

## Coaching and mentoring: What’s the difference?

### Some views on the subject:

- A teacher gives instructions
- A mentor gives advice
- A coach asks questions

The most important differentiator a coach has is the recognition that providing solutions, advice, suggestions or answers actually doesn’t help very much. As the proverb says: ‘Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach him to fish and you feed his family for a lifetime. The trick is to know what questions to ask!

*David Nicoll*

As definitions of ‘mentor’ tend to include all three roles, i.e. teacher, advisor, coach, I’d suggest that ‘mentoring’ might be more accurately described as a broad approach to supporting someone’s long-term development.

*Scott Welch*

Mentoring techniques are very much those of coaching. The difference lies in:

<b>The nature of the relationship</b>	More distant – not working in the same department, or at the same or immediate superior level.
<b>The focus of discussion</b>	Personal behaviour, relationships, career aspirations – rather than immediate work performance
<b>Frequency of interaction</b>	Occasional and driven by the mentee rather than the mentor <i>Source: David White</i>

The term ‘*mentor*’ is taken from a story in The Odyssey in which Odysseus entrusts the care and nurturing of his son Telemachus to his friend Mentor.

### Mentoring:

‘ A nurturing process in which a more skilled or more experienced person, serving as a role model, teaches, encourages, counsels and befriends a less skilled or less experienced person for the purpose of promoting the latter’s professional and/or personal development. Mentoring functions are carried out within the context of an ongoing, caring relationship between the mentor and mentee, ’

**5 Mentoring Functions:**

- teaching
- sponsoring ( protecting, supporting, promoting)
- encouraging
- counselling
- befriending

**Key Skills and Qualities for the Effective Mentor:**

- Good listener
- Able to challenge
- Responds to individual needs
- Approachable
- Skilled communicator
- Problem solver
- Confidential
- Respectful
- Committed to mentee
- Organised
- Intelligent
- Honest
- Self-confident
- Open – minded
- Patient
- Has Empathy
- Negotiator
- Discreet
- Assertive

**Mentoring is most likely to succeed when...**

- There is a need for advice and long term personal development.
- The mentee is in a position to select their mentor.
- The mentor is perceived as experienced, skilled and trustworthy by the mentee.
- Mentoring occurs on an occasional, mentee-driven and confidential basis.

## Differences between mentoring and coaching in the workplace

It is helpful to understand these differences as, although many of the processes are similar, they are generally delivered by individuals with different qualifications and different relationships with their client.

( Sources: the CIPD and The Coaching and Mentoring network)

Mentoring	Coaching
Ongoing relationship that can last for a long period of time	Relationship generally has a set duration
Can be more informal and meetings can take place as and when the mentee needs some advice, guidance or support	Generally more structured in nature and meetings are scheduled on a regular basis
More long-term and takes a broader view of the person	Short-term (sometimes time-bounded) and focused on specific development areas/issues
Mentor is usually more experienced and qualified than the 'mentee'. Often a senior person in the organisation who can pass on knowledge, experience and open doors to otherwise out-of-reach opportunities	Coaching is generally not performed on the basis that the coach needs to have direct experience of their client's formal occupational role, unless the coaching is specific and skills-focused
Focus is on career and personal development	Focus is generally on development/issues at work
Agenda is set by the mentee, with the mentor providing support and guidance to prepare them for future roles	The agenda is focused on achieving specific, immediate goals
Mentoring revolves more around developing the mentee professional	Coaching revolves more around specific development areas/issues

## Differences between counselling and coaching in the workplace

Coaching and counselling share many core skills. However, professional counsellors work with personal issues in much greater depth than would be generally explored within a coaching context.

Counselling aims to:

- ✓ Explore personal issues and problems through discussion in order to increase understanding or develop greater self awareness.
- ✓ The aim of counselling is to leads the client towards self-directed actions to achieve their goals.



## Two Models for Coaching

### Input coaching:

For many people, coaching is specifically about advising people on ways that they can improve their skills in order to perform better.

There is a sense of creating improvement by transferring, or *inputting* some of the skills, knowledge and expertise of the coach to the person being coached.

This model has less to do with helping people find their own solutions and ways forward. It is more to do with prescribing and directing the 'right' course of action. The coach identifies the problem, advises on the technique or method of solving it and then checks back to see how successfully the coachee has managed the process.

### When might you use Input coaching?

- ✓ When there is a technical training need.
- ✓ When the problem /issue is very urgent.
- ✓ When the only issue is a very narrowly defined task.
- ✓ In a one off situation.

### What are the dangers of input coaching?

- Coachee becomes dependent.
- Coach's views overwhelm the coachee.
- Coachee can only ever be as good as the coach.
- Coachee develops one way of doing things: the coach's way.





## How do Adults Learn?

### The Learning Ladder: an NLP model\*

#### Unconscious incompetence

*You don't know what you don't know or cannot do*

This is the 'ignorance is bliss stage' and many people prefer to remain here and not to try to learn or improve. We can all think of presenters who continue to present very badly, blissfully unaware of just how bad they are!

#### Conscious incompetence

*You are aware (often painfully) of what you don't know or cannot do*

This is the stage at which we are vulnerable. It can feel as though nothing can be achieved without huge effort. Course like this tend to push us into this stage and the next one, which is why we often experience them as challenges. It's important to remember that these feelings are an entirely normal part of the process of learning something.

#### Conscious competence

*You are able to perform but need to concentrate very hard to get it right.*

#### Unconscious competence

You can now do a good job relatively easily, this is usually the result of a combination of skill, experience and aptitude...and it takes practice!

\*NLP stands for Neuro Linguistic Programming



## **Listening Skills**

Beliefs about Listening

*Adapted from Nelson – Jones, R Human Relationship Skills,(1996) Holt Rinehart and Winston , London*

### **How do we view these beliefs about listening in terms of true or false?**

- It is always up to other people to communicate precisely what they want to say
- Talking is more important than listening
- We are more likely to hear messages that agree with our own outlook on the world, than messages that challenge our views.
- We listen well when we have something to say on a subject
- Listening is a natural ability for most people
- Being a good listener requires self discipline
- Observing body language and voice quality plays no part in effective listening
- Our listening is not affected by our previous experiences.

### **Why we don't listen to others:**

- Mind Reader
- Rehearser
- Filterer
- Dreamer
- Identifier
- Comparer
- Derailer
- Sparrer
- Placater

**What kind of mentoring/ coaching relationship works best?**

- You need to know the person and develop a positive, not adversarial relationship with them.
- The relationship must be a mutually respectful adult-adult one.
- Each individual is unique, and you need to know what approach works best for them. Determining this requires you to work with them interactively.
- Each situation is unique and you need flexibility. What works well in one situation may not work well in another.
- All of this takes time!

**The T GROW model:**

The GROW model offers a useful framework around which to build a comprehensive checklist for coaching.

<b>G R O W</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>General area</b>
	<b>Goal</b>	<b>What do you want</b>
	<b>Reality</b>	<b>What is happening now?</b>
	<b>Options</b>	<b>What could you do?</b>
	<b>Way Forward</b>	<b>What will you do?</b>

Not all coaching will use all of these stages all of the time.

You may, for example spend several sessions on any of these stages. The model is best seen as a spiral, with a continuous process of review, and feedback built into the conversations between coach and coachee.





## Keys to Success as a Coach

### **Focus on the views of the person you are coaching:**

You do not have to know or have all the answers

### **Ask the right questions:**

This prompts people to reflect and think, it involves them and creates an active relationship, it also allows people to use their own insights and experience as opposed to yours.

### **Learn from and value failure:**

*'I failed my way to success'*

*Edison*

Enable and encourage people to take risks: we often learn more from what goes wrong than from what went right.

*A person who is never wrong or who has never failed has not done very much!*

### **Recognise that it is the 'coachee' that does the work:**

This is difficult for a manager who has traditionally had a 'command and control' approach.

When a person is successful the coach puts them on centre stage. When things go wrong, it is the coach that accepts responsibility and shields the person

### **A coach derives satisfaction of the success of other people:**

Coaching is best seen as 'a conversation' between peers and equals, rather than between the manager and a staff member.

## **When is a need a coaching need?**

### **You may decide to use coaching:**

- As part of regular one-one meetings
- When delegating new tasks
- When a team member comes to you with a problem
- When a piece of work appears to be going wrong and mistakes are being made
- If a team member is looking concerned or stressed
- As part of performance reviews
- All the time!

## Summary of Effective Coaching Behaviours

<b>Open-ended questions</b>	What, when, how, where, who..? These questions elicit more than a yes or no response and give you and your coachee more information and insight
<b>Probing questions</b>	Dig deeper to find out underlying issues. Use simple phrases such as ‘What do you think caused that?’ ‘What did you think/feel/say then?’
<b>Reflecting questions</b>	Play back phrases when you feel an area is worth greater consideration. Use the coachee’s own words to reflect back: ‘You said that xxx, let’s go back to that for a moment...’
<b>Active listening</b>	Use listening signals ( nodding etc..) Be aware that some body language may discourage speaker.
<b>Summarising and testing out understanding</b>	Give periodic summaries of the discussion to facilitate the direction of the discussion, verify your understanding, draw out key points and demonstrate interest.
<b>Giving feedback</b>	Resist the temptation to give assessments before the coachee has had a real opportunity to give their own self assessment. Avoid inputting motives, feelings to the coachee. Stick to specific behavioural examples with actual, recent evidence. Generalised comments are not helpful.
<b>Managing Resistance</b>	Where the coachee does not agree with your assessment, encourage them to give counter examples. Where these are forthcoming, be positive but focus on the need to bring this level of competency to a wider range of activities.

