

# 5 Ways to Use Your Coaching to Help You Develop as a Leader

If this is your first time getting coaching, you may wonder the best way to get the most out of it. The answer is, there are many ways to develop your leadership skills by working with your coach.

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**HERE ARE FIVE WAYS THAT HAVE BEEN PROVEN TO WORK:**

## **1. Define and Refine Your Goal(s)**

You've heard about your department's and company's goals and started thinking about how you and your team can help achieve them. Choose one area of your leadership skills and ask for your coach's help designing a challenging and motivational goal there to help you grow and your team succeed.

## **2. Get More Out of the Training Tools and Sessions**

Choose the tool that most intrigues you from any of the sessions and ask your coach to help you explore ways to experiment with it to help your team get new results.

## **3. Reflect on What's Getting in Your Way**

Is there a key person in your team or company that you always butt heads with? Or a process that always slows you down? Or something that keeps coming up on performance reviews? Using a coaching session to dig into that and search for new ways to approach it can be a great way to create new awareness and choices, and can often lead to major breakthroughs that can help you move toward your goal.

## **4. Search for Ways to Leverage Past Successes**

Too often, we narrow our choices by only looking at what's currently happening and available. But you've had a lot of experiences at and outside of work that could help you change the current situation. Use your coaching session to explore ways of using past successes to address present challenges.

## **5. Bring More Stakeholders Into the Conversation**

Ask your coach to help you think through how to use your sessions to consider the needs of your key stakeholders. How could pursuing your goals also benefit your team? Your boss? Your company? Your clients? Bringing their needs and concerns into the session can greatly increase its value and impact.

## SOME TIPS ON HOW TO GET THE MOST IMPACT OUT OF A COACHING SESSION:

- ▶ Before the session, think about which goals, objectives, challenges, or dreams you want your coach to help you address in the session.
- ▶ Go to a room/place where you won't be disturbed and try to eliminate as many distractions as possible. If possible, face an open window and avoid looking at computer screens or your phone - you'll get much more out of the call if you give the conversation your full attention.
- ▶ Tell the coach at the start of the session where you are in your thinking and what you'd most like to focus on. Listen to the coach's response to your focus and see where it leads. Ask any clarification questions to help you better understand the process.
- ▶ Pay attention to your emotions during the call. If a question makes you feel uncomfortable, think about why: does the question challenge you to rethink the ways you've been working or living? Does the idea of taking new action feel risky? Are you anxious about change? All of those are quite normal emotions to experience in a deep coaching conversation and can lead to new ways of looking at your situation. Tell your coach what you're feeling so that they can better understand what does and doesn't work for you.
- ▶ One of the biggest goals of a coaching session is to help you see your situation in new ways, so be ready to capture any new ideas, powerful insights, or meaningful questions that come up on the call.
- ▶ If you have a big insight, feel free to pause the conversation so that you can reflect on it for a moment and see where it leads. Coaches LOVE when clients take the time to follow their own ideas and come up with new actions, ideas, or goals. And write your insights down! Research shows that we do better pursuing goals and taking action when we write about our progress on a regular basis. Journaling can be very helpful.
- ▶ Turn that insight into actionable steps. What can you try or experiment with before your next session to move toward your goal?
- ▶ Commit to a specific time to take the steps. People who schedule actions have a much higher likelihood of taking them.
- ▶ Use your coach between sessions to stay connected to your goal and maintain momentum. The easier it is, the more likely you'll be to do it. So share a win/new progress, ask for a resource, or ask for help with something that's slowing you down. Your coach wants to help you move forward!

