

Being Coached

By David Skinner



David Skinner

Leadership Trust Coach and Facilitator

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?

David Skinner shares below more about how he approaches coaching to give more depth to his Biography.

I have been coaching for over 30 years. I love getting to know people and working with them as they grow. Every coach is different, so it's important to find the person you feel is right for you.

I believe that coaching is primarily about helping you think – usually about something going on in your life that isn't the way you want it to be. The coach's role is to support you in resolving it and help you move forward – or to start with, maybe just understanding better what the issue actually is!

Examples might be:-

- A specific issue at work – maybe something that isn't going well, how to develop your career objectives or change the way you do things.
- How to deal with a new role and win the commitment of a new team.
- How to be more influential or build self-confidence.
- Something you need to do where you doubt your capability, e.g. speaking in public.
- A sense that things are just stagnating.

- A conflict between different areas of life – for example, work vs. family.
- An athlete that is losing motivation, feels their commitment to training is dropping off, or maybe feels their coach doesn't recognise how they are feeling.

What do people get out of coaching?

You set the agenda, so it's important to establish what you want out of the coaching relationship and how you want it to work. This is something we would spend time on at the outset.

What people get out of coaching can differ. Here are a few examples:-

- **Space to think:** quiet time and space to think out loud without worrying about day to day pressures or other people's reactions.
- **Independence:** the opportunity to bounce issues and thinking off someone completely separate from your work situation
- **Clarity:** you may have an idea of the changes you want to make, but can't quite pin them down, or something is still holding you back.
- **Input:** you may be seeking a level of input and guidance to navigate the issue. This might for example be exploring different ways of looking at it.

It's important you should be comfortable with the way the sessions run. There are a few principles that I think are important:-

- **Enjoyment:** it should be an enjoyable experience - it is about creating a relationship and environment that helps you think in depth about the issues that are important to you. If we aren't both feeling comfortable about it, neither of us will think effectively!
- **Listening:** it starts with listening intensely to you, how you are thinking and how you are feeling. I might ask questions aimed at helping you move forward – perhaps by considering a different perspective; or maybe thinking more deeply about the implications of what you are saying and doing; or exploring things that don't seem to make sense to me as an outside listener.
- **Equals:** the coach and the client are equals in this process. I will of course use my experience when listening and questioning. However, the focus of my role isn't to be the person with the wisdom and ideas to give to you – although it may be I can offer suggestions based on my experience, if that's what you want. An answer that works for me is quite probably not one that will work as well for you!
- **Safe:** the coaching relationship is safe, friendly, informal and trusting. As a coach I will never make a judgement about you as an individual.
- **Emotions:** what people say and do is often driven as much by emotion as hard analytic thinking. Feelings and emotions are often an important underlying factor to any issue – possibly to you, possibly to other parties involved. It often helps to spend time exploring this.

What sets you apart from other coaches?

I'm not sure I can compare myself to others that I haven't actually been coached by, but I hope the answers to the questions above give you a sense of how I go about things. I'd like to characterise myself as compassionate, knowledgeable and thoughtful – as well as challenging.

How did you get into coaching?

I have spent over 35 years in the Financial Services Industry working with some of the UK's leading businesses up to Board level. Throughout my career, I have helped the people I worked with develop their careers and develop as individuals - as well as building long term relationships with clients. I was also active on a number of coaching and mentoring programs within the businesses I worked for. Coaching was something I enjoyed, but it was also a core part of my job – you can't lead multidisciplinary teams on complex transactions without having high performing teams that trust each other and work well together.

In parallel to this, I have been privileged to be a Facilitator at the Leadership Trust for over 25 years. This role is stimulating and challenging. It is entirely focused on helping delegates maximise their personal development while they are with the Trust – challenging them to reflect on their experiences and apply them to their working life.

I have also been active in sport as a competitor, parent and coach, at various levels from grass roots to international. Experiencing and observing different team dynamics and coaching styles gives an extra perspective on the impact coaching can have.

When I left Financial Services, I maintained my role with the Leadership Trust. In addition, some of those I coached asked me to continue to do so which I was happy to do and this has led to me widening my coaching. I have the ILM 7 Executive Coaching and Mentoring Qualification and am a member of the Association for Coaching.