

Driving Development Coaching Methods and Mindset

A Learning Journey

READER: GROW



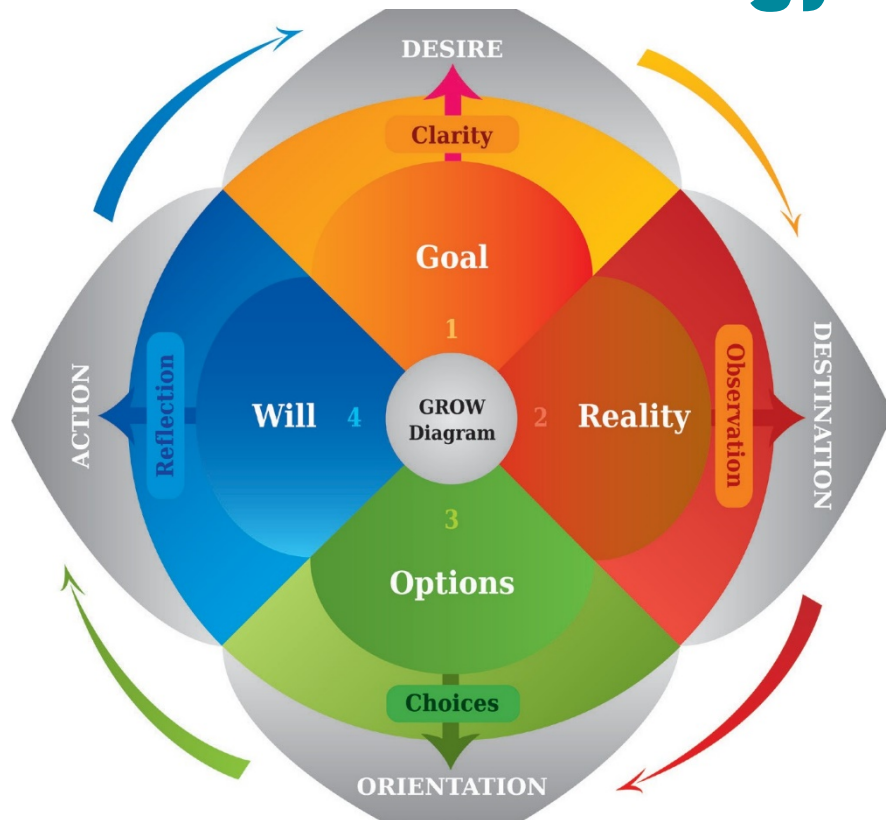
Goal, current Reality, Options, and Will

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Introduction to the GROW methodology



GROW is a proven framework for coaching and development discussions. Originally developed by Sir John Whitmore, it provides a solid structure for conversations.

Start with a clear understanding of the goal, describe the reality, examine options and write down concrete actions. This structure provides a hands-on guideline for development dialogues.

GROW for development dialogue

During the GOAL phase you support your co-worker in gaining clarity on desirable outcomes: upskilling position or career development. In REALITY you support observation and self-reflection. In OPTIONS you help to think outside the box, develop solutions and thereby give orientation on development possibilities. In WILL you support reflection on actions.

Basically, it is about four questions:

- Goal: where do you want to go?
- Reality: where are you today?
- Options: what can you do to reach your goals.
- Will: what will you do.

GROW is more than a framework – it describes specific thinking processes. In the GOAL phase you trigger solution-oriented and future oriented thinking. This is especially helpful with persons who have a strong focus on constraints and problems. You shift the thinking process away from today's obstacles to desirable and realistic targets.

In REALITY we foster realistic and objective thinking. We help others to understand the situation as it is today and to take a realistic view. This is particularly helpful when people have a one sided view. We encourage others to take different perspectives, use tools to have a balanced view on themselves and prioritize on really important aspects. In REALITY we support others in considering strengths as well as development needs.

In OPTIONS we shift the conversation to creative thinking and help others to think in opportunities. This is usually the light and positive sequence. We encourage others to dream, be bold and a bit crazy. Options can be a huge leap forward and very often small but important steps in the right direction.

In WILL we ask others to bring the discussion to an actionable end and think in activities: prioritize, focus, translate ideas into concrete actions and define a roadmap. Also, we ask people about stumbling block and how to get them out of the way. We shift thinking into getting things done.

I always think of GROW as a diamond: we start with a focused view on goals, then we open up with reality and options, and finally we bring it back to the point with will.

GOAL

Purpose

My co-worker develops a clear view on desired and realistic development goals.

Checkpoint

You know that the goal is clear enough when you and you co-worker can write a few sentences with a simple description of what to achieve.

Be aware

Gaining clarity on development goals might take some time. It is OK to work with a first proposal that can be defined more concretely over time. Goals can also be revised after working in the reality, opportunity and will sections.

REALITY

Purpose

Your co-worker develops a clear view on current strengths and weaknesses, personal motivation and the perception of important stakeholders.

Checkpoint

You and your co-worker can write down the key information needed to work on the goal in five points.

Be aware

Honesty and objectivity are important in the reality phase. Don't sugar-coat the situation – you can help by asking the right questions, offering outside perspective and tools for self-reflection.

OPTIONS

Purpose

Your co-worker thinks outside the box and develops ideas for solutions and possibilities.

Checkpoint

Your co-worker can summarize the most attractive ideas in simple words to ensure that the ideas are concrete and tangible.

Be aware

The shift from problem-oriented thinking to solution oriented thinking might need some support from you. Bring in optimism, invite ideation, make it light and easy.

WILL

Purpose

Your co-worker prioritizes ideas, makes them actionable and defines the first step.

Checkpoint

Your co-worker knows what to do and can write down a plan.

Be aware

If ideas are too generic, people have a hard time acting upon them. Support your co-worker in making it simple and actionable. Also, make sure that your co-worker gets going. It does not matter how big the first step is, it is important to make that step.

QUESTIONS ARE ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT TOOLS FOR COACHING SKILLS AND DEVELOPMENT DIALOGUE

GOAL Questions

Support your co-worker to develop solutions and define goals.

Imagine we will sit here a year from now, what would an ideal situation look like. Please describe it in detailed words.

When you think about your topic of today, what would you like to achieve before the end of our meeting?

If we push a magic button and we assume we have reached the goal: what would a good solution look like?

If we asked the smartest person you know, what would she advise us to do?

If you list all of your possible development goals in order of importance, what would be on top?

REALITY Questions

Support your co-worker to gain a more profound understanding of the topic, situation or challenge.

- Which steps have you already taken to achieve your goal?
- What is missing towards your goal?
- If we asked another person what would she tell us about this topic?
- What have you tried so far and what has worked / not worked out?
- On a scale from 0-10, how do you perceive your skill level today? What are your strengths? What would you do to move one step towards 10?
- If I asked your former boss about your strengths, what would she tell us?

OPTION Questions

Support your co-worker to develop new ideas

- Brainstorming – no, yes, but ... no inner critic: what are first ideas how to move on and solve it?
- If anything is possible, what would you do?
- Have you been in similar situations in the past – what can you use today that worked then?
- Do you know other people that have been in similar situations – what can you learn from them?
- Who is the craziest person you know – what would she do?
- Think about small steps to reach your goals

WILL Questions

Support your co-worker to make things happen

- Which option do you feel ready to act on?
- Which option do you like most?
- Can you bring your ideas from the OPTION phase in order of importance, how would you sort them?
- What could be your first step?
- Take the top idea – what are three concrete steps.
- What has helped you to implement your ideas and follow through in the past?
- What could prevent you from taking these steps?
- What resources can help you?
- How will you know that you have achieved your goals?

Example Skill Development

An example of how to use GROW for development dialogue

GOAL

Ideas for questions

What do you have in mind when you think about relationship-building and communication?

Can you write your ideas for development goals on sticky notes – a wild collection to begin with?

When you look at this collection of possible goals, where is your energy? What is most important?

Let's take your most important goals and make them more concrete. Can you describe your behaviour in the future?

Put yourself in the shoes of your client: how would your client observe that you have reached your goal?

REALITY

Ideas for questions

On a scale from 0-10, how happy are you with your relationship and communication skills today?

You have rated a 5, so what works well today – what are your strengths?

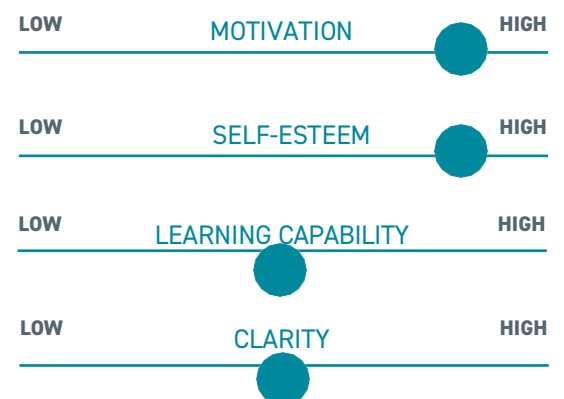
What would you need to do to get from a 5 to a 6?

If your client or a colleague would sit here and listen to you, what would the client or colleague say about your skills?

How could you make a difference in their eyes?

This example is about a person who wants to develop new skills for a new role. This is the example of Sebastian.

Quick assessment



Case study

Sebastian is 26 years old, he has a diploma in business and is with the company for two years. He is motivated, intelligent, a quick learner and has good expertise for his role. Now, Sebastian wants to broaden his skill set beyond technical expertise. He would love to have more exposure towards clients, improve his relationship-building and communication. Sebastian has tons of ideas, but is unsure what he really needs and wants to do. Sebastian meets his manager for a development dialogue.

Energy we can use

Sebastian has a strong energy to expose himself to new learning opportunities. He is motivated by risks and sees the chances.

Pay attention to ...

Shooting over the top: Sebastian might exaggerate – help him to gain focus and to prioritize.

Inexperience with learning and development: help Sebastian to find the right measures and actions. Endurance: Sebastian might start fast and then lose energy. Help him to follow through.

Tool support

For a traditional development dialogue it can be helpful to use the development canvas or order My Development Cycle for self-reflection. You can ask your co-worker to fill this in prior to your meeting and then go through the results.

OPTIONS

Ideas for questions

When you summarize your findings, what are your major strengths and development fields?

How could you leverage your strengths and make more out of this?

Let's do some brain-writing about ideas of how to work on your development fields?

Do you know persons that work on similar topics? Can you copy and paste something from them?

Do you want me to make proposals on how to work on your development topics?

WILL

Ideas for questions

OK, let's take 3 ideas. I suggest you go with the flow and select what you like best.

I propose you make a plan: please note concrete steps with a time-line.

Can you anticipate challenges or tumbling stones that can get in your way? What would you need to do in this case?

Sometimes it is helpful for people in development to have check-in's – would it be help you to set reminders?

Example Insecurity & Ambiguity

An example **of** how to use GROW for development dialogue

GOAL

Ideas for questions

Hello Mia, as I understand the goal for today's development dialogue is to get clarity on which job option is most attractive to you?

Mia, let's leave the concrete job opportunities aside for a moment. Imagine you have your dream job, please describe it to me?

When you look at the different aspects of your dream job, can you list them in order of importance for you?

Can you describe it as a target – a desire. My job is ...? (list adjectives)

REALITY

Ideas for questions

Let us try to understand the challenge in your situation better. What have you tried so far to deal with this challenge?

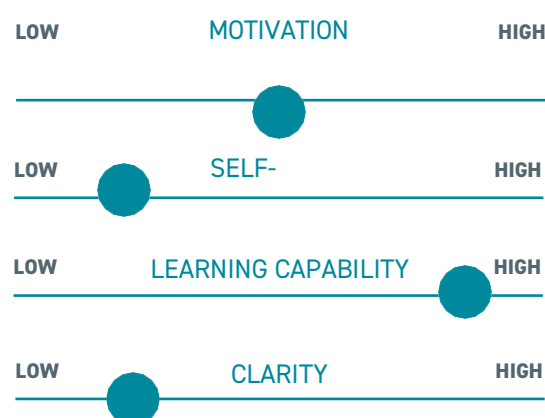
From these approaches, what was helpful or not helpful?

Have you been in similar situations and if yes, how have you handled them?

If I asked a close friend of yours, what would he tell us about this challenge?

In development dialogues, often insecurity and ambiguities are topics to deal with. This is the example of Mia.

Quick assessment



Case study

Mia is 35. She has seven years of professional experience in a global corporation. For the last two years she has worked as the CEO's assistant. Before the end of the year, Mia needs to decide about her next position. Mia is ambivalent if she wants to go for a management career, or take an HR role, or be an in-house consultant for organizational development. Her boss believes that a management career would be best for her and pushes her in this direction. Both Mia and her boss are unhappy with the discussions they have had so far and want to try a GROW dialogue.

Energy we can use

Mia wants to change something and is willing to invest the energy.

Mia puts a lot of her energy into explaining why others are wrong or proposals do not work – we can help her to redirect the energy towards goals by asking questions in the goal phase.

Pay attention to ...

Yes *but* and blaming others: listen to Mia, then ask if it is helpful to look at others or rather look at her circle of influence. Leave the ownership with Mia – ask her what she wants to tackle. Start with mapping possibilities and then reflecting those options. Help her to first define actions to gain clarity.

Tool support

The Strength Finder can support the self-reflection process. Mia could use the methodology to gain clarity about her strengths and also about her motivations. In a second step she could compare her strengths with the different roles and conclude in which role she can best make use of her strengths.

OPTIONS

Ideas for questions

When you look at your desire, your dream job, please take a sheet of paper and write down your options with upsides and downsides?

Imagine you work in each of these jobs, what would your day look like, what do you do? Pay attention to your feelings – does one of these jobs feel more attractive to you?

WILL

Ideas for questions

Now that we can see the differences between the three job options more clearly, can you list them in order of attractiveness?

Who could give a good neutral outside perspective to your challenge?

Can you make it concrete: with whom will you speak to get feedback?

How to work with GROW effectively

**GROW helps to set free the potential of people.
It helps others to learn instead of teaching them how to do it.**

John Withmore

Frame the development dialogue

Start with an agreement on the goal you want to reach in this meeting. Then clarify the framework: roles, responsibilities, expectations, achievements of the last meeting. Agree on the methodology of the meeting.

Build rapport

To begin with, establish a friendly atmosphere and speak about personal aspects. Try to be on the same wavelength – use a similar language. Building rapport means to establish a personal connection.

Active listening

Listen with the objective to understand what the other person wants to tell you. Try to catch the meaning or need behind the words. When you listen actively you concentrate on the other person. If you are not sure, you ask again. *Can you give me more details? Can you explain it in other words. I am not sure if I got this – can you try again?*

Paraphrasing

Ensure understanding by paraphrasing what you have understood. Don't just summarize. Try to bring it to the point in your words. Check if this resonates with your co-worker. If not ask again. Show your co-worker that you have understood and that both of you can come to the central point.

Pay attention to verbal and non-verbal signals: shaking of the head, Yes but ..., no eye contact, judgmental language can be a sign that your co-worker does not have the feeling to be understood.

