



LEADERSHIP TOOL 004

COACHING CONVERSATION PLANNER

A practical coaching framework to guide meaningful conversations and help others find their own solutions.



THEQUIETLEADERHQ.COM

INTRODUCTION

Coaching conversations are often most effective when leaders resist the urge to provide immediate answers. The purpose of coaching is not to demonstrate expertise, solve the problem quickly or steer someone towards a predetermined solution. It is to create the conditions in which another person can think more clearly, examine their assumptions and take greater ownership of what happens next.

Without preparation, coaching conversations can easily become ordinary management conversations. Leaders may ask questions but interrupt the thinking that follows, offer advice too early or guide the conversation towards the answer they already prefer. What appears to be coaching can become a subtle form of direction, leaving the other person involved in the conversation but not genuinely responsible for the outcome.

The Coaching Conversation Planner provides a structured way to prepare for and guide a purposeful coaching conversation. It helps leaders clarify the issue being explored, separate observation from assumption, prepare questions that encourage reflection, create space for deeper thinking and identify how the conversation will move towards meaningful action without taking ownership away from the other person.

The purpose of the tool is not to provide a script or guarantee that every conversation reaches a solution. It is to help leaders enter coaching conversations with greater discipline, curiosity and patience. Used before and during a conversation, the planner can help leaders listen more carefully, avoid solving problems prematurely and ensure that reflection leads to clear ownership of what happens next.

HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

1

FOCUS

Clarify what the person needs to think about. Identify the issue, decision or challenge they want to explore without defining the problem or desired outcome for them.

2

EXPLORE

Use open questions to deepen thinking. Examine what is happening, what matters, what assumptions may be shaping their perspective and what they have not yet considered.

3

LISTEN

Create space for the person to think aloud. Stay attentive to what is said, what is avoided and where silence, uncertainty or changes in language may signal something worth exploring.

4

CHALLENGE

Test thinking without taking control. Surface contradictions, question assumptions and invite different perspectives that may help the person see the situation more clearly.

5

OWN

Move from reflection to responsibility. Clarify what the person has decided, what action they will take next, when they will act and how they will remain accountable for following through.



A QUIET LEADER PRACTICE

Do not prepare the answers you want someone to reach. Prepare to listen, question and remain curious. Good coaching creates better thinking, but the insight, decision and responsibility for what happens next should remain with the person being coached.

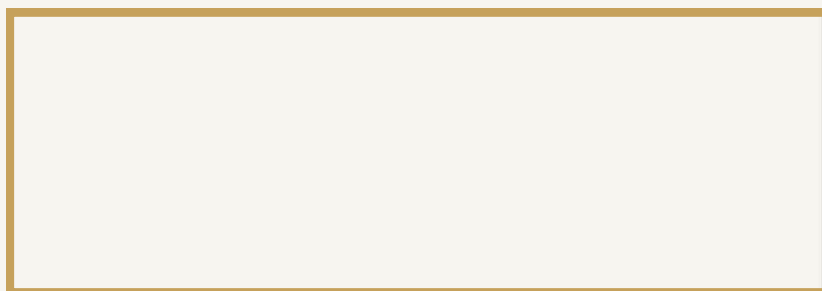
PREPARE THE CONVERSATION

Before beginning the conversation, clarify what you know, what you are assuming and what you need to remain curious about. Good preparation should help you enter the conversation with greater focus without deciding in advance what the other person should think, say or do.



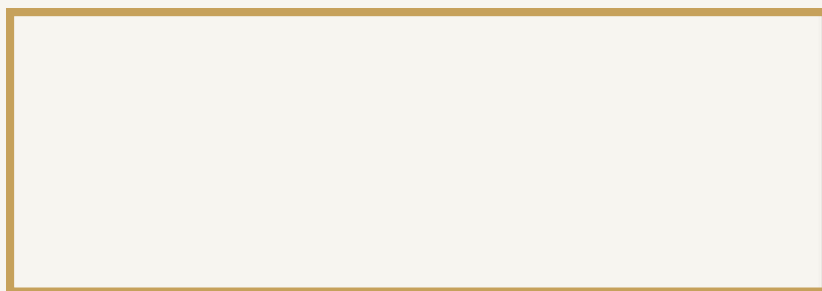
WHAT IS THE FOCUS?

What issue, decision or challenge needs thinking through? Describe it without defining the problem or solution.



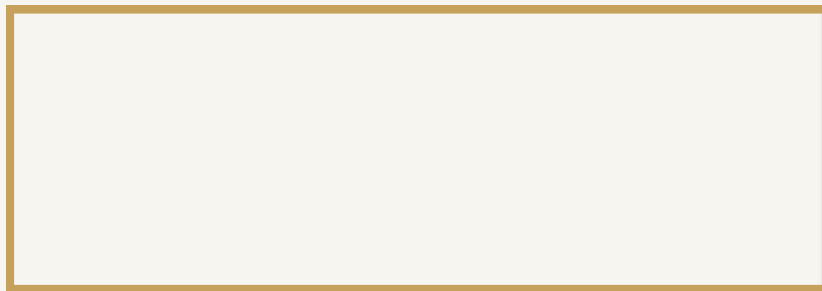
WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

What have you directly observed, heard or learned? Record the relevant facts and evidence without adding judgement or assumptions.



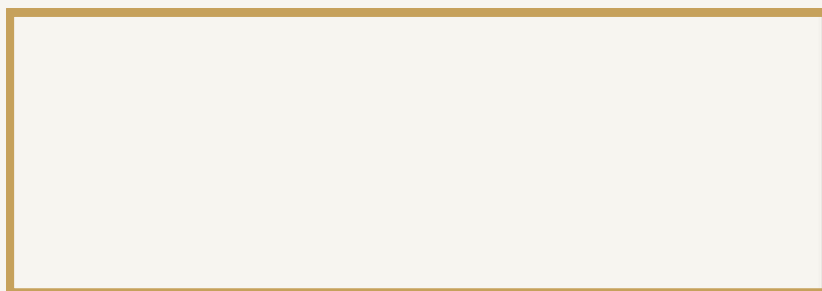
WHAT IS BEING ASSUMED?

What conclusions or assumptions might you already be making? Which of these need to be tested rather than treated as fact?



THE DESIRABLE OUTCOME?

Are you hoping the person reaches a particular conclusion or takes a specific action? How might this influence the way you coach?



A QUIET LEADER PRACTICE

Preparation should make you more curious, not more certain. Notice the answers you hope to hear and the assumptions you are carrying into the conversation. Hold them lightly enough to listen properly and allow the other person's thinking to shape what happens next.

PLAN THE QUESTIONS

Use this page to prepare questions that support deeper thinking without scripting the conversation. Choose questions that fit the person and the situation, remain willing to change direction and follow what emerges rather than working mechanically through a prepared list.

1

OPEN THE THINKING

What questions will help the person describe the situation in their own words and identify what they most need to think about?



2

DEEPEN THE THINKING

What questions could explore what matters, uncover assumptions and help the person consider what may be influencing their perspective?



3

WIDEN THE THINKING

What questions could introduce different perspectives, test current thinking or reveal new possibilities?



4

MOVE TOWARDS ACTION

What questions will help the person decide what they want to do, identify their next step and take responsibility for following through?



A QUIET LEADER PRACTICE

Prepare questions, but do not become attached to asking them. The most useful question is often shaped by what the person has just said. Listen carefully, allow silence and follow the thinking rather than forcing the conversation through your plan.

TAKING OWNERSHIP

Use this page to help the person turn reflection into meaningful action. Focus on what they have decided, what they will do next and how they will take ownership for following through without becoming dependent on you.

1

WHAT HAVE THEY DECIDED?

What key insight, decision or realisation has emerged from the conversation? Record it in the person's own words wherever possible.



2

WHAT WILL THEY DO?

What is the first practical action they have chosen to take? Make the action clear, realistic and within their control.



3

WHAT SUPPORT IS NEEDED?

What resources, conversations, learning or accountability will help them succeed without removing ownership of the action?



4

HOW WILL PROGRESS BE REVIEWED?

When will they reflect on progress, what evidence will show movement and how will they know whether further action is needed?



A QUIET LEADER PRACTICE

Resist the temptation to improve the person's action plan. If they own the thinking, they should also own the decision. Your role is to support commitment and accountability, not to take responsibility for the outcome.

REVIEW YOUR COACHING

Use this page after the conversation to reflect on your coaching. Consider what worked well, what you noticed and what you would do differently next time. Small reflections help develop stronger coaching habits over time.

1



WHAT WENT WELL?

Which moments encouraged deeper thinking or helped the person make meaningful progress during the conversation?

2



WHAT DID YOU NOTICE?

What did you observe about the person's thinking, emotions, behaviour or communication that may inform future conversations?

3



WHAT COULD YOU IMPROVE?

What would you do differently next time? Consider your questions, listening and use of silence during the conversation.

4



WHAT WILL YOU DO NEXT?

What is one coaching habit you will develop before your next conversation? How will you make it part of your regular practice?



A QUIET LEADER PRACTICE

Every coaching conversation develops two people. While the other person reflects on their thinking, take time to reflect on your own practice. Quiet improvement, repeated consistently, is how great coaches are built.