

## Rusty or out of practice

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### **Purpose**

As a budding or even as an established coach, there may be periods in your coaching career where you do little or no coaching. Perhaps your business has been taking you in a different direction and you're spending your time on other activities; maybe you are beginning to build a client base; or the opportunities to coach have been sporadic. Similar to the woodcutter in Stephen Covey's *Seven Habits of Highly Effective People* (whose tool had become less effective), you too may need to sharpen your saw. To refresh your best authentic coaching self, here are activities you can pursue.

### **Description**

#### ***Reflecting***

- 1 Browse through previous coaching session reflection notes and pick out one or two that were particularly significant to you. Note down in your learning journal how you have incorporated those experiences and learning subsequently.
- 2 Read through your learning journal from an earlier period, for example a year ago or where you remember a significant learning experience. Write down how you might tackle this type of coaching situation differently today. If you would tackle it in the same way, also note down the reasons why you would do so. This can really

help you build your confidence in how far you have come and your ability to keep learning.

### ***Doing***

- 1 By agreement with a colleague (preferably another coach), take a conversation you were going to have anyway and explicitly use it as a mini-practice session. Ask for the other person's feedback afterwards and make reflection notes as you would for a normal coaching session.
- 2 Find an opportunity to observe fellow coaches or coaches-in-training, perhaps as a facilitator on a course. If possible, arrange to provide them with feedback on their coaching practice, which will sharpen your observation and feedback skills.
- 3 Speak to your supervisor, or if you don't have one, given that you are feeling rusty, find a colleague or fellow coach who knows your style or has seen you coach and ask for feedback on what they really appreciate about your coaching style and/or approach.

### ***Reading***

- 1 Pick a coaching book you have enjoyed and/or one that has been recommended, which gives plenty of examples of excerpts of coaching interventions. These practical tips and examples will help refresh your knowledge and raise your awareness of tools and techniques you may have forgotten. Make a note of the key ones.
- 2 Go through this book and pick out two or three strategies you would like to try out. Find a willing volunteer, or try them out on yourself.

### ***Process***

- 1 Either during the 'down' time between coaching assignments or directly in advance of your next coaching session, select at least one activity from each section in this book, list them and plan when you will do them.
- 2 Record your results in your learning journal or diary.

Committing your activities to paper is a key part of the process.

### **Pitfalls**

Not recognizing the need to undertake the exercise.

### **Bibliography**

Covey, S. R. (2004) *The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People*, New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.