



Ten Top Tips to get the most out of your sessions

Be prepared

This is such an obvious point but often ignored. Many coachees appear at the coaching session having been flat out at work. They are under pressure, flustered and totally unprepared. Everyone can find five minutes to think about what comes next. And it is more productive to delay the start and shorten the session but enter into it prepared, rather than to rush straight into the session. The tick list is straightforward:

- What do I want to get out of this session?
- What is my key point for discussion and working on?
- What happened last time, what were the conclusions? What did I learn?
- How important is the issue I want to discuss?
- How do I feel about it?
- How much effort am I prepared to put in to get it resolved?
- Are there any related issues?
- What are the one or two other areas I want to explore if there is time?

Jot down a few notes and take them into the session.

Rehearse

How will you explain the issue in hand? You need to run it over in your mind so that when the session begins, you will have clearly enunciated what the issue is. So many coaching sessions go wrong or take ages to focus because there is no clarity between what the client means and what the coach understands.

Set outcomes

Your coach should always ask you what you want to get out of the session, but that should not stop you from running over in your own mind what would success look like and feel like. Be clear about outcomes.

Be clear about what you want to change

Is the resolution dependent on a lot of action on your part or simply in airing the issues? Be clear if you want something to happen and own any actions you agree to take.

Concentrate

Concentration is a key to success. Try not to get distracted - don't answer your phone or glimpse at incoming emails and texts. For the time that you are in the session, give it your full and undivided attention.

Seek clarity

Do not proceed when you are not clear what is being said or even agreed. Rehearse the main points out loud. "So my feeling is that the best course of action would be . . ."

Take time to reflect

It is fine to ask for a minute to go over that last point or to think through something. If it is about a conversation, for example, go over it in your own mind quietly whilst the coach is there and raise any concerns immediately.

Don't hide your feelings

Be honest about how "hard" something is, or how that made you feel. Say when you feel a real sense of direction emerging out of the session, or that what you have agreed to do will be very stressful and demand a lot. Avoid pretending that everything is fine, when it clearly isn't.

Be honest

Always have the courage to be totally honest as this is one place where you can admit to failure, frustration or even despair. Get used to being frank and unambiguous and to giving honest feedback. It will help the sessions go really well.

Get the most out of it that you can

Finally, remember that you are really fortunate to have this time set aside to focus on what you need and to help you do your job better. The vast majority of people do not get that opportunity and can be struggling as a result. Therefore treat each session as a huge event that you are determined to get the best out of, not as a bit of a chore to be got through.

If you are well prepared, go into this with the right attitude and grab each minute of each session, what you take from the coaching will be immeasurably more valuable. And that is guaranteed. It takes two to make a great coaching session.