

# Coaching Tips for your First Meeting

Transcript

## Appearing

In order of appearance:

1. MAJ David Stephens
2. LCDR Peter Kenworthy
3. MAJ Ali Heenan
4. CHAP Andrew 'Red' Taylor
5. Ms Pam Stone
6. GPCAPT Chris Ward

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## Transcript details

- David Stephens      Next we have, Peter Kenworthy, who's been a great advocate of the program here at ADFA and has been involved, in the Navy coaching program in particular, for many years. Peter's both involved in the mentoring of staff here at ADFA as well as the coaching of that, some of our training officers. So welcome Peter.
- Peter Kenworthy      Thanks, Dave.
- David Stephens      So, Peter, tell me, thinking about that first engagement that you have with the training officer, what are some of the things that you consider? What are some of the processes that you go through? During that first engagement?
- Peter Kenworthy      So, I think one of the most important things at that first engagement is building that relationship. It's the rapport. And I think the research shows within coaching that rapport building is the really, basis of building a successful coaching program with the coaching counterpart. So I'm looking at developing that relationship early. I want to really find out about the coaching counterpart and find out about what was, their life like before ADFA, you know a little bit about what they did at school, but about their family if they're, happy to share that.
- Peter Kenworthy      And, and I'm going to do the same. I want to make sure that I share a little bit about Peter Kenworthy, perhaps even show a little bit of vulnerability about, some of the things that that I've done and really start making that connection.



- Peter Kenworthy The next thing I'd like to have a look at is, I'm big on having a commencement questionnaire. So getting them to think about what are their strengths. What are some things that they do really well. So how could we use that in the coaching program. So I send that out prior to the first engagement and then have a look at the other questions around what is it that I really want to focus on in coaching program.
- Peter Kenworthy And by going through that commencement questionnaire, I want to map out some broad goals that they think is important to work on, over the sessions in the program, also engage them about the coaching agreement to make sure that we're both on the same page, and then I'll get them to sign the agreement form. I'll sign it at the same time, and I'll ask them to actually scan it and send it back to the coaching program.
- Peter Kenworthy So they're taking some responsibility within that relationship. And then at the end, I will then looking at what's the next session that we want to focus on and make sure that I've got that booked in, so we're locked in, we know what we're working towards for session two.
- David Stephens Perfect. I'm joined by Major Ali Heenan. Ali has been working with the character, leadership and ethics team at ADFA and since its inception. She's an experienced coach, both working on the coaching program here at ADFA, as well as with the staff mentoring program. She also has her own business in equine learning, where she works with people and horses in order to facilitate, outcomes, very much in that sort of coaching mindset.
- David Stephens So welcome, Ali. During your first engagement with your coaching counterpart, what are some of your expectations? What's the process that you go through when you, first engaging with someone?
- Ali Heenan So for me, the very first engagement, I always try to do face to face, and on campus at ADFA so that it is as relaxed as possible and as convenient as possible for the TOs with their schedule. I like to keep that meet and greet, very informal and personable. So ideally I'm there to get to know them.
- Ali Heenan However they would like to introduce themselves, for them to get to know me, ask any questions they have and also understand the program itself.
- Ali Heenan One of the tools that I find really helpful to explain to the TO, who may have no experience with a formal coaching program before, is the use of different hats as an analogy for the different roles that I might take in any coaching encounter.
- Ali Heenan So I share with them that if I'm in a purely coaching role and wearing my coaching hat, then my primary job is to ask them questions and to tap into their own potential rather than giving them answers. If I, put on a mentoring hat and I make it clear that I will always have this conversation with them before stepping into any other role with my mentor hat on, I may be drawing specifically on my own life experience or military experience where they might,



gain some knowledge or understanding that can help with their individual situation.

- Ali Heenan      If I put a training hat on that, I might be running through specific tools that they can use to develop greater understanding, or work through an issue with the support of a framework to work through. The other hat that I may put on is like a little "counselling hat". So I do not claim to be a registered psychologist or formal counsellor, but I can move more into that, supportive counselling role, especially if they're talking through mental health type issues.
- David Stephens      And how do you introduce that idea in the conversation? What would you say to them when you're introducing sort of your different hats? How does that work?
- Ali Heenan      Firstly, I like to ask what they... what their understanding is of coaching and if they have any expectations coming into this program as to what they think might occur more often than not, I find that for many of them, they're not sure what to expect. They don't know what it's going to look like or what they might get out of it.
- Ali Heenan      It's quite a new concept to a lot of them. So from there, I start to explain those different hats and exactly in that way of saying there are multiple hats that I can wear, my primary hat will always be the coaching hat. And when I'm wearing the coaching hat, I'm not here to give you answers, but rather to challenge your own perspectives, help you broaden your thinking, and tap into your own potential, yourself.
- Ali Heenan      Then I explain that there are other hats that I can put on. But we will discuss that as we go. So I will not default to giving them the answers or my war stories or anything like that. But that is there for us to have a conversation about if it's relevant with whatever they're dealing with in that session.
- David Stephens      Great.
- David Stephens      I'm joined by, Red Taylor, who's been with the character, leadership and ethics team since 2018. And Red has a wide range of experience, both mentoring and coaching. And, he's got some great experience, both within Defence and also in his role as a chaplain more broadly. Welcome Red.
- Red Taylor      Thank you.
- David Stephens      So, Red, tell me a little bit about that first coaching engagement. So when you're meeting with your coaching counterpart, what are some of the things that you think about and steps that you take, for that engagement?



- Red Taylor            Yeah, it's a good question. I think one of the, the most important things for me initially is to make the connection with the, the trainee officer that I'm working with. In the ADFA environment, there's often a lot of assessment involved. People are being watched. People being ... the nature of the engagement is very much, to try to determine whether they are suitable to be officers.
- Red Taylor            And so I find that the coaching space is a pretty unique opportunity for them to actually have somebody just engage with them for who they are. So early on, I'm trying to work it, work with that, and ask questions about who they are. And for some of the training officers, it might be the first time they've ever been asked something personal, about them.
- Red Taylor            So that's my first point. Second thing I want to do is, is just touch on what the nature of coaching is. What's this all about? And for some of them, they've been encouraged strongly to attend. For some of them. I put their hand up because they see it as an opportunity to develop themselves. And so for me, I want to work that through a little bit.
- Red Taylor            And one of the ways I do that is actually often use the coaching agreement, which is something that we get them to sign off on. And I'll work through the different items on that agreement and just expand a little bit on each of those, and it helps me make sure I cover off on the key points, but it also helps them get a sense of what it's all about.
- Red Taylor            And what's involved with the coaching program?
- David Stephens       Pam Stone has been involved, both in her Army career but also in her post Army career in the coaching space. And Pam has been involved at ADFA working both on the staff mentoring program as well as a coaching trainee officers for a number of years now. So welcome Pam.
- Pam Stone            Thank you.
- David Stephens       Pam, tell me about that first coaching session. Tell me, what are some of the things that you think about as you sort of, prepare to and then engage with, your coaching counterpart for the first time.
- Pam Stone            Well David, the first indication that I get that I've been matched with a trainee officer is when I get the coaching, the pairing email, from the team. So once I've received that, I like to be able to email my coaching counterpart and give them the opportunity to contact me in a way that's best for them.
- Pam Stone            Noting that they're really busy here, at ADFA, so I give them the option to either call me or give them my... call me, email me any way that they actually really want to make contact. Give them my availability and a few windows of when, it might be the best time to contact me. That usually works very well.



- Pam Stone I usually get an email or a phone call back and we set our first meeting time from there. In our first coaching session, to me, it's really important that they get to know me as a person and that I get to know them. I really want them to know that my time is theirs for the whole time that I'm with them, that we aren't being prescribed things we have to talk about, it's actually about them.
- Pam Stone Some have been asked to participate, some have actually wanted to actually try and participate or try and get a really good understanding of what it is that they want to get out of the coaching program. I like to explain what my concept of coaching is, that it takes a little bit of an idea about it.
- Pam Stone Many haven't been involved with coaching before and have no idea what to expect. And so just giving them that understanding of the fact that they're in control and they really have the direction they can set the direction for us.
- David Stephens Group Captain Chris Ward has been, deeply involved in the Air Force's coaching program, as well as, engaging here at ADFA on the coaching program. Chris has actually helped facilitate a one day, "Introduction to Coaching" for staff here as well. So, Chris, welcome. Tell me about that first coaching session.
- David Stephens What are some of the key things that, that you think are important for our coaches to consider as they are going into that session?
- Chris Ward Well, I think couple of the ground rules are very important, David. I think the fact that the relationship is based on consent and that that consent can be withdrawn at any time by either myself or the coaching counterpart. I think they are very important and also the confidentiality, so that the coaching counterpart can speak freely and understands right at the outset the very limited exceptions that apply to the confidential nature of the coaching relationship with them.
- Chris Ward I think that's very important, and that's why I always stress with them why I'm taking notes, so that I understand that the notes are for my later reference, and aren't seen by anyone else.
- David Stephens Tell me, where do you meet with your coaching counterparts? When you're meeting with them?
- Chris Ward Well, it was online for a little while, and now I have a habit of meeting them outside AAFCANs, just on the tables. And it's usually, I've found the Sunday afternoon works well for the trainee officers, and I'm very keen to fit my coaching in around their program so that it's not just a burden on them. So I like to go wherever they are most comfortable, and that seems to be a spot that's very familiar to them.
- Chris Ward Occasionally in inclement weather, we'll make use of a room inside the library.



