

Coaching

Insight. Support. Accountability.

Helping professionals identify, clarify and reach their goals.



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Introduction

You may be considering coaching to support you as you work towards a goal or deal with a challenge in your working life. You may be considering introducing coaching to your organisation for the first time. Or you may be looking to source new coaches.

Based on our years of experience of coaching individuals globally, from recent graduates to members of the leadership team, we've put this short guide together to help you understand what's involved, how to prepare and how to get the best from your coaching experience.

Why coaching?

There is an enormous range of scenarios where working with a coach can be beneficial. Many people seek out a coach at important or significant junctures in their professional lives. Others look for a coach when they've had feedback that they want to act on. Others, simply when they realise they're just not satisfied with their working lives.

For example:

- Adjusting to a new level of responsibility or seniority
- Returning to work after a significance period of absence
- Considering the next career move
- Challenges in dealing with workload and productivity
- Frustrations with work-life balance
- Developing a healthier relationship with technology
- Clarifying what's important and setting meaningful goals

As professional coaching psychologists, we're careful to ensure that the area a coachee wants to work on is appropriate for coaching. So, we'll prioritise getting clarity on your topic and goals before starting coaching.



What's involved?

Boiling coaching down to its essentials, working with a coach can help you:

- Clarify your goals
- Consider what's holding you back
- Take meaningful action to reach those goals
- Develop your self-awareness
- Learn how to coach yourself

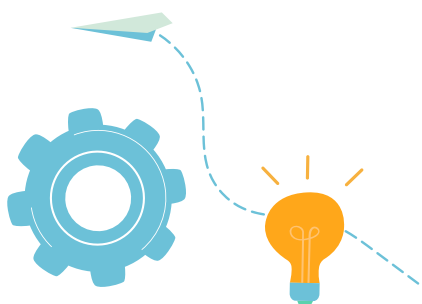


This last point is crucial, as coaching is usually a time-limited activity. You might work with a coach over a period of months – it's not an ongoing, lifetime relationship. So, it's important to plan for a life after coaching, to learn how to challenge yourself as your coach would, and continue to identify and attain goals.

Your coach's job is to provide support, but balance this with accountability. They'll work hard to understand your perspective and where you want to get to – but will also challenge you when your thinking or behaviour is holding you back.

Coaching involves you stepping outside of your comfort zone and trying new things. Making that 'difficult' phone call. Providing feedback to a challenging colleague. Stepping into new responsibilities. Trying a new approach to deal with pressure.

Your coach will emphasise the need to take some action in between coaching sessions, to try new things and to experiment. You'll discuss your reflections and the progress made towards your goal – which will require openness and honesty on your part. We'll match that openness and honesty with support, with accountability and challenge – to help you on your way.



What coaching is not

It's important to highlight where coaching is not a useful or helpful development activity. Coaching isn't, for example, an alternative to counselling or psychotherapy. The nature of the significant mental health or life challenges that a therapist can help with means they are out of bounds for the coach.

Similarly, coaching isn't a 'quick fix', where you'll be told exactly what to do and how to do it. It involves work, reflection and getting out of your comfort zone. It's also not just long conversations, however interesting they may be. It's about growth, change and action.

Coaching isn't something to be embarrassed about, either. It's just another kind of development activity. In fact, we'd argue that by engaging in coaching, you've something to be proud of!



What to expect from coaching

The process

Our process is fairly straightforward. It begins with a 'chemistry meeting', where one of our team will meet with you – either face to face or via video conference – to get a feel for what you're looking for from coaching. This would include the topic or development area,



and any practicalities we need to be aware of, such as timescales. This meeting also gives you a chance to meet the coach, ask them any questions you want and get a feel for whether you think you could work with them or not.

Selecting a coach is a very subjective matter, though you may find it useful to consider their qualifications and experience, alongside the level of rapport and trust you feel by the end of the chemistry meeting. They should be able to answer all your questions about coaching and clarify their way of working. Remember that the chemistry meeting is a no-commitment conversation, so you should take some time afterwards to consider whether you'd like to work with this coach.

After that, subject to both parties being happy to proceed, we'll draw up a simple coaching contract which outlines how we'll work together. It will include the number of sessions, the area we're going to focus on and how we'll work together.

Then it's a matter of exploring the topic at hand so we can explore the role of your thinking, your personality, and your life experience to date in how you feel about making some changes. We work to make sure that we frame the goal appropriately and realistically and then gauge together your appetite for personal change.

Don't expect your coach to hand out advice or give you a 'cheat sheet' for making change. There's no simple 'three-step process' for making personal change. You can expect a lot of questions and the need to really reflect on what's important to you.

Practicalities

Coaching sessions can take place face-to-face, at your office or ours in the City of London. Alternatively, we can conduct coaching via Skype or other video conference platforms. Whatever the medium, privacy is essential. We don't conduct coaching sessions in coffee shops



or hotel foyers! Sessions last up to 90 minutes at a time and can be spaced out at a rhythm appropriate to the topic we're working on. Often, this means meeting on a monthly basis but depending upon the issues being explored we may meet more often at first, with longer intervals between sessions as progress is made and circumstances change.

Your coach will provide you with any resources you need (e.g. handouts, articles to read, videos to watch) and agree with you the tasks you'll complete between each session. This might involve maintaining a journal of your development, experimenting with new behaviours or trying some relaxation techniques. The key point is: you'll take action and come to your next session ready to share how it went.

Confidentiality

The coaching relationship is different to most other relationships in your life and one core difference is the confidential nature of coaching. With very few exceptions, what we discuss in our coaching sessions doesn't leave the room.

These exceptions are concerned with legal and wellbeing issues, and we'll elaborate on them during the chemistry meeting. And if you'd like us to intentionally speak to a third party (e.g. your manager) about the coaching in detail, we can do with your permission.

Outside of those exceptions, we treat confidentiality very seriously. You, of course, are free to discuss your coaching with anyone you wish. We actively encourage coachees to speak openly about the coaching experience, so that those around them can understand why they're trying new things and can even provide them with some helpful feedback along the way.

Involving others

If coaching is being organised and sponsored by your employer, then they are also part of the process. We'll take input and feedback from someone appropriate (e.g. your manager) and liaise with the business as we progress. Confidentiality will still apply, of course, though we'll be able to confirm with your employer what's in the coaching contract and indicate your level of engagement or progress in very general terms. And of course, you can be as open about your experience with them as you like.

The coach

We understand how challenging it can sometimes be to find a suitable coach. There are no barriers to calling yourself a coach, so we emphasise our experience and professional skills in everything we do.

All our coaches are accredited and qualified coaching psychologists. This means they're registered with the British Psychological Society and have additional coaching skills training on top of their professional psychology education. As coaching psychologists, we can leverage our deep understanding of how people think, feel and act while using practical coaching techniques to unleash our clients' potential.



Who can benefit from coaching?

Quite simply, we believe that everyone can benefit from coaching, if it's approached correctly. Sometimes, coaching is viewed as the preserve of the executives or the 'high potential' employees in an organisation. We like to challenge this view and aim to make coaching available and useful to employees of all levels.



To keep things simple, we make the distinction between four coaching populations:

1. Coaching for executives

It can be lonely at the top. Senior professionals can benefit from coaching as they deal with the challenges of leadership, of making change and setting a strategic direction, all while simultaneously attending to the needs of their direct reports and working on their own development. We have significant experience of working with senior leaders around the world, including those in the early stages of their leadership journey.

2. Coaching for managers

A manager's job is never done. In fact, managerial roles tend to expand over time and managers can feel pressure from both above and below as they navigate the day to day challenges they face. We've coached managers at all ends of the spectrum, from the newly appointed to those with significant experience under their belt. We've worked with managers to address personal development challenges, adjust to new levels of responsibility and seniority, to adopt a more strategic and long-term perspective and to prepare for the next steps in their career.

3. Coaching for graduates

Graduates face a number of specific challenges when adapting to the workplace. Having created and run a number of graduate development programmes, we know that graduates can take time to find their place, develop their confidence and get used to how organisations function.

Moving from the structure of the university to the ambiguity and politics of the workplace, graduates can benefit from professional support to understand how they can leverage their strengths and work on their development areas. This ensures their employer feels the benefits of their contributions and talent sooner.

4. Coaching for individual contributors

We're passionate believers in the power of coaching for employees at all levels, including those without managerial or supervisory responsibilities. This includes technical specialists, and those whose career plans focus on their first steps into supervision of others. Remember: today's individual contributors are tomorrow's managers, so it makes sense to expedite their development before they take on these responsibilities.

To make this as accessible as possible, we've created the 'Coach on Campus' proposition. See below for more details on this.



Coach on campus

An accessible and cost-effective coaching solution

Why 'Coach on Campus'?

Despite the positive impact workplace coaching can have on performance, satisfaction and wellbeing, it is still often viewed as a development intervention reserved for senior executives.



Evidence shows us that in-house workplace coaches can get great results, but not every business has a sufficient pool of trained coaches to make this viable. Additionally, the costs associated with some traditional executive coaching solutions means offering coaching to the wider employee population is prohibitive.

At WorkLifePsych, we believe that coaching is for everyone and so we have created a cost-efficient, flexible and impactful solution we call 'Coach on Campus'. This means coaching can be made available to more junior employees, emerging talent and those without managerial responsibilities within the organisation, without incurring the cost of executive coaching.

Using this model, a WorkLifePsych coach is based on the client site on a regular day each week, month or quarter, with a schedule that is dedicated to that organisation, who then books in coaching sessions as required. This meets the needs of the organisation and its employees, providing access to high quality coaching, supported by flexibility and an accessible price point – all without unnecessary long-term commitment or needless expenditure or administration.

The benefits of this approach

Our coaches have experience across a wide range of organisational and individual challenges, augmenting their coaching skills with a deep understanding of human psychology at work.

By using the coaching psychologists from WorkLifePsych, organisations guarantee that they can respond to developmental queries in an agile and professional way.

The organisation has access to a coach on a regular basis, but unlike traditional executive coaching packages:

- There is no need to commit to multiple coaching sessions at the outset.
- There is continuity in the coaching team used, who can then leverage organisational knowledge and build effective relationships with coachees.
- Last minute coaching cancellations open up a slot for other employees without penalty
- The coach can work in partnership with the HR function more closely.
- The coach's onsite presence can help to demystify and de-stigmatise coaching.
- Coaching requests go through a single channel, maintaining quality standards and securing cost savings for the business.

Practicalities

Our coaches can accommodate up to five, one-hour coaching sessions in a given 'Coach on Campus' day. Our model assumes the client will provide a suitable room for on-site sessions.

Of course, coaching hours can also be used for meetings with line managers, tripartite feedback sessions, or progress reviews with organisational sponsors.

This gives organisational flexibility with how the coach's time and expertise are utilised, allowing them to respond in a more agile way.

How to get started

Employee awareness and understanding are key, so it's important that they are made aware of the solution and its scope. This will ensure maximum utilisation of the coach's time each day they are on site.

We can support this by offering a free webinar to employees prior to the first on site date, to explain coaching, what's involved and how to access it.

We'll work together to identify a coach from the team, select some initial suitable 'on campus' dates, book them in and share availability with employees.

What next?

If reading this has inspired you to take the next step in your development journey, ...or you'd like to discuss how we can support employees in your organisation with coaching, please get in touch with us for a no-commitment conversation and how we can help.

Email us on info@worklifepsych.com Call us on **+44 (0)20 7947 7717**



About WorkLifePsych

Founded in 2014 by Dr. Richard MacKinnon, we're a team of workplace psychologists whose expertise lies in developing people at work. We operate at the intersection of wellbeing, productivity and professional effectiveness and provide coaching, training and structured development programmes.

Our focus on people development reflects both our skill set and our passion. We've coached leaders, managers, graduates and individual contributors across and globe and in a range of organisational sectors. We love seeing people make progress towards their goals and hearing how our support has made all the difference in their working lives.

As psychologists, we're best placed to combine our deep knowledge of workplace psychology with cutting edge approaches to get you the best results. We avoid fads and fashions and focus on what actually works.

You can find out all about our activities and see the profiles of our team by visiting our website at worklifepsych.com.

Alternatively, get in touch to find out more about how we can help:

info@worklifepsych.com

+44 (0)20 7947 4417

What our clients say



Richard brings a combination of intelligence, robust and evidence-based practices and, above all, practical approach to his work. He is an expert in his fields yet he speaks the language of business and is always pragmatic and commercial.

He is able to diagnose issues and articulate them clearly and simply along with solutions which are innovative, relevant and understandable.

I always feel completely confident in introducing him to the business and I consider him to be very much a trusted business partner.

Wayne Mullen, Global Head of Human Resources, The Workshop



There is a before and an after working with Richard. Once you embark on the coaching journey, be prepared for a tremendous positive change in your daily life.

Thanks to his strong experience, focus, kindness and skills, Richard successfully and gently steers you towards personal breakthroughs and discoveries.

Alvaro Duarte, Head of Studio, King

I would have no hesitation in recommending WorkLifePsych as a provider of coaching skills and development interventions more generally and I look forward to working with Richard again.

Louise Morris, Learning & Development Manager, Certas Energy

All six coaching sessions were excellent, worked extremely well with Richard who was very supportive and available between the sessions. Enjoyed the past six months working with Richard and have learned more than I had expected, the feedback from my reports and peers within the business has been extremely positive and I believe my leadership style has significantly improved.

I have already recommended the coaching experience to others in the business and have already booked a follow up session with Richard for later in the year.

Thank you, Richard for all your help and support, it is greatly appreciated.

Coachee feedback via survey

Massively positive experience. I learned a great deal about how I work and specific actions I can take for both immediate and long- term improvements. My coach was exceedingly professional but also personable and easy to relate to. His level of focus was always very high.

The sessions were intense and demanding but rewarding for sure.

Coachee feedback via survey

Overall Richard was engaged and genuinely helped me focus on the items that I wanted to work on during coaching. He provided valuable feedback and was able to pull from the examples I brought to the sessions from a real-world attack strategy. He provided tools and worked with me to run them through how I can incorporate them into my daily work.

He demonstrated caring, attentive and very professional approach to working with me, and it resulted in me trusting him which made the coaching that much more successful.

Coachee feedback via survey

This was my first time working with an executive coach. Dr. MacKinnon made the experience feel very safe and comfortable as well as very productive and fulfilling.

Coachee feedback via survey

