

# GROW COACHING MODEL QUESTIONS

Good questions are a core component to a coaching conversation. Below are examples of questions you, as a coach, can use when implementing the GROW (Goals, Reality, Outcomes, What Next) coaching model developed John Whitmore and is explained in detail in his book *Coaching for Performance*.

## Goals

Goals can take two forms: End Goals and Performance Goals

1. End goals, which are final objectives, are often not in an individual's control, but provide inspiration.
2. Performance goals, which are key results that will drive final objectives, and are more controllable by an individual, provide specification, and support to a final objective.

And all goals should pass the **SMART test**: A goal should be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic, and time bound.

### Questions to define End Goals

1. What must you accomplish in the next 12 months?
2. What do you want to be doing in five-years?
3. What's your ideal future?
4. What is the legacy that you want to leave?
5. How can you word your goal using positive language?
6. What is the experience you are looking to create?

### Questions to define Performance Goals

1. What would you like to focus on today?
2. What do you want to achieve from this coaching session?
3. What's important to you today?
4. What are you working on at the moment?
5. What challenges are you struggling with?
6. How can you word that goal more specifically?

7. How can you measure that goal?
8. How can you break down that goal into smaller steps?
9. What do you want to change?
10. What impact will achieving this goal have for you?
11. What new skill do you want to learn or develop?
12. What would the benefits be if you achieved this goal?

## Reality

Reality defines the current state. And often when reality becomes crystal clear, goals need to be adjusted. Your role as coach is to ask questions, which will uncover all the facts, figures, actions taken, available resources, potential obstacles, and past results. This requires questions that encourage the coachee to use descriptive, detailed, and specific words. It leads the coachee to assess the situation at hand and create a new awareness.

The questions need to be ones that will require focus in order to draw out details. Questions starting with What, When, Where, Who, and How Much are best used during this part of the coaching conversation.

### Questions to explore reality

1. What's working well for you at the moment?
2. What is happening now (what, who, when, and how often)? What is the affect or result of this?
3. Have you already taken any steps towards your goal?
4. Is what you are doing helping you follow your joy?
5. What isn't working well at the moment?
6. Just because that happened in the past, why must it happen again?
7. What have you done so far to improve things?
8. How does this goal impact your spouse/partner?
9. What's the excuse that you have always used for not achieving your goals?
10. Do you know other people who have achieved that goal?
11. What did you learn from \_\_\_\_\_?
12. What have you already tried?
13. How could you turn this around this time?
14. What could you do better this time?

15. What aspects of your life will be impacted by reaching the above goal?
16. On a scale of one to ten how severe/serious/urgent is the situation?
17. What is the biggest obstacle that you are facing?
18. What are you afraid of?
19. What are you trying to prove to yourself?
20. What are you passionate about?
21. What are you willing to endure to see your goal become a reality?
22. Is that a need or a want?
23. Where are you sabotaging yourself?
24. What are the positive outcomes of this negative situation?
25. What part of what you've just said could be an assumption?
26. How does this decision match up with who you know you are?

## Options

As a coach you want to guide your coachee to as many options as possible that will help them close the gap between reality, the current situation, and meeting their goals. In addition to questions, a coach needs to create a safe environment that will allow a coachee to explore options without feeling judged.

During this part of the coaching model, there will be times when your coachee will have **negative assumptions**. For example: "It will probably cost too much" is a negative assumption. When you hear a negative assumption, respond with a **"What if"** question. "What if you had enough money in the budget?" This question eliminates the roadblock and allows the person to be more creative in their thoughts.

1. What are your options?
2. What do you think you need to do next?
3. What could be your first step?
4. What do you think you need to do to get a better result (or closer to your goal)?
5. What else could you do?
6. Who else might be able to help?
7. What would happen if you did nothing?
8. What has worked for you already? How could you do more of that?
9. What would happen if you did that?
10. What is the hardest/most challenging part of that for you?
11. What advice would you give to a friend about that?

12. What would you gain/lose by doing/saying that?
13. If someone did/said that to you what do you think would happen?
14. What's the best/worst thing about that option?
15. Which option do you feel ready to act on?
16. How have you tackled this/a similar situation before?
17. What could you do differently?
18. Who do you know who has encountered a similar situation?
19. If anything was possible, what would you do?
20. What else?
21. What do you think you should do first?
22. What would be the most helpful thing that you could do now?
23. If money wasn't a restriction for you, what would you do?
24. If time wasn't a restriction for you, what would you do?
25. What would you do if you weren't answerable to anyone?
26. What small steps can you take to get you closer to your vision?
27. What would (enter name of relevant expert) do in this situation?
28. What would you try now if you knew you could not fail?
29. If you were guaranteed to succeed, what would you do?
30. What's the best use of your time at the moment?
31. If you could only do one thing this week, what would it be?
32. What can you do better than anyone else in your organization?
33. What books should you be reading to help you achieve your goals?
34. If you went to your boss with this problem, what would they suggest?
35. If you saw someone else in your situation, what would you suggest they do?
36. If you had 50% more confidence, what would you be doing that would be different?
37. If you weren't holding anything back, what would you be doing?

## Way Forward

These questions are designed to get your coachee(s) to make their own decision on the next step(s) they are committed to making.

Incorporating questions using a **likert scale** is useful in this final phase of the coaching conversation. These questions help to quantify commitment, energy, willingness etc. Also note that many of the questions below are "will" questions. These type of

questions helps the coachee to have both choice and ownership in the direction they are committing to take.

This step is also where accountability enters into the process. In the book, *Winning with Accountability*, author Henry Evans, describes the four pieces to The Accountability Puzzle. In order for an interaction to be accountable, all four pieces of the puzzle must be in place: Clear Expectations, Specific Date and Time, Ownership, and Share. Not only do you need your coachee to define next steps, but you need them to be accountable for the next steps.

1. What are you going to do in the next 24 hours?
2. What do you think you need to do right now?
3. What will you do first?
4. What one small step will you take now?
5. What are three actions you can take that would make sense this week?
6. Whatever your first step is, can you think of anything that might stop you from doing it?
7. Is there anything else that you need to consider before starting?
8. How are going to go about it?
9. Tell me how you're going to do that.
10. What else?
11. Is there anything else you can do?
12. When will you start?
13. When will you complete this step?
14. How committed are you in reaching this goal?
15. How much energy are you willing to put into that?
16. Who do you need to speak to about this goal?
17. How are you going to celebrate reaching your goal?
18. How will you know when you have done it?
19. How will you know when you've been successful?
20. What obstacles are getting in the way of success?
21. What roadblocks do you expect or require planning?
22. What resources can help you?
23. Is there anything missing?
24. When are you going to start?
25. How will you know you have been successful?
26. What support do you need to get that done?
27. What will happen (or, what is the cost) of you NOT doing this?
28. What do you need from me/others to help you achieve this?

Likert Scale Questions

1. On a scale of one to ten, how committed/motivated are you to doing it?
2. On a scale of 1 to 10, how motivated are you to achieving this goal?
3. On a scale of one to ten, what is the likelihood of your plan succeeding?
4. What would it take to make it a 10?
5. On a scale of 1-10, how much energy are you willing to put into that?
6. What would it take to raise your energy by 2 points?

And finally, there are the questions to use when you want **clarification and/or elaboration**. These can be used during all the steps of the GROW model. They should be used often to help the coachee discover and become clear in his/her own mind.

- Tell me more about...
- What else?
- What other ideas/feelings/thoughts/opinions do you have?
- What do you mean by...?
- What do you really think about...?
- And?
- Please explain that...
- I'm curious about...

\* GROW Coaching Model was developed by John Whitmore



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