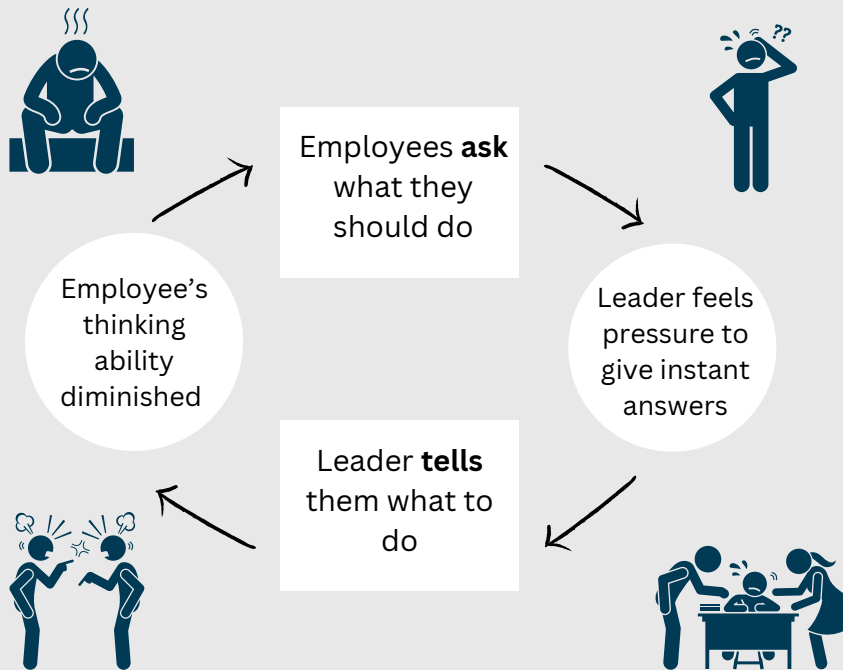
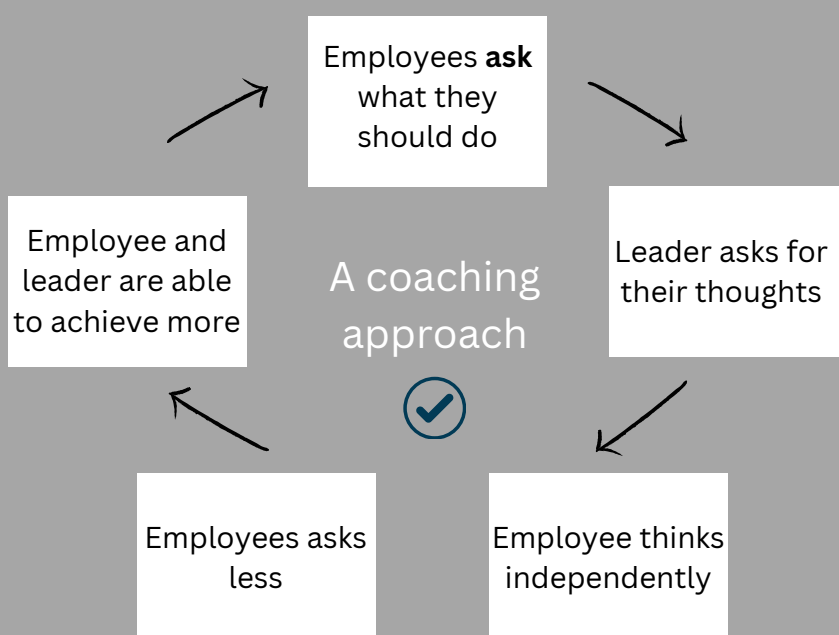


## Employee Asks.....Leader Tells



- 30 - 40% of time spent on work and decisions that others should be doing
- Clogged up decision making pipeline
- Disengaged employees
- Increased costs
- Frustrated leaders

## Leader Asks.....Employee Thinks



- More critical decision makers
- Quality decision making
- Individual growth
- Positive people
- Organisational growth
- Lower cost
- Improved retention
- Improved communication
- Improved self confidence
- Increased productivity
- Improved relationships

# A Coaching approach to leadership



- A coaching approach emphasises employee development and growth. It focuses on nurturing potential and maximising talent.
- Coaching encourages open dialogue between managers and employees, building trust and understanding, enabling both parties to address concerns and set goals collaboratively.
- A coaching approach can be used to enhance specific skills or competencies. By providing targeted feedback and guidance, leaders can help their team members improve in areas of concern or that are critical to their roles.
- One of the key benefits is empowerment and ownership. Staff are empowered to take ownership of their performance and development which leads to increased motivation and engagement.
- A coaching style can be adapted to suit individual team member's needs and preferences. It's a flexible approach that allows leaders to tailor their support based on each person's unique circumstances.
- Coaching encourages problem-solving skills. Instead of simply telling employees what to do, managers can guide them through challenges, enabling them to develop their problem-solving abilities.
- Effective coaching includes positive reinforcement and recognition of achievements. This helps reinforce desired behaviours and motivates employees to continue improving.
- Despite these benefits, it's important to remember that coaching is not suitable for every situation or every employee. Some employees may prefer more direct feedback or may require a different style of management depending on their developmental stage or job responsibilities. It's essential for managers to be adaptable and to use a range of management styles based on the needs of their team members and the circumstances they face. However, coaching is a great start point or default style.

# A Coaching approach to leadership



Here's a list of 15 powerful coaching questions that help leaders shift from a "tell" to an "ask" approach, encouraging ownership, reflection, and independent thinking:

- What's the challenge here for you?
- What outcome do you want to achieve?
- What have you already tried so far?
- What options do you see going forward?
- What's stopping you from moving ahead?
- What would success look like if you solved this?
- What assumptions might be getting in your way?
- How does this situation look from someone else's perspective?
- What resources or support do you already have?
- If you had to make a decision right now, what would it be?
- What's the smallest next step you could take?
- What might you do differently next time?
- How will you know you've made progress?
- What's the most important thing to focus on here?
- If I weren't here, what would you do?

These questions deliberately move thinking from clarifying the issue → exploring options → committing to action while keeping the responsibility with the other person.

## Active Listening

Listening is the foundation of a coaching approach. Without it, your questions will be empty, and the other person will feel unheard. But listening is harder than we think.

Most of the time, we are not listening to understand, we are listening to reply. We spend most of our time queuing to speak. Our brains naturally seek consistency with our own thoughts and experiences so when someone speaks, we quickly connect it to what we already know. We make assumptions. We prepare our response. We focus on what we want to say next rather than what is being said now.

In coaching conversations, we need to listen at four levels:

- Facts: What actually happened? What are the concrete details?
- Feelings: What emotions are underneath the words?
- Assumptions: What beliefs or interpretations might be shaping their perspective?
- Intentions: What do they really want to achieve or avoid?

Most leaders stay at the level of facts. Coaching leaders go deeper. They notice tone, emotion, and body language. They ask powerful questions to uncover assumptions and test intentions.

This is difficult because it requires us to quiet our inner voice and be fully present. It means holding back our own opinions long enough to truly hear the other person's reality before jumping to advice or judgement.

When we listen actively across all four levels, people feel understood. They think more clearly. They find their own solutions. And that is the heart of a coaching approach.

## Active Listening

### Facts



Listen to the words, the structure, the flow and any data used.

### Feelings



Listen for emotions expressed either in words or through non-verbal communication

### Assumptions



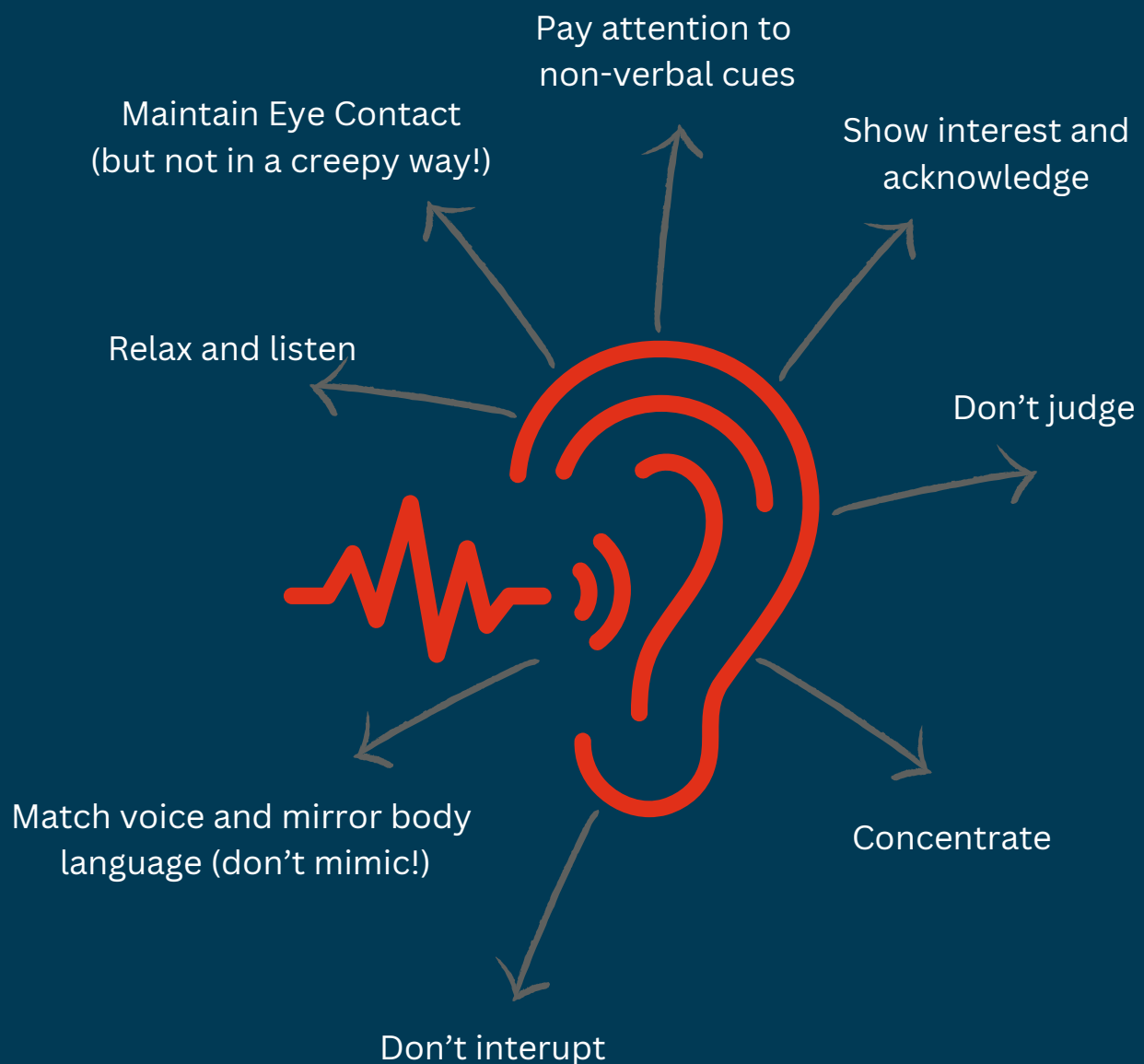
What assumptions either positive or negative is the speaker making?

### Intentions



Listen for any evidence of intentions

## Active Listening



## 5 Practical things for you to try straight away to improve your active listening

### 1. Pause before responding

When someone finishes speaking, hold the space and count to three before you reply. It stops you from jumping in too quickly and gives your brain time to process what was actually said rather than what you expected to hear.

### 2. Summarise back what you heard

Use phrases like “So what I’m hearing is...” or “It sounds like you’re saying...”. This not only checks your understanding but shows the other person that you are genuinely trying to grasp their perspective.

### 3. Listen for feelings as well as facts

Notice tone, pace, and body language. Ask yourself, “How might they be feeling right now?” rather than just “What happened?”. It helps you explore assumptions and intentions beneath the surface.

### 4. Ask open questions rather than giving advice

Replace statements with questions like “What’s the real challenge here for you?” or “What options do you see?”. It stops you from drifting into problem-solving mode and keeps the focus on their thinking, not yours.

### 5. Turn off distractions and give full attention

Put your phone away, close the laptop, and maintain eye contact. People can sense when you are only half present. Coaching conversations need your full attention to be effective.