



solutionsurfers[®]

Coaching PURE

A. Coaching – tapping into potential

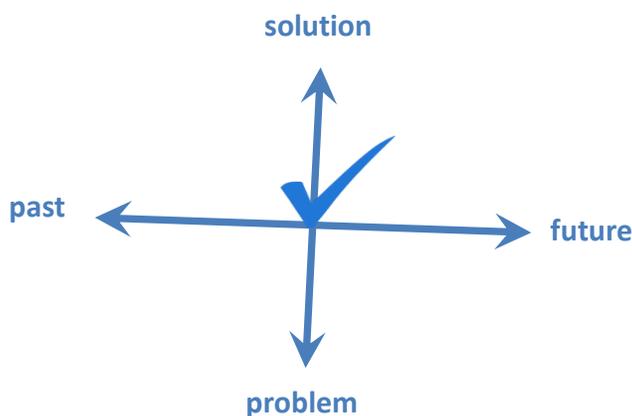
1. What is coaching?

Successful coaching is...

...when clients start to achieve what they set out to do after completing their coaching sessions.

As a method for supervising and supporting individuals or teams, the aim of coaching is to tap into existing potential and really make the most of it.

Its approach is based around solutions and the future. Coaching provides support by encouraging specific action to reach a goal. What is coaching not? It is not about dealing with and reflecting on past problems; it is more about goal-oriented action in the here and now.



2. Success factors in coaching

Having the 'right' coaching technique is not a decisive factor when it comes to success. In fact, it is much more important to have a coach with a helpful attitude who:

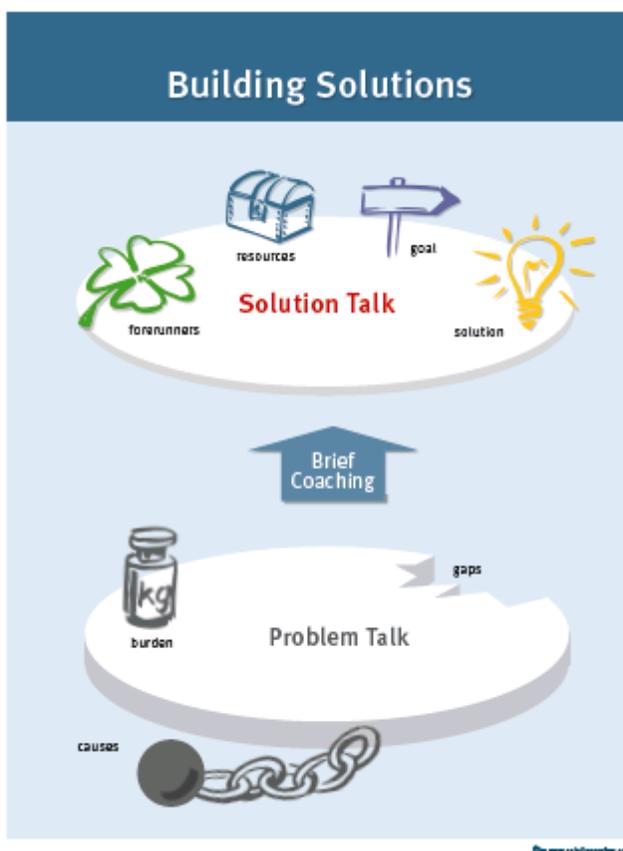
- works with appreciation and respect
- considers clients as experts for their own solutions
- wants to listen and is eager to observe
- identifies and enhances resources
- is able to let go of their own frame of reference (ideas, advice, etc.) and shows an interest in the client's perspectives, goals, resources and solutions
- encourages initiative and independence

B. The solution-focused coaching model

1. Getting on to the solutions level

In the solution-focused consultancy process, the coach steers the conversation and uses suitable questions to switch awareness from the problem level to the solutions level. Instead of looking into problems, causes and difficulties, the coach explores the goals, solutions for reaching these goals, successful existing solutions and the resources to be used.

Past experience shows that it is beneficial to spend as much coaching time as possible on the solution level and construct detailed information about solutions. Clients should use their coaching sessions to tell the 'story of their solutions'. Surprisingly, they end up yielding the targeted results in a simpler process, in a shorter time and with a bigger impact. After all, words make an impact.



2. Solution-oriented questions

In the solution-oriented coaching model, the following questions help to find solutions:

Goals: What do you want to achieve?

Preferred Future: How do you want the future to be different?

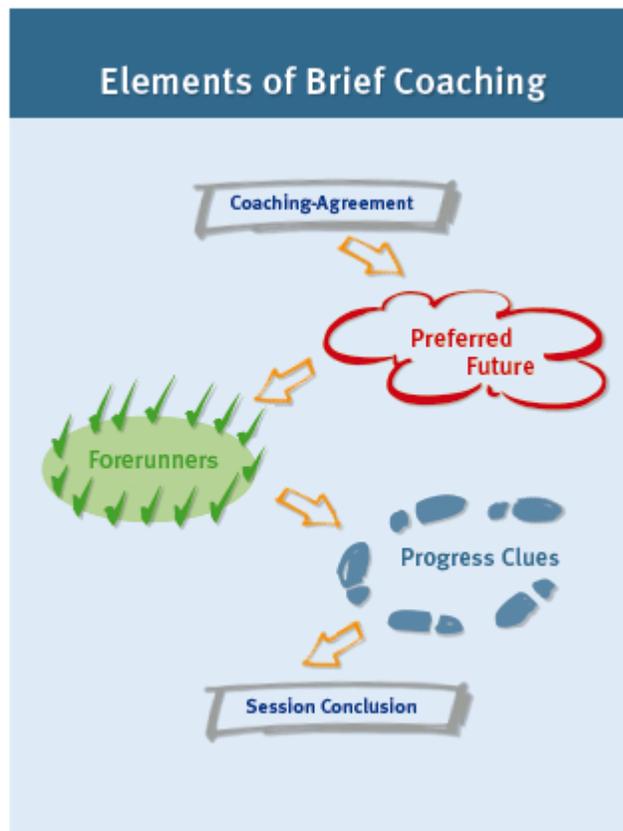
Forerunners: What is already working well?

Resources: Which skills can be applied?

Scales: How exactly can you get to the heart of the matter?

Changing perspectives: What aspects will make a difference to the other parties involved?

C. Solution-focused discussion stages



A classic solution-focused coaching session is broken down into the following discussion stages:

1. Coaching agreement / definition of goals

We use the first few minutes of a coaching session to work with the client to find out which benefits (or goals) should be generated by the session.

'What is your best hope for the outcome of our conversation?'

'When you leave at the end of the session, what would be the first thing that shows you that you are moving closer towards your goal?'

'What should change after our session so that you can say it was a good idea to come here?'

We therefore start every session with a finish line in our sights.

2. Target for the future: finding solutions or making your own

In this stage, we invite the client to identify the consequences of reaching their goals, describing them in as much detail as possible. The most elegant way of doing this is to ask 'the miracle question':

'Let's say that a miracle happens overnight and you have reached your goal. However, because you were asleep while it happened, you don't actually know anything about it. What would be the first thing to make you notice that the miracle has happened? How would you behave differently? How would other people notice that something has changed for you?'

We also have another approach called 'creating hypothetical solutions'.

'Imagine that you have completely reached your goal and the situation poses no problem at all any more. You have completed everything to your utmost satisfaction. How might you notice this?'

3. The best hopes

'What are your best hopes in terms of the outcome of this session? And what impact will these have?'

4. Finding existing solutions that work

Questions about solutions that already work can also help to steer attention back to the solution level. In many cases, situations and circumstances in which the problem does not arise (or where it is muted) can point towards successful solutions.

'When was the last time you experienced something similar to this feeling of safety and trust (as you felt on the miracle morning) in a conversation?'

'When and where have you encountered something close to your goal, even to just a small extent?'

'Is there anything that is already happening that you would like to continue happening?'

If you manage to find successful existing solutions, it is now time to find out more about these past solutions. Which differences make a difference?

'What would be different if the problem no longer existed? How exactly did you contribute to ensuring this solution was possible?'

'What have you already tried to improve the situation? What was the most effective aspect? How could you do more of this?'

5. Making the most of resources

In coaching, we assume that our clients have everything they need to solve the problem. As a coach, it is therefore important to pay close attention to the client's resources, skills and strengths, and examine them carefully.

The simplest and most effective way to achieve the required goals is to find and assess existing successful solutions. This is the easiest way to make the most of existing resources available to the client.

By specifying how the coachee contributed to exceptions, we often construct significant correlations and come up with solutions that were not obviously clear in the past.

6. Signs of progress: exploring the first small steps

This stage in a typical short-term coaching programme helps the client to gain clear ideas about their first small steps to success. It can be useful to focus on two elements:

a) Creating options

Creating a range of options instead of reducing the client to a single specific action is usually very helpful. This can open up new prospects and expand the client's repertoire. The more options that remain open, the more likely one is to work

b) Small but feasible

In coaching, we like to define small yet feasible steps. The likelihood of ideas actually being implemented is significantly higher when the client can embed small things into their day-to-day life.

Scales as a guide

In this stage, we often work with a little tool known as scales.

'Where are you currently on a scale from 1 to 10?'

'At point X, is there anything clear to you now that you were not sure of at point 1?'

'How will you notice when you have advanced one point up the scale?'

'Anything else?'

'How will others notice the difference?'

7. Concluding the session

Planning the last few minutes

A few minutes before the end of the coaching session, you can start to think about the following options:

- Ask the coachee whether there are any other issues they would like to discuss before the end of the session.
- Assess the goal: The end of the session is a good time to steer attention back to the goal agreed at the start of your meeting.
- Prepare for setbacks: Depending on the coachee's situation, it may be helpful to discuss what they might do if they encounter setbacks. Who could help you and how, etc.
- The end of the session, at the very latest, is a good opportunity to name all the coachee's resources and skills identified during the session! What gives you confidence that they will stay on the agreed path?
- Experiments: In some cases, the coach could also come up with an experiment that may help them on the path to achieving their goal. (Example:
- Clarify collective agreements: The coach asks the client what they will do until the next session or if there is anything they want to try out.

D. Highlight progress: the follow-up session

In a typical short-term coaching programme, there is a follow-up session with the following stages:

Progress

As a coach, you should always bring the focus back to the progress achieved, no matter how small it is.

'What has improved since the last session?'

'How did you do this?'

'What contributed to this improvement?'

'What else?'

Scale of progress

The progress scale has proven to be a useful metaphor for the client's dynamic path to their goal.

'Where are you currently on a scale from 1 to 10?'

If nothing has changed since the last session:

'How were you able to maintain this status?'

'What elements will make a difference?'

'What would others say about your current situation?'

Final questions

'Is your current situation good enough?'

'How confident are you on a scale from 1 to 10 that this situation will remain satisfactory?'

Compliment

Ending the session with a compliment helps to motivate the client. Shift the focus back to the coachee's successful achievements, resources and strengths.

'I am impressed... '

E. Additional tools

1. Explaining with scales

Skills and 'soft factors' can be clarified with scaling questions. These help you to make issues more specific and easier to grasp, thus helping the client to move in the right direction.

In general, scales are an intuitive way to work. There is no right or wrong way to use them. However, a model made up of four stages has proven successful in practice (S.U.R.F. model):

S – Specify status

U – Upgrade to the future target

R – Review highlights

F – Forecast and encourage progress

Specify status:

- Where are you at the moment on a scale from 1 to 10?
- What has changed since you were at 1?
- Which forces are helping you to move forwards?

Upgrade to the future target

- How high up the scale do you want to climb?
- Imagine you are already there: What would you start doing differently? Anything else?

Review highlights

- What examples from the recent past demonstrate that you are moving in the right direction?
- Where would these examples be on the scale?
- How did you achieve this?

Forecast progress

- Imagine that you have managed to climb up one point on the scale: What will show you that you have made progress? Anything else?
- How will other people notice that you have made progress?

Further reading

All the listed books and DVDs are available from
www.coachingwebshop.ch

Daniel Meier Peter Szabó	Coaching plain and simple A refreshingly simple approach to coaching	Solutionsurfers 2008
	An introduction to solution-oriented Brief coaching	
Daniel Meier	Teamcoaching with the SolutionCircle Solution-oriented team coaching	Solutionsurfers Lucerne 2005
Solutionsurfers	S.U.R.F. Making progress – in a re- freshing and sustainable style	Solutionsurfers Lucerne 2008
Daniel Meier	Coaching logbook	Solutionsurfers Lucerne 2012
Daniel Meier	Back to lightness Live coaching DVD	Solutionsurfers Lucerne 2009
Peter Szabó Insoo Kim Berg	Brief coaching for lasting solutions	Borgmann Media Dortmund 2006

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Daniel Meier, MCC
Co-Founder/Owner
daniel.meier@solutionsurfers.com

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