

BUILDING RAPPORT

Coaching Essentials

COACHING CONVERSATIONS



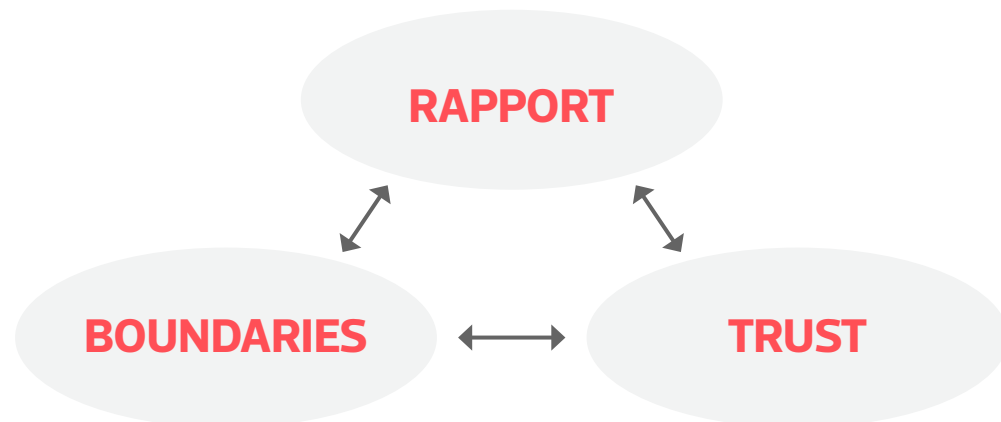


Ask open-ended questions like you would with a new friend. Don't jump right into the problem. Make small talk; ask them what they did last weekend. Tell them some things about you. Just have a conversation. When they get to know you, they will open up.

Kathleen Houlihan, 2018

THE COACHING RELATIONSHIP

An effective coaching relationship is one which is focused on the team member's issue, encourages their confidence, and stretches their thinking in order to reach a great outcome. To achieve that, the coaching manager needs to invest time in building a safe and positive space in which to work. The three cornerstones for this are Rapport, Trust and Boundaries:



Sometimes, we become too focused on achieving results rather than investing time in making sure these elements are in place, but without them we do not build a strong enough platform for effective coaching to occur.

RAPPORT

Rapport is fundamental in building the effective relationship between coach and team member as it promotes trust and allows trust to develop. Sometimes you will find you naturally get on well with someone, whilst with others it is possible to build rapport through finding common ground and being empathetic.

RAPPORT AND TRUST

Trust is an outcome of an effective relationship and good rapport between coaching manager and team member. Trust has both emotional and rational elements: emotionally, it involves someone being able to be open and honest about their vulnerabilities with another person, and, at the same time, candidly viewing the other person and deciding whether they are likely to behave predictably or in a 'trust-worthy' way.

To develop trust, rapport must be non-judgemental, without placing your own value judgements on your team member or their actions, and you should be genuinely curious about their interests and concerns: This helps to create the conditions where they will feel able to explore their experience, thinking, wisdom and insights.

RAPPORT AND BOUNDARIES

Finally, it should be remembered that clear and agreed boundaries allow rapport to develop appropriately and are a cornerstone in any good coaching relationship.

Care must be taken to ensure that boundaries are not broken by one person 'overstepping the mark,' and in coaching a key issue to agree on is confidentiality, i.e. confirming that you will not talk about your conversation to anyone else without prior agreement (such as it being recorded for assessment of your coaching skills).

Capabilities for building rapport include:

- Ensuring your team member understands that in this conversation you are equal partners having a mutual respect
- Asking questions to find out what is important for your team member, what matters to them, so they set the agenda and the pace of the conversation
- Listening and showing you are listening. For example; reflecting back and/or summarising what you have heard, asking clarifying questions, not adding your own opinions and experiences
- Noticing and using the words your team member uses
- Be affirming and prepared to feed back that you appreciate their capabilities, such as particular skills, qualities, successes and strengths
- Check what your own body language is communicating and pay attention to your team member's non-verbal communications. Are they sitting forward or back? Do they sound tense or relaxed? Are they still or fidgeting? If they are engaged, try to mirror and match their body language, if they are not, ask "How are you feeling right now?" or "What would help you feel more relaxed?"

TOP TIPS

- Be genuinely interested in your team member and be prepared to find out more about them
- Ensure the environment supports the equality of this relationship
- Take time to build rapport and trust
- Be clear about boundaries
- Use empathetic listening – and show you are listening
- Be aware of the impact of your own behaviour (both within the coaching and every day)

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NEXT STEPS

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