

Get Ready for Coaching

An essential guide to preparing to work with a coach

"Plenty of people probably feel a little nervous about launching themselves into the clutches of a coach.

This is the first book to offer much needed guidance to the coachee... It is easy to follow, guides them through the process... and should be very helpful".

Sir John Whitmore

Author of Performance Coaching



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Where are you now?

How ready are you for coaching? Circle the relevant answer for each of the questions below to see whether you are ready to get the most from coaching.

- I have a good understanding of coaching and see it as a positive step in my growth and development.

Yes

Probably

Unsure

- I am capable of honest self-assessment, and I am ready for candid feedback from others.

Yes

Probably

Unsure

- I am prepared to trust a coach enough to talk openly about my hopes, fears and weaknesses.

Yes

Probably

Unsure

- I am ready to commit time and energy – to coaching sessions, and to any ‘homework’ between sessions.

Yes

Probably

Unsure

- I am willing to try new approaches and to make any necessary changes in my behaviour.

Yes

Probably

Unsure

- I recognise that the benefit I get from coaching will depend on the level of investment I am prepared to make.

Yes

Probably

Unsure

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Understanding your learning style

Throughout the coaching process, you will be trying new things, adopting new behaviours and making sense of events to draw out learning.

People learn differently depending on their personality. To maximise success, it's helpful to understand your learning style. The most widely used model is Peter Honey's Learning Styles, which is based on Kolb's Learning Cycle. Descriptions below will help you to recognise how you learn best. This is valuable for you and your coach, when designing learning opportunities during coaching sessions.

- **Activists**

Activists involve themselves fully in new experiences. They enjoy the here and now and are happy to be dominated by immediate experiences. They are open-minded, and this tends to make them enthusiastic about anything new. They learn best when:

- They have to go and do something within a short period of time – it's appropriate to "have a go"
- They're thrown in at the deep end with a task they think is difficult e.g. when set a challenge with inadequate resources and/or adverse conditions
- They're involved with other people e.g. bouncing ideas off them, solving problems as part of a team

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Ending

As you get more knowledgeable about coaching and develop your self-awareness, you may find that you would benefit from a change or you no longer need coaching. (See the research insight on page 19). Reasons for this may include:

- You've developed and achieved your objectives. It seems a natural time to stop
- You've moved on in the organisation and now have different needs
- The coaching is not feeling as challenging as it was, perhaps it's a little cosy and comfortable
- You notice that there are fewer issues to bring to your coach

Research suggests that coachees find it very difficult to give their coach negative feedback or to end the coaching partnership

Your coach will have done nothing wrong and your relationship will still be good, which makes initiating a change or ending the coaching feel even more difficult.

Some things to bear in mind:

- Coaching is not intended to be long term – its nature is results-focused and relatively quick
- Coaches will not expect sessions to run on and on – but that doesn't mean they will initiate the ending
- A good coach may suggest ending or reducing the frequency of meeting
- From the coach's perspective, it is better to deliver value to a new client than to stay with a client while their effectiveness decreases