



...solve thorny business challenges in the time it takes to drink a cup of tea

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# Your people do more and achieve more when you use a few proven coaching skills...

If you and your managers fail to improve your coaching skills, then your wider team are less likely to achieve the results you seek.

In sport, you know that the best coaches are lauded with praise and gratitude, and for good reason. A good coach is a major part of a sports person's or sports team's success and can take on legendary status!

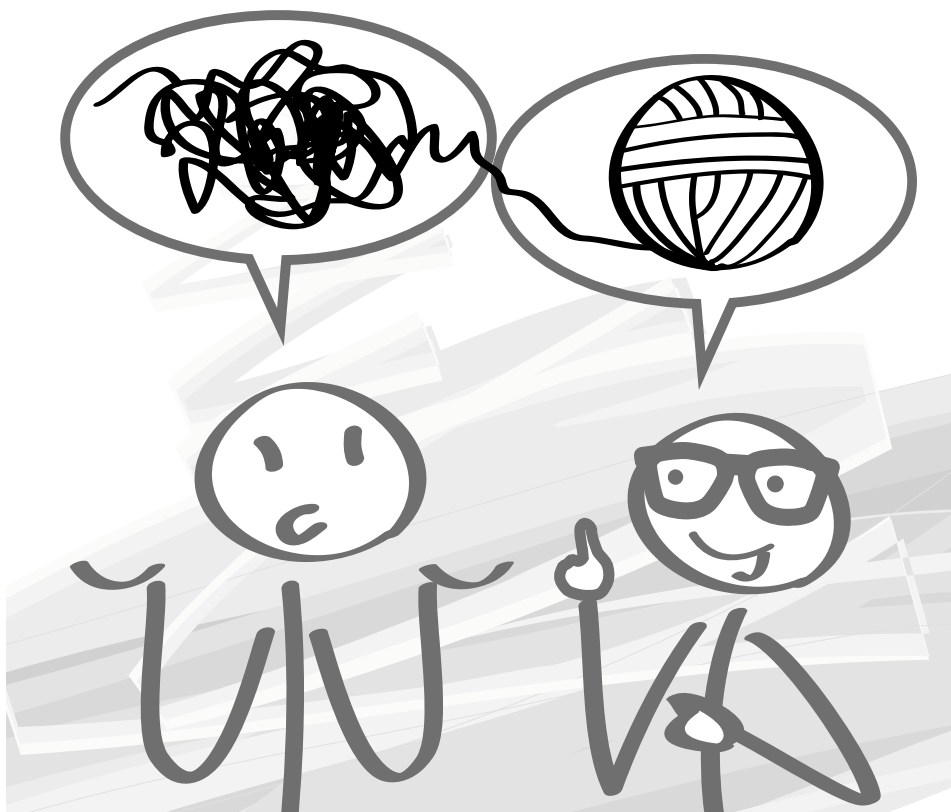
Could you?

## Let's get real...

A better question is - how can you learn or improve the simple skills of coaching to help your team be more successful?

How can you, in a small way, help each of your team be more successful to the tune of a few percentage points each?

All it takes is the improvement of a few core, easy-to-implement coaching skills, coaching skills we already use as humans and which we can all enhance with a little structure and learning.



## IN A NUTSHELL

**Develop your coaching skills and you will develop your team's knowledge, skills and motivation towards the work they do. When skills and motivation grow, your business results grow too.**

## Small things make a big difference...

The global survey company, Gallup, has conducted more than 2.7 million employee surveys across more than 50

diverse industries.

The Gallup surveys categorically show how the engagement of your people in their work profoundly impacts the results you achieve.

The Gallup surveys also show that **high-engagement businesses make 23% more profit** than those with low employee engagement.

You'll find more on the Gallup surveys in the download tools - link below - and how the *12 elements of engagement benefit from a coaching approach*.

## You're already using these engagement skills...

As a leader and manager, you already spend time asking questions of your people and listening to their responses. These are the two core coaching skills in business.

Yet they become so much more valuable when you apply strong and proven frameworks that help you help your people.

But can (or should) we all be coaches? As parents, we have to be. As business leaders or managers, we have to be. As friends, it's a great skill to have. As community leaders, how else would we get volunteers to do what needs to be done?

**STOP** thinking coaching is something other people do to help you and your team

**START** thinking that you are responsible for improving your coaching skills and thus strengthen your team's skills, self-belief and results

## What's stopping you?

Why don't we take coaching more seriously in business, as sports people do when they want to perform better at their chosen sport?

This is because of the pressure to produce immediate, high-quality results, as well as the fear of failure. The medium/ long-term payoff of coaching your team loses out to short-term pressure.

All it takes is your commitment to carve out a little time each week to use your newly developed coaching skills.

## What makes a great coach?

*"No problem can withstand the assault of sustained thinking."*

– Voltaire

Sustained thinking requires better questions.

Better questions unlock the potential in your team and remove the barriers holding them back.

If coaching questions help create an environment where people are inspired to learn, to succeed, to grow and to do the right thing, we should ask – how do we improve our coaching questioning skills?

*"Imagine knowing the right*



*question to ask, at exactly the right moment, in order to help others to think in a solution-focused way and achieve greater results. Imagine mastering a coaching framework that enables you to help yourself, your team and organisation to make differences that matter."* – Andy Gilbert

Here are the SIX WORDS we use when asking questions- WHAT? HOW? WHEN? WHERE? WHO? and WHY?

By connecting these six question words with the subjects in the two frameworks shared below, you have an infinite number of open questions to unlock your team's performance.

NB: WHY is deliberately last in this list because it can sometimes produce a highly emotive, defensive and combative answer in response.

It also pays to appreciate the difference between OPEN and CLOSED questions.

**CLOSED QUESTION: "Are you happy with the results you're getting?"**

'Yes', 'no' or 'maybe' are the only possible answers. This question might also result in your team becoming defensive about the results.

**OPEN QUESTION: "What results are you hoping to get?"** This open question can generate infinite possible answers and open your team to thinking differently.

To advance your questioning skills, simply use the following two frameworks to guide your coaching questions.

## Framework 1 – A simple equation...

Tim Gallwey is considered a giant in the coaching field (amongst many others, he's worked with Apple, Coca-Cola and Rolls-Royce), thanks to his insights around the simple but powerful *Inner Game Equation*. You

can ask questions around these three elements:

**(P) Performance = (p) potential – (i) interference**

Ask questions that focus on improving performance (P) by growing or making more of existing potential (p) and by decreasing interference (i) and you're helping grow your people's capabilities and results.

These elements provide a positive and optimistic framework for asking questions which change people's thinking and improve performance. Check out the 4-stage performance curve in the download tools to see the impact of this framework and see what level of performance your leadership style produces.

*"Coaching focuses on future possibilities, not past mistakes."*

– Sir John Whitmore

## It takes time...

When you set out to 'Make A Difference' with your people through asking great questions, you'll be helping your people grow. As your people grow, you'll be helping your business grow as well.

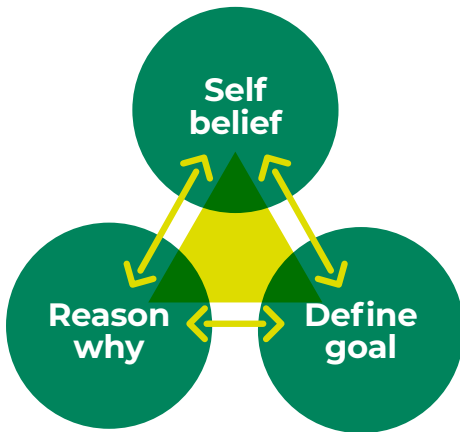
However, a bit like tomatoes, you can't force-grow your people. Time and skill are needed.

Regular watering and occasional plant food nurtures tomatoes, over time. In the same way, good coaching questions and active listening to the answers will nurture your people, over time.

## Framework 2 – Make A Difference (M.A.D.) triangles...

For more than 25 years and across 40 countries, Andy Gilbert and his team at Go M.A.D. Thinking have been training trainers in organisations such as the NHS and Royal & Sun Alliance.

When they start to coach coaches, they get them to ask questions around two triangles:



**Development of self**  
 motivation, values, beliefs, feelings, confidence, self-image, ambitions, vision, self-awareness



**Development of performance**  
 objectives, ideas, tasks, priorities, actions, plans, timescales, logistics, people

The first triangle focuses questioning on 'softer' internal issues – the development of self.

The second triangle focuses questioning on the more tangible elements that are easier to see, touch and substantiate.

These two triangles form part of a 7-part coaching framework fully explained in Andy Gilbert and Ian Chakravorty's brilliant book *Go MAD About Coaching*.

With your existing questioning skills, you can now use these two frameworks to help the people you want to coach succeed. The insights in this Business Breakthrough get you started, but clearly there's more to coaching than a couple of thousand words can achieve – go to the 'Want to know more?' section below to advance your knowledge and skills further.

## Ask high-quality questions...

What is a high-quality question?

As Andy says:

*"...the purpose of asking high quality questions is to help the people you are coaching to generate high quality answers in order to help themselves."* – Andy Gilbert – *Go MAD About Coaching*

Of the six open questions Andy suggests, we focus mostly on the question – WHAT? and then on the question – HOW? These open questions prompt people to think for themselves.

## Probe deeper still...

Bring a microscope to even the blandest of objects – say, a plain carpet

– and you discover a fascinating world of textures, colours and microbes (and bugs!). Ask probing questions of your colleagues and you unlock layers of insight that may prove valuable or important.

The focus of open questions can be increased by adding single words. For example:

- What **else** do you want?
- What do you **really** want?
- **Exactly** what is happening now?
- What **specifically** are you looking for?
- What **more** could you do?
- **Precisely** what will you do?

For more sample coaching questions, check out the download tools section at the link below.

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<https://businessbreakthrough.online/coaching-counts-tools-and-resources/>

## 4 helping hands for you...



Take a leaf from Andy Gilbert's research and ask yourself the question:

*"What is the simplest way of putting to work the success process that people naturally use when making a difference?"*

As a leader or manager, your job is partly/mostly to help your people succeed.

Helping your people succeed means asking great questions. Now you can ask questions that prompt them to think differently about their situation, their work, their motivations and drivers, the beliefs they have about themselves, the people they could work with, the things holding them back, the actions they can take.

1. **Remember, it's not about you. It's about making your people think for themselves.** Asking great questions of your people prompts them to think and act on the insights and decisions your questions generate. You're not telling them what to do – they are working it out for themselves.
2. **You can't force growth.** Your people need time to grow, and they need your time to nurture the way they think, believe and behave. In the 21st century, great coaching skills are essential for success.
3. **Ask great questions using proven coaching frameworks.** Rather than using trial and error to build your coaching question skills, apply the M.A.D. triangles and the Inner Game Equation: (P) Performance = (p) potential – (i) interference. You'll build your questioning skills faster and stronger.
4. **Practice, practice, practice.** Asking great questions is a skill, and skills require practice and a willingness to make mistakes. Coaching is a life skill worth your time investment. For more insights in becoming a stronger coach, explore the resources from both Andy Gilbert and Sir John Whitmore.

## TIME TO DISAGREE:

**“Wouldn’t it be much better to get external coaching expertise to help my team perform better?”**

Yes, you can buy in external coaching. And yes, this can improve your team’s skills, behaviours and results (including yours!). It’s worth considering, for sure. But this doesn’t mean you shouldn’t improve your own coaching skills as well.

You work with your people every day, so why not build your own coaching skills to have an even greater impact on your team and your business every day and every week, and not just once a week or once a month as it would be with external coaches.

**“I’m here to get a job done, not coach people. I just want people to do what they’re meant to do when they’re meant to do it!”**

It’s great that you’re ambitious to get a job done, and well, but don’t you find it’s often hard to force volunteers to do something?

Command and control worked in the 20th century. However, you’re now dealing with volunteers in your business, not conscripts! Use command and control and you risk losing your best people.

*“Talent retention is a vital issue and expectations about the way people are treated are rising fast. Prescription, instruction, autocracy, and hierarchy are losing traction and acceptability. Good people want more choice, more*

*responsibility, and more fun in their lives, and that includes the workplace.” – Sir John Whitmore – Coaching for Performance*

## ULTIMATE ARGUMENT:

**“The time needed to apply coaching questions to every situation is impractical. We have too much on our plate.”**

It’s hardly surprising that coaching is sometimes side-lined by short-term business pressures. It’s also clear that development of employees is the lowest priority of four criteria that compel us to adapt our leadership behaviour in the moment.

At the head of the list comes time pressure, then fear, followed by the quality and quantity of the job or the product, leaving employee development a poor fourth.

A shortage of time, excess fear and the short-term metrics of getting the job done can drive us permanently into command and control. After all, it’s expected that we have to drive up results in the short term. But command and control alienates good people and disengages so many others.

What’s also expected of leaders and managers is that medium/long-term results around quality, speed and customer care also improve. This then requires some additional coaching of your people so that results improve over time. How will you escape the time pressure but still improve your people?

To use a coaching question – how can you carve out a small window of time, say, once a week, to build your use of the coaching questions frameworks you find here?

Or is this question too simplistic or too challenging at this time, and you need coaching help from your manager or perhaps an external coach to help guide your thinking further?

## Want to know more?

Practical and focused on improving performance, these two books provide a much deeper insight to the skills of coaching than we can in this Bitesize Breakthrough Report. We wholeheartedly encourage you to check out both books.



*“Whether you’re new to coaching or wishing to extend your skills, you will gain so much from applying the content of this practical book”*

**– Bob Mendelsohn, Group Chief**

**Executive, Royal & Sun Alliance**



*“This book is about more than coaching; it is undoubtedly a valuable twenty-first-century strategic organizational development resource.”*

*The insights, frameworks, and resources provided can help ensure organizations manifest the ROI that may be realized from coaching-informed interventions.”*

**– Vyla Rollins, Executive Director, London Business School Leadership Institute**

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