ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS
TO
GROW
YOUR TEAM

By Kathryn Jackson of
www.careerbalance.co.nz

66 *A vital guide to coaching conversations
at work to deliver great business results* **99**

Graham Alexander, founder of the Alexander Corporation, originator of
the GROW model, and author of SuperCoaching and Tales from the Top

An Extract from Essential Questions to GROW Your Team

http://www.careerbalance.co.nz

BEFORE YOU GO ANY FURTHER...

WHY SHOULD YOU READ THESE eBOOKS?

You can't escape the growth of interest in the power of coaching at work.

No longer just the stuff of track and field, coaching questions are now proven to produce quicker results, increased accountability and almost instantaneous personal development for the person being coached.

By using these questions you will be able to increase your impact quickly and effectively so that you can;

- Develop a more self sufficient and acountable team
- Have some of the more difficult conversations with confidence
- Get your team excited, motivated and engaged at work
- Create bigger picture thinking or fresh ideas in the people you work with
- Ultimately...free yourself up to focus on the stuff that REALLY matters at work.

The eBooks you're about to read have been designed to give you the tools to use coaching questions with members of your team – and many of the conversations can take place in 10 minutes or less.

eBOOK ONE

This eBook contains a quick introduction to help you decide who to coach (and who not to coach). It then presents a series of the most common discussions at work, using the internationally acclaimed GROW model. It's been designed as a quick guide to review before you have a coaching discussion with a member of your team. Simply check that a coaching conversation is likely to be effective, select the most appropriate conversation guide and get started.

eBOOK TWO

This eBook provides detail on the origins and use of the GROW coaching model, explores different learning styles and how they might impact the development and actions of your team when you coach them, introduces the core skills required to be a successful coach at work and identifies some of the main barriers to coaching in the workplace. The eBook also includes a detailed reference section for further reading, including an overview of the main coaching schools around the world.

MEET THE AUTHOR

No doubt if you've found these eBooks then you're eager to be the leader of a team that really knows how to perform, and you're interested in how coaching questions might play a key role in making that happen.

The idea for this work has been developing over the last couple of years; largely as a result of the coaching work I've done in organisations across New Zealand, and my previous experience as an executive coach in the UK.

It seemed to me that although there were plenty of exceptional resources to explain what coaching is, how to do it and list upon list of great coaching questions…there were limited tools and resources to demonstrate how coaching questions might look in REAL conversations at work.

Leaders and managers shared with me that they TOTALLY understood the concept of coaching, and the power that it brings with creating responsibility and accountability in their team – but they also wanted me to help them prepare for specific conversations at work, asking me what sort of questions might be helpful to ask and when.

I checked my experiences with other coaches around the world and they had a similar story to tell…

As a result, the idea for these eBooks was sown.

Please feel free to adapt or change any questions you use from these eBooks to make them sound more like something you would say.

The only thing I would ask is that you contact me if you'd like to use any of the models that I've used because I've obtained special permissions to include them, and would like to honour those permissions.

Thank you so much for investing your money in these eBooks, I hope that you love them and find the information invaluable to your conversations in the workplace.

Kathryn

A special thanks goes to Pat Flynn for his awesome publication '**eBooks the $mart Way'** which was a critical resource for creating the eBook you're reading now!

I'm absolutely delighted that you've chosen my eBooks to help you out with your coaching conversations at work. While you're reading them, if you have any questions, or would like me to help you to design a coaching conversation that hasn't been included please don't hesitate to get in touch with me.

My private email is kathryn@careerbalance.co.nz.

THE SMALL PRINT

At first, I resisted including this section - but on the advice of many I'm going to do so.

I've kept the content as simple as possible and have based it largely on a common sense approach as opposed to legal speak – I hope you can respect my desire to do so.

All information contained in these eBooks is for informational purposes only; it is not intended as a directive to action.

Any amendments to the GROW model are with the express written permissions of the creators, Graham Alexander and Sir John Whitmore.

The materials in these eBooks may include information, products and resources from third parties. Where this is the case, I cannot assume any responsibility or liability for any third party materials or opinions.

In reading these eBooks you agree that neither my company nor I are responsible for the success or failure of your choices and/or conversations as a result of information presented in them.

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Users of these eBooks are advised to do their own due diligence when making decisions about whether to have a coaching conversation and using the models to develop their teams.   In addition, when having a coaching conversation, users are also advised to apply common sense (largely to avoid legal issues), for example please do not only discuss work-life balance with mothers in your team!

I honestly hope that you find these eBooks a valuable resource to support you in your coaching conversations at work. I ask that you respect the time and resources it took to create them by encouraging your friends and colleagues to purchase their own copy from www.careerbalance.co.nz.

Ready to go ahead and buy Essential Questions?

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BOOK ONE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

ON COACHING

Research by the Chartered Institute of Personnel & Development (CIPD Resourcing & Talent Planning Survey; UK, 2010) has highlighted that in-house development through coaching was the preferred way to grow skills, confidence and capability – used in 54% of the 500 organisations surveyed and compared with 36% in 2009.

The impact of and value in coaching at work is ever increasing.

There is widespread recognition of the fact that one management style does not suit all members of a team, and while it is not appropriate to coach all of the time (just like it is not appropriate to command and control all of the time), there is a requirement to have coaching capability in all management toolboxes so it can be used where necessary.

My purpose is not to create an eBook on How To Coach - there are already many great resources to achieve this, some of which are listed in the **Great Resources** section of the second eBook, GROW your team.

Before presenting the **Essential Questions** however, it is imperative that we pause to explore some parameters on when it is, and is not appropriate to use coaching as a management style**.**

CAUTIOUS ENTHUSIASM

As a manager who had just been taught about the power of coaching on a workplace course, I returned to my team full of great ideas about questions and exciting notions of accountability and responsibility. I spent the next few weeks coaching my socks off; asking powerful coaching questions of everybody I came into contact with (including my poor, long suffering husband!).

I soon realised that this approach was not working, and when I looked at my 360 feedback report to check the impact of my coaching I started to see why;

> "I sometimes wish Kathryn would not ask us a question every time - every now and then we just want advice!"

> "When Kathryn asks me a question that I don't know the answer to, it sometimes makes me feel stupid"

I adapted my approach pretty rapidly after this!

I started asking "would you like some coaching on this or are you looking for an answer?"

I also paid much closer attention to the non verbal behaviours I saw to give me a clue about whether coaching might be the best solution.

Of course, sometimes I coached a little bit anyway when I worked out that 'stealth coaching' can be a good tool for team members who like to take the easy way out by always asking for advice, when they could come up with some ideas of their own if they tried hard enough!

DECIDING WHO TO COACH

A simple way to decide whether it would be appropriate to ask a coaching question is to ask yourself how much knowledge the person is 'likely' to have about the subject.

I have deliberately written 'likely' because you're never going to be 100% sure unless you ask the other person.

For example, let's say you are talking with a new manager who's just moved into a role where you know they are managing a team for the first time and you ask them for their ideas on **Options** for approaching a conversation with somebody who's underperforming.

It's fairly unlikely that the new manager will be able to do more than guess a response…and that might seem a bit uncomfortable or risky for them especially as they probably want to make a good impression on you and seem knowledgeable!

However, you could ask the same manager whether they have ever handled a performance management conversation before, or heard a performance management conversation handled well by another person.

Using their response, you can decide whether to **Tell More or Ask More**.

- **Tell More** - If the response is that that <u>have not</u> handled or experienced this before, you could adopt a more **Instructive** style; pointing out some of the risks, encouraging them to speak to Human Resources, showing them where the resources are to help them and checking the support they need from you. You've chosen this style because their knowledge, skills and experience in handling discussions about performance is LOW. You might still ask some coaching style questions, but most of your conversation will be sharing information that you know.

- **Ask More** - If the response is that they <u>have</u> handled or experienced an underperformer before, you could adopt a more **Encouraging** or **Coaching** style; encouraging them to recall the main content of the discussion, outcomes they achieved, challenges they overcame and subsequently plan how they will approach this conversation. You've chosen this style because their knowledge, skills and experience in handling discussions about performance is HIGH.

COACHING CONTINUUM

The **Coaching Continuum Model** is a framework to help you decide whether coaching is likely to be helpful by highlighting that the level of knowledge, skills or experience of your team member should dictate whether it would be appropriate to be more instructive in your approach, or whether a more enabling coaching style would be preferable.

(**If you'd like me to acknowledge this as your Coaching Continuum please contact me as I cannot find a source for this model)

TRAFFIC LIGHTS

An alternative framework for you to use when deciding to coach would be the **Traffic Light Model** – which I have designed in collaboration with one of my New Zealand based clients.

We were exploring the impact of **Motivation** and **Skill** on whether a team member would be appropriate to coach, and the **Traffic Light Model** represents the conclusions that we drew for this particular business.

Please feel free to adapt this model for your own business.

RED

Our conclusions were that coaching somebody who has low skill AND low motivation might not get you very far. These were defined as the team members that perhaps don't have the ability to perform well in their role, and they also don't demonstrate any sort of motivation in their work.

We concluded that they may be in the wrong job and that encouraging them to move into new areas of responsibility might improve their motivation or lead them to use skills that they are more confident in using – but until that time our conclusion was that it `might be unkind to coach them at all.

We discussed whether it would be more appropriate for an external (and therefore independent) coach to work with this team member to encourage them to regain their enthusiasm for work, and also decided that the most important outcome for this group was a clear understanding of what was expected of them at work – perhaps using more of a formal performance management approach.

AMBER

Where team members have high motivation (regardless of whether they are highly skilled or not), we concluded that it would be appropriate to coach them with caution.

 For real 'high flyers' in the team (those with high skill, high motivation) we concluded that coaching can sometimes be incredibly beneficial to encourage them towards the next level of their capabilities…but that used inappropriately coaching might result in them believing that their capability is being called into question, or that deficiencies were being identified. One of the most important factors in coaching this group is to clearly explain why coaching is being used as a development tool – perhaps exploring how it will take their career to an even higher level. It is also imperative that they choose to be coached, possibly even selecting an external coach to help challenge and develop their capabilities.

For the 'enthusiastic' members of your team that don't quite have the skills but are loving their responsibilities (the low skill, high motivation group), we wondered whether coaching might accidentally curb that enthusiasm, so concluded that a more directive approach might be more appropriate, unless the manager or leader was a very careful coach! This might be typical with new members of the team who are looking for clarity on what is expected of them and ideas for how to work effectively in their new workplace and coaching questions might just highlight what they don't know. We did however conclude that questions might encourage them to look for answers if used sensitively.

GREEN

The conclusion we reached is that the best team members for using the GROW coaching model with would be those who are highly skilled and capable but have perhaps lost their motivation, or their confidence at work or who maybe are not making decisions for themselves.

We decided that coaching might help this group to regain their self-confidence and challenge their own self-limiting beliefs, thereby encouraging them to take new actions and start to believe that they can achieve even more through their work and their career.

Some ideas we had for how these people might look included; capable team members who often stayed late or missed deadlines, people approaching retirement, employees without a clear career plan – and who have been in a similar role for a while, team members who don't speak up in meetings and those who were reluctant to make decisions. We also concluded that these team members may be labelled the 'trouble makers' in that by being highly skilled but without the motivation they may use those skills in all the wrong areas!

THE HAWTHORNE EFFECT

From 1924-1932 a study was conducted at the Hawthorne Works (a Western Electric manufacturing facility outside Chicago). The study was to see if its workers would become more productive in higher or lower levels of light.

In a nutshell, the conclusions of the study were that regardless of higher or lower levels of light, the workforce productivity improved when changes were made...and then slumped when the study was concluded.

The very fact that there was interest and focus in their productivity became an incentive to achieve more.

This study became one of the earliest Workplace Motivation studies and is also known as the 'Someone Upstairs Cares' effect.

It's worth reflecting on what this means for taking the time to focus on your team by using essential coaching questions to explore their experience at work.

Use the following model to plot your own team members into the Red, Amber and Green Categories in order to help you identify whether a coaching conversation might be appropriate.
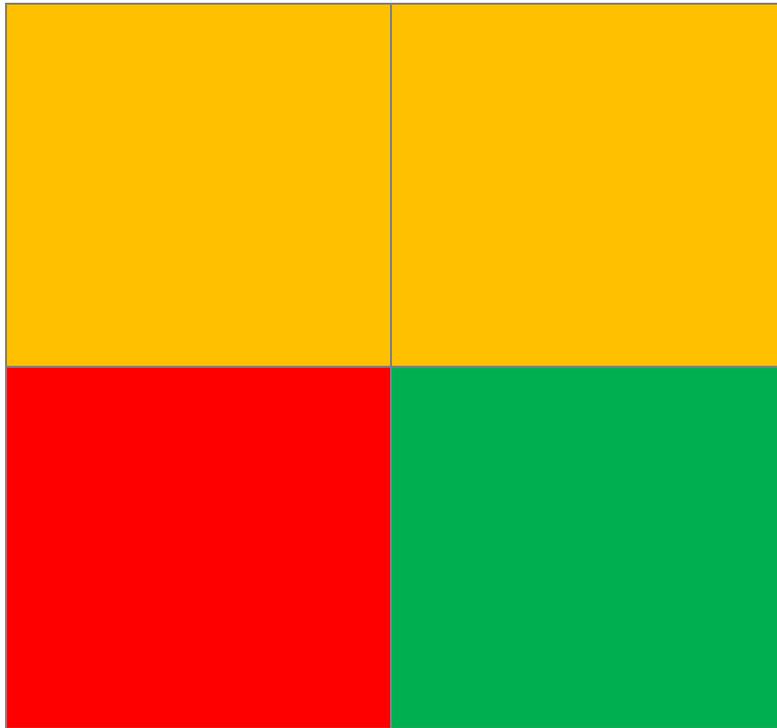
For the team members you will not be coaching, how will you work with them instead to ensure that organisational goals are still achieved?

Who will support you in having discussions or taking action?

What will you do to help them get back on track –with increased skills and capability or a more motivated approach at work?

THE ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

The next part of this eBook is dedicated to **Essential Questions** and includes a summary of some of the main conversations that take place in the workplace, with questions mapped back to the GROW model.

On each page, there is a series of GROW questions for you to work with and develop into your own, and you'll also see a reminder of the GROW model that we are using, so that you can easily refer back to check that your coaching discussion is covering the whole framework – remembering to check in with the **Goal** along the way!

In addition, there's a space for you to add your own **Great Coaching Questions** – perhaps you've heard somebody use it and kept it tucked away for your own personal use. I've included some of my favourites to get you started.

Use the GROW framework to check that your own questions are covering the **Goal**, **Reality**, **Options** and **Will**…and not just all focussed in one area.

> **Remember that to find out more about the GROW Model – how it was developed, how to use it, what it means etc. you should read the second eBook in this series...GROW Your Team.**

Simply want to buy Essential Questions?

Visit www.careerbalance.co.nz to purchase your copy for

just NZ$14.99

CREATING PERFORMANCE OBJECTIVES

It's typical to take some time each year to create personal objectives for your team that are aligned with the overall business objectives of the organisation. Often the two are considered very separately with the result that individuals don't clearly see how their own actions impact business success. Even more common is that performance objectives for individuals are 'set' by the leader, with very little consideration to what employees really want to achieve at work.

Coaching questions can help your team to consider how their own skills, knowledge and experience can contribute to achieving the organisation goals, and identify possible performance goals that are aligned.

It can be really helpful to have an understanding of the personal values and motivators in your team for this discussion to support a more meaningful discussion about how they 'fit' into the organisation. It is essential that you are familiar with the latest business objectives, and that you have shared them with your team before this discussion.

G	• What does your overall focus at work need to be in order for you to meet the needs of the business, but also to really enjoy your job? • Which specific business targets interest you the most? Explore • Which specific business targets interest you the least? Explore • What will the achievement of this business objective mean to you personally? • How could achieving that particular business objective result in you having more XYZ at work (insert values, skills or motivators)? • Where do we as a team need to prioritise to ensure business success? • What are the top five priorities to you currently in your work?
R	• How does your current role or responsibilities directly contribute to the overall goals of the organisation? • What would need to change in your current role or responsibilities to enable you to contribute more directly to the achievement of this business goal? • To what extent does your role currently allow you to have XYZ (insert values, skills or motivators) • For the business targets that interest you the most, how does your current role enable you to contribute to them? • What stops you from contributing to the business targets that interest you the most? • Which of your top five priorities could have the biggest impact on our organisation?
O	• What ideas do you have about knowledge, skills or abilities that you'd like to develop over the next 12 months in order to support the achievement of our business goals? • How could we formally record your personal performance objectives so that they are aligned to the formal business objectives of the business? • What different options would you have within the organisation to develop your knowledge, skills and abilities to contribute even further to the business goals? • Who has already contributed widely to this business goal or has the skills to provide you with some mentoring along the way?
W	• How will you chart your progress against achieving the performance goals that we have agreed today? • How will we measure your success against achieving those objectives? • What action do you need to take on a daily/weekly/monthly basis to achieve your goals? • What support do you need from me to achieve these goals?

COACHING UNDER PERFORMANCE

During your career as a leader you may occasionally be required to discuss under-performance with members of your team.

Taking into consideration the capability and wider performance of the employee involved
will be crucial to help you to decide if a coaching conversation is appropriate – please refer back to the **Coaching Continuum Model** and the **Traffic Light Model** to do this.

For example, if your employee does not have the knowledge or capability to deliver the work that was required of them, then coaching might not be appropriate. Similarly, if the poor performance is part of a wider pattern of under delivery then it may be more appropriate to initiate formal performance management processes with the support of your Human Resources team.

You may also wish to explore some models for **Giving Feedback** in order to support your discussion about under performance at work –searching the internet will identify models like the EEC model (Example, Effect, Change/Consequence), the TELL Model (Tell, Explain, Listen, Let Know) and the old faithful Sandwich Model.

Once you have identified that a coaching conversation could be helpful, here are some questions you might use;

G	• Let's talk about that project you delivered last week – what were some of the key things you were hoping to achieve? • When you consider how you're delivering against your performance objectives, how do you think you're doing? • What sort of feedback have you had from your leaders about the work you've delivered this year? • We need to talk about what happened in that client meeting this morning – what was the thinking behind the comments that you made?
R	• If they were the key things that you wanted to achieve, to what extent do you think you achieved them? • The feedback that I've been hearing from people working with you has been that you are not achieving your goals in the following areas; XYZ (be specific) • It sounds as though while there are one or two areas that are going well, there are some specific areas you think you are struggling with? Explore. • It seems that the thinking behind sharing those comments in the client meeting was to share XYZ information – how well do you think you did that? • What impact could that have on your results/the business/the team?
O	• What ideas do you have for addressing the specific areas that aren't working out for you? • I'd like to share some thoughts on actions you could take to get back on track – would that be helpful? • What might get in the way and prevent you from further achieving? How could you overcome them? • What's stopping you from achieving your objectives right now? • Who do you need to talk to and what are they key things you need to tell them or share?
W	• What do you plan to do next to get back on track? What's the first step you need to take? • When would you like to achieve that by? • What support would you like from me? • When shall we get together to check in on how that's going? • I'd like to provide you with full support on that, let's meet at the end of the day/as appropriate to find out how things are going.

CREATING CAREER GOALS

Having a regular discussion with each team member about their career goals is vital in any organisation. This can help to create an understanding of their career values, motivators and the skills that they would like to use or develop while working with your business.

There is great power in these discussions, because they can help team members believe that you have a personal interest in supporting their career development. However, this doesn't necessarily mean that they must constantly climb the career ladder – stretching more and more each year.

People will look for different things from their career throughout their lives; for example a new parent may look for more balance in their life – perhaps cutting back on stress and responsibilities at work.

Managing expectations **realistically** is one of the most important roles you can play in this discussion – ensuring that they have a reasonable understanding of the opportunities that would be available to them in your organisation, and their current ability to achieve in future roles – while encouraging and supporting their plans to get there.

G	• What is your overall goal for your career? • When you think about what you'd like to be doing in 2/5/10yrs time, what does it look like? • How will you know when you've achieved your latest career goals? • What have been your proudest moments in your career so far? • What is the most important thing about work to you? • When you think back, how did you hope your career would work out for you? • What were some of the main reasons that you accepted this job?
R	• What do you really love about your job right now? • What would you like to change about your job right now? • How does your current job compare with your vision of what you'd like to be doing? • Are there any skills that you would like to use more often? Or less frequently? • Is there anything that you need to change in order to get where you'd like to go with your career? • What has been getting in the way of achieving your career goals so far?
O	• What ideas do you have for ways that you could change your job to make it more enjoyable? • What other roles or opportunities do you see in the organisation or industry that you would like to find out more about? • How could you develop your knowledge, skills and abilities to bring them more into line with the knowledge, skills and abilities that you will need in your future career? • Who do you know that's already doing that sort of job? What could you do to find out more about how they got there? What would you want to know from them? • What ideas do you have for how we could work together to ensure that you can use your XYZ skills more (or less)?
W	• What would you like to achieve in the next 12 months to take you closer to this career goal? • Who could help you to achieve these things? • What might get in the way? How will you overcome it? • What are the consequences if you don't take steps towards achieving your career goals? • What support do you need, and from whom? • When would you like to have achieved your career goals? • What are you going to do first?

DEBRIEFING A PROJECT

When a significant piece of work has been delivered it can be useful to consider how things went.

This can help to raise awareness around what went well and therefore could be continued, or taken into new projects. It can also help to identify what hasn't gone to plan, with a view to identifying lessons learned or exploring root causes that need addressing.

For projects that span a considerable length of time you could consider having this sort of conversation at regular intervals, rather than waiting until the end. You should make an informed decision on whether you would like to hold this conversation with individuals or with the project team, depending on the circumstances.

G	• I'd like to review how that particular XYZ project went – what were our overall aims in delivering it? • In delivering phase two of this project, what were some of the main results we needed? • What were the key outcomes we were looking for? • What were the overall constraints that we wanted to overcome? • Who were the major competitors that we wanted to outperform? • Who were the main people we wanted to influence? • What outcomes had we committed to with our clients?
R	• On reflection, to what extent did we meet our aims? • I'd like to share my own thoughts on how well we achieved against our deliverables - SHARE • How well were those outcomes achieved? • I'd like you to share your ideas on how well we achieved that. • On a scale of 1-10, how well did we influence those people? • Was there anything that didn't go to plan? • What were some of the key lessons that we learned? • Were there any deadlines or milestones that we missed? What ideas do you have about why we missed them?
O	• What ideas do you have for additional action we need to take in order to ensure that our overall aims are achieved or achieved next time? • How could we get things back on track? • If we were doing this project again, from the start – what would we do differently? • What do we need to change about this sort of project in the future? • What else could we include next time? • What action could we take in the future? • What are the really great things that we achieved that could be applied to other projects? • Are there any similar projects in the organisation that might benefit from our learning?
W	• What are we specifically committing to do after this meeting? • Who is going to take ownership of XYZ actions? • When are we going to achieve this by? • Who else needs to be involved in our plans? • What support do you need from me as the overall leader of this project?

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BOOK TWO GROW YOUR TEAM

COACHING CONTEXT

COACHING IS EVERYWHERE

Although coaching as a concept has arguably been around for many years (in fact, it's often quoted that Socrates was one of the original coaches – and he lived around 450 years BC!), it seems that really since the mid 2000's that the concept of applying coaching principals at work have really taken off.

Coaching professionals are also everywhere.

Many of them have trained formally through the numerous global coaching schools and universities that have been created to support their growth. Most of them belong to a professionally recognised body that guides their ethical practice and protects their clients. All of them have exceptional real-life experiences that provide support and inspiration for their client base.

I'm one of those coaches.

I trained with the Oxford School of Coaching & Mentoring in 2006 (www.theocm.co.uk); a career decision that built on over 15 years of experience working across a variety of Human Resources, Consulting and Management roles.

I worked in the corporate and financial world for most of those 15 years; building my own knowledge of what it's like to work with a team, and helping other managers to grow and develop the skills to manage their own people.

I have designed and implemented career frameworks, led a Scottish HR recruitment practice, supported the development of an employee engagement model, taught feedback skills and facilitated the experiences of other managers to help them have more meaningful and 'real' conversations at work.

Since immigrating to New Zealand in 2006, I have successfully launched my own private coaching practice, where I help people to achieve their own career goals, and I use tools and resources like those presented in these eBooks with leaders and managers to enable them to have the same sort of development discussions with their team.

While designing a series of two-day coaching workshops for managers, I realised that if I created a resource like this, then I would be able to provide an extra resource for leaders and managers anywhere in the world to practically explore how coaching conversations might look and feel.

> I hope this information helps to set the context for these eBooks and gives you confidence in my capability to create a resource about this subject.

The importance of sharing.

Sharing knowledge and resources is a personal passion of mine.

My first 'real book' was published in 2009 to provide timely support for people who lost their job as a result of redundancy. Going through the experience of writing and publishing the book reminded me of the responsibility that comes with knowledge – and my desire to find as many ways as possible to share what might be helpful to other people.

To support the launch of my 'real' book, I talked on the radio, appeared on TV and wrote in national (and international) media to try to help as much as possible.

I wasn't paid for any of the work that I did to support my book launch, I just wanted to share the information I had learned while researching and writing it.

These eBooks are my answer to sharing the information I have learned about coaching conversations at work.

I genuinely do hope that they provide you with information to try new conversations with your team, to create new ways of motivating others and to inspire you into using the models – go on, give them a try and see what happens!

PS If you're interested in finding out more about my 'real book' it's called **How to Keep Your Cool if You Lose Your Job** and it's published by Longacre Press, which is now part of Random House.

The ISBN is 978 1877460 33 3 and it's available widely across New Zealand and internet based booksellers.

If you can't get hold of a copy, just contact me directly by emailing Kathryn@careerbalance.co.nz and I'll arrange for a copy to be sent to you.

CORE COACHING SKILLS

"In an encounter with a good coach, you walk away impressed with the coach; in an encounter with a great coach, you walk away impressed with yourself".

Awesome quote, but unknown source – please contact me if it was you!

Having the skills for great coaching discussions at work can be very different to the skills typically used in the 'command and control' approach that is often favoured by managers around the world.

- Listening to a challenge that a member of your team is facing and then offering a solution for them to try is not coaching.
- Encouraging a member of your team to develop their skills by attending a course that you recently enjoyed is not coaching.
- Setting deadlines for your team and then asking for regular updates on progress is not coaching.

"At its simplest, coaching is a conversation where the employee talks and the manager listens and asks questions…

…the conversation helps the employee to think and to decide to take action, in ways that might not have occurred to them if the conversation had not taken place".

Sir John Whitmore

If you were to search the internet for a comprehensive list of the core skills required in order to have a coaching conversation you would be there for HOURS!

Every school of coaching has done countless hours of research into the personal attributes that make a coaching conversation successful, and I've included links to many of their websites in the **Resources Section** of this eBook so that you can find out more, and decide what works for you.

We all possess these skills to a greater or lesser extent, and we can all take action to develop them if necessary so that we can become even better at coaching our team, or the individuals in our team to success.

In a nutshell from the work that I've done, I believe that they boil down to the following seven key areas;

1. **Listening** – the ability to TRULY listen to what somebody else is telling you. No background interference from your inner voice telling you what you think the other person should do!

2. **Flexibility** – the ability to change how you work with somebody based on their natural learning style, their capabilities or their need for information. Not just applying a 'one size fits all' approach and sharing what you've tried before so the other person can copy what worked for you.

3. **Questioning** – your talent for having a good (or a great) question to help other people find their own answer, sticking with it until somebody works it out for themselves or recognising when making a suggesting is appropriate.

4. **Challenging** – your confidence in having tough coaching conversations if somebody isn't achieving what they committed to, if the results aren't good enough or if the person's words and the actions just don't add up.

5. **Interest in Developing Others** – a genuine desire from you to develop all the others in your team - not just a desire to tell them what worked for you, or focus on coaching the 'easy' people.

6. **Interest in Developing Yourself** – a genuine commitment to having a go at new skills yourself, making mistakes and learning from the experience along the way.

7. **Agreeing Goals** – the ability to REALLY nail what somebody is committing to achieve, by when and how it's going to be when it's achieved…in fact with coaching, sometimes all that is required is a clear goal and the rest of the requirements become obvious.

TRUST

In addition to these skills, another element that is inherent for a great coaching conversation is **Trust** – the sense that your team really believes in you; has confidence that you have their best interests at heart and knows that they can bounce ideas without judgement.

Trust is something that we earn through our words and our actions, and just like a bank account we can credit or debit our Trust account (sometimes even on a daily basis!).

If you team trusts you, they will have the confidence to share their ideas or thoughts with you in the knowledge that you won't laugh at them, or steal their thinking and call it your own. Trust will give your team members the sense that you are on their side, and they can share what they hope to achieve at work – and then you will support them.

Can you think of any other coaching skills that will be important to you in your work situation?

Write them down here;

YOUR CORE COACHING SKILLS

"Being a great coach relies on being honest about your own areas of strength and development from the very start and then continually building your capability".

Kathryn Jackson, careerbalance

Taking into account the seven core coaching skills required, plus the level of Trust that your team has in you as a manager, you can now use this model to assess your perception of your own performance in the core skills for coaching.

Once you have identified the coaching skills that are your strengths or areas for development you can set yourself some goals to improve, or support other managers.

For each skill, give yourself a score out of 10 depending on how confident you would be in your capabilities. Ask yourself honestly what evidence your team, your peers or your own manager would give to support the score that you choose?

Want to find out more about the Model?

Visit www.careerbalance.co.nz to purchase your copy for

just NZ$14.99

Here's what some of the reviews say;

"A vital guide to coaching conversations at work to deliver great business results" **Graham Alexander, founder of the Alexander Corporation, originator of the GROW model and author of SuperCoaching and Tales from the Top"**

"A brisk, no nonsense style eBook which will be truly helpful to people who want to coach their team", **Alison Hardingham – International Best Selling author of eight books, and Director of Business Psychology at Yellow Dog Consulting UK.**

'As a mentor and coach to senior executives I can say that coaching is now an essential skill for them. Kathryn's eBook may be the start, or the inspiration to continue on this coaching journey, giving you practical tips to excel'. **Simon O'Shaughnessy, Executive and CEO Coach, Carista Ltd. New Zealand**

'Easily the best collection of coaching questions I've ever come across. As a professional coach whose clientele consists primarily of managers and executives, I know that I will be using many of the pages of this wonderful little book many, many times.' **Pierre Gauthier Certified Integral Coach (TM), Canada**