

# Coaching Culture Quickstart Guide

*Free Resource from Mission-Driven Momentum Podcast*

Build a culture of coaching that strengthens teams, develops leaders, and creates sustainable growth—without formal training or big budgets.

## UNDERSTANDING COACHING

### What Coaching IS:

- Creating space for reflection and self-discovery
- Asking powerful questions that unlock insight
- Helping people find their own solutions
- Building confidence and decision-making capacity
- Supporting growth through curiosity and challenge

### What Coaching IS NOT:

- Giving advice or telling people what to do
- Solving problems for others
- Therapy or counseling
- Management or performance evaluation
- Mentorship (sharing your experience)

## THE COACHING MINDSET

### Core Beliefs:

- People already have valuable insights and capabilities
- The best solutions come from within, not from experts
- Reflection and questions are more powerful than answers
- Growth happens when people feel safe to explore
- Coaching builds sustainable capacity, not dependency

## Shift Your Stance:

| FROM      | TO         |
|-----------|------------|
| Fixing    | Exploring  |
| Directing | Asking     |
| Answering | Listening  |
| Solving   | Supporting |
| Telling   | Trusting   |

## COACHING VS. MANAGING VS. MENTORING

### When to MANAGE:

- Setting expectations and accountability
- Delegating tasks and tracking progress
- Making decisions about resources
- Providing performance feedback
- Ensuring work gets done on time

*Sounds like: "Here's what needs to happen by Friday..."*

### When to MENTOR:

- Sharing your relevant experience
- Offering industry-specific guidance
- Helping someone avoid mistakes you made
- Teaching specific skills or knowledge
- Guiding someone through familiar territory

*Sounds like: "When I faced this, here's what I learned..."*

### When to COACH:

- Helping someone think through options
- Building problem-solving capacity
- Exploring challenges without clear answers
- Supporting someone's development
- Encouraging ownership and autonomy

*Sounds like: "What do you think might work here?"*

## POWERFUL COACHING QUESTIONS

### Opening Questions (Start the Conversation):

- "What's on your mind?"
- "What would be most helpful to explore today?"
- "Where are you feeling stuck?"
- "What's the real challenge here for you?"

### Exploring Questions (Go Deeper):

- "What else?"
- "Tell me more about that."
- "What's important to you about this?"
- "What's underneath that concern?"
- "If you zoomed out, what would you notice?"

### Possibility Questions (Expand Thinking):

- "What would success look like?"
- "What would you do if you weren't afraid of failing?"
- "What's one option you haven't considered yet?"
- "If anything were possible, what would you try?"
- "What would [someone you admire] do in this situation?"

### Action Questions (Move Forward):

- "What's one small step you could take this week?"
- "What support do you need?"
- "What will you do? By when?"
- "How will you know it's working?"
- "What might get in the way, and how will you handle it?"

### Reflection Questions (Build Learning):

- "What did you learn from this?"
- "What would you do differently next time?"
- "What surprised you?"
- "What are you most proud of?"
- "How did this challenge help you grow?"

## THE POWER OF THE PAUSE

Before jumping in with your brilliant solution, try this:

1. **Count to 3** in your head
2. **Take a breath**
3. **Ask a question** instead of giving an answer

**This pause creates space for:**

- The other person to keep thinking
- You to shift from "solving" to "coaching"
- Something unexpected to emerge
- Deeper reflection and insight

## 15-MINUTE COACHING CONVERSATIONS

**Minutes 0-3: Check-in & Frame**

- "What would be most helpful to talk about?"
- Clarify the focus and desired outcome

**Minutes 3-10: Explore & Discover**

- Ask powerful questions
- Listen deeply
- Follow curiosity
- Resist the urge to solve

**Minutes 10-14: Action & Commitment**

- "What will you do?"
- "By when?"
- "What support do you need?"

**Minutes 14-15: Reflect**

- "What was most helpful about this conversation?"
- "What are you taking away?"

## BUILDING COACHING INTO MEETINGS

### Team Meeting Check-ins:

- "What's something you're proud of this week?"
- "What's one challenge you're navigating right now?"
- "What support would be helpful?"

### Project Debriefs:

- "What worked well that we should keep doing?"
- "What should we do differently next time?"
- "What did we learn about ourselves as a team?"

### 1-on-1s:

**Start with:** "What would be most valuable to focus on today?"

**Mid-conversation:** "What else should we explore?"

**End with:** "What's your next step? How can I support you?"

## PEER COACHING CIRCLES (30-60 MIN)

### Step 1: Set the Space (5 min)

- Review ground rules: no advice-giving, stay curious, maintain confidentiality
- Choose a facilitator for today

### Step 2: Share the Challenge (5 min)

- One person volunteers to share a real challenge they're facing
- They describe the situation and what they've tried
- No interruptions—just listening

### Step 3: Coaching Questions (15-30 min)

- Group asks coaching questions (not advice!)
- Facilitator helps redirect if people start problem-solving
- The person being coached reflects out loud

### Step 4: Commit to Action (5 min)

- Person being coached shares their next step
- Group witnesses the commitment

### Step 5: Debrief (5-10 min)

- What did we notice about the coaching process?
- What questions were most powerful?
- What did we learn?

## **Ground Rules for Peer Coaching:**

- One person in the "hot seat" at a time
- Questions only—no advice or solutions
- Stay curious, not judgmental
- Trust the person has their own answers
- What's shared stays in the circle

## **THE 30-DAY COACHING CHALLENGE**

### **Week 1: Ask More, Tell Less**

- Practice asking at least 3 coaching questions each day
- Notice when you want to jump in with answers
- Count to 3 before responding

### **Week 2: Build Reflection Rituals**

- End one meeting each day with a reflection question
- Try a team check-in question
- Ask yourself reflection questions at day's end

### **Week 3: Practice the Pause**

- Before giving advice, pause and ask a question
- Notice what emerges in the silence
- Track how it feels to hold back

### **Week 4: Create a Coaching Moment**

- Schedule a 15-minute coaching conversation
- Try a peer coaching circle
- Teach someone else a coaching question

## SELF-COACHING QUESTIONS

Use these for your own reflection and growth:

### **Morning:**

- "What matters most today?"
- "What would success look like?"
- "How do I want to show up?"

### **Midday Check-in:**

- "What's working?"
- "What needs adjusting?"
- "What support do I need?"

### **Evening Reflection:**

- "What went well?"
- "What did I learn?"
- "What will I do differently tomorrow?"

## CREATING PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY

Coaching only works in environments where people feel safe. Build safety by:

- **Modeling vulnerability** – Share your own learning edges
- **Normalizing not knowing** – Celebrate questions over quick answers
- **Separating coaching from evaluation** – Make it clear this isn't performance review
- **Honoring confidentiality** – What's shared in coaching stays there
- **Celebrating experiments** – Reward trying, not just succeeding
- **Naming what you're doing** – "I'm going to coach you on this—ask questions rather than give advice"

## COACHING BEST PRACTICES

### DO:

- Ask open-ended questions
- Listen more than you talk
- Stay curious about their perspective
- Trust they can figure it out
- Follow their energy and interests
- Acknowledge insights and growth

### DON'T:

- Jump in with your solution
- Ask leading questions that push your agenda
- Fix their problem for them
- Judge their choices
- Coach when you should be managing
- Force coaching on someone who asked for advice

## MEASURING COACHING CULTURE

### Signs It's Working:

- Team members ask each other coaching questions
- People solve problems more independently
- Staff report feeling more supported and trusted
- Decision-making happens at more levels
- Innovation and creativity increase
- Reflection becomes a normal part of work
- People seek feedback rather than avoid it

### Signs to Adjust:

- People feel frustrated by lack of direction
- Too much time spent in exploration, not enough action
- Confusion about when you're coaching vs. managing
- Team wants more direct guidance
- Urgent decisions get delayed by too much processing

## NEED MORE SUPPORT?

**Podcast:** Listen to Episode 4 at [missiondrivenpod.com](http://missiondrivenpod.com)

**Blog:** Read the companion post for deeper examples and stories

**Consulting:** Want to build a coaching culture in your organization? Contact The Scanland Group at [contact@thescanlandgroup.com](mailto:contact@thescanlandgroup.com) or visit [thescanlandgroup.com](http://thescanlandgroup.com)

*From The Scanland Group:*

*Keep leading with heart, keep showing up with purpose,  
and keep creating a world where everyone belongs.*