

Coaching & You

Getting the best out of your coaching relationship

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About CFI

Coaching Foundation India Limited (CFI) is India's first institution dedicated to Executive Coaching. Its founding purpose is to create world class coaching professionals and offer comprehensive training and advisory solutions to individuals and organizations.

With businesses experiencing both unprecedented opportunities for growth and competitive pressures in equal measure, many executives now find themselves in new roles and company cultures that require managing more efficiently than ever before. In situations such as these, executive coaching acts as a catalyst to lift individuals and teams alike to their highest potential. Having completed over 250 coaching assignments for leading global and Indian companies, CFI has built deep insights into what constitutes coaching effectiveness.

This guide is a result of these research insights. Through this guide, CFI aims to foster an appropriate application of coaching so that its integrity is maintained.





About this guide

This guide is meant to help potential coachees get the best out of their executive coaching engagements by answering questions they may have and providing tips for a rewarding experience.

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Your organization has just offered you the opportunity of working with a coach as a part of your leadership development and you have said yes to it. You are excited but also somewhat unsure. There are a thousand questions flooding your mind and you really wish you could find some honest answers.

Well, look no further because this guide has been created for this precise reason. It attempts to answer some of these questions for you and provide you with tips that can help you get the best out of this golden opportunity.

We do hope you find this valuable and also enjoy reading it.

1. Why me???

Have I been chosen because I have a problem? Is there something lacking in my performance? Is this some sort of signal that the organization is giving me?

Yes, it certainly is a signal that the organization is giving you. A signal that you are important. Important enough for the Company to make this investment in you. Coaching is seldom used to bail out poor performers or as a last resort before asking someone to leave. The purpose of coaching is to help you realize your full potential and achieve success in your current and future roles. Coaching is an integral part of your leadership development plan and is intended to prepare you for bigger and better roles and responsibilities. The purpose of coaching is to create value, both for you and the organization.

That being said, it is entirely your choice. You choose whether or not you want to work with a coach. What's more, you choose the coach you want to work with. *And finally, you choose the difference that you want to make to your life.*



2. How will coaching be different from what my Manager does?

So, now that you know why you are the chosen one you are wondering what coaching will do that your manager cannot do. *“Isn’t my manager meant to be my coach?”*

As we navigate the many challenges that life has in store for us, both professional and personal, ‘help’ can come from many sources. In the workplace a manager is one such helper and undoubtedly plays a very important role in your development. But there is a nuanced difference between what a manager can do and what an executive coach in a formal coaching engagement will do.

Manager	Coach
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is emotionally invested 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will be emotionally tuned in.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will have a point of view on your performance and developmental needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will have an objective, impartial and unbiased perspective
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By virtue of being responsible for your performance is likely to be evaluative and directive 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will be non-judgmental and non-directive and will make you responsible for your performance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature of the relationship is such that it can border on the formal and informal 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relationship is a formal, contractual, time bound one
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The approach will be driven by organizational interests 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The approach will be driven by <i>your</i> interests to eventually benefit the organization

3. Is coaching the same as mentoring?

Coaching is often confused with or loosely interchanged with mentoring. Both 'mentoring' and 'coaching' have interesting origins.

The word 'mentor' originates from Greek mythology. In Greek poet Homer's epic 'The Odyssey' the great warrior Odysseus goes to fight the Trojan War leaving behind his one and only heir Telemachus. In order to tutor, advise and guide Telemachus to play the role of 'King' in his absence, Odysseus appoints Mentor, a wise friend and counselor in whom he trusts blindly. And so the word found its way into the English language - to mean an experienced and trusted advisor, counselor and teacher.

***Mentoring** comes out of the wisdom of one who is more experienced and 'been there, done that'. A mentor gives direction and imparts learning through his tales of inspiration. He **guides and shows** the path based on his own experience.*

***Coaching** is an individualized developmental process where a coach who is an experienced professional will work with you to identify ways in which you can hone your strengths and deploy them to maximum benefit. A coach **helps you to discover** your path.*

The word 'coach' comes from Hungarian 'kocsi'. According to historians, the coach (a horse cart or wheeled vehicle) was named after the small Hungarian town of Kocsi, which made a livelihood from cart building and transport between Vienna and Budapest. As it turns out, today that is exactly what a coach does in the context that we speak - ***takes you from where you are to where you want to be...and the journey is transformational.***

The key difference between coaching and mentoring is that coaching is a contractual, time-bound relationship that is non-prescriptive and non-directive in nature.

While they are different, coaching and mentoring often work in tandem in the leadership development process.

4. What is the difference between coaching and training?

Coaching and training are two very distinctive tools, both part of a range of developmental experiences for leadership development. In fact, there are several other developmental experiences like assessment and development centers, executive education, job rotations and stretch assignments. Your L& D department would have scientifically arrived at a combination of experiences for you. Each will have a role to play and will tackle a particular aspect of leadership development very effectively. And one experience cannot be substituted by another. So, the benefits that coaching offers are hard to replace.

Given its one-on-one nature and the safe space it creates for honest exploration, reflection and change, it has the ability to provide highly customized development like no other intervention. Coaching helps to develop capabilities and new ways of thinking that will have a lasting impact. It is *'learning how to learn'* which means developing skills and habits of self-reflection that will ensure that the process of learning continues even after the coaching engagement ends. Coaching has to be used wherever appropriate and has to be skillfully integrated with other interventions.

Coaching is 'learning how to learn' and has to do with deep and enduring change.

5. How do I know coaching is right for me?

If coaching features as part of your Leadership Development Plan, it is for a very good reason. Your HR team could have recommended coaching for you because you are in any of the following or similar situations.

Am I doing it right?

- *You need to hone certain skills that will make you more effective in your job.*
- *For instance, you need to be more assertive in your leadership style.*

You or your manager feel that certain behaviors, beliefs and perspectives are coming in the way of your performance and growth.

Am I ready for it?

- *You have just been promoted to the next level and the scale and scope of your responsibility has increased manifold.*
- *You are on the fast track and need to build confidence, stature and executive presence to be effective in the next role.*

You or your manager feel you have underleveraged certain skills and not used all of your potential.

How do I prepare to get there?

- *You have just moved from a Marketing role to a Business Head role.*
- *From Head of Channel Sales you have been made Head of Large Accounts.*

You or your manager feel that enhancement of interpersonal and leadership skills will accelerate your performance and growth.

6. What is required from me?

It has been proven time and again that an individual's motivation to be coached is the single biggest contributor to the success of coaching. There are three key ingredients required from you for you to get the most out of your coaching engagement.

"A relationship without trust is like a car without gas, you can stay in it all you want, but it won't go anywhere."

- **A deep resolve to bring about change**

Remember coaching is a choice you have made and it can work for you only if you are completely committed. It is a process that will allow you to discover, acquire, develop and use the power within you to bring about constructive change.

- **Trust and have faith in your coach**

Mutual respect and trust is a key pillar of a coaching relationship. You can take all the time you need to pick your coach. But once you have made your choice you owe him all the honesty, candor and access to your thoughts and feelings that is needed for him to help you achieve your goals. To be non-judgmental, non-evaluative and non- directive are the golden rules of coaching so you can engage with our coach safely without any fear of consequences.

- **Time**

A coaching engagement could take anywhere from six to eight months and will require you to engage in a series of 'coaching sessions' with your coach. The frequency of these sessions will be determined by your coach but would be at least once a month. A session could last anywhere from an hour and a half to three hours. In addition, you will be required to commit time to apply your learning's from the coaching sessions in your work and personal life and report back progress.

***Do I own my
change?***

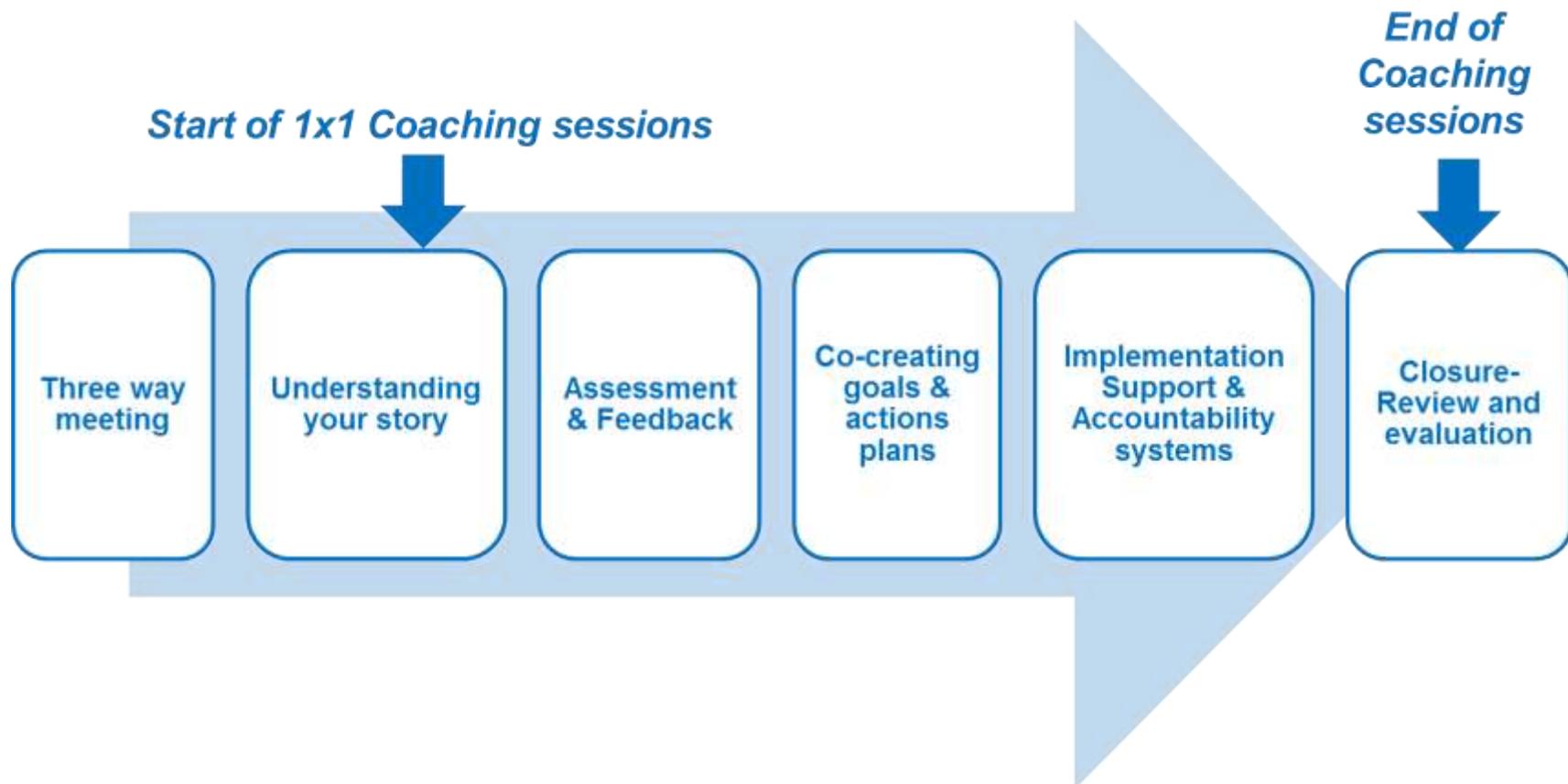
7. Is there a process to coaching?

While your coach will have a series of conversations with you over many months which may appear informal and chatty, behind the informal setting is a very strong and scientific process that is intended to help you accomplish your goals.

To begin with, your Coach will calibrate expectations in a three way dialogue between you and your Manager. This will ensure that you are all on the same page. Once that is done, your Coach will spend adequate time to understand you, your aspirations, your concerns and anything else that is important to know. Your Coach will also choose to get information about you from additional sources like a 360 or a psychometric tool. Armed with all this information you and your Coach will arrive at one or two SMART goals that will make a difference to you. Your Coach will also help you craft strategies and actions that will help achieve these goals. Most importantly, your Coach will ensure that you stay committed to these goals and make visible and sustainable progress.

As your Sponsor, your Manager may be required in some of these meetings. Your Coach may also co-opt experts who can impart skills as needed by you. At certain intervals your Coach may be required to report progress to the organisation keeping in mind boundaries of confidentiality.

Here is how the process will look in a nutshell:



8. What makes my coach competent to coach me?

Certified coaches are typically highly qualified people with decades of industry experience in leadership roles. Professional coaches are highly proficient in the art and science of coaching and will have many hundreds of hours of very diverse coaching experience to their credit. The combination of on-job experience in top management, a deep desire to help and bring out the best in others and finely honed coaching skills is what makes a good coach. Most companies will seek coaches who have been certified by institutions that are dedicated to the cause of coaching because they would have gone through a lot of rigor to attain their skills.

9. Does my coach need to be from the same industry as I?

You may choose to have a coach who has hands on experience in your industry. Or you may choose a coach from a completely different background. Both will bring depth and dimension to your coaching experience. Because coaching spotlights the individual and not the organization, it doesn't matter what the coach's background is. What does matter is his or her expertise and ability to understand your needs and support the coaching process right from reflection and challenge to concrete actions and change. But do seek the guidance of your HR partners. They will be best suited to advise you on the kind of coach you need.

10. How should I go about selecting a coach?

Your organization will most likely have a well-defined process for selecting coaches. All companies recognize the importance of chemistry in the coaching relationship and your HR function will help you to choose the right coach. It is likely that they will provide you with a shortlist of coach profiles that is suitable for your requirement and allow you to meet each of the coaches. It is a good idea to have preliminary one-on-one meetings with your shortlisted coaches before deciding who you want to work with. It is imperative that you are comfortable with your coach and have the confidence in his ability to help you. Here are some questions you could ask a prospective coach to help you determine if he is appropriate for you.

Why did you choose to be a coach?

Can you share some of your coaching achievements/ results with me?

Are there some specific areas that you have expertise in?

Why did you agree to meet me as a potential coachee?

How will you decide whether you want to take me on as your coachee?

What would you expect out of me to make this engagement successful?

What kind of tools and techniques would you be using?

What can I do to help you understand me and my challenges better?



11. What is the role of my manager and the organization after I have started working with my coach?

Your Company has decided to invest in this coaching engagement for you as part of your leadership development. Hence the company is a key stakeholder in the process. You, the organization (represented by your manager and your HR partner) and the coach will therefore work in tripartite collaboration to achieve maximum impact. In coaching parlance the engagement is a '3-way' engagement and your manager and/or HR is the 'sponsor'. The sponsor's involvement and support is very critical in your change agenda and he will therefore come into the picture at crucial points in the 3 stages of the process. In each of these stages you will have at least one joint meeting with your coach and your sponsor. The first such meeting is called the '**intake meeting**' where the broad outcomes expected from the coaching are discussed and agreed upon.

While your sponsor will be an important resource through the engagement, it is important for you to know that as far as the coach is concerned you are the center of the universe and your interests will supersede all else.



12. Will everything I tell my coach be shared with my manager?

Confidentiality is a founding value in coaching and your coach will be bound by the ethical framework of the institute he comes from. At the outset of the engagement you or your organization will be signing a '**coaching contract**' which will define the boundaries of the engagement including the broad agenda for coaching, the overall duration, the number of sessions, the commercial terms and the reporting and review requirements. Most importantly, the contract will outline the confidentiality terms of the engagement. It will specify what information will and will not be shared, in which circumstances, with whom, and how. The contract helps you, the coach and the sponsor to remain sensitive to confidentiality issues from each other's perspectives.

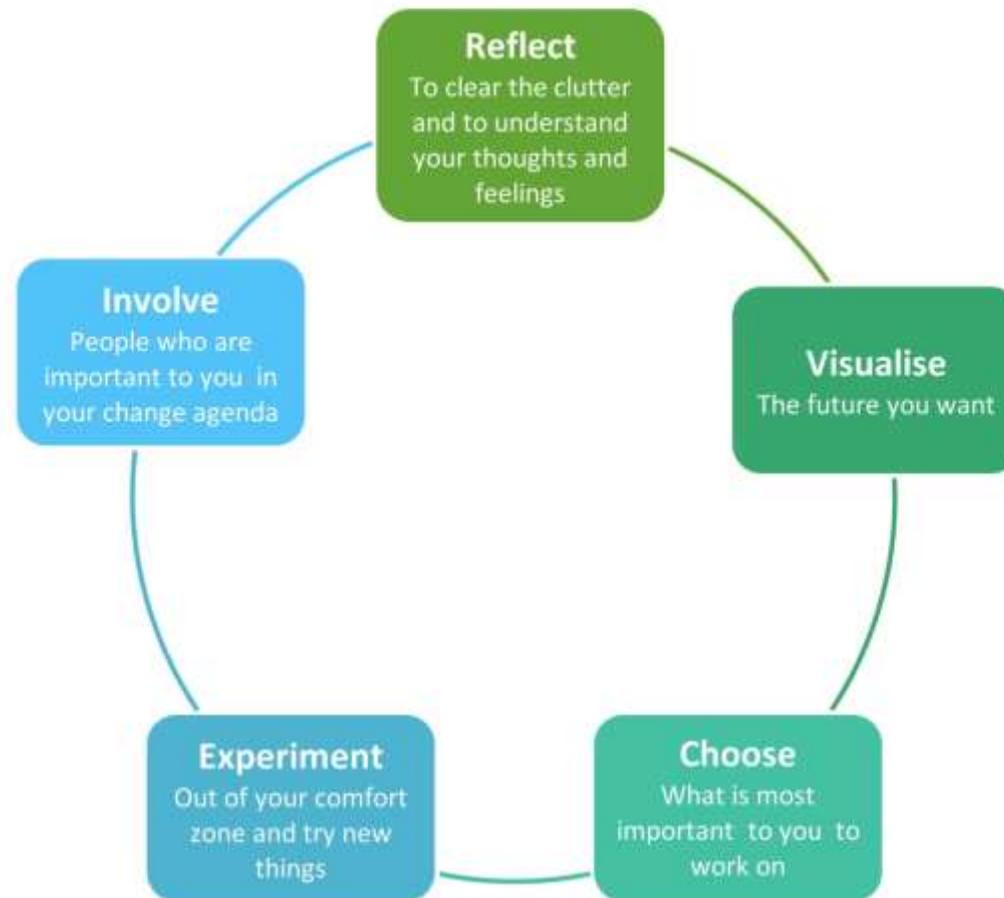
Typically, all the one-on-one conversations with the coach are completely confidential. However, there are some pieces in the engagement where your manager as the sponsor will play a key role. He will of course be involved in framing the coaching agenda. He will need to sign off on the goals that emerge. And, finally, he will have to support you as you work on your action plan once the formal coaching engagement has come to an end.

13. Will coaching change my personality?

What coaching will change is behavior. It will explore dimensions of your personality that may be undiscovered or underutilized and can be instrumental in maximizing potential. Coaching will help you develop new perspectives, acquire new skills or modify styles. Coaching can bring about a dramatic shift in the way individuals approach their lives - from being reactive to being proactive, from being fixers to being preventers and from being followers to being initiators.

14. What do I need to do to get the most out of coaching?

Coaching is a partnership between you and your coach. As the cliché goes 'you will get out of it as much as you give to it', and coaching can be an energizing, exhilarating and liberating experience if you give to it with complete abandon. Your coach will follow a scientific process and here are five things that you can do to get the best out of it.



15. What can I expect by the end of the engagement?

Your coaching engagement will formally come to an end when you have achieved your coaching goals with a certain number of sessions with your coach. By this time you would have developed heightened self-awareness and understood the implications of some of your typical behaviors. You will have discovered your blind spots and will have deeper insights into your strengths and developmental needs. You should have a clear vision of your goals and a clearly articulated action plan for achieving those goals. Your action plan could include learning new skills, building competencies, changing behaviors and achieving results.

For example, you may become more confident, assertive or learn to say no. Or you may learn to temper your aggression and have a more balanced leadership style. You may be able to delegate more effectively. Or you may build gravitas and executive presence. You may learn to think strategically. Or you may develop an international perspective. And the list goes on. Coaching can have myriad outcomes depending on what the agenda was.

By the end of the engagement your manager will be completely aligned to your development needs and your coach will hand over the reins to him so he can monitor and review your progress and help course correct as and when required. You may have enlisted other friends, colleagues or even family in your review process. It is a proven fact that when people hold themselves publicly accountable, the chances of successful change are greater.

16. Does coaching address only work issues?

Coaching can actually have a life changing effect. Because it scratches below the surface and seeks to understand root causes, the outcomes often transcend the workplace. Many a time, executives are victims of their circumstances, sometimes childhood experiences, which could end up impacting their interactions with people in general, be it in the workplace or their personal lives. Coaching has been known to help people deal with issues ranging from the ability to understand and manage one's emotions to self-esteem and confidence to derailing irrational beliefs. Naturally, a transformation in any of these areas is likely to be all-embracing and will affect every aspect of one's life.

We hope this guide has addressed your coaching FAQs. Now, go on and enjoy this truly liberating journey; discover your true potential and find fulfillment in both your professional and personal life.

If you still have some questions you can reach us at www.cfi.co.in and we will be happy to help.