

### Topic 3 - How to Become Your Own Career Coach:

Coaching can be a valuable tool to help employees understand themselves and discover options that may exist. But career coaching isn't (generally) available to all employees, so it's helpful to understand the approach used by a career coach so you can coach yourself in your career. This information can then be used to have more meaningful conversations with your manager, peers and mentors.

#### 1. Self-Awareness.

In order to gain proper self-awareness, you need to see yourself clearly and understand how others see you. Ways to improve self-awareness:

--Create a five-minute mind-map. This requires you to spend focused time thinking about yourself. Because we are very busy, we rarely take the time to do this. However, if we spend more time thinking about how our values and beliefs drive our actions, we can be more conscious about decisions we make in the future. Creating a five-minute mind-map can help you quickly gain insight into your reactions to a career challenge. To do this, write down your challenge in the center of a page, then note down any reflections you have about the what, who, when, and why of the challenge, and see what you notice. For example, if you have a difficult relationship with someone at work, you might reflect on your need to be liked by people (a "why" insight), or you might come to the conclusion that the people you find difficult just happen to work differently from you (a "who" insight).

--Understand intent vs. impact. Is what you want to be known for (as an employee) consistent with how you show up at work? This question requires considering self-awareness gaps that you may need to work on. To explore this for yourself, think about three important situations in your week where you have a clear view of how you want to show up. For each scenario, summarize your intention using just one word. For example, you might want to be "credible" in a presentation or "collaborative" in a team meeting. After each situation, ask at least one person who was involved to describe your impact from their perspective in one word. This question might sound like, "What word would you use to summarize my approach in today's meeting?" or "What one word would you use to describe my impact when presenting?" Comparing your intent with the feedback you receive on your impact will help you see whether you have self-awareness alignment or a potential gap and opportunity for growth.

#### 2. Coach-Yourself-Questions (CYQs).

Asking some insightful questions will unlock your thinking and support you to identify actions that can help with progress. Assess the questions using the following:

--Open. Ask open-ended questions. Instead of asking, "Do I enjoy my job," ask, "What do I enjoy about my job?"

--Ownership. Focus on yourself. Instead of asking, "How has that person progressed more quickly than me?" rephrase the question to become, "How could I accelerate my progression?"

--One-at-a-time. Don't question-stack. Instead of asking, "Why am I missing deadlines and feeling so out of control of my time?" you ask and answer each question in turn: "Why am I missing deadlines?" and "Why do I feel out of control of my time?"

#### **Some CYQs to get started:**

What gives me the most energy at work?

When do I let my self-belief hold me back?

How can I increase the frequency of the feedback that I get?

Who could offer me a different perspective on my career challenge?

What do I want to be true in 12 months' time that isn't true today?

### 3. Listening to Yourself.

In order to coach yourself, you need to listen to the thoughts and beliefs that inform your actions. Distraction and discomfort can make your mind wander, so using techniques to practice listening to yourself (without distraction) are key.

--Find your friction. Try to figure out what causes you to lose focus, and remove that while you are working on self-coaching. For example, if technology is your weakness, you can find friction by leaving your devices in another room. If other people create a problem for your focus, try coaching yourself in a café or at the start of a day before the demands of your job distract you.

--Become your best friend. We all have an inner coach and an inner critic, and there will be times when your inner critic will creep in and start to take control. This might sound like "I'm not smart enough to figure this out" or "I can't do this so I should give up now." To quiet your inner critic, try talking to yourself in the same way your best friend would talk to you. Imagine yourself having a conversation with that person and write down three supportive sentences they would say.