

Peer Coaching Guidelines

Principles for Peer Coaching Conversations

There are many different types of conversation we can have in the workplace, as illustrated in this diagram.



As a coach it is valuable to focus your conversation in the Explore-Breakthrough quadrant primarily so that the coachee is encouraged to do their own thinking. Also, this provides you with a deeper understanding of how they are seeing things, which, in turn, allows you to shape what you share in terms of experience and knowledge relevant to the individual.

Achieving this can be helped if the coach takes account of the following principles as guidelines for the conversation.

Self-directed learning

The coachee is more likely to own next steps and to develop a strong and considered decision-making capability if the coach challenges the coachee to find their own answers first through a series of open-ended questions, rather than jump immediately to advice. For example, ‘what do

you think your options are here?', 'thinking about these options, which do you feel is going to get you where you want to be?', 'how do you think you can move forward on this?'

Solutions focus

The more we focus on a problem the more we strengthen it. This is because focus and attention strengthen the existing hardwired connections in our brains. Faster progress is likely to be made if the coach asks questions that focus the coachee's attention on the solutions. For example, 'so what would the ideal scenario/outcome look like here?', 'tell me more about what that would consist of?', 'if you achieved it, what would have changed for you?'

Positive feedback

We need encouragement to make changes or to tackle challenges. However, this encouragement needs to be authentic, not false. Just noticing that a coachee is moving in the right direction with their thinking or actions is positive feedback. Acknowledging them for trying as well as succeeding is important.

Stretch

Many of us undershoot in seeing our own potential. Coaches need to believe in their coachee's potential and encourage them to step outside their comfort zone.

Structure

Again, there is evidence that it is focus and attention that hardwires new thinking and behaviors. Coaches need to set up structures that ensure that coachees deliver on their commitments, so some checking in between coaching sessions may be valuable.