

Being Coached

By Robin Ancrum



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Having a good rapport with your Coach is important in being able to trust them with your thinking.

Often by reading a biography we get an understanding of their qualifications, their experience and sometimes their values and style of coaching. So how do you choose or match a client and a coach?

Robin Ancrum shares below some of the life experiences that have shaped his approach to coaching.

I first became involved at the Leadership Trust in 1990 when I joined the team as a trainee Facilitator and Course Director. I had previously worked as a teacher of English and Drama and naively thought that my teaching skills would be easily transferable. Some of them were, but I needed to learn the essence of experiential learning with adults. Which is that the facilitator structures the learning experience and then assists the learner by questioning, prompting, challenging – but not by telling. As a teacher I felt at the centre of the learning process; it has taken me a long time to practise de-centring myself – getting out of the way of the learning.

This is equally important in coaching. I am a good listener but I know that my instinct is to use that listening to the point where I think I have understood – ‘solved your problem’ – and much of the time that instinct is a hindrance rather than a help. It’s not the coach’s job to solve the problem; it is to assist the coachee in making progress. Very different.

I like doing cryptic crosswords and I find the right coaching mindset is like that **before** you crack the clue, when you are holding in your mind many and various possibilities and allowing the 'answer' to emerge of itself. It doesn't always happen, but when it does, it's very special and very rewarding. It's a kind of alchemy.

On the other hand, I have clients who are put off if I behave in a way which they see as too *coachy*. 'Please don't answer all my questions with another question, Robin – tell me what you're actually thinking. And there are times when that is right.

Every coaching relationship is different and the relationship between coach and client is absolutely central to success, so I like to spend time establishing what will work best for you and agreeing that part of the 'contract' carefully.

So why choose me as a Coach?

- You want a coach who listens, empathises and challenges your thinking
- You're stuck in a situation or a way of thinking and want to make progress
- There are complicated issues of relationships with colleagues that seem intractable
- You are blaming and/or doubting yourself and want an objective check
- New challenges at work are both scary and enticing. How to self-manage?
- Old and familiar ways of doing things aren't succeeding for you. How to make changes?
- How do I take others with me in uncertain and fast-changing times?