



The GROW Model

GUIDE

Introduction

The GROW model (or process) is a coaching technique. It was developed in the United Kingdom and was used extensively in the corporate coaching market in the late 1980s and 1990s. There have been many claims to authorship of GROW as a way of achieving goals and solving problems.

While no one can be clearly identified as the originator, Graham Alexander, Alan Fine, and Sir John Whitmore, who are well-known in the world of coaching, made significant contributions to it.

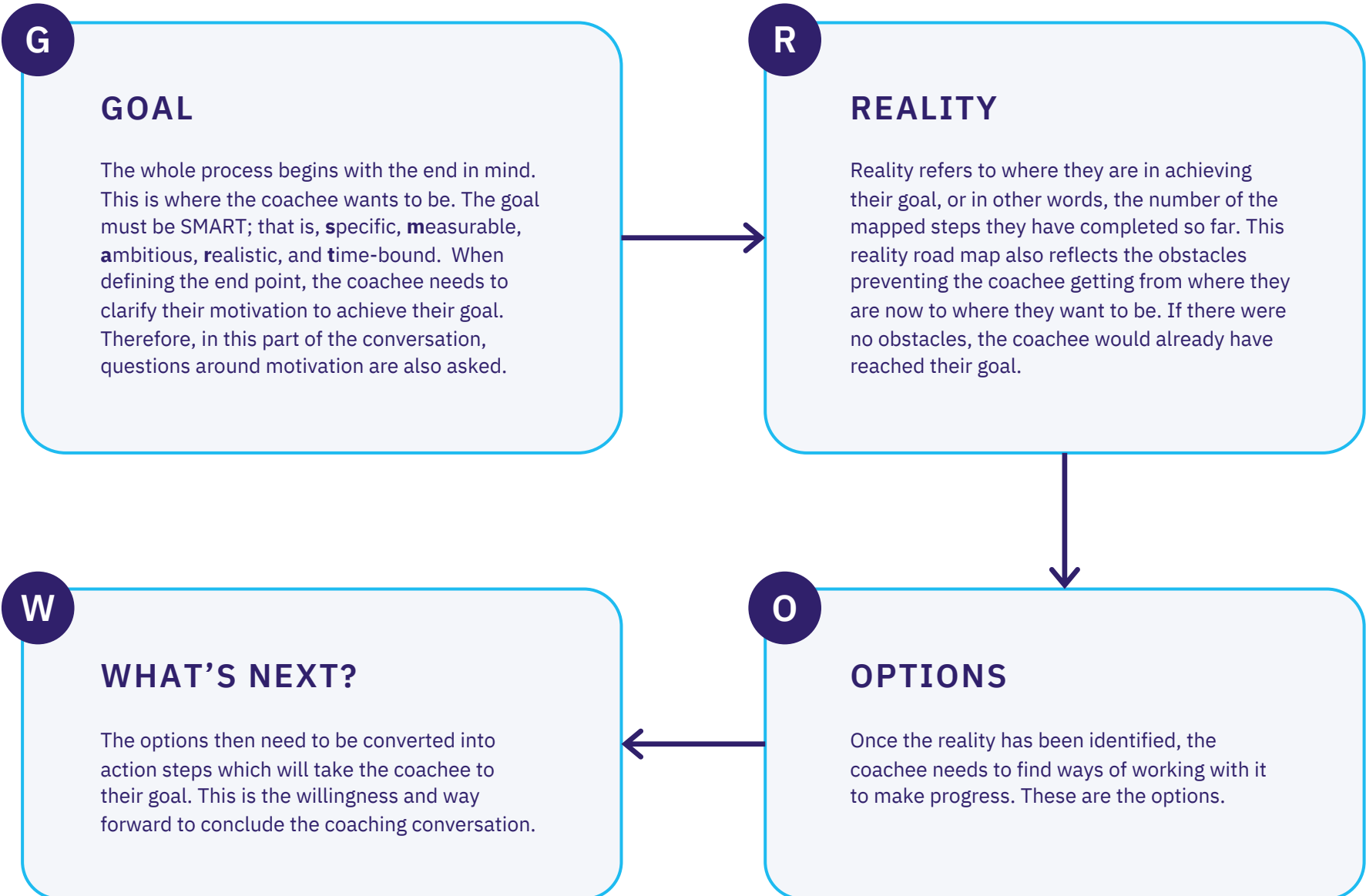
GROW is very well-known in the business arena, but it also has many applications in everyday life. The particular value of GROW is that it provides an effective, structured methodology and is easily understood, straightforward to apply, and very thorough.

In addition, it is possible to apply it to a large variety of issues in a very effective way.

In this guidebook, we will take a look at the four phases of the GROW model. These phases represent a roadmap for our coaching process.

Each phase contains a set of practical questions and tools you can use when working with your coachee. Consider this guidebook a working document. Feel free to add your notes and insights and come back to it as you progress in your coaching process.





Overview

The first step is to establish and agree on the goal by answering the following question: “What do I want to achieve?”

In establishing goals, ensure they are described in the SMART formula: specific, measurable, ambitious, realistic, and time-bound.

Aims

- Set the stage for the conversation.
- Set a goal for the conversation.
- Set a goal for the issue.

Coaching Questions Checklist

☐ What would you like to get out of this session?	☐ How will you measure it?
☐ What would you like to happen that is not happening now?	☐ How will achieving this goal affect your other roles?
☐ What would you like to be different when you leave this conversation?	☐ How does this goal fit your departmental goals?
☐ What outcome would you like from this discussion?	☐ What will it do for you/give you if you achieve the goal? How meaningful is that to you?
☐ What will be the most helpful thing for you to take away from this conversation?	☐ If you had to stretch yourself, what would the goal look like?
☐ What would you like to achieve?	☐ How much control do you have in achieving this goal?
☐ Is this goal challenging enough?	☐ By when do you need to achieve your goal?
☐ What does success look like?	☐ What are the key milestones along the way to achieving your goal?
☐ How will you know when you have achieved it?	☐ Is your goal positive? Challenging? Attainable?
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐

Select the questions you would like to use in your next session or add some of your own.

Overview

The next step is to examine the current reality. If the goal statement describes where you want to go, then the reality check describes the starting position.

As a coach, it is your task to challenge the perception of your coachee, encouraging them to see that there is another reality; there are different opportunities and chances available to them.

Aims

- Establish the current reality and explore the issues.
- Seek clarification.
- Provide examples to support perceptions.
- Self-disclose; share personal information that might be useful.

Coaching Questions Checklist	
☐ What is happening right now? What is the current situation?	☐ Who else is relevant in this situation and what do they think?
☐ What is working and what is not working?	☐ What effect does your goal have on your own and others' feelings, thinking, and behaviour?
☐ When does this challenge happen? How often does it happen?	☐ How do you feel about your progress?
☐ What is holding you back?	☐ What can you learn about yourself from the current reality?
☐ What have you tried so far that is working/not working?	☐ What is important for the other stakeholders?
☐ Who is involved? What are they like?	☐ How long have you been thinking about this?
☐ How easy is it to get things done?	☐
☐	☐
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☐	☐
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Select the questions you would like to use in your next session or add some of your own.

Overview

When you know where you want to go (goals) and where you are (reality), the third step is to consider possibilities for getting from one place to the other.

A common approach is to look for the “one right way.” In practice, there are often many different ways to get where the coachee wants to go.

Aims

- Explore options/solutions.
- Encourage the person being coached to generate options.
- Share ideas.
- Short-list options and tailor them to specific situations.

Coaching Questions Checklist	
☐ What possibilities exist for you to go about achieving your goal?	☐ Where can you find these resources?
☐ What would be the first step you could take now to start towards your goal?	☐ What are the benefits and pitfalls of each option?
☐ What other resources will you need? Where will you get them from?	☐ What would the consequences be?
☐ How else could you go about doing it?	☐ What are the risks for each option?
☐ What could go wrong with that approach?	☐ What criteria will you use to select your preferred option?
☐ How long would it take?	☐ What do you need to do to get started on your goal?
☐ What resources do you have already—skill, time, enthusiasm, money, people, etc. – that you can utilize?	☐ If money and resources were no issue, what would you do?
☐ What other resources and expenditure would be needed?	☐ Which option are you going to go with?
☐ What possibilities exist for you to go about achieving your goal?	☐ Where can you find these resources?
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐

Select the questions you would like to use in your next session or add some of your own.

Overview

Finally, now that you have a strategy of how to get from reality to goals, you need to plan its implementation. The big question is: “Does everyone involved have the energy and motivation for the journey?”

Aims

- Get agreement on outcomes and next steps.
- Agree on one or two specific (SMART) development objectives.
- Identify next steps.
- Agree on follow-up.

Coaching Questions Checklist

☐ When do you want to get started?	☐ Can you maintain the goal by yourself? Who else needs to buy into it?
☐ What are your next steps?	☐ What needs to happen to inspire other people to help you?
☐ When are you going to start?	☐ What are the consequences for other people? (Take into account your responsibility to your “loved ones” as well.)
☐ Will these actions help you achieve your goal?	☐ How does your current work/life balance affect the achievement of your goal? Is work/life balance important in order to achieve your goal?
☐ What might get in the way?	☐ What are the key milestones you need to achieve along the way?
☐ What support do you need?	☐ When will our next meeting be on this?
☐ How can you get that support?	☐ How do you want me to keep you accountable?
☐ What will happen if you don't achieve your goal?	☐ Is there anything stopping you from committing wholeheartedly to this?
☐ When do you want to get started?	☐ Can you maintain the goal by yourself? Who else needs to buy into it?
☐	☐
☐	☐
☐	☐

Select the questions you would like to use in your next session or add some of your own.

Powerful Coaching Questions

Open vs. closed

Impact: Open-ended questions draw out more information. They encourage continued conversation and help you get more information. They also provide opportunities to gain insight into the other person's feelings. Use open-ended questions that start with "what," "where," "when," "how," and "who." Closed questions can evoke defensiveness.



Open: "What, how, who ...?"



Closed (yes/no): "Are you ...?" "Do you ...?" "Is it ...?"

Provoking thinking vs. seeking information

Impact: By asking information-seeking questions, we can give the impression that we are gathering data to prescribe a solution at the end. The coachee will then stop being the owner of the conversation and will become the "patient." Another risk is that we encourage the coachee to go into too much detail, which decreases the time efficiency of the conversation.

When we ask coaching questions, the answers are of secondary importance. The information is not for the coach to make use of. The coach needs to know that the coachee has the necessary information and can utilize it to improve their performance.



Provoking thinking: "What do you think about...?"



Seeking information: "Have you ...?" "Could you ...?" "Don't you ...?"

Short vs. long

Impact: Long questions create more noise, and the coachee can get confused when trying to answer a question they did not quite understand in the first place.



Short: “What is the most important aspect?”



Long: “Which of the many aspects so far do you think is the most important with view to the goal that you formulated earlier?”

Single vs. multiple

Impact: Multiple questions create noise in the mind of the coachee and thus block their thinking. Consequently, little or no change occurs in their performance.



Single: “How do you feel about the progress so far?”



Multiple: “How do you feel about your progress so far? Did you get the acknowledgement you expected? What will you do if no one recognizes your accomplishment?”

Tone of curiosity and respect vs. tone of judgement

Impact: When feeling judged, a person loses confidence, stops thinking clearly, and can become defensive. This may then likely result in the coachee resisting any change.

In order to convey a tone of curiosity and respect, keep the following tips in mind:

- *Always use “I” speech.* (“I feel like ...,” “I would like to ...,” “It’s important to me ...”) Avoid using blaming “you” speech. (“You never ...,” “Why would you ...,” “You are so ...”)
- *Be open-minded.* Every interaction is an opportunity to hear new ideas.
- *Practice empathy.* Always try to understand the context and circumstances of the other person.



Tone of curiosity and respect: “I would be interested to hear more about ...”



Tone of judgement: “Why on earth did you ...?”

When a Person Comes with a Dilemma...

Here is a selection of questions to help you maintain your coaching style when faced with everyday situations during group meetings and individual conversations.

- How would you like this to be resolved?
- How might you approach the situation differently?
- If you were advising someone else on a similar issue, what do you think their options might be?
- What steps do you think other people might take to resolve this problem?
- Who do you know that has encountered a similar problem? How did they tackle it?
- What are the most important aspects of this problem to handle first?
- What will happen if this problem is not resolved?
- What knowledge and skills do you need to learn to be able to manage this problem?
- Who else could you ask to help you tackle this issue?
- What one part of the problem should you approach first?
- What might happen if you simply ignored the conflict?

- How did you manage the last problem you encountered?
- What commitment do you personally need to make to resolve this issue?
- What would you do differently if you could start again?
- How do you think the customers/senior managers/your staff would deal with the issue?
- What is the prime sticking point?

This is not a definitive list. Add your own questions below.

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Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing helps people hear their own thoughts and understand themselves better. It demonstrates to people that they are being listened to, which gives them confidence to think more clearly and gain their own insights faster. Paraphrasing is also a way for you to pace the coachee and formulate the next best question.

An example is:

Coachee's statement

"Based on my recent experiences with this particular vendor, they offered a solution that includes XYZ—and then we heard from our procurement department that, in fact, they were quite expensive compared to 123."

Paraphrasing response

"So, if I understood you correctly, you think this would be an expensive option ...?"



There is a Chinese proverb that states:

"The participant's perspective is clouded, while the bystander's view is clear."

There are many times when the coachee cannot see what the coach sees. This is often because the coach has the advantage of being objective and distant from the situation; in addition, they have not been affected by the challenges and emotions that the coached may have experienced. The coach may be able to see the situation more clearly, and summarizing can be a good way for the coach to add value.



Conclusion

We hope this guide gave you clarity on the GROW model and how it can be used for your coaching conversations. As you get more coaching experience, the questions will flow naturally, but if you are just starting out, this is a great step-by-step framework for you to follow. Feel free to add your insights. Customize it and make it your own.

As always, share your thoughts and ideas with the community!

Best of luck!

