

Introduction

So who is this book for?

As far as we are concerned, anyone involved in coaching will find value in this book. We want it to appeal to:

- external coaches;
- internal coaches;
- managers and leaders who use coaching skills;
- individuals seeking tools to develop people within non-business organizations.

The great thing about this book is that whether you're an external coach, an internal coach, a manager of people or just interested in increasing your skills at interacting with people, there'll be a tool for you. Our aim is to give you the chance to coach and discover for yourself the true joy in helping and supporting others in their personal development journey.

The book has been designed so that you don't need an academic qualification in coaching to understand how to use the tools. Our aim is to give you tools which you can use straight away.

We designed the book this way because we want it to be shared with anyone who really wants to understand and practise the art of coaching. The experience of witnessing the real pleasure of others achieving and becoming what and who they want to be and do is why coaching is becoming increasingly popular.

So before you conclude that this toolkit is just for professional coaches, think again. The tools in this book can help you create and develop your own style of working with and helping people. It's written in an easy-to-follow format and is designed to be practical so that you can immediately apply what you've read. For those among you who like concepts, we have included an overview of each tool to set the scene.

Why is it useful?

Ultimately you want something that's going to help give you practical support. To ensure this, we asked ourselves, 'What would I need to know if I were using this tool?' We've used simple and easy-to-follow language with as little jargon as possible. We recognize that not all of you will be coaches and we want the tools to be as accessible as possible because we believe that coaching skills shouldn't just be restricted to professional coaches. Wherever relevant we also include diagrams to help you follow the tool step by step.

This book gives you proven and simple tools that can help you work with people to solve their problems and create great futures. The fact that there are 50 proven tools to choose from means that you can pick the one that's most appropriate for the coaching topic. The tools have all been used in real-life coaching sessions, so you are benefiting from our experience of what works. There are hundreds of different tools that we could have included. But we have chosen our top 50 to get you started.

Many books contain useful tools, but you are not allowed to use them for copyright reasons. We want our book to be different, so we are allowing you to use the forms and templates, and you'll see that we've formatted them in a way that makes them ready-made for you to use.

How did we decide which tools to include?

This is probably a good place to talk about what we decided to leave out. You will notice that we don't cover coaching philosophy or methodologies. We have also decided not to give you our thoughts on coaching styles. We did have many conversations about the pros and cons of directive versus non-directive coaching styles, ie the difference between leading clients and advising them versus facilitating their journey. But that's probably a topic for another book.

The tools in this book are included because they lend themselves to any style of coaching. They are not prescriptive, so if you find that a tool needs adapting to suit your style, that's great. As the saying goes, 'It's not what you say but the way that you say it.' So we leave that down to you.

Many of the tools are included on the basis that they've been used in coaching sessions we have run and, in some cases, we have used some of the tools in facilitating groups of people. Essentially there are a number of key tools that are at the heart of coaching. We call these the foundation tools

(see Chapter 2); they are the bedrock of any coach's toolkit. No coaching toolkit would be complete without tools that provide a basic guide on how you conduct the coaching discussion. Similarly, tools for questioning, listening and feedback are essential if you are to have any meaningful dialogue as a coach with your clients.

What is the point of tools?

We've already talked about the practical side of having tools readily available at your fingertips that you can use when needed. There's also a more subtle reason for having tools, and that is consistency and learning. If you apply the tools to your coaching experiences you can assess how well they work with different types of client and so become more adept at finding the best means of helping each client.

This toolkit will provide you with a sufficient range of tools to be equipped for a whole variety of situations. Of course, you may not always be able to predict the situation you will find yourself in and therefore may not have a tool ready, so it will help you to read through the tools and become familiar with them. In any situation that then occurs you are able to say, 'I think I know a process that will help you.' (Sadly, flicking through the toolkit manual in front of clients in the hope that you might stumble upon something will not enhance their feelings of confidence in your ability to help them.)

We have selected these tools as our top 50, as these are the ones that we have used most over the years. Selecting tools is clearly situational, so some will be more frequently used, but we feel this book gives a good range for you to select from.

How to use this book

Chapter 1 is designed to help those readers who are external coaches. We have created a part of the book specifically to support you. Invariably, when you work as a professional coach you have to be able to demonstrate models and processes that you use to ensure a professional and ethical approach. To support you with this particular challenge, Chapter 1 is dedicated to how you create professional working relationships with clients. We have included here examples of a typical coaching process, a model for coaching, coaching

agreements and templates that will help you as a coach continue your own personal development.

Chapter 2 covers the foundation tools and includes the core ORACLE model: the basic route map for how you conduct a coaching session. This section also offers you tools to carry out short coaching sessions. We believe that effective coaching sessions don't need to last for hours. The coffee-break coaching tool describes how you can achieve great results in the space of a coffee break. We wanted to give you the chance to use tools that will fit into your busy schedules, since none of us lives in an ideal world with lots of time available, and sometimes coaching discussions need to fit into a short space of time. We find that coaching can work equally well in a short, structured conversation and our philosophy is to incorporate a coaching style in your day-to-day activities. Use your coaching style with discretion and, of course, only when appropriate: it can be a little wearing for people if they are constantly being 'coached'. It's very easy when you get the bug to go onto autopilot and coach anyone that will talk to you. We've been there ourselves, so we speak again from our own experience. And remember to ask individuals' permission first, particularly if you are using one of the more 'creative' tools.

Chapter 3 covers a key topic for success: goal setting. This is the driving force in a coaching session and can make the difference between the mediocre and the outstanding. Most clients will find that they start to think much more clearly about potential solutions when they have absolute clarity on where they want to get to. We've included challenging questions and powerful visualization tools to make this section really come alive.

Chapter 4 focuses on problem resolution. At a simple level there are two types of coaching: remedial and generative. Remedial coaching seeks to help resolve a problem that clients are having. Generative coaching is more focused on increased performance and potential. A coaching relationship can cover both aspects: once clients have resolved their problem and start to experience progress, they can then focus on how to be even better. The tools in this section are all about helping clients resolve a problem and put plans in place to take action.

Chapter 5 is the motivating force behind any coaching session: values and beliefs. Once clients have defined their goal, what motivates them to achieve it are their values, their beliefs and how they act. These tools help you coach around issues that might be getting in the way of clients achieving their goal. You will also find that the tools help you discover resources within clients and help support their journey towards achieving their goal.

We have experienced sessions where the penny drops and there is a realization that ‘the only thing stopping me is me’. Find out for yourself how these tools work for you.

Chapters 6 to 10 can be described as tools that are useful for particular themes that crop up. We chose these topics because in our experience this is where a lot of our work with individuals in organizations is focused.

In Chapter 6 the tools help you look at confidence strategies that underpin values and beliefs. To fully achieve a goal, you need to align three things: belief, ability and desire. If people have negative thoughts that affect their beliefs, which inevitably hold them back, then often solutions that are discussed and agreed will not succeed – even if people have sufficient ability and a burning desire to change. The confidence techniques in this chapter zoom in on particular situations, and can be particularly useful for reducing nerves in presentations.

Confidence strategies link closely with Chapters 7 and 8. These chapters look at how clients develop strategies to work more effectively with others and enhance their personal impact and influence.

Chapter 7 focuses on how to work effectively with other people. A lot of time and emotional energy can be expended when conflict exists at work. People can become very drained and often get to the point where they cannot see the situation clearly. When people have a view that another person is ‘bad’, this can start to affect their filter so that they think nothing but negative thoughts, and relationships can hit an all-time low. The tools in this section are particularly useful in exploring conflicts in relationships and helping clients to plan how to have critical conversations in situations where they feel blocked and unable to continue dialogue.

Chapter 8 is a selection of tools for helping people to look introspectively at how they interact with others through the use of 360-degree tools. These tools are very flexible and can be used as a base that invites clients to design their own questions, thereby making them very specific to the client you are coaching. The chapter also introduces the concept of ‘modelling’ – looking at a person who is particularly successful, identifying the attributes that create the success and planning how to emulate them. It also looks at how to support clients in being more influential through preparing to present ideas.

Chapter 9 has tools that look specifically at enhancing leadership style. While on the surface this chapter might seem targeted to business coaching, the tools do lend themselves to leadership challenges outside the work environment, as they can help to develop skills in prioritization. However, if your client is a leader, then the team climate inventory and strategy, and

delegation tools, will enable the person to be more strategic and effective in building a team and delivering results.

Chapter 10 is all about planning for the future and has a mixture of business tools and life-coaching tools. These tools, perhaps more than the others, can also be used for self-coaching. There are some great self-reflection tools included here and they really make you think about what gets you out of bed in the morning.

Chapter 11 provides a new range of tools specifically designed for supporting women's development by increasing confidence, examining and changing beliefs and encouraging them to manage upwards. Although designed for women they will still work effectively when coaching men.

Chapter 12 provides a new range of tools for creating change. These tools are geared towards working with groups in organizations and are designed with adaptation in mind.

Chapter 13 provides an opportunity to hear from other coaches about tools they've developed. We've included information about the coaches to find out who they are, what areas of coaching they specialize in, what their take on coaching is and how you can contact them.

Chapter 14 is for people who are managing others, whether that is direct, in a matrix environment or during projects.

We have included a tool for coaching to improve performance. We realize that this is not technically a coaching situation and that there are many processes to go through, particularly if the situation is heading for formal action, but we also understand that at early stages adopting a coaching approach can be really helpful to getting people's performance back on track and thereby avoiding formal action.

We have also included tools for managing talent – sometimes it is hard to keep talent motivated so hopefully this tool will help you to understand how to use coaching to retain the best of your people.

We have also included tools on managing more difficult situations, whether that is conflict or whether it is managing your manager – always an interesting topic of discussion on training courses.

And finally, we have included a chapter on coaching for resistant to change – which is even more valid in today's climate.

The majority of these tools are preparation tools based on the fact that we often only have one chance to tackle difficult situations and not thinking through your outcomes or using the wrong opening statement could make the situation worse.

Chapter 15 includes tools for building a coaching practice both from the business perspective and the personal development perspective. We've included the tools in this edition because most coaches receive great coaching training around skills and techniques but less training on how to create a coaching practice. While they're not coaching tools per se, they are included more as self-coaching tools to enable you to put your coaching skills into practice and earn an income at the same time. The tools follow a sequence in this section starting with understanding your potential clients so you can create a value proposition – the benefits your clients can expect by working with you. The next tool is about making it easy for your prospective clients to understand how coaching can help them. From there it's about understanding how you will price your coaching services. A coaching practice also needs a business process to help deliver the coaching services consistently so there is a tool to help with this and a tool for ensuring you have systems to support your practice as it grows and develops.

Building your coaching practice isn't just about business tools. It's also about developing and honing your coaching skills and staying relevant in an ever-changing world. We're pleased to include some tools from Coach Supervisor Mark Bisson, to help you stay grounded in your practice. Self-coaching is about mindful practice and supervision reminds us to be aware of the client system and how our coaching is impacted by and impacts both the coaching client and their environment.

It is important not to feel 'married' to the tools – it isn't necessary to use a tool in exactly the way it is laid out, or ask all the questions we suggest in the order we suggest them, but we can guarantee that they have all been tried and tested and really do work. And please remember, we are always searching for new tools, so if you have some great tools that you have found or devised yourself, please do let us know and we will include them in further updates of the book and give you credit. Let's keep building on our shared toolkit.

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