



Real Talk Coaching Technique to Use With Staff and Students

What to do: Use this technique to coach someone by using questions and dialogue to help them clarify their thinking, set realistic goals and expectations, or make a decision. The approach can be as formal as a facilitated discussion with a group, or as informal as a one-on-one sidebar conversation.

Why it matters: This technique creates a partnership with the person you're coaching. It shows respect by taking their ideas seriously; responding with genuine curiosity and care; being honest if they ask your opinion; and standing by their side as they face hard truths, grapple with challenging situations, and deal with emotionally difficult decisions.

When using this technique to coach someone, you should:

- Listen carefully to their idea, plan or proposal.
- Make sure you understand by using prompts and questions like:
 - Tell me more about ____.
 - Could you explain ____?
 - In other words, you're saying ____, right?
- Offer responses and feedback to keep the conversation (and the thinking) going. The purpose of your feedback isn't to "critique" what the other person tells you, but to "keep it real" by guiding and supporting them through the critical thinking process so they can make their own judgment. Your responses might offer a different perspective, an overlooked fact, or new information that could help them move toward a clear solution or plan. For example, you might say things like:
 - That's interesting. Are you assuming ____?
 - I know what you mean. What about ____?
 - You'll need to work out the logistics. How will you ____?
 - I see your dilemma. What other solutions might work?
 - Did you know that _____?
 - What criteria will you use for _____?
 - You've described the disadvantages. What are the advantages?

A great coach not only inspires but supports and encourages others to get results. —Richard Schuy

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