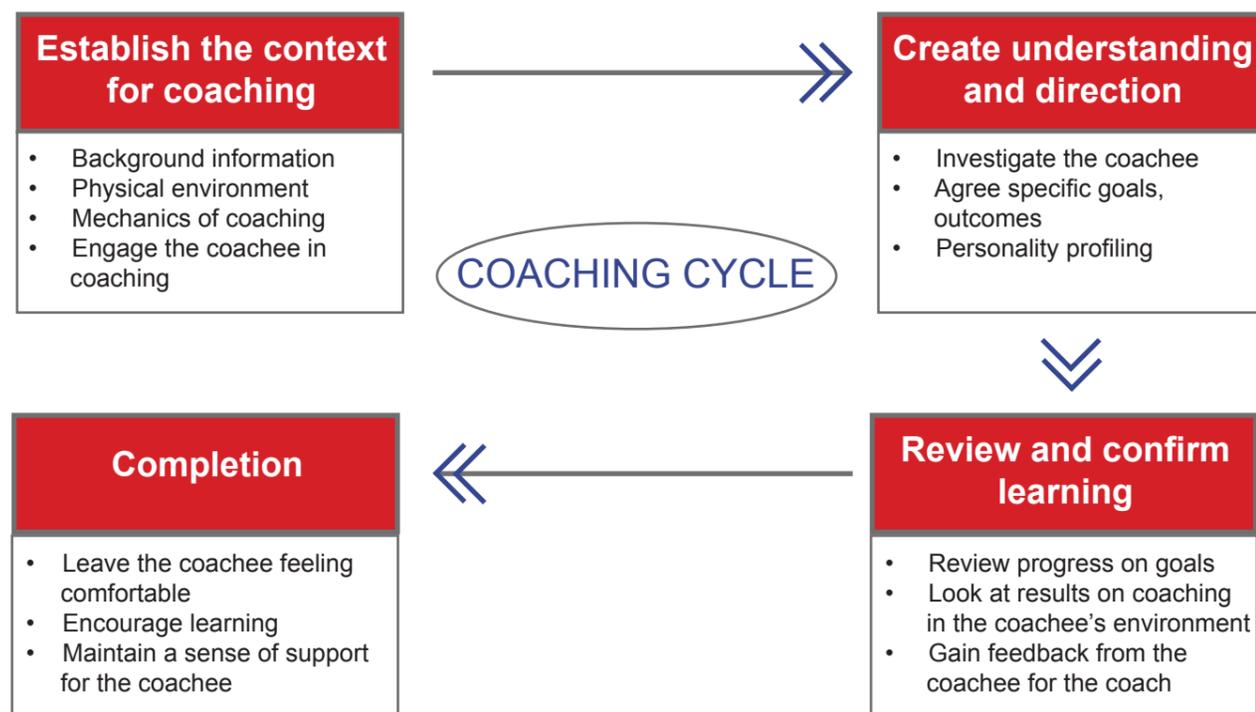


Figure 7: Coaching Cycle⁴³

So, how can you be more specific?

- 'When do you want more income specifically?'
- 'Is there any particular goal you'd like more income for?'
- 'How much more income?'
- 'When?'
- 'Where?'
- 'Any specific activities you have already targeted to achieve more income?'

⁴² see Starr 2016, p.202 et seqq.
⁴³ Starr 2016 : p. 202

When discussing these questions and coming closer to according answers (thus the goal the coachee wants to achieve) you might want to engage the coachee in becoming more specific on concrete next steps in order to promote action-taking. This might happen essentially by the use of two essential questions:

- 'What can you do to achieve this goal?'
- 'What is the next/first step for you now?'

The third stage of the coaching cycle is about review and confirmation of learning progress. Regular reviews help maintain progress during a coaching assignment. The coach is interested in both the effectiveness of the coaching sessions and whether the coachee is making good progress in reaching their goals. This might be done according to the following questions:

- Are the coaching sessions working well, e.g. are they productive, worthwhile, etc.?
- What impact are the sessions having on the coachee?
- What progress has been made on the coachee's goals?
- Is the coach's style and approach working for the coachee?
- Are there any issues that need to be resolved, e.g. what's not working?
- How could the sessions be improved?

By reviewing the progress and results of coaching, you are able to affirm learning with the coachee. By this affirmation, we are simply linking what the coachee is learning with the benefits they are experiencing as a result – benefits such as better relationships with business partners, increased personal productivity, increased income, satisfaction or well-being, etc.

Finally, the 'completion' stage of coaching aims at bringing the coaching assignment to a conclusion. No matter how encouraging the benefits from the coaching have been or how stimulating the coaching relationship is, each coaching assignment should have an end to it.

In the final stage the coach aims to:

- Leave the coachee feeling that the coaching has been worthwhile.
- Identify ways in which the coachee may continue to learn when the coaching sessions end.
- Make sure that the coachee understands other ways they might be supported in future, e.g. which friends, which colleagues, which books, courses, seminars, etc.

The coaching cycle – a guide

Like any outline or plan, a series of coaching sessions never develop entirely according to 'schedule', hence, the coaching cycle is indicative. However, it is helpful to have the coaching cycle (the 'bigger picture') in mind and come back to it in order to guide the process and crosscheck the guiding coaching structure to the actual process, how it evolves and at which point coach and coachee have arrived.

8.1 Specific Part of the Coaching Cycle I: Final assignment

The alternating training-coaching cycle, which is at the heart of the SME Loop, will be terminated with a final assignment. This assignment is compulsory for all participants in order to conclude the SME Loop and is a pre-condition for receiving coaching vouchers that entitle the entrepreneur to call upon a coach for three additional coaching sessions after the Graduation Ceremony⁴⁴.

The final assignment is an individual, personal assignment that is agreed upon by coach and coachee according to the specific situation of the coachee i.e. literacy level, entrepreneurial status quo, challenges, needs, development path so far, development plans, etc. The completion of this final assignment will then automatically lead to the reception of three coaching vouchers at the Graduation Ceremony. Note that there is no grading of the assignment; it is rather considered a symbolical completion act of the SME Loop.

The following list provides examples of final assignments. Which one of these examples will eventually be chosen or whether coach and coachee agree on a completely different assignment is subject to discussion and consensus between these two:

- Formulation of a detailed written entrepreneurial vision according to the individual capacities of the coachee and definition of steps how to get there (for illiterates picture-drawing or any other way of doing this is also appropriate)
- Development of an action plan (one to two years) for entrepreneurial and/or personal development
- Development of a long-term strategy for the enterprise
- Development of a business plan or, if applicable, only parts of it like e.g. a marketing plan
- Completed process for business registration
- Completed loan application process

Specific Part: Coaching 3

Coaching 3 is beyond the actual supported and accompanied SME Loop and happens after the Graduation Ceremony. The idea is to provide a follow-up coaching, according to the coachees' needs and initiative. Whether or not and the number of vouchers that will be redeemed is entirely up to the individual. Hence, the intention of the vouchers apart from additional support is to promote self-reliant work (final assignment) and self-responsible decision-making for coaching support.

Information on the ratio coach – coachee in the SME Loop:

We recommend a ratio of **12 coachees per coach**. Given all coaching session in Coaching 1, 2 and 3 as well as connected activities this workload will add up to 38-40 hours per week, taking into account vacation and a number of public holidays.

Activities of each of coach consist of:

- Coaching sessions⁴⁵
- Covering distances (to coaching and training venues, peer-to-peer meeting of coaches)
- Administrative work
- Preparatory work
- Final report (every coaching phase)
- Participation in Training 1, 2 and Graduation Ceremony
- Intervision (Meetings of coaches)

⁴⁴ Coaching vouchers for one coaching session per month over a period of three months according to the needs and preferences of the coachee.

⁴⁵ Not all entrepreneur who received vouchers for additional coaching will redeem all of them. Therefore, we estimated that only two thirds of the maximum number of coaching sessions would be held in Coaching 3.

Please, do not underestimate the workload of coaches as it might eventually lead to a decrease in performance quality and outcomes.

Specific Part of the Coaching 3: Intervision

Intervision is collegial consultation, exchange and mutual support among peers in order to discuss individual professional challenges and problems; it improves the quality of the coaching work, it facilitates learning from one another and helps coaches finding solutions for specific challenges they have encountered.

Possible forms of intervion:

- Coaches in the same region meet regularly (e.g. every 6 weeks to share experiences and lessons learnt)
- All coaches come together every three months
- Informal meeting and discussion between trainer and coach(es) before and/or after training
- Similar intervion forms may apply to trainers

When starting your coaching assignment always remember:

COACHING IS PRACTICING!



REFERENCES

- 1) Bianca Jänecke (2016): "Coaching Manual, Deepening Economic Development for Peace and Stability in Plateau State (Nigeria) Programme".
- 2) Julie Starr (2016) : "The Coaching Manual : The definitive guide to the process, principles and skills of personal coaching".