

## “Leadership GROWth – Development through Coaching”

In my previous article “The Essence of Leadership Coaching”[link to article 11](#) I introduced the GROW model as a way of asking effective questions that tackle the issues of awareness and responsibility in the leader.

In this article I’ll take a closer look at each of the steps in the GROW model and at the types of questions that best raise awareness and responsibility within these steps.

The GROW model is about asking questions in the following sequence:

- **G**oal setting
- **R**eality checking
- Looking at **O**ptions
- The **W**ill to do it.

Within the goal stage we can distinguish between a session goal e.g. What outcome would you like at the end of this session?; an end goal or final objective, and a performance goal.

An end goal /final objective may not be wholly within our control, whereas a performance goal (i.e. a performance level which will provide a very good chance of achieving the end goal) is largely within our control and generally provides a means of measuring progress.

- In the long term, what’s your goal related to this issue?
- What milestones can you identify?
- What are your time frames?

Within the reality stage asking questions that use the senses and tap into emotions will develop a deeper self-awareness, as we have a measure of choice and control over what we are aware of, but what we are unaware of controls us!

- What’s the present situation? Who else is affected by this?
- How much control do you have? Who else has some control? How much?”
- What’s the real issue here?
- How do you feel about this? What frustrates you? Which parts do you feel good about? How do you really feel?
- What have you done about it so far? What stopped you doing more?

In the Options stage the object is to draw out as many options as possible.

- What are all the different ways you could approach this?

It might also be necessary to temporarily sidestep the censorship of the rational mind which stops us thinking of options by making assumptions such as “it’s bound to cost too much.”

This is done by asking “What if...” questions such as,

- what would you do if you had more time? A bigger budget? If you could start again?

These options can then be analyzed and the best chosen:

- Which would give the best result? The most satisfaction?

The purpose of the final phase is to convert a discussion into a decision by using WILL questions.

- What will you choose? How will you know if it’s been successful?
- What will you do to eliminate or get round barriers?
- When will you do this? Who else needs to know?

This model provides a framework for coaching, but if we also want to explore how coaching can improve a leader’s performance (his growth), then we need to understand what we mean by “performance.”

I’d suggest John Whitmore’s definition (in his book “Coaching for Performance”) as a good starting point i.e. “exceeding expectations and fulfilling one’s potential.” This, as detailed in my earlier article, demands taking total responsibility or ownership.

Coaching and the art of effective questioning can be used to help leaders self assess, plan, problem solve and develop their skills. It can also be used with and by leaders for giving feedback, team assessment, and team development.

I like the acronyms used by Whitmore, which can be summed up as the essential ingredients of coaching for leadership performance. These are:

**SEE** - **S**elf **E**steem and **E**nthusiasm of the leader  
**HEAR** - **H**igh **E**nergy, **A**wareness and **R**esponsibility, and  
**GROW** - **G**oals, **R**eality, **O**ptions and **W**ill

Are you ready, willing and able to GROW through SEEing, HEARing and Coaching? Do you want to help your team GROW too?

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Julie Johnson, formerly a manager and development specialist, created The Leadership Coaching Company to help managers solve one of their biggest business problems: how to get the most from themselves and their staff. She is now a leadership success specialist and has attracted a loyal following who praise her down to earth yet inspiring approach.

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