

Coaching: An Overview

Purpose

The purpose of coaching is straightforward. It is to enhance the performance of the coachee (performer) through learning and motivation.

Awareness and Responsibility are the two most important words in the language of modern coaching. The intention of the coach is to enhance the situational awareness of the coachee and help them to take personal responsibility for their actions.

Traditional methods

Traditionally coaching has been associated with sport, where the coach's main method of operating was instruction. For example they would set the athlete goals, show or demonstrate new techniques, give feedback and motivate them through praise and encouragement. This way of working enabled good levels of performance.

A modern approach

The traditional method of coaching, while having some real benefits, also has some disadvantages. For example it promotes dependency on the coach. It presupposes that the coach has all the knowledge and experience necessary to promote improvement. What it doesn't recognise is the inherent ability of the coachee to improve performance through self-discovery and learning. Modern coaching has shifted the emphasis from being coach centred where the coach holds all the power and control to being coachee centred where the coachee plays a proactive role in their own personal development.

Dr David Hemery (Olympic gold medallist) and one of the founders of Developing Potential has coined the phrase the 'Coaching Dance' to describe a new way of working where the coach is coachee centred. For example, starting a coaching session by asking the coachee for their aims and interests. The coachee is then engaged in thinking about what will interest them and enable them to do their best.

The coach would ask the coachee to discuss and agree goals, they would agree on what was to be learnt and how. In terms of feedback the coach would ask the coachee what was their experience of an exercise and then add value by sharing observations and making suggestions. This is a two way process where the coach and coachee have equal status, where there is true respect on both sides and where the coach has the humility to know that their success comes from growing their coachee. This enables the coachee to develop independence and interdependence.

Skills: Questioning & listening

There are two key skills in the coaching process - questioning and listening.

The modern coach asks mainly open questions, for example, 'what do you want to achieve today? This has the effect of raising a coachee's awareness of what they want and encourages them to make a choice and take responsibility for their next steps. It enables them to focus their attention in the present, which is where all performance occurs.

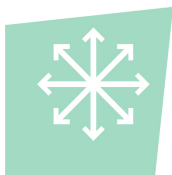
Listening with empathy and attention not only allows the coach to ask the next most appropriate question of the coachee but also helps to enhance relationships.

If you would like to know more about effective coaching then please contact us. Our details are below.





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