



COACHING

CHARACTERS & BACKGROUND

Neil and Anna work in the Finance department of an independent television company. Neil is Anna's manager. He asked her to deliver a monthly presentation to the board at short notice. It didn't go well. She over-ran on time, provided too much detail, mumbled and failed to 'read the mood of the room' and adapt her style in the moment.

Neil has already given Anna this feedback in a previous conversation. He now wants to coach her, with the intention of working on a plan for Anna to improve her skills.

FILM 1 | HOW NOT TO COACH

Neil is a nice guy. He is warm and has the best of intentions, but finds these sorts of conversations uncomfortable. He starts by taking up too much airtime, waffling, framing it poorly:

'I am here to give you a bit of coaching, a bit of mentoring, definitely some advice, maybe'

He ends his first monologue by framing an open question with a closed one:

'Let me ask you an open question, did you think it went well?'

Later on, Neil's face betrays discomfort and he uses humour inappropriately. The impact of this on Anna is that she is clearly uncomfortable and unclear about his confused signals.

Neil gives Anna advice on what works for him (telling a joke at the beginning of the presentation), which is clearly not congruent with Anna's style and preference.

Neil continues to use a mixture of styles - tell (**'what I would do...'**), sarcasm (**'bit of a car crash'**), leading questions (**'what would you do if you fell off a bike?'**).

He fails to give her clarity on whether she should do the next month's presentation and he doesn't listen to her concerns about having enough time to prepare.

Anna leaves the meeting despondent and confused.

FILM 2 | HOW TO COACH

Neil starts well. He is a little hesitant, but clear about the purpose of the meeting. He asks Anna to summarise the feedback. This gives Anna the opportunity to demonstrate what she has understood. Neil agrees with her summary and asks an open question:

'What is the best way that we can move forward with this?'

After her answer, Neil asks another open question:

'What sort of help would be most useful?'

Neil has clearly listened to Anna's points and his questions are both relevant and open.

A much easier discussion ensues, with Neil giving Anna the space to own the issues and come up with her own ideas. Neil also acknowledges that he didn't create the conditions for Anna to be successful by not giving her enough time to prepare for the presentation.

Anna looks and sounds more confident as she makes a plan.





COACHING

BEHAVIOURS TO ENCOURAGE

- Use of open questions
- Making each question relevant and related to the content offered by the person being coached
- Active listening
- Resisting the temptation to dispense advice
- Giving the person being coached the space to 'find' their own answer

