

# Conversations Count

Adapted from [It's the Manager: Moving From Boss to Coach](#) by Jim Clifton and Jim Harter

## What is coaching?

Coaching is the practice of asking open-ended questions and providing critical feedback with the goal of tapping into your team's potential. And because coaching is a practice, those who *do* commit to practicing will see the positive ripple effect reverberate throughout their teams. Use this guide filled with tips from industry experts to help you get started with building your coaching habit.

### 1. Establish expectations.

Employees whose manager involve them in setting goals were nearly four times more likely to be engaged than other employees. Yet only 30% of employees experience this basic expectation.

### 2. Make a habit of continuous coaching.

Employees who receive daily feedback from their manager are three times more likely to be engaged than those who receive feedback once a year or less. But the feedback needs to be meaningful. It has to be based on an understanding of the individual strengths. As a rule, managers should give their employees meaningful feedback at least once a week. These coaching conversations can include any of the types listed below:

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#### Role and Relationship Orientation

Get to know each individual and their strengths and establish expectations that align with the person's strengths and the organization's overall objectives.

#### Quick Connect

While it's important for employees to have the autonomy to "own" their work and how they do it, ongoing daily and weekly conversations serve many purposes.

#### Check-Ins

Managers and employees review successes and barriers and align and reset priorities.

#### Development Coaching

The purpose of this conversation is for the manager to give the employee direction, support and advice when they are exploring career, aspirational or developmental opportunities.

#### Progress Reviews

Progress Review conversations are a powerful coaching tool when they focus on celebrating success, preparing for future achievements, and planning for development and growth opportunities.

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### 3. Create accountability.

While many organizations are changing their annual review systems accountability is still important. Managers should have progress reviews at least twice per year and focus on the employee's purpose goals metrics development strategy team contribution and personal life. These reviews should be achievement oriented fair and accurate and centered on development.

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Adapted from [The Coaching Habit: Say Less, Ask More, and Change the Way You Lead Forever](#) by Michael Bungay Stanier

The Question	The Rationale
<b>The Kickstart Question</b> "What's on your mind?"	This is a powerful conversation starter that will allow for exploration in your conversation. Use one of the 3 P's (Projects - the actual content of the work, People - the stakeholders involved, or Patterns - personal behaviors of you getting in your own way) to help you refine the conversation.
<b>The AWE Question</b> "And what else?"	Decision-making experts share that decisions made from binary choices have a failure rate in excess of 70% - however, opening the door for more possibilities and asking what else we should consider, that failure rates drops by more than half (30%)! Stay interested and curious, and ask it again if the conversation leads you there.
<b>The Focus Question</b> "What's the real challenge here for you?"	While you're itching to solve problems and be the fix-it-all person for your team, you might be addressing the wrong problem. Give your team an opportunity to share what truly needs to be solved so you can work together using their insights on a solution, which is where the real development happens.
<b>The Foundation Question</b> "What do you want?"	We tend to go into conversations believing that we understand the wants of the other person, which can create frustration. If you create an environment on your team where those who report into you feel safe to have these types of conversations, it will ultimately allow for more efficient ways of working.
<b>The Lazy Question</b> "How can I help?"	When prompted with this question, it facilitates a direct and clear request from the person being coached. Even if their request is not something you can realistically help with, you can continue the conversation by exploring alternatives.
<b>The Strategic Question</b> "If you're saying Yes to this, what are you saying No to?"	A Yes is nothing without the No that gives it boundaries and form. Encourage the person you're coaching to say yes slowly by finding out what is being asked, who else that person has asked, what deadlines look like, and so on. This encourages strategic thinking, which is a competency your team will need to develop throughout their careers.
<b>The Learning Question</b> "What was most useful for you?"	As a manager, your job is to create space for those learning moments. This question reinforces that this interaction was meant to help them, so by concluding on your coaching session with a question that allows employees to reflect on their key takeaways will reinforce the power of a coaching conversation.

Want to learn more?  
Check out [The Coaching Habit - getAbstract Summary](#)