

## THE GROW MODEL

Perhaps the most widely known and popular coaching tool is the GROW model. It was popularised by Sir John Whitmore in his book, *Coaching for Performance*, published in 1992. There have been many claims to authorship of GROW as a way of achieving goals and solving problems. Although not one person can be clearly identified as the originator, many believe Graham Alexander and Alan Fine, who worked with Whitmore, made significant contributions.

The reason for its widespread use and popularity is that it is simple and effective. The GROW model likely fulfils the conditions of the quotation attributed to Albert Einstein, “Make things as simple as possible, but not any simpler.” It can be applied in many situations and depending on your preference can become the foundation for your coaching practice.

In our experience and opinion, GROW coaching as normally practiced is effective in tactical and developmental coaching situations. It is widely used in performance coaching, executive coaching and by line managers in organisations.

### Stages of GROW

It is vital that a coaching session and/or a programme begins with establishing an agreement on what it is that the Client wants to achieve (the Goal). If this phase is not properly executed, the rest of the session or programme will lack direction and clear movement.

The goal is always subject to change if, at any point, the client or coach notices that there may be something else which is more important than the originally stated goal or movement toward the goal has changed their perspective and, ultimately what they want to achieve.

High commitment to goals is attained when the individual is convinced that the goal is (a) important and true for them, (b) positively stated, (c) under their control, (d) there is room for improvement. At this stage, the goal should be concisely stated (no more than 10 words is ideal). One of the reasons why people do not achieve goals is that they are not concisely and clearly articulated.

Once an initial expression of the goal is established, it is important to explore where the client finds themselves in the present. This includes an exploration of the interference that stops them reaching their goal (Reality). Until people recognize the gap between where they would like to be and where they are now, learning cannot occur. Note that the non-use or under-use of a strength or a resource is also regarded as “interference”. Therefore, it is useful to also explore what could support the achievement of the goal as there may be such resources which are being ignored.

The third stage (Options) is when the coach helps the client generate ideas about how they can get to where they want to be. In this stage it is important to recognize that there are many options and the first ones that are spoken are rarely the only or optimal option. Questioning here is focused on ways to remove interference to the creative process by helping the client to look outside their habitual patterns of thought.

In the final stage (Wrap Up), the coach and the client commit to actions that fit with the chosen option, and set timelines, anticipate possible interference, design tracking processes, and establish support to help them fulfil their goal.

### When using GROW, a coach needs to:

- Question and listen; use more ask than tell to elicit useful ideals from the client.
- Keep questions open, particularly at the G R and O stages.
- Think creatively not just systematically –particularly in the Options and Wrap Up steps.
- Remember it is the client’s goal not the coaches.
- Reflect back and check the client’s understanding by using specific examples- using the client’s own language and way of speaking.

### Question Bank

