

Coaching Tool: Values and Strength Based Coaching

Transcript

Appearing

In order of appearance:

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Recorded: 2023

Location: ADFA

Transcript details

We're going to talk about what it means to use values and strengths-based coaching, which in many ways sits at the heart of coaching practice. Now, both values and strengths can be used in different ways. Let's first talk about values. Now why might it be important for someone to consider what their values are, as they're working through, problems and issues, that they might be dealing with?

Well, of course, values are a lot about identity. It's about what really matters to you. And that can shape your approach to both how you're experiencing a problem, but also the solutions to a problem. When you're working with your coaching counterpart, you can better understand what is valuable to them, you know, where their values lie

you'll be in a much better position to be able to ask really good questions, to encourage them to work through some of the things that you might be working on, with them, together. This approach to values is in many ways, it's at the heart of what we're what we're doing. So how do you get someone to consider what their values might be?

I mean, it could be as simple as what's really important to you. And I tend to do this, you know, relatively early in a coaching session, maybe even as you're getting to know your coaching counterpart. You know, you might have already covered some of this as you're building rapport, asking them about sort of family where they're from.

What's their sports, hobbies, interests... But really getting someone to think about what matters to them, and to do it in a way that's deliberate and cuts below just that surface level stuff, can be a really valuable exercise. So once again, you could just simply ask them, you know, what's important to you. If they're still struggling, then ask some questions like think about when you were most happy.

Think about when you really achieved something that mattered to you. Think about success and off that, ask them why are those things are important to you. What is it? Was it family? Was it, you know, money? Was it relationships? Was it loyalty? Was it, you know, what were the values that play into those sort of moments?



Another, another great question to ask is “What do you spend most of your time doing?” Because often what we spend our time doing will reflect what our values are. And so that's another good question to start getting people thinking in this space. Another great tool that I use all the time is values cards. Now there's a lot of different values cards out there.

I've got a couple here. He's, you know, one core values. It's about 100 odd cards. The values cards. This is another set that I use all the time. It's about, another 30 or 40 cards or there's, you know, other versions. Here's a set that, that I've also used that I've just downloaded off the internet,

free site, and I can provide that link if you're interested in those. And these are really great because they give you a whole range of cards. And here's a sample with some different values on them. What have we got? Leadership, Service. Self-respect. This is an example of some of the values and the way you can use a set of cards like these is to spread them out or work with your counterpart.

Give them the cards and say, all right, take your time. I'll be back in ten minutes or whatever, and I want you to sort them into, three piles, potentially. So lots of different ways. The way I typically approach it is break it into three piles: Those that are most important to you as values, those are somewhat important.

And then those that, are not so important in in a third pile and get them to work through those, sorting it out as part of that process that will have to actually think deliberately about what matters and what doesn't matter. And I try to get them to come down to about six cards, because what typically happens is that I'll end up with most important will be like 20 cards or something.

And, I'll challenge them. I'll say, okay, let's I'll that 20. Yeah. I want you to sort of sort it down to the top, sort of 4 to 6 cards that are going to be the most important to you. Once they've got those sorted, you can then have a great conversation. You can ask them, so what is it about those top cards that you've chosen, those top values, or even if you're not using cards, you can still have this conversation about why is it that you chose those values as your top values and have a conversation with them?

Try to understand where they're coming from, why those things are really important to them, what lies at the heart of what drives them and motivates them? Likewise, I often go to the other end of the pile and say, okay, these are things that aren't important to you. Why did they make it down there? And once again, it can lead to another good conversation.

And then if, depending on the time and where we're at, I'll sometimes ask all the cards down, are there any cards that you would like ideally to shift around to the more important pile, or move down to the less important pile? Once again, great conversations you could have, which will really give you more insights into how your coaching counterpart is thinking about things, what really matters to them.

And then of course, that can play out as you're having conversations with them, working on, different challenges, issues, leadership styles, things like that. So, values that can be really important. The other thing about values, of course, is that we have the Defence Values. So another great way to use these is once they've got their personal values, you know, ask them to get those across them to think about them in relation to the Defence Values.

How do they match up where do they sit in terms of the Defence Values? Maybe ask them, why do you think the Defence chose the values that they did? And once again, you can have a great conversation



if you're using the cards which contain the Defence Values. Even better, you can look at where they've landed as if sorted out those in the different piles.

So using, you know, values, mapping them across to the Defence Values is another really good conversation that you might have. And so values. Yes. Once you've got those and you've identified, I help them to identify their values. It can lead to some great conversations or points of reflection. It can tell you something about their identity as you start moving through, with your coaching conversations.

All right. So that's values. Let's talk about the next part I want to talk about is Strengths. Now of course strengths based coaching is something that you might have heard of before. But it's a really good concept. And it's almost the opposite to the way many of us are taught to think about, solving problems or helping someone develop, if you're anything like me, when I first started doing sort of, you know, leadership development, people would say to me, okay, so what are your weaknesses?

Let's work on those. Well, this sort of flips that idea on its head and says rather than focusing on your weaknesses, let's start out by focusing on your strengths. So help your coaching counterpart work out what their different strengths are. And this can play out in really helpful ways when you're helping them to work through a problem, to help them, what we call reframe our problem.

So someone might say, for example, I'll look, I'm really having trouble with this person. I just can't relate to them at all. You know, I don't think I'm ever going to talk to them again. Well, what you could do once you know what their strengths are, you can go back to it. You can talk to your coaching counterpart and say, okay.

So when you think about your strengths, which of your strengths might be able to help you in this situation? What can you leverage off in order to help you as you're dealing with this person and that your coaching counterpart might say, well, yeah, actually, you know, I'm a good problem solver. And so maybe I need to think a little bit more deeply about how I engage with this person or work with them to overcome our differences.

So, it can be used in ways like that. So once again, there's different ways to think about strengths. And you can, you can do a session. I like to do this, you know, in sort of maybe session two if I'm able to, it's to ask them, what are your key strengths? What are the things that, that you think you're good at and just get them to write?

At least it could be their homework between sessions to go "Okay, I'd like you to try to come up with your top ten strengths." And then you can use that as a way to leverage off for the next session, as you as you get them to talk through why they've chosen what they've chosen. You know it could come under different categories.

Get them to think about, "As a leader, what are your strengths?" Maybe "As a team member what are your strengths?" "When you're under pressure what are some of your strengths?" You know, when you're, you know, in a work environment, maybe when you're in social environment, what are some of the things that that your coaching counterpart would consider strengths.

Now, of course, there's you can also use cards or, you know, there's a whole lot of different ways as even some online surveys that you can, you know, you can just Google and find it all. It'll give a way for



people to try to categorize their strengths. And once they've got those strengths, then they're top ten strengths that you can then just put aside.

And then as you're having conversations and working on different issues, you can go back to those strengths. When someone's really struggling to work to a problem, you know, again, say to them, "So if you think about your strengths that we identified previously, which of those could help you in this situation?" And so it's a really powerful tool

you can use. Which is why it's great to sort of work on those and identify those early in your coaching session. So both values and strengths are great ways to help people think through, where they're at, how they view themselves and the world around them, how they relate to others, and then what they can rely on us as their strengths, in order to overcome some of those problems.

As a coach, our job is to help them to use those tools in ways that allows them to be self-reflective and to come up with those solutions. But I'd also put a challenge out to you. When was the last time you really thought about, you know, what value, what matters most to you? What are your values?

Because it's one thing to have a conversation with others about their values. But if we haven't thought about where we stand, what's important to us, what do we spend most of our time doing? Then, you know, it is hard to have that conversation with others if we haven't actually gone through that process ourselves. So I would encourage you to, to think about that, think about it as a concept, but also personally to work through some of those things yourself so you're in a better position to then coach others in these really important areas.

