

# Using the GROW Model in a Coaching Approach



## What is Coaching

Coaching is a confidential process that meets a person where they are and uses a process of questioning and personal discovery to support growth and sustainable change in achieving professional and personal goals.

This job aid explains the flow of a coaching conversation between a coach and a coachee to support learners who take the course Coaching for Effective Leadership.

## The GROW Model Coaching Approach and Levels of Listening

People express themselves and listen to each other on different levels. We may speak from the head, in an analytical way, using the language of logic, judgements and beliefs. We may speak from the heart, expressing emotions, feelings, sharing our values and experiences. This can be observed from someone's facial expression, the tone of their voice and the way in which they express empathy and sympathy. We can also express ourselves from our body, which connects to our intentions, motivations and commitment. This can be observed by paying attention to a person's energy levels. When we pay attention to what our coachees are saying with their head, their heart and their body, we are using the three levels of listening and practicing an important skill in a coaching conversation.

When using the GROW Model coaching approach, it is important to note which level of listening your coachee is speaking from. This will allow you to ask powerful, open-ended questions that help your coachee see their issue or challenge from a new perspective and gain new insights.



One of the most challenging aspects of using a coaching approach is choosing the next powerful question that will encourage deeper self-reflection, prompt new insights or inspire new action. This job aid provides samples of powerful questions from each level of listening that you can ask your coachee at each step in the GROW Model. This ensures that the coachee will consider the full range of their knowledge and experience as the coaching conversation moves through the Goal, Reality, Options and Will phases.

### Examples of Powerful Questions by Level of Listening

#### Head

- What do you want to achieve?
- What does success look like?
- What is the current situation?
- What are the internal/external obstacles?
- What strengths/resources do you have?
- What are your options?
- What else could you do?
- What is the first, next step?
- What will you do?
- When will you do it by?



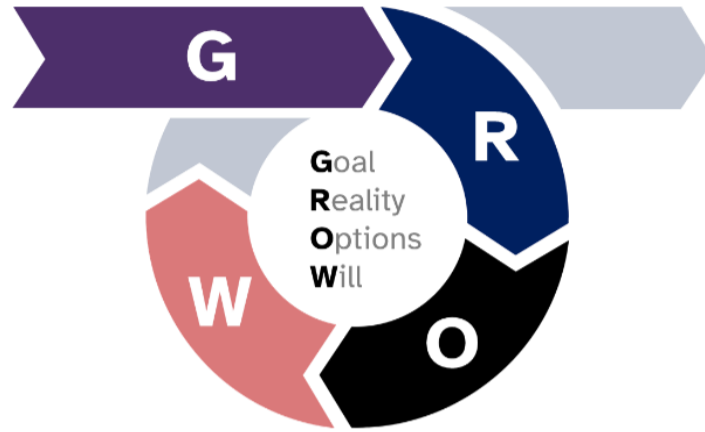
#### Heart

- What is important about that?
- How do you want to feel at the end of this conversation?
- How do you feel about this?
- What value do you want to honour here?
- What is important about this?
- How are you protecting yourself?
- How do you feel now with respect to your goal?
- What energizes you about this action?

#### Body

- How will this serve you?
- What is your level of commitment?
- What impact is this having on you?
- What are your motivations to change?
- What can you count on yourself for?
- What are you stopping yourself from considering?
- Which option energizes you the most?
- On a scale of 1 to 10, what is your level of commitment to this action?
- How would you like to be held accountable?

Using the GROW Model in a Coaching Conversation



Goal



This step brings focus to the topic and supports the coachee in identifying their goals and aspirations. Goals should be as resonant and as specific as possible to maximize success.

Head

What do you want to achieve?

What does success look like?

Heart

What is important about that?

How do you want to feel at the end of this conversation?

Body

How will this serve you?

What is your level of commitment?

## Reality



This step explores the coachee's inner and outer realities, identifying the barriers that exist between their current situation and desired future state. Examine and challenge the dominant perspective and find existing strengths. This step raises the coachee's awareness of their values, limiting beliefs and what their feelings and energy levels are in relation to their topic. New insights are a common output of this step.

### Head

- What is the current situation?
- What are the internal/external obstacles?
- What strengths/resources do you have?

### Heart

- How do you feel about this?
- What value do you want to honour here?

### Body

- What impact is this having on you?
- What are your motivations to change?

## Options



This step explores new perspectives and identifies possible options that can help the coachee move closer to meeting their goal. Inspiration and a sense of possibility characterize this step.

### Head

What are your options?

What else could you do?

### Heart

What is important about this?

How are you protecting yourself?

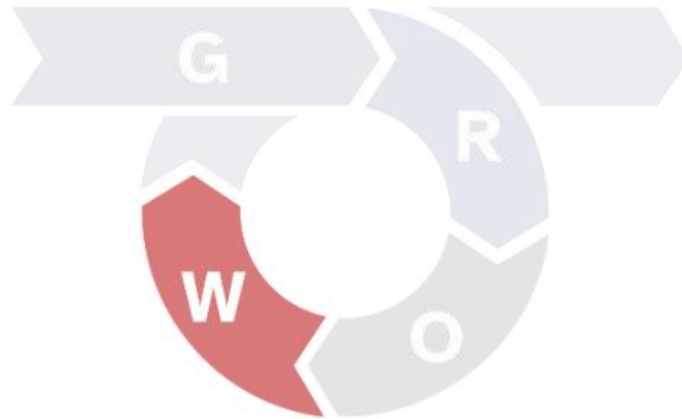
### Body

What can you count on yourself for?

What are you stopping yourself from considering?

Which option energizes you the most?

**Will**



This step is about identifying what the coachee will do, when they will do it and how they will choose to be accountable. Attention is paid to how challenging and resonant the action is for the coachee, and how committed they are to taking it. It is important that the action is SMART (specific, measureable, achievable, relevant and time-bound).

**Head**

What is the first, next step?

What will you do?

When will you do it by?

**Heart**

How do you feel now with respect to your goal?

What energizes you about this action?

**Body**

On a scale of 1 to 10, what is your level of commitment to this action?

How would you like to be held accountable?



## GROW Model

### GOAL

**Head**

What do you want to achieve?  
What does success look like?

**Heart**

What is important about that?  
How do you want to feel at the end of this conversation?

**Body**

How will this serve you?  
What is your level of commitment?

### REALITY

**Head**

What is the current situation?  
What are the internal/external obstacles?

What strengths/resources do you have?

**Heart**

How do you feel about this?  
What value do you want to honour here?

**Body**

What impact is this having on you?  
What are your motivations to change?

### OPTIONS

**Head**

What are your options?  
What else could you do?

**Heart**

What is important about this?  
How are you protecting yourself?

**Body**

What can you count on yourself for?  
What are you stopping yourself from considering?  
Which option energizes you the most?

### WILL

**Head**

What is the first, next step?  
What will you do?  
When will you do it by?

**Heart**

How do you feel now with respect to your goal?  
What energizes you about this action?

**Body**

On a scale of 1 to 10, what is your level of commitment to this action?  
How would you like to be held accountable?



## Additional Reference Tools

- Canada School of Public Service Job Aids:
  - ✓ Peer Coaching Conversation Process: Using the GROW Model Approach
  - ✓ Coaching for Resilience
  - ✓ Coaching for Influence
  - ✓ Coaching for Empowerment
  - ✓ Coaching for Engagement



- *Coaching for Performance: GROWing Human Potential and Purpose: The Principles and Practice of Coaching and Leadership, Sir John Whitmore*  
The GROW model was developed by Sir John Whitmore and first discussed in his book. The book also explains how to unlock people's potential to maximize their performance and use coaching to transform learning and workplace relationships.
- *Change Your Questions, Change Your Life, Marilee Adams*  
This book offers 12 powerful tools for leadership, coaching and life and shares her insight on the art of asking powerful questions.

