

## 1 Format of programme and sessions



Whilst my actual coaching approach is flexible according to your needs, it helps to have a scaffold for the logistical aspects of the programme and individual sessions.

A 'discovery' meeting of around 30 minutes is an ideal way to start forming a coaching relationship. By the end of this, you'll probably know if you feel able to work with me. Then you can choose either to withdraw, or to move on to the written contracting stage.

Contracting is crucial to our coaching relationship. It sets out the framework for our partnership, establishing how we intend to work together, the success and evaluation criteria for the overall programme, and the intended number of sessions. I can't begin coaching until it has been signed and returned.

Each subsequent session will contain a brief verbal re-contracting process. This is so that psychological issues as well as practical ones can be agreed upon. I'll ask if you're happy with the approach so far, or if you'd welcome a change; clarify the arrangement for a safe, confidential and non-judgmental reflective space; determine to what extent you want your thinking challenged or whether you only want support; ask whether you want suggestions or advice (more like mentoring); or if you prefer a 'purer' form of coaching which is totally non-directive. There will be agreement about which of us takes notes and what should happen to them after the session, in line with GDPR requirements. We'll also determine what outcome you'd like and where possible agree the success criteria against which it can be measured.

After the discovery and contract meeting I'll have some idea of what you're looking for from the programme, so I'll suggest an outline plan with broad themes for several sessions. This will need regular adjustment and refinement. As our relationship develops, there'll be a natural progression from session to session. We'll also need to remain open to any new and sudden challenges that may arise which require an urgent response. If you decide you'd like to extend the programme beyond the initial sessions, we can arrange to do so. On the other hand, if at any stage during the coaching programme either you or I decide that the relationship is not working, either of us is able to end it.

As we develop our working partnership, we'll discover what works best for you. Although I have a range of coaching tools and methodologies at my disposal, I'll select only those that seem most appropriate to your requirements and preferences as I understand them. I'll offer you options from which you can choose. We'll review that process regularly to ensure that you're satisfied and that your needs are still being met.



I like to begin every session with a quick review of actions undertaken since the previous one, and end with your summary of what you've learned or 'taken' from the session and the actions (if appropriate) that you intend to implement. This provides you with additional motivation and accountability and helps towards the final evaluation of the programme. I'll also ask for your feedback from time to time so that I can check if you're satisfied with my coaching so that I can see what changes or improvements I might need to make.

At the end of the programme we'll review its success against the evaluation criteria in the contract, also taking into account the reviews we've conducted session by session. In particular, I like to ask:

- What aspects of the coaching have you found to be the most and the least useful?
- How would you describe the coaching relationship/partnership?
- Can you provide specific examples of any changes you have made or actions you have undertaken which you can attribute wholly or in part to the coaching programme?
- How, if at all, has your thinking changed since undertaking coaching?
- On a scale of 1-10 with 10 being 'definitely', how likely are you to recommend me as coach to other people?

If possible, I like to have a catch-up session with you lasting between 15 and 30 minutes about 3 months after the end of the programme, to identify whether you feel there are any long-term benefits you may have derived from it.

I'm happy to coach either face-to-face if geography permits, or remotely. Hourly sessions work well, but some clients have preferred 90-minute sessions. This means that a whole hour can be devoted to the coaching and the additional half-hour used in two 15-minute slots for review, re-contracting and at the end of a session, summarising/feedback. 90-minutes also increases flexibility – if the coaching needs a little more time we can adjust. If we come to a natural end earlier, it doesn't matter, so long as we agree. But if an hour suits you better, that's fine.



## 2. The coaching/mentoring spectrum

A version of the coaching and mentoring spectrum is shown in the diagram below. My coaching is on the right of the vertical line, so I shall 'pull' more than 'push' you, because I believe in your own innate ability and potential to fulfil your ambitions and achieve your goals.

Push Directive	Some direction)	(Fully non-directive) Pull
Mentoring	Coaching	Pure Coaching

When we start the programme you may not know quite what to expect, so we can work it out together in an early session to see which approach you prefer, or find the most useful. Of course, you may decide to try different approaches in different sessions or within a session, depending on your issue, how you feel, or what frame of mind you're in on a particular day. Since we re-contract at the beginning of each session, this would be entirely feasible. Whatever you want to have happen, we will attempt.

We may also decide to use some diagnostic testing so that we can establish a baseline which will give us a clearer idea of 'where' you are now and help us to decide what will help you to reach your goal.

### (i) Non-directive – the 'pure' end of the spectrum (Pull)

Here, coaching conversations are not the same as ordinary, everyday conversations, although of course there will be some normal conversation at the beginning and probably briefly at the end of each session. Once the coaching begins, 80% of the talking should be done by you whilst I need to be listening carefully to what you say without interrupting or rushing to reply the moment you finish speaking. This means that there may well be some longer silences than usual. These are sometimes uncomfortable until one becomes used to them, but their purpose is to allow you time to think.

Most of my questions will be open ones. Some of them may also seem strange. If so, be assured that any bemusement you experience is all to the good: it means that they're helping to make you think differently. The advantages of this approach may not be immediately apparent – although sometimes they may create a 'light bulb moment' - but over time, new ways of thinking will evolve and you'll

begin to feel the benefit in terms of increased capacity to think creatively, see more options and consequently exercise more control over outcomes.



Occasionally I may simply repeat some of your own words back to you. Reflecting what you say, as if showing you your image in a mirror, can be powerful. We often don't realise how something we've said reveals things going on at a subconscious level that could have a bearing on solving problems or determining our actions going forward. Recognising and acknowledging these things can help accelerate progress.

Some questions might seem vague or very open-ended: I don't want to constrain your thinking or restrict your options because of words I've used that are too specific and which may lead you in a particular direction. If you flounder for a moment or two trying to think of an answer – don't worry. Just take your time and think. You may well surprise yourself with your eventual reply!

## **(ii) Partly Directive – still to the right, but nearer to the vertical line**

As your coach, I don't want to 'tell' you what to do. However, some of my clients have asked me to make suggestions or to include 'teaching episodes' in the sessions, drawing upon my own leadership and management experience. I don't see myself as an expert whose job it is to provide 'right' answers or solutions, but if this is your request, I'll signpost 'teaching episodes' or suggestions, provide what I can and then ask you to determine whether they can be of any use to you, and if so, how.

You'll choose what option or action to pursue; you'll have the responsibility for implementing it; and you'll be the one living with its consequences. My job is to help you to determine the menu and assess the risks associated with the different choices on it; not to cook the meal and eat it with you!

Having said that, if your choice of action results in 'indigestible' consequences I'll be happy to help you explore the reasons for that, and to assist in looking at new options going forward.

### (iii) Fully Directive ~ far left : mentoring end of the spectrum (Push)

I see this end of the spectrum as outside my remit. If you want a mentor rather than a coach, I would be the wrong choice of partner, not least because a mentor needs to be very familiar with the field in which you work in order to be able to provide specific guidance.

Coaching relationships have the ultimate aim of enabling you to develop strategies to use in the future unaided, whereas mentoring relationships are often longer-term and the dynamics are different: one person is the expert; the other the 'learner'. In executive coaching partnerships the balance is more equal: both can be seen as 'experts' in their individual fields and both are 'learners' or 'explorers' within the coaching space. The work is collaborative and participative. As a coach, I learn about you and how I can help you unlock your learning and potential; as the client, you learn more about yourself, how to resolve challenges, increase your capacity and resilience, and reach your goals. You also learn about coaching strategies, which you'll be able to use to help both yourself and others to achieve desired outcomes looking ahead to after the programme has finished.

## 3. Your role

As the client in the coaching partnership, you will need to:

- Decide what overall outcome/gain/value you want from the coaching;
- Come to each session with an idea of what you want to discuss/explore/think about; have an idea about the kind of outcome you'd like eg. action plan; further thinking points; useful model or tool;
- Check that you understand the terms of the contract and what coaching is, and is not – and if you're unsure, please ask for clarification;
- Turn up on time for sessions (I give 15 minutes' leeway) and if you can't make a session, please give 24 hours' notice where this is possible;
- Arrange to be undisturbed (bar emergencies) during the coaching time;



- Come to sessions with the right mindset: remain as open to new ideas/approaches as possible; be ready to think hard and face some challenge (levels of which will be in accordance with our agreement in the contract or re-contract);
- Take responsibility for implementing any actions arising from the session;
- If there is 'homework', complete it as best you can;
- Trust the process – give it a chance. It may not have an immediate effect, but after a couple of sessions you should start to notice some progress; and
- Give (and possibly in some circumstances receive) honest feedback.

#### 4. My role

As your coach, I promise to:

- Do my utmost to deliver an effective coaching programme that suits you and if appropriate, the organisation for which you work
- Put you first, providing a suitable thinking environment and conducting my dealings with you with dignity, respect, honesty, confidentiality and equality
- Bring to the sessions attentive listening, understanding, belief and commitment to your success
- Partner with you to identify and achieve your goals
- Partner with you to identify the approaches and methodology you find the most useful and which align with your preferred learning/cognitive/personality characteristics, and to use those in the coaching sessions
- Refer you to appropriate professional support if issues develop that are outside the coaching remit (eg. Counselling, medical advice etc.)
- Maintain the Code of Ethics and standards of behaviour set out in the Association for Coaching and the European Mentoring and Coaching Council global ethical code.  
(<https://www.associationforcoaching.com/page/AboutCodeEthics> and [https://emccuk.org/Common/Uploaded%20files/Policies/Global\\_Code\\_of\\_Ethics\\_EN\\_v3.pdf](https://emccuk.org/Common/Uploaded%20files/Policies/Global_Code_of_Ethics_EN_v3.pdf))
- If it is clear that our client/coach relationship is not working, I will stop it (the same right applies to you)



However, it is important to clarify that as coach I cannot guarantee results, as it is your responsibility to have the courage and determination to turn decisions or ideas emerging from sessions into action.



## 5. Types of coaching upon which we can draw

There are many different types of coaching approaches and these are just some examples. The list and their definitions are adapted from Erik de Haan's book, 'Relational Coaching' (Wiley and Sons Ltd. 2008, pages 14,15 and 20).

- Person focused – observing and supporting you from your perspective – exploring the issue with you, encouraging and supporting and giving you plenty of time to reflect ( so a 'thinking partnership')
- Solution focused – supporting you in your search for solutions; helping you to determine the options, weigh up risks; action planning
- Problem focused – helping you with an approach to a problem – offering a new framework or approach to the issues presented by challenging as well as supporting you; exploring things from different perspectives and angles
- Insight focused – considering you from an independent perspective – looking at what you're leaving out or unaware of that might help, so exploring at a deeper level and challenging you to think or behave differently

I can explain about other approaches and methodologies when we meet if you'd like to know more. There are also plenty of coaching models and tools available. If I think they'll be helpful, I'll introduce relevant ones to you and you can decide if you want us to use them or not.

## 6. What my coaching is not

Coaching is not counselling or therapy, although some elements may overlap. We need to be clear about the boundaries.

Occasionally sessions can result in heightened emotions. These episodes can sometimes be therapeutic and may even lead to 'breakthroughs' and new insights. I may ask whether you'd like to resume the coaching or abandon it, or if your upset seems to merit it, I may refer you to counselling

or therapy. At that point we may have to pause or stop the coaching programme until you've received the necessary help. If you're already receiving counselling or therapy, you need to tell me, so that we can agree on what grounds the coaching may begin, or if we should wait until you've finished therapy.



What happens in sessions is entirely confidential unless I consider that your health is seriously at risk, or that there is a legal imperative to which I must adhere, in which case I would have to report my concern to the relevant bodies. I would, however, always discuss it with you first. All this is outlined in the contract.

You may also rest assured that if I feel the issue or matter you bring to the coaching session is beyond my limits or capabilities, I shall say so, and, if possible, either refer you to a coach/counsellor/therapist more qualified to help, or signpost you to look elsewhere.

If you'd like any further information, please feel free to ask me any questions either before we meet via email or telephone, or during our chemistry meeting. My email address is:

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