

# Coaching Skills for Leaders — Workbook

This workbook accompanies the Coaching Skills for Leaders course. Use it to practice the frameworks from each module, reflect on your current conversations, and build a personal coaching development plan. Complete each section after the corresponding module — the exercises work best when applied to real situations you are currently navigating.

## The Coaching Mindset and When to Use It

Audit your current leadership mode defaults and identify the conversations where a coaching approach would create the most value.

### Exercise: Mode Audit: Mapping Your Last Five Conversations

Think about the last five one-on-one or team conversations you led this week. For each one, identify which mode you used (directing, mentoring, or coaching) and whether that was the best fit for the situation.

- Which conversation most needed a coaching approach but got a directive one instead? What did you do, and what would a coaching version have looked like?

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- What is your typical default mode when you are under time pressure? What drives that default?

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- Identify one recurring team challenge where you consistently give the answer. What question could you ask instead that would help the person reason through it themselves?

### Worksheet: The Mode-Situation Map

For each team member you lead, fill in their current Development Level (D1–D4 per Situational Leadership II) and identify which mode best fits their current role and tasks. Review this monthly.

Team member name

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Role / key responsibilities

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Current Development Level (D1 Enthusiastic Beginner / D2 Disillusioned Learner / D3 Capable but Cautious / D4 Self-Reliant Achiever)

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Best-fit leadership mode for this quarter (Direct / Coach / Support / Delegate)

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One specific situation where I defaulted to the wrong mode recently

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What I will do differently next time

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## Checklist: Coaching Mindset Pre-Session Checklist

- I have set aside 2 minutes before this conversation to clear my agenda
- I have assumed the person is resourceful, whole, and capable of solving this
- I have identified the one mode (direct / mentor / coach) most appropriate for this conversation
- I have a clear two-sentence coaching contract ready to open with
- I have silenced notifications and removed physical distractions
- I have reminded myself to ask rather than tell at least three times this conversation

## Powerful Questions and the GROW Model

Practice constructing GROW conversations and building a personal library of powerful questions for your most common coaching situations.

### Exercise: GROW Conversation Planner

Choose a real challenge one of your team members is currently facing. Plan the coaching conversation using the GROW structure below before you hold it. After the conversation, return and note what actually happened vs. what you planned.

- Goal stage: What question will you open with to establish the session goal? Write the exact words you will say.  

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- Options stage: List five questions you could ask to help this person generate options — without suggesting any yourself. Which three feel most natural to you?  

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- Will stage: What specific commitment language will you use to close this conversation? How will you ensure the action is observable and time-bound?  

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### Worksheet: Personal Question Library

Build your own coaching question library organized by GROW stage and situation. Add to this document across the course and use it as a reference card in your one-on-ones.

GROW stage (Goal / Reality / Options / Will)

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Situation type (e.g., stuck on a problem, conflict with peer, career development, performance gap)

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Question text (exact words)

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When this question is most effective

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When to avoid this question

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Notes from using it in practice

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### Checklist: Question Quality Checklist — Before You Ask

- This question is genuinely open — I do not know the answer
- This question produces reflection, not just factual recall
- This question moves the conversation toward options or action
- This question is ten words or fewer
- I am not embedding advice or my preferred answer in this question
- I have resisted the urge to fill the silence after asking

### Exercise: Goal Alignment Conversation Practice

Schedule a 20-minute goal alignment conversation with one team member this week. Use the three-horizon framework (this quarter, this year, three years). Capture the outputs below.

- What did you learn about this person's 3-year aspiration that you did not know before?  
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- Where is the alignment between their personal goals and the team's current priorities? Where are the gaps?  
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- What one project or stretch assignment could you offer them this quarter that directly serves both their Horizon 3 goal and the team's Horizon 1 objectives?  
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### Active Listening and Presence

Develop and measure your listening depth through structured practice and self-observation tools.

#### Exercise: Listening Level Self-Assessment

After your next three one-on-one conversations, complete this reflection within 30 minutes of each session. Track your listening level trends over time.

- What percentage of the conversation were you operating at Level 2 or Level 3 listening (genuinely focused on the speaker, not composing your response)? What pulled you down to Level 1?  
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- What did you notice about the person's emotion or energy that you might not have noticed if you had only been listening to the content of their words?  
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- Identify one moment where you spoke before the silence had fully resolved. What would have happened if you had waited another three seconds?  
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#### Worksheet: Belief Iceberg Tracker

Use this worksheet to map the limiting beliefs and patterns you are noticing in a team member across multiple coaching conversations. This helps you see recurring themes that point to deeper development opportunities.

Team member (use initials for privacy)  
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Date of conversation  
\_\_\_\_\_

Surface statement (their exact words)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Pattern type (generalization / deletion / nominalization / mind-reading / modal operator of necessity)  
\_\_\_\_\_

Underlying belief or assumption you suspect  
\_\_\_\_\_

Question you used or will use to surface it  
\_\_\_\_\_

Their response  
\_\_\_\_\_

Follow-up in next session  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## Checklist: Presence and Empathy Practices — Weekly

- I completed at least one one-on-one this week with no device on the desk or in my hand
- I named an emotion I observed at least once this week: "I notice this seems frustrating"
- I used a pause of 3+ seconds after at least one question before filling the silence
- I reflected back content in at least one conversation without adding my interpretation
- I asked "Am I reading that right?" at least once to check my empathic interpretation
- After a heavy conversation, I took 5 minutes to decompress before my next meeting

## Accountability, Feedback, and Building a Coaching Culture

Build the accountability structures and team norms that make coaching sustainable and scalable beyond your one-on-ones.

### Exercise: Accountability Agreement Audit

Review the last five commitments made in your one-on-ones. For each, assess whether they met all five criteria of a strong accountability agreement and what you will change going forward.

- How many of the five commitments included a specific observable action (not just an intention), a real deadline with date and time, and a defined success metric? What was missing most often?  

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- For any commitment that was not kept, which type was it — a capability gap or a commitment gap? How did you or will you respond differently based on that distinction?  

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- Design a 5-minute accountability close you will use at the end of every one-on-one to ensure each commitment meets all five criteria. Write out the exact questions you will ask.  

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### Worksheet: SBI-C Feedback Preparation Sheet

Use this worksheet to prepare structured feedback conversations before you deliver them. Complete one row per feedback conversation. Preparing in writing before speaking significantly improves specificity and reduces defensiveness.

Team member name

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Date and context of the observed behavior

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Situation (specific meeting, project, or event — one sentence)

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Behavior (observable action only — no interpretation or adjectives)

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Impact (what you observed change: team energy, client response, project outcome)

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Coaching pivot question (the open question you will ask after delivering the SBI)

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Anticipated response and your contingency question

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Agreed next step from this conversation

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## Checklist: Coaching Culture 90-Day Launch Checklist

- I have restructured at least two one-on-ones from status updates to GROW conversations
- I have introduced the ask-first norm in at least one team meeting this month
- I have assigned at least one peer coaching pair on my team
- I have publicly shared one thing I am developing in myself as a leader
- I have measured psychological safety on my team using Edmondson's 7-item scale
- I have reviewed my question-to-statement ratio in at least one recorded or observed conversation
- I have given at least three SBI-C structured feedback conversations this quarter
- I have asked at least one team member for feedback on my coaching effectiveness

## Your Action Plan

1. Complete the Mode Audit worksheet within 48 hours of finishing Module 1 — use last week's actual conversations
2. Hold one 20-minute goal alignment conversation with a direct report this week using the three-horizon framework
3. Build your personal question library: write five questions per GROW stage before your next one-on-one
4. Run your next one-on-one as a GROW conversation — use the planner worksheet to prepare the key questions in advance
5. After each of the next three one-on-ones, complete the Listening Level Self-Assessment within 30 minutes
6. Deliver one SBI-C feedback conversation this week using the preparation worksheet to script it first
7. Introduce the ask-first norm at your next team meeting — open with a problem and ask for three questions before any solutions
8. Assign peer coaching pairs on your team and brief them with a one-page how-to (use the module content as source material)
9. Measure your team's psychological safety using the Edmondson 7-item scale — benchmark your starting point
10. Schedule a 60-day review: compare your coaching culture metrics (psychological safety, development conversations, 360 feedback) to your starting baseline









