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QUICK WIN COACHING

Quick Win Coaching is a beautifully simple yet effective technique that's both the perfect introduction to coaching for beginners yet so powerful that senior coaches and managers use it decades after learning it. The Whatever Life Throws Team dubbed it 'Coffee Break Coaching' as it's so speedy and straightforward you can get positive results and a breakthrough in approach in the time it takes to make and share a decent cup of coffee (or a cup of Nescafe if you really must). When you don't have the time or knowledge to complete a full coaching session but you DO want to make a difference and help someone break through and solve a particular problem, or get a task done quickly, then this is the technique you're looking for. Like the Swiss Army Pen-Knife of coaching tools, it can be employed for any problem or issue and is great for the following:

- Overcoming a stuck state or situation, feeling overwhelmed and a lack of clarity.
- Smart, effective coaching for busy managers.
- Lightly moving someone from being 'At Effect' (powerless) to 'At Cause' (responsible, taking ownership)
- Building a capable and resourceful problem-solving mentality within individuals and teams, minimising hand-holding and you having to tell them what to do
- Instantly graspable by young people and those new to coaching
- A great state-change – can instantly generate clarity, creative thinking and a feeling of moving forwards
- Coaching yourself – try it the next time you find yourself with a challenge

Emma, a senior manager and highly-regarded coach, is a big fan of Quick Win Coaching. "I learned this 15 years ago and it's still one of the first things in my coaching toolkit I turn to today. I'm under increasing time pressure at work and sometimes an employee genuinely needs coaching or direction but my schedule's too packed to fit an in-depth session in – I just need the job done and I want them to build the resources so they don't need me so much in future. The temptation used to be to just tell people what to do, but I've found this way more effective." Using Quick Win Coaching repeatedly with her large team has reaped rewards as it's become core to their own approach, transferring the ability to act back to them and building up their own coaching muscles. The rapid increase in their levels of performance and motivation has been noted and appreciated across the whole company. "They've got the drill now – I just say 'When you've got to Stage Three come and talk to me and we'll brainstorm the solutions.' Or even: 'What am I going to ask you to do?' and they go off among themselves and come back with clarity and solutions. So 70% of the work is already done. It's totally taken the pressure off me – Quick Win is worth its weight in gold!"

So here's how to get to grips with this excellent turbo-coaching method and immediately start using it yourself. There are four stages.

STEP ONE

- Ask your coachee what the problem or issue at the moment is. (Tip - it's far more positive coaching-speak to call this the 'Present State' instead – in NLP we find the smallest details of language can help tip someone into a more positive mindset!)
- Get them to give you a small amount of relevant background – this doesn't have to be a big lengthy story – just specifics that give the headlines. This helps you both focus.
- Don't get into trying to solve the problem at this stage, but if any ideas emerge, note them down.

Example: "I'm really disorganised and can't see the wood for the trees. I can't find key documents, lose track of what the priorities are and project timelines spin out of control."

STEP TWO

- Next get your coachee to describe the solution – the great clear space they want to get to where this isn't a problem any more. We call this the 'Desired State'. You can often deduce what you do want from what you don't want – think of the opposite.

Example: "I want to be organised, have clarity, know where everything is and what's happening and when. Feel peace of mind, in control, and that projects are moving forward smoothly."

- Again, use specific questions to help them describe their Desired State in as much detail as possible – make it vivid – how will they feel when they get there? Once you're both clear on this, you're ready for Step Three.

STEP THREE

- Now you move into jointly thinking about what's in the way. You're looking for at least three barriers in each of the following areas:
- **Barriers in the Coachee** – what are the obstacles and patterns within them personally and the way they're going about things that are keeping them stuck in the Present State? Looking at this helps move them from 'At Effect' to being 'At Cause' i.e powerful, responsible, owning the issue instead of being a victim of it. Examples might include: lack of skill/knowledge lack of technical knowledge, conflicting priorities.

Example: "I don't make lists and get overwhelmed so I feel so stuck I stop communicating."

- **Barriers in Other People** – no issue is created in isolation; there are always other people involved, whether it's other professional team members, family members, or customers etc. Examples might include: unhappy boss, impatient customer, unreliable supplier, lack of capabilities in colleagues, nagging wife.

Example: “Suppliers crucial to the project aren't delivering at the right time.”

- **Barriers in the Situation** – what are the non-people challenges or constraints that are contributing to the problem? Think impartially here, outside the box – what is going on at an environmental or strategic level? Examples might include: distance, tough deadlines, time-scales, lack of resources

Example: “The project is extremely complex, there's no clear project plan, everyone is working in isolation.”

STEP FOUR

- Here comes the fun bit – next, together, brainstorm solutions for the barriers in all three categories – try to generate potential ways forward for each barrier listed if possible, but aim for at least three solutions in each section. The previous step feeds into this – the more clearly you can identify the barriers in Step Three, the more easily different options and solutions will present themselves. What are the steps to success? What is the single most effective action or smallest step which will move the coachee towards their goal? Which barrier in each section could the coachee focus on and overcome to lead to the biggest breakthrough?
- Finally, together you'll agree a hit-list of next actions to prioritise right now, mapping a clear way forward. It's fine to have these next steps firmly in the coachee's corner – they'll already be feeling more confident, clear and energised, so leave them with the responsibility for making further decisions and working through their action plan.

Tip: for the biggest impact, you want your coachee to take as much responsibility as possible for their solutions. Make use of careful questioning and encourage them to articulate the issues, options and next steps themselves – this embeds resourceful thinking in them so that they can use it again and think more proactively in future.

Example: “Move unrealistic timescales, organise clarifying meeting with supplier then potentially change supplier, make daily lists, use new project planning software, structure week to have more meetings and phone check-ins, ask for help and feedback when I'm stuck, go and work directly with others if I'm getting bogged down in isolation.”



PRESENT STATE

Get clear on problem and background.



DESIRED STATE

Describe success. Where do they want to be. Agree next steps and actions.



BRAINSTORM BLOCKS

Whats stopping them achieving their desired state.

Explore the blocks in:

- a) The coachee.
- b) The other people involved.
- c) Other constraints in the situation.



DESIRED STATE

Describe success. Where do they want to be. Agree next steps and actions

By Neil Almond and Jo Worsley.

Partly adapted from the book, *The Tao of Coaching* by Max Landsberg. *Neil Almond*, Head Trainer at *Whatever Life Throws*, is a well-respected and sought after coach, trainer and consultant. He has delivered projects for many of the UK's top organizations, facilitated sessions in Downing Street and has worked with industry leaders including Sir Richard Branson.



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What We're About

Whatever Life Throws is a team of highly experienced and qualified instructors and practitioners from a variety of fields and backgrounds. We are united by a passion: **to help you get from where you are today to where you want to be.**

Whether it's overcoming a particular problem, moving forward in your life or career or gaining the skills you need to help others, we're here whenever you need to tap into a wealth of empowering insights and practical techniques for change.

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