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learning

Solution Focused Coaching

Meet “OSKAR”





Typical coaching topic questions

- What area or areas are you concerned about?
- What aspect of your role would you like to talk about?
- What is important to you?
- What does this mean to you?
- What areas do you want to address?
- What is behind this?

Solutions focused principles

- Some have the view that by traditional questions focus on the problem we draw the attention away from a solution
- Our energy goes down when we problem solve, yet we feel energized when we focus on solutions.
- We can *enable accountability*, rather than *hold people accountable*.
- We can create an environment in which *people motivate themselves* rather than *motivate them*.

The solutions focused approach

- This is a solution-focused model that requires you to ask questions in such a way as to move the coachee's attention away from problems in favor of solutions. Instead of **discussing difficulties and their causes, the coaching session explores:**
 - Desired goals
 - Exceptions that have led to success in the past (times when the problem did not occur)
 - Solutions (the changes that will have occurred once the goal is reached) as well as existing resources.
- **At heart this solution-focused approach involves finding out what works and doing more of it.** It also entails stopping doing what doesn't work and doing something else.

Problem focus

- It is easy when coaching to focus on the problem and to explore it in great depth in order **eventually to reach a solution.**
- **In particular, people are often keen to find 'the cause' of the problem** and identify all the effects.
- Time spent doing this, however, is time that is **not spent on finding a solution.**

**IF YOU ONLY
FOCUS ON THE PROBLEM**



**YOU MIGHT
MISS THE EASY SOLUTION**

Fundamental Differences

Problem Focus

- The past
- What's wrong
- Blame
- Control
- The expert knows best
- Deficits
- Complications
- Definitions

Solution Focus

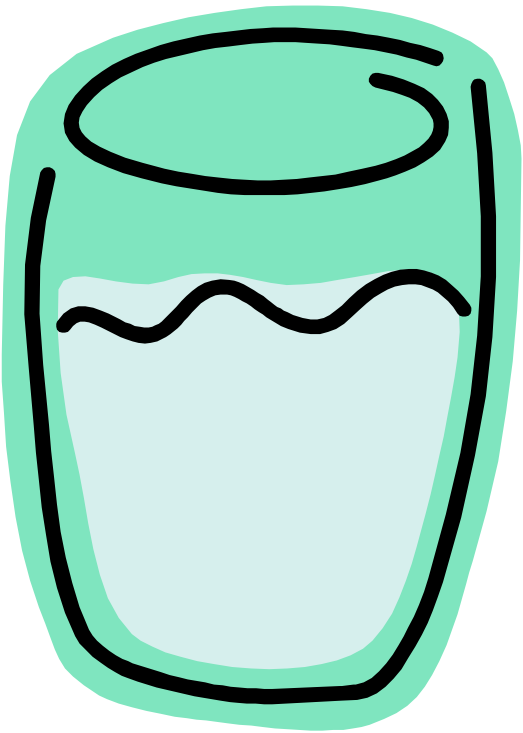
- The future
- What's working
- Progress
- Influence
- Collaboration
- Resources
- Simplicity
- Actions

Builds on Several Assumptions

- In organizations or groups, something works.
- What we focus on becomes our reality.
- The act of asking questions influences the group in some way.
- What we want already exists in our selves, organizations, firms and communities.
- This is extracted when you create a positive atmosphere.

Appreciative
Inquiry –
what is it?

Is Your Glass Half Full?



- Focus on the SOLUTION, not the Problem....
- Focus on what IS working

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY

David Cooperrider,
Management Professor, Case
Western University

Appreciative enquiry steps

- Focus on what's working as a better way to fix what's wrong.
- Generally entails 4 phases:
 1. interviews with employees and customers, to ask what is already working.
 2. open ended brainstorming sessions.
 3. The group takes the information gleaned thus far and defines and prioritizes the next steps to make that ideal vision a reality
 4. the participants work exclusively on the necessary tasks to execute the plan.

Introducing the OSKAR model

O

- Outcome

S

- Scaling

K

- Know-How and Resources

A

- Affirm and Action

R

- Review

Outcome

This is similar but different to the 'goal' in most coaching models. The outcome is not simply the goal of the coachee. It is the difference that the coachee (and those around them) wants to see as a result of the coaching.



This establishes a 'platform' from which to coach. It clarifies:

What the coachee wants to achieve (long, medium, and short term)

What they want to achieve from the session itself

How they will know it has been useful to them

The perfect scenario desired by the coachee (miracle)

Outcome Questions



What do you want to achieve today?



How will you know that we have made some progress?



What would be the payoff from solving this problem? What would it help us to get?



How confident are you that something can be done about this?



When have you tackled this problem before? What skills and resources did you discover then?



What in general has been going well for you?

The Miracle Question

- The miracle question is used to establish the perfect scenario.
- You ask the coachee to suppose that suddenly and miraculously overnight the goal was achieved and the problems vanished.
- The typical questions you might ask at this stage are:
 - *‘I want you to imagine that you have attained your goal. What changes do you see in your working environment?’*
 - *‘You've come into work today to find that this problem has vanished. What changes have occurred?’*
 - *‘What do you want to achieve?’*
 - *‘Are there times when the solution is already present, or something similar? Can you identify what is different about these times?’*



Discussion

This leads to a discussion not merely about results, but also about the small and visible signs that the results are starting to happen, something that helps the coachee visualize their desired outcome.

Sometimes it is good to focus on these small incremental steps to build confidence that there is progress.

Scaling

-
- By asking the coachee where they rate things on a scale of 0–10 (where the Outcome is 10 – or the miracle, and 0 is the complete opposite), you will both find to what extent the current situation is working.
 - By using this scale in your coaching you are likely see two things happen:
 - The current situation is rarely zero
 - Often there is already some limited progress towards the outcome even at the very beginning of the process.

Typical Scaling Questions

- The typical questions you would ask at this stage are:
 - **‘On a scale of 0 to 10, with 0 representing the worst it has ever been and 10 the preferred future, where would you put the situation today?’**
 - **‘If 0 is no achievement and 10 is complete goal achievement, where are you on the scale already?’**
 - **‘You are at “N” now; what did you do to get this far?’ ‘How would you know you had got to N+1?’**

SCALING

- On a scale of 0 – 10, where are you now?
 - Outcome = 10
 - 0 = the complete opposite
 - Where I am now is seldom a 0
- Incremental Change or radical change?
- “Miracle Question”: If you were to wake up tomorrow and do one thing differently, what would it be?
- What’s the one thing if you changed would make a significant impact on your life?

Sample questions

- What would it look like to be a 7 instead of a 6?
- Between now and the next time I see you, what could you do differently?
- Who will you do this with?

Know-how and resources

- You have identified how far along the scale the goal is.
- Now you have to help the coachee establish what factors are already contributing to getting the situation incrementally closer to the outcome.
- This stage really is about finding out what is working—that is, what is already happening to get the situation closer to the objective.
- The search for know-how may be extended to include the coach, other people, and teams.
- The focus is always relentlessly on what works or what has worked rather than what won't work or what is wrong.

Know How questions

- The sort of questions you would ask at this stage are:
 - *‘What are your strengths?’*
 - *‘What helps you perform at “N” on the scale, rather than 0?’ N is the current position or any chosen position that can be described.*
 - *“What knowledge do you currently have that is helping you?” ‘What resources do you have?’*
 - *‘What skills do you currently have that are helping you?’*
 - *‘What attitudes do you currently have that are helping you?’*
 - *‘When does the outcome already happen for you—even a little bit?’ ‘What did you do to make that happen? How did you do that?’*

KNOW-HOW and RESOURCES

- Find what works.....
- Establish what is already happening so that we are at least a 3 on the scale and not lower.
- The coach builds up as big a collection as they can find about what is helping.
- The search for know-how can be extended to other people and teams.
- It's all about what works or what has worked rather than what won't work or what is wrong.

Affirm

- Affirm involves providing positive reinforcement to the coachee by reflecting back positive comments about the key strengths they have revealed in terms of their knowledge, skills, and attitudes.
- For example:
 - ***‘So your knowledge of “X” is extensive and has enabled ...’***
 - ***‘Reacting to the situation in the way you describe was excellent because ...’***
 - ***‘The level of skills within your team is much higher than others I’ve seen in this situation.’***
 - ***‘How can you use these resources and strengths to help you achieve your goal?’***
- Recognizing these qualities helps to build the coachee’s self-belief, as well as enhancing the relationship between you and the coachee.

Action

- Action involves helping your coachee determine what actions they will take to keep moving toward the outcome. This means doing more of the things that have already been recognized as working rather than anything new or different. For example:
 - ***‘Will keeping that successful process in place help you complete that action?’***
 - ***‘What did you do to get this far?’***
 - ***‘How can you do more of that?’***
 - ***‘Do you think altering the current procedure has any additional benefits?’***

Start, stop, continue

AFFIRM & ACTION

- The coach affirms the positive qualities of the coachee, based on what they have observed during the coaching conversation.
- Action: is about finding small next steps to build on what works.
- Small steps build confidence.

Review

- This final stage of the OSKAR coaching model involves reviewing progress and takes place at the beginning of the next coaching session.
- You should ask 'What is better?' rather than whether a particular action was carried out, or what happened. This keeps the focus on the things that are moving the process in the right direction.
- You can go back to the scale to find out how much things have improved and what has helped the most, provided the emphasis remains on reviewing the positives.

Review Questions

- The review is typically done during a follow up session.
- Typical questions for the review would be:
 - ***What is better?***
 - ***What is working?***
 - ***'What did you do that made change successful?'***
 - ***What do you think will change next?'***
- The Coach can be impressed and affirm more about the coachee, and more small actions contemplated.

Summary

This model's focus on finding a solution highlights key differences from a problem-based approach.

Firstly, it clarifies what goal you want to attain by asking what you want to change rather than asking you to describe and assess a problem.

It also asks what recent improvements the coachee has seen instead of recent difficulties.

Some Coaching Examples.....

- Take a group of people and ask: “If you were to wake up tomorrow and do one thing differently, what would it be?”
- Look at an area of HR and ask: “What could we do to improve a work process or function?”
- Individually, perhaps you wish to learn to delegate more?
- How could you coach yourself or another to do this?
- What will you hear?
- What do you think about this?
- What questions do you have for understanding?

Principles of Solution-Focused Coaching:

- It has a focus on solutions, not on analyzing problems.
- It begins with the notion that people are competent.
- It believes that people have problems – not that they are the problem!
- It has an expectation of success and progress.
- It believes in making the least change to achieve the greatest results.
(Start)
- If something is not working, stop doing it. (Stop)
- If something is working, keep on doing it. (Continue)

Focus on strengths

- From a motivational perspective the solution-based model is more positive because it sees people as having problems rather than them being the problem!
- This is also reflected in you asking the coachee to explain what progress has been made and not asking for an explanation of the problems.
- Finally, as the coach you get the individual to focus on the strengths and resources of the central issue, not the opposite aspects.

Benefits of Solutions Focus

- Positive progress leads to good motivation for the coachee.
- Positive questions lead to an excellent relationship between coach and coachee.
- Focus on know-how of what works encourages shared wisdom throughout the organization. (positive affirmation)

Acknowledgements



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Maribeth B. Dockety, PHR

The background features a light blue-to-green gradient. On the left side, there are several overlapping, wavy, semi-circular shapes in shades of blue and white. On the right side, there are similar wavy shapes in shades of green and white, creating a sense of movement and depth.

Thank You!