

Coaching

A Coaching Mindset

Whether you manage others, lead project teams, or contribute as a team member, you'll be able to develop new skills—and extend the ideas to others through coaching and collaboration.

Coaching at work *

You've probably had a coach before—maybe someone who helped you hone your debating skills or guided you in a job search. Or you've seen coaches in action—whether on a sports field or in a dance competition.

In these and other settings, coaches play a key role in helping people grow and achieve their goals.

Coaching is not:

- Following a lockstep process
- Giving employees explicit direction
- Mentoring or training
- Offering advice

Instead, it's an ongoing process where you help people reflect on and improve their performance.

Your coaching toolkit

Coaching is about using your good judgment in context. You may find yourself coaching team members located in different offices and from different cultures and backgrounds. No two situations are the same, and there are many right ways to coach.

To prepare for a range of coaching challenges, in this topic, you'll learn how to:

Promote learning agility	Support people in staying flexible, growing from mistakes, and successfully responding to challenges.
Hold coaching conversations	Discover how to coach both “in the moment” and in formal, scheduled sessions.
Listen and question effectively	Draw on the tools of encouraging reflection, listening, asking questions, and sharing input during coaching conversations.
Give constructive feedback	Use this “secret weapon” to motivate and stretch others—and close performance gaps.

When you hone your coaching skills, you do more than just benefit individual team members. You build your effectiveness as a leader and make your entire organization more agile, too

Promote Learning Agility

Get your team ready for new opportunities.

The growth zone

When you coach, you'll often focus on something specific—

Developing a skill

Filling a gap

or achieving a goal.

But great coaches do something else, too: They support people in developing **learning agility**.

Possibilities, not roadblocks

As a coach, you may find yourself working with people who avoid challenges for fear of making mistakes—or who take feedback as a personal attack. These individuals likely have a **fixed mindset**. Many of us do. The good news: You can help team members shift to a **growth mindset**—the belief that with effort and support, they can stretch and grow



Fixed Mindset

People with a fixed mindset believe that skills and intelligence are predetermined. They think success hinges on how smart you are—and serious personal growth and development aren't possible.



Growth Mindset

People with a growth mindset believe that with practice and support, they can develop and grow their abilities. They see failure as a temporary setback and give themselves permission to try again.

How do you know if someone has a fixed or growth mindset? Listen for hints. For example, people with a fixed mindset:

- Make broad statements
- Blame factors outside their control
- Engage in negative self-talk

Numbers aren't really my thing...

If you hear...

"I wasn't going to win that account anyway."

"Our product development processes don't allow for creativity."

"We can't be competitive because marketing sets prices too high."

"I'm just not a people person."

You could say: "Losing that account was hard, but what did you learn from the experience that can help you next time?"

Make the most of mistakes

When people have a growth mindset, they see failure as an opportunity for growth.

Don't let good mistakes go to waste—they're great fodder for coaching.

Remember to praise effort, not just results.

By signaling the value of traits like

Persistence

Innovation

Risk-taking

and curiosity,

you position people for long-term success.

Build trust and openness

Trust is a game changer in any relationship—especially one where you'll be encouraging team members to acknowledge shortcomings and open themselves to learning. **They need to know they are safe to explore their perceived limitations and missteps.**



Tip

If your coachee is pessimistic or defensive, they may not see things exactly the same way you do. Try to think about what their defensiveness indicates—perhaps they feel threatened or insecure.*

To build trust:

- **Follow through** on what you say you're going to do.
- **Show appreciation** for each team member and their contributions.
- **Take shared responsibility** for successes *and* failures.
- **Admit when you are wrong** and correct your mistakes.

When you are authentic—by using relatable language, talking about your experiences, and giving real examples—you create bonds with the people you are coaching.

Fail Forward , fail Fast

Take away So Far

- **Great coaches support people in developing learning agility.**
- Learning agility is being able to **stay flexible, grow from mistakes, and respond to challenges.**
- People with a **fixed mindset** fear making mistakes.
- Help team members shift to a **growth mindset**—the belief that with effort and support, they can grow.
- Build trust so people know they are **safe to explore perceived limitations and missteps.**