

Your Ultimate Coaching Tool: The GROW Model Explained And Why it Always Works!

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You probably use the GROW model (or T-GROW) without even realizing it:

T – Topic (Session Topic)

G – Goal (Session Goal)

R – Reality (Where they are and what's going on for them)

O – Options (Ideas and brainstorming – what they COULD do to move forwards)

W – Will Do (Their actions – what they WILL do to move forwards)

In reality it's probably more like ROTGOW or TROWG or TRORGWOW but these 5 key elements ALWAYS work and here's why:

T – Topic:

While establishing the Topic often blends into the Goal and Reality parts of the model, getting a topic up front – even a loose one – is the start point for any coaching session. Sometimes the client will come with a clear topic and other times we may start by discussing their 'Reality' to find out what they want to work on. Questions like, "What would put a smile on your face?", "What's been working for you since the last session?", "What hasn't been working for you?" can help to clarify a session Topic.

G – Goal:

This is the client's goal for the session – and while it doesn't have to be specific or 'SMART' it does need to be enough to give the session a clear purpose understood by both the client and the coach. For example, a session goal might be to establish a bigger goal or to gain some clarity in their lives – it just has to be enough for you to keep the client on track.

One of the things that makes coaching different from many other therapies is our focus on action and change. A session goal helps us keep the client focused and when the session drifts it gives us the ability to say, "We seem to be heading in a different direction here, is this what you want?" Tip: This tactic can be especially helpful if you have a client that likes to tell long stories.

And no, the goal doesn't have to be agreed right up front – although it's helpful if you can. A session goal can be 'evolved' as the session unfolds. And occasionally the 'real' goal of the session may not come out until the end when we ask our clients what their biggest win of the session was. This is when the client realizes their 'goal' for the session was simply to feel heard, to commit to themselves or to feel challenged or supported.

When we ensure the client understands what they want to get out of the session – we ensure the client receives value from coaching – and that they continue to learn and grow.

R – Reality:

Reality is about the client understanding their situation and how they got there. It's where we question, challenge, reframe and reflect back to our client where they are, what they've done so far, what's working and what isn't. It's about really getting into where the client is right now and why. It should include talking about feelings and digging into emotions, gut-feelings and intuition – often new or uncharted frontiers for our clients.

For me, the Reality section is the 'meat' of any coaching session where we raise our client's awareness around their values, priorities and beliefs – so they gain insights and learn about themselves.

O – Options:

If the client could solve their problems alone they would have done. Often what they need from us is help brainstorming, a push or some support to take an action they have been putting off. It may involve tweaking an existing action, challenging and inspiring them to make an action bigger or it could also mean shrinking an action to make it more achievable. Either way, a good dig around in the 'Options' to find actions and solutions that really work for our clients pays huge dividends in moving our clients forward. Tip: I have often found that the best and breakthrough actions come out toward the end of the Options discussion, so make sure you allow enough time... Check out our FREE Questions Worksheet "37 Questions to Liberate Your Clients From Themselves" for some great Options (and Action!) question ideas.

W – Will Do:

The essence of coaching is change – some sort of action – even if the action is to change the way they do something, to stop doing something or even do nothing! I always make sure every client leaves their session committed to at least ONE action otherwise our session would simply be a conversation. And while a conversation can be helpful – nothing changes unless something changes. Tip: Check-in with the clients about how they FEEL about their actions. Can they commit to them 100%? Is there time to fit the actions into their busy lives? Would they like to be stretched more, or do they need to simplify their actions to maximise the chances of success?

W can also be – "WHAT do you need from me?": Ask this question to find out what they need from you to support them.

W also stands for – WIN: "What was your biggest win of the session today?" As mentioned under 'Goal', I always ask some variation of this question at the end of my sessions. By asking this, we not only reinforce the value of coaching but over time both you and your client will learn what's really important to them.

In Summary:

So, what's missing from this model? Perhaps a review of actions set at the last session. It's possible this would come up under 'Topic' or 'Reality', but unless we explicitly ask it could get missed. I usually start my sessions by reviewing the actions from the previous session – but at whatever point you do this, an action review is essential for accountability.

I see the GROW model as the coaching session "basics". Without any one of these elements, something would be missing. And, the great thing about the GROW model is that you can apply any other coaching tool or model over the top. But as long as you follow this simple structure, you can't go wrong - the GROW Model is your ultimate coaching tool!

Article Excerpt:

There are many, many different coaching models out there but I still haven't found anything that beats the GROW model for simplicity, effectiveness and results. If you embrace the GROW model – your clients will love you and you'll never lose track in a coaching session again.