

## **Getting the most out of your Personal Coach**

We asked our Founder & Director of Transformation, Susan Went, for her thoughts on what makes for a successful change programme – and a personal coaching relationship.

*“I’m a **Health Foundation Improvement Fellow** ([www.health.org.uk](http://www.health.org.uk)) and have had a long career as an NHS clinician, both as a manager and as an Executive Director.*

*Over the years, I have worked with individuals and on transformation projects across the health, social care, academic and charitable sectors. One thing I have learned along the way is that no change or transformation project can be successful without the involvement of the staff, patients, users and carers who are set to benefit from the end result.*

*During my years of leading change programmes, I have been asked many times to support those individuals who are most impacted or will struggle with the effects of the change. I therefore decided to train as a coach to enable me to work directly with those leaders, teams and individual staff who needed the support of one to one coaching in order to move forward.*

*I have become acutely aware that the language we use around coaching could do with some refinement.*

*A coach is not a teacher, nor a therapist. Not a manager, nor a friend. For some people, their only knowledge of coaching is the person seen shouting orders from the side-lines at a sports match*

***Coaching is a partnership** and it is important to me and for any successful coaching relationship that the client is always in control of the way that we work, as well as the actual topics we’ll focus on. Often this can be a difficult challenge - especially if you have never worked with a coach before. Here are a few pointers that may help:*

### **1 Choose a Coach who best fits your needs – not your personality**

*Your coaching partner should be someone who has experience in helping to achieve the results you are hoping for. I recommend you spend time up front thinking about exactly what you want to achieve.*

*What would “great” look like? What future are you hoping to create?*

*Your coach will help you design strategies to get there and a good coach will have lots of experience in dealing with different individuals - and different personalities. But responsibility for making any specific changes or improvements will rest with you so you need someone who can be an effective sounding board, not a shoulder to cry on!*

*Ask him/her how they work and how they will challenge you. How have they worked with others in similar situations? And – most importantly - ask what they need from you for this partnership to be successful.*

*At Nerissa, we always offer a **free Introduction meeting** before you make any commitments. This gives both coach and client the necessary time to get to know each-other. It also allows for both of us to answer any questions which the other may have.*

## 2 *Control the agenda, your goals and the topics for discussion*

*Once you have more clarity about what you want to achieve, you can start to plan in some specific goals with your coach. Goals help you to visualise your success and are a great way of keeping you on track when the going gets tough!*

*Talk to your coach about how you might record these goals. For some, this may be an actual picture of what life could look like post-change. For others, a written list may be more effective. Whatever works best for you, your coach will have the experience to help you define agendas for each meeting and the topics to work through in order for you to reach your goals.*

*Ensure you communicate honestly with your coach about what you need to get from any call or meeting. You may plan this in from one session to the next. Your time is precious so try to break your discussions up into bite-sized chunks that will help you feel a real sense of focus, pace and direction.*

## 3 *Keep looking forward*

*Don't spend too much time focusing on what is 'wrong'. Your coach will help you understand if there are specific habits or current ways of working that are causing you difficulty.*

*Your role is to focus on the future – the place you want to occupy when your coaching partnership is long finished. It is very helpful if you can explain what it is in this "future" that is important to you.*

*Your coach's role is draw on his or her experience to help you design a series of strategies that will work for you as an individual and the life you want to lead.*

*In my Coaching practice, I draw on 30+ years of operational and strategic leadership, and a decade of Executive experience in complex settings. Importantly I bring a deep understanding of the process of change and the impact transitions have on organisations, teams and individuals. My focus is always on the human aspects of change and transition.*

*As your Coach, therefore, I will not be giving you advice or solutions as we work. Instead, I will listen, ask questions and make you think. My goal is to enable you to develop the skills to lead, live and work with a real sense of purpose. But more significantly, to do so long after our partnership has ended – getting you to a place where you rely on no one other than yourself."*

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Are you:

- lacking in confidence
- feeling overwhelmed
- feeling you have lost your way and are no longer "you"
- trying to deal with conflict at home or at work
- struggling to influence others or manage a difficult relationship
- wanting to realign your life and sense of purpose – to better understand what you stand for?

We would love to work together with you. Why not get in touch for an initial, no-obligation chat? Then you can decide if **Personal Coaching** is the right thing for you! **All sessions – regardless of where or how they take place – will be treated as absolutely confidential.**