

Tips for Effective Coaching

To help their managers become good coaches able to support direct reports in implementing their 70-20-10 plans, organizations can communicate tips for effective coaching such as:

- **Ask good questions:** Avoid using closed questions that involve a simple yes or no response. Instead, ask open-ended queries that encourage elaboration, such as “What is it you want to achieve? What have you done about this so far? What else could you try?”
- **Listen and encourage:** To show the individual you are listening, summarize what they’ve said. This will help you as the coach to gain a clearer understanding of the situation and provide the individual an opportunity for further reflection as they hear their own words in a new light.
- **Guide the conversation rather than lead it:** Learnings are most powerful when they come from within us versus being thrust upon us. Rather than sharing information, use techniques to guide the individual toward self-realization. For example, silence is a powerful tool in helping the individual to think of their own options and solutions rather than you providing all the answers. If you’re interested in learning more about this tactic, [“The Feedback Fallacy”](#) in *Harvard Business Review* includes examples of how to do this.
- **Use concrete examples:** If you’re debriefing with someone about actions you’ve observed, recap the context, what the person said or did, and the impact of the actions. Consider the difference between saying “Great job on that meeting schedule!” versus saying “We both know board alignment is important to our new strategy’s success, so I was pleased to see that, in your proposed meeting schedule, you suggested inviting a few board members. I think including them will help us socialize these ideas with the broader board.”
- **Have a positive approach:** A positive approach can help both the coach and the individual respond and react in a way that fosters constructive change. One important aspect is being asset-based and building on existing strengths. Another aspect is encouraging positivity as you discuss challenges and not resorting to venting or blaming. As a coach, you can often turn the situation around by asking questions that encourage positivity, for example, “I understand your frustrations. How can you move forward from this?”
- **Generate personal responsibility and ownership:** Encourage the individual to think about their options for moving forward. This will enable them to create a plan and, because the way forward is their choice, they will have more motivation to act. Through this thought process, the individual will arrive at solutions that are more likely to be relevant and realistic because they are their own ideas and have not been imposed by you.