

7. Working with the coachee's own experiences and strengths

As a coach, you can do various exercises with the coachee to help them overcome obstacles and achieve goals. This chapter explains and describes two different exercises.

If the coachee says: 'I lack self-confidence and perseverance', then do the exercise 'Drawing on your own strengths'.

If the coachee says: 'I don't know what I could do or say in that situation', then do the exercise 'Mental rehearsal', in which the coachee learns from earlier mental experiences.

'Combining strengths' exercise

1. Ask the coachee to recall a situation in which he or she would like to be more effective.
2. Ask the coachee questions to clarify the situation.
3. Ask the coachee what he or she would like to happen in the situation and expects of him- or herself.
4. Ask the coachee to draw up a list of feelings and inner strengths (such as self-confidence, perseverance, nerve and creativity) that are needed to achieve the desired result.
5. Once the list is complete (five emotions and/or inner strengths are enough), ask the coachee to point to a spot on the floor and to imagine a circle there in his or her favourite colour.
6. Next, ask the coachee to recall a situation in which he or she experienced the first emotion/strength on the list.
7. Indicate that the intention is for the coachee to relive the situation in their mind, with the accompanying sounds, images and feelings of that moment.
8. Ask the coachee to step into the circle when the situation and feelings have reached their peak.
9. Once the coachee is standing in the circle, indicate that the coachee should leave the emotion or inner state behind in the circle in their own way. Once the coachee has done this, he or she may step out of the circle.
10. Ask the coachee to blink their eyes ten times.

11. Repeat steps 4 to 7 until every emotion has been given a place in the circle.
12. Have the coachee mentally relive the situation in which they would like to be more effective. Indicate that the coachee should take a step into the circle in order to experience the situation with all the necessary strengths.
13. Have the coachee take a step out of the circle and ask what happened at the moment he or she stepped into the circle.
14. Repeat steps 12 and 13 once more.
15. Instruct the coachee to stand in the circle and, with eyes closed, to “make the circle their own” so that the emotions/strengths will always be available.

'Mental rehearsal' exercise

Explain to the coachee that they can use their imagination to predict the outcome of decisions and agreements. The technique involves the coachee picturing the outcome, imagining what happens and what it will be like. The coachee can test 'what if' scenarios and explore potential problems. It is essential that the coachee considers the wider effects, on colleagues, other departments, the organisation, customers, family or friends, in order to avoid negative consequences.

1. Ask the coachee to describe an upcoming situation in which he or she does not know what to do.
2. Ask the coachee to imagine various possible courses of action - the coachee must see, hear and feel what it will be like.
3. Ask the coachee to think through the effects of the various options. Ask:
 - Whether it benefits the coachee and their interests?
 - Whether it is worth the time and effort?
 - What the effect is on others (colleagues, other departments, the organisation, customers, suppliers, family or friends)?
 - What can go wrong?
 - What is needed to respond to potential problems?
4. Ask the coachee to create a mental scenario of the possible outcomes of the decision the coachee has chosen.
5. Ask the coachee to be as creative as possible and to analyse the scenario in his or her mind in order to answer the questions in point three.

Exercise 7.1

Practise 'Combining strengths' several times with friends, family or colleagues.

Exercise 7.2

Practise 'Mental rehearsal' several times with friends, family or colleagues.