3

Coaching-style leadership

Organisations are looking for independent employees; people who want to – and are able to – assume responsibility for their work. These are people who associate with the goals of the organisation and the department, people who are competent and have the willingness to develop themselves further in order to perform better. They are people who want to get the best out of themselves and use that for the organisation.

This vision of people in organisations is the reason for a change in the way of thinking about management. The idea that 'good employees are employees who do what is asked of them' has been abandoned and replaced by 'good employees are self-directed, give direction to their own life and to the work they do in that life'. People like this take full responsibility for the work they do and the choices they make within the framework that the organisation sets.

For you as a manager, this means you will adopt a more helping attitude and will steer less. It's the difference between 'how can I make sure my goals are reached?' and 'what do my employees need from me in order to be able to reach their goals within the organisation?'. Your role changes, essentially: you become more of a coach than a person who assigns tasks. Can you feel the difference?

This chapter firstly explores the concept of coaching and leadership by coaching, and goes on to discuss situational leadership. Finally, let's examine the delegating style, as you'll be delegating more and more if your employees are self-directed.

The aim of coaching

The aim of coaching is to improve the performance and the learning possibilities of your employees; you can also increase the self-directing potential of your employees by

coaching. The underlying aim is more confidence for the person being coached. According to John Whitmore, coaching is:

- Freeing potential qualities so someone can perform to the best of their ability.
- Stimulating employees to learn and keep on learning.
- A type of leadership that is the opposite to commanding and controlling.
- Looking at employees in terms of potential possibilities and not in terms of how they functioned in the past.

In this book, I'm applying the following view of coaching: coaching is acting in such a manner that possibilities based on mutual commitment are created, which enables those being coached to get the best out of themselves. It also heightens their self-directing, self-learning and self-solving abilities – and the overall effect is better results in the working environment.

Here are the key concepts:

- *Commitment* is the permanent trust that you and the person you are coaching must have in each other.
- *Trust* is the basis of a good coaching relationship.
- By making sure that *the necessary conditions are created*, you determine the playing field and provide the employees you coach with the authority to organise and plan their work.
- A *self-learning ability* means that employees who are being coached learn from their experiences.
- Employees you are coaching have a *self-directing ability* if they are aware of their actions and the effect they have on others. They are able to take decisions and are not afraid to do so.
- *Self-solving ability* means that the employees you are coaching learn to provide creative, realistic solutions.

Questions for reflection

What do you think of this view?

What is your view of coaching?

Which view of coaching does the management in your organisation take?

A number of behavioural characteristics are met by good coaches.

Good coaches promote self-directing.
They care that their employees give direction to their own work and life, and encourage them on their way to independence. Good coaches also make sure that they are superfluous as soon as possible. This is not always easy; people being coached are used to being dependent, going to the manager with problems and taking for granted the fact that the manager will solve them. It is sometimes very tempting to steer and advise, but by doing this you will hinder development towards self-direction.

Good coaches work from an accepting attitude.
Accepting yourself with all your limitations and questions is essential for change. This also applies to the attitude of the coach in regard to the coachee. Acceptance of the person who is being coached, and acceptance of the situation in the here and now, is the foundation of coaching and the basis for trust. Coaching without value judgement is very important for the learning process.

Good coaches are transparent and selectively authentic.
They are open about their intentions, about the background of any questions, about the reasons for the choice of this method. They are also open about what they experience during coaching: about their own difficulties and blocks. However, that does not mean that they introduce everything they think and feel into the conversation. Good coaches make a choice in what they say about their emotions and ideas, and introduce matters when they believe these will help the other person.

Good coaches have trust in the competence of their coachees.
People are, in principle, able to lead and give direction to themselves and to make the best choice for themselves. This competence is often hidden behind various inhibitions and blockades. Often, people being coached do not allow themselves to feel emotions such as anger, disappointment, grief or enthusiasm and entrepreneurship. The last thing they will do is introduce them into a discussion. A lot of talent is wasted in this way. A good coach helps to remove those hurdles and to clear the way for unused qualities. The person who is being coached learns to mobilise aspects of themselves that they have not often used, even if doing so is sometimes awkward and unpleasant in the beginning.

Good coaches see that the path is also the goal.
Of course, coaching works towards reaching goals that have been formulated in advance and towards results. However, a good coach knows that the path along which the goal is achieved is just as important. Questions such as 'how do we work together in this?' and 'how shall we communicate during coaching?' are used by good coaches to help their coachees to learn. Good coaches don't hold on to their own preparation when the here and now situation demands something different; they can let go of their own plans. In other words, they can combine both the task and the process.

Good coaches know themselves and can reflect on their own behaviour.
Self-directing is a life-long process that is not finished at a specific moment. Good coaches know this and are always willing to do some self-examination; they are coaches who learn. They think about questions such as 'what role am I playing in the fact that talks with this person are so awkward?', 'what is my attitude towards this person who is being coached?', 'what about my own aversions, fears and longings?', 'what am I avoiding? and 'what do I evoke?'. They also make use of this self-examination to adjust the coaching path where necessary, and also encourage self-reflection in the person being coached.

Good coaches can define limits.
They do not always agree with everything, but know where their limits are and define them. Good coaches are not afraid to confront their coachees – in other words, to hold a mirror up where necessary. They also know the limits of their own competence. A coach is not a psychotherapist (unless trained as such), and knows which questions do or do not belong to his or her competence. If necessary, a coach refers to another expert.

These behaviour characteristics apply to a coach. As an executive, you are not only a coach, but also a manager. You can choose which characteristics you find important and want to develop and which do not fit in with your role as an executive.

Peter works as an executive in a bank, leading a team of eight mortgage advisers. He is used to steering in a task-focused way. The directors of the bank want the executives to act more like coaches, but this is difficult for Peter as it means looking at his own leadership and executive skills in a completely new way. The organisation has done a 360º feedback round to map the coaching skills of the managers. This means that Peter will have to develop the following competences: coping with emotions, increasing the problem-solving abilities of his employees and switching styles both in his style of leadership and in the discussions he holds with his employees. When it comes to 'coping with emotions', Peter wants to learn to mirror emotions. To develop problem-solving skills, he decides to ask questions when an employee has a problem instead of giving an immediate solution. With regard to switching styles, he will practice giving his attention in discussions to both the task and the relationship with the employee.

Questions for reflection
Work out which coaching characteristics you have already developed and which you would still like to develop. Be as concrete as possible and make a development plan for yourself. For this, you can use the questionnaire in Appendix 1.

A manager willing to adopt an attitude more geared towards coaching will have to create a balance between the so-called hard and soft aspects:

Hard	Soft
as regards content	as regards the relationship
target and results-oriented	commitment and people-oriented
clarity	harmony and involvement
deal with	help to learn and support
quality decisions	acceptance of decisions
challenge	inspire
content	process
decisiveness	care
confronting	counselling/mentoring

THE MANAGER AS COACH

If, as a manager, you want to coach, you will have to ask yourself a number of questions:

- Is there a basis for trust between myself and my employees?
- Am I prepared to adopt a fundamentally different attitude?
- Do I have the abilities and behaviour characteristics of a coach?
- Can I cope with the dilemma between coaching on the one hand and setting targets and judging results on the other?
- What do I want to address myself to when coaching – producing better results, increasing the problem-solving abilities of my employees or developing competences? What do I want to achieve by coaching?
- Am I looking forward to it? And, last but not least, does the employee want to be coached by me?

These questions can be partly answered by talking to your employees. My opinion is that, when it comes to the dilemma between coaching and judging/assessing, both can go together if you have a basis of trust with your employees and they want to be self-directing in their work and learning process. The transition from directing to coaching is a process. In my experience, executives take the initiative to coach their employees in the beginning and employees bring in initiatives, questions about coaching and development issues during the process itself.

If you find it difficult to combine the roles of coach and evaluator, you can consider having your employees coached by an executive colleague and you can then coach your colleague's employees. If you do not feel like coaching a particular employee or the employee does not want to be coached, you should do preliminary work before entering into a coaching relationship. You can both invest in the conditions necessary if you wish to go ahead. You can look into your own convictions and hindrances, make them a subject of discussion and talk about what the employee needs to enter into a coaching relationship.

Finally, let's look at the conditions needed for coaching in organisations:
- The management of the organisation clearly propagates the vision and belief of leadership by coaching.
- In its vision and means, the organisation shows that coaching and self-directing is important.
- The organisation works in results-oriented way.
- Mistakes are sometimes made but there is no punishment for making them; people learn from them.
- There is time and space to learn.
- The climate is such that there is room for taking risks and experimenting.
- There is constant, systematic feedback about the results of learning, procedure and mutual expectations.
- Each employee takes responsibility for their own learning process.
- Work is done with commitment and mutual trust.

Questions for reflection
- Consider your answers to the above questions.
- If you have answered no to a number of them, think about what you want and which conditions you or your organisation will have to create in order to begin coaching. Make goal-oriented agreements with yourself.

Situational leadership and coaching

Let's now look at a situational leadership model that can be used to coach your employees towards independence.

Situational leadership is geared towards allowing people to function independently in their work. You could see the whole process of instructing, via convincing and consulting to delegating, as a part of coaching. You coach and guide your employees towards functioning independently. The switching of competences plays an important role in situational leadership.

Hersey and Blanchard developed the situational approach to guiding and coaching people. This approach is based on the relationship between the amount of directing and supervision by a manager (directive behaviour) and the amount of support and encouragement given by them (supportive behaviour), and the competence and commitment of the employee when performing a certain task.

Directive behaviour:
The extent to which a leader establishes targets and priorities and organises work, and the amount of supervision in the execution of the task.

Supportive behaviour:
The extent to which the manager listens, exchanges ideas, supports and encourages, as well as the extent of the participation by the employee in the decision process.

Hersey and Blanchard observed managers in practice and established that they showed directive as well as supportive behaviour when directing their employees. Moreover, one manager was successful when using a lot of directing, while another achieved good results with a combination of directing and support, or by support alone. This was connected to the need and development of the employee concerned.

THE FOUR LEADERSHIP STYLES
If we combine task-oriented behaviour and relationship oriented behaviour, we arrive at the following model that represents the four styles of leadership:
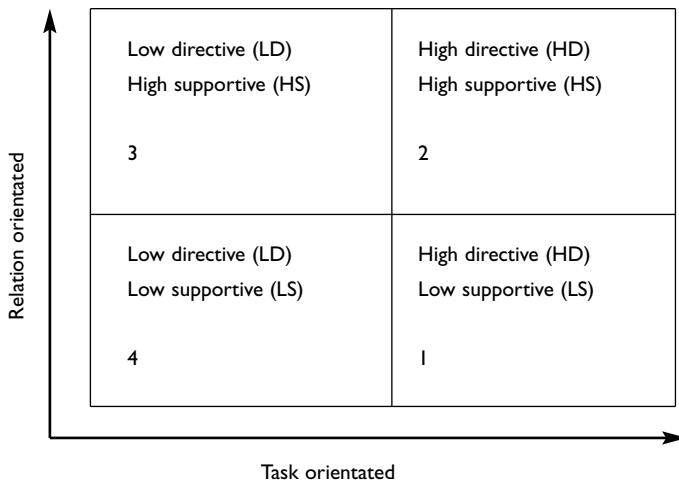
	Low directive (LD) High supportive (HS) 3	High directive (HD) High supportive (HS) 2
Relation orientated	Low directive (LD) Low supportive (LS) 4	High directive (HD) Low supportive (LS) 1
	Task orientated	

Figure 2. Hersey and Blanchard's four styles of leadership

- Style 1: directing (S1). High directive /low supportive behaviour. The leader gives the assignment, spells out the role and task, explains what the targets are and closely supervises the execution of the task.

- Style 2: coaching (S2). High directive/ high supportive behaviour. The manager explains decisions and asks the employee for suggestions. The manager still closely supervises the execution of the task.
- Style 3: supporting (S3). Low directive/high supportive behaviour. The manager and the employee take decisions together, and the manager supports the employee's efforts in executing the task.
- Style 4: delegating (S4). Low supportive/low directive behaviour. The manager assigns the responsibility for the decisions to the employee.

A certain style may sometimes be effective while a different one may lead to better results in a different situation. The manager's work situation is an important factor. The type of work, the contact with colleagues, other managers and the organisation in its entirety, pose specific demands on the work and behaviour of a manager (the culture). The most important factor for managers' success is the relationship between them and their employees.

In addition, it's important for you as a manager that you are able to assess the competence of your employees – the extent to which an employee is willing and able to fulfil a certain task. Willingness has to do with self-confidence, dedication and the motivation to execute a specific task or activity.

Hersey and Blanchard distinguish four development levels for employees:
- Level 1: Low competence, high commitment
- Level 2: Some or low competence, weak commitment
- Level 3: Reasonable to high competence, varying commitment
- Level 4: High commitment, high competence

The more competence and commitment employees have, the more freedom you can give them to be responsible for their behaviour. It is, however, important that the development level always applies to a certain task or competence and never to the development level of the individual.

High | Average | Low

| High competence	Reasonable to high competence	Some or low competence	Low competence
High commitment	Varying commitment	Weak commitment	High commitment (wants to learn something new)
O_4	O_3	O_2	O_1

Development

Figure 3. The development level of the employee relating to a particular task or responsibility

EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Effective leadership is about choosing the right style in a certain situation. Managers can use competence level to asses the competence and willingness of their employees, on the basis of which they can then choose the most appropriate style of leadership.

On the basis of the four leadership styles and on the basis of the competence levels (01 t/m 04) we can now see which style of leadership will be effective in which situation.

BEHAVIOUR OF THE LEADER
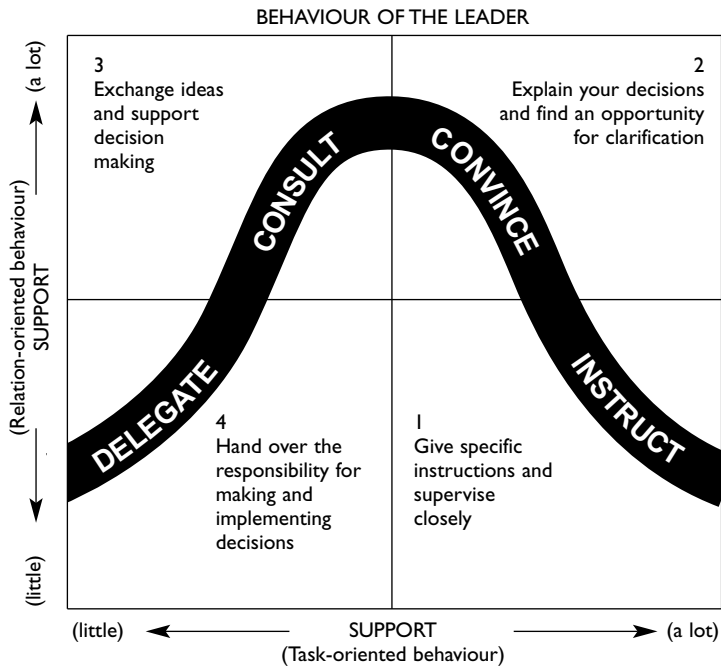
1 New staff member in the job (task immature)
2 Somewhat settled staff member
3 Member of staff with advanced competences
4 Task mature member of staff

Figure 4. Model of situational leadership

Effective leadership is not just about using the right style in the right situation. Managers often say that they want to direct their employees as they would like to be directed themselves. For some employees this will work; for others it will not work at all. If you like to work independently, it can be difficult for you to keep on giving up assignments and control. If you are at home with the work as regards content, it can be difficult to give very concrete instructions, or manage employees who want to execute the assignment

differently or solve a problem differently from the way you would. If you have a proactive approach and are results-oriented, you may become irritated because your employee hasn't yet begun to understand things or because you're experiencing resistance.

DEVELOPING EMPLOYEES

As a manager, you will want to bring your employees from a low development level to a high one. The rise of the development level of an employee from 01 to 04 does not just happen overnight, but progresses in slow steps. If somebody has a low achievement level, you cannot expect enormous changes from one day to the next.

The best thing to do is to state tasks, working method and targets as specifically as possible. As soon as employees show the desired behaviour when executing the task they have been given, it's important to give a compliment – they will then acquire more self-confidence. Once you see that they have mastered the task, you can allow them to execute it independently.

As a manager, you have three methods of encouraging the development of employees:
- Set targets and tasks clearly and instruct if necessary (in the case of new tasks, new working methods, new computer programmes, etc.)
- Give compliments or show appreciation if tasks are executed properly – with this you will increase self-confidence and self-respect.
- Reprimanding or correcting (also called addressing behaviour) if an employee has not executed a task properly. This is only used when the manager is certain that the person in question is able to cope with the task.

The three methods are also called the manager's basic skills. These basic skills are, next to a flexible way of handling the various leadership styles, the most important tool for effectiveness.

The model of situational leadership has the behaviour of the employee as a starting point. It assumes that managers more or less give employees assignments all the time but this is different in practice, of course. Most employees have set tasks that are executed independently, ones that the manager does not have to bother about.

You can use the styles if an employee receives a new task that you have to regulate because the agreed results are not being achieved. In a situation like this you have to ask yourself whether the employee is (or is not) able to do it, or whether this particular employee might just not want to do it. A coaching leader will always look into this together with the employee and leave the responsibility with the employee. A proactive leader will determine what the employee has to change and improve and convince the employee of this. Here is an example of a proactive leader and a coaching leader in the same situation.

Charles works as a director of a production company where engines are developed and assembled. He has agreed with his heads of department that they will deliver the figures for the management report on the last Thursday of the month. The management report is on the agenda of the management team every second Monday of the month. Bill is head of production and has delivered the figures late for the past three months. He's able to produce the figures, but doesn't do so on time. Charles has a talk with Bill.

The proactive leader

Charles: *This is the third time you've not delivered the figures on time. You know we discuss the management report every second Monday and that we need time to put everything together. It's important for me to have all the figures from the heads of department on time.*

Bill: *I know, but I'm very busy, I have to help people in the department.*

Charles: *I've told you before that you shouldn't occupy yourself with the operational work – I expect the figures on time next month.*

Bill: *OK.*

Who is the owner of the problem in this example? Do you think that Bill will deliver the figures on time next month? Why do you think he will? Why do you think he won't?

The coaching leader

Charles: *I noticed that you delivered the figures for the monthly report too late, what's wrong?*

Bill: *The department's very busy and I have to constantly help out because, as you know, we can't deliver late.*

Charles: *If I understand properly, your report is falling through because you have to help the department out.*

Bill: *That's right.*

Charles: *What do you think of that?*

Bill: *I know it shouldn't happen, but I don't want to let my people down. I know you're waiting for those figures.*

Charles: *What can you do to support your employees and still have the report ready on time?*

Bill: *Well, I could keep the last Thursday morning of the month for the report...*

Charles: *That's good, I'm happy with that. What can you do to put the employees under less pressure and support them?*

Who is the owner of the problem in this example? Do you think that Bill will deliver the figures on time next month? Why do you think he will? Why do you think he won't?

Delegating

Let's give extra attention to delegating, as a lot of managers find this difficult; many managers find it hard to let go of tasks. The most important pitfall is probably the control–trust dilemma. Delegating is characterised by a minor form of control and by a large amount of trust that an employee will fulfil the task or assignment as they should. You cannot exert a lot of control and at the same time expect your employee to function independently. However, you are responsible for everything that happens in your area of responsibility – and that is where friction comes in. Many managers find this difficult and do not delegate, or do not delegate sufficiently, for this reason. However, delegating is also an important style for you as manager.

Do you recognize the following worries?
- You are worried that desired results will not be achieved. You have not got enough trust in your employees and do not dare to take risks (you'll keep your employees 'in their place' in this way).
- You are worried about losing control if you excessively delegate many activities. (Ask your employees to give feedback about the results themselves.)
- You are worried that your employee will do the work better than you, and will overshadow you. (Your primary task is to create conditions.)
- You are worried about letting go and think that you are indispensable ('what will people say if I am not terribly busy?').
- You are worried that your employee will do things in a different way from how you have always done them. (Excellent – after all, it's not really about *how* things are done, but about the result and whether that is acceptable to you.)
- You don't want to give up a couple of nice jobs… (However, by doing them yourself you will deprive your employee of a challenging possibility for personal development.)
- You don't like asking your employee to do (part of) your job.
- You think: 'It takes more time to explain the tasks and delegate them than it does to do it myself' and 'If X makes a mistake, I'm the one responsible'.

Do you recognise these pitfalls?

- You delegate the responsibility, but not the authority.
- An employee says 'yes' to a delegated task but does not know what they're up against.
- You only pass on unattractive tasks.
- You don't it make clear within your organisation exactly who has the authority after delegation.
- You leave your employees to their own devices and do not offer support.
- You don't delegate the task, just the way in which you want it done.
- You delegate a task to an employee you don't trust.
- You just do not do certain work.

Questions for reflection

What are your worries and pitfalls? What would you like to change? Talk about your resistance and pitfalls with a coach. If you have worked at your worries and pitfalls, then you can start delegating tasks. It is important to prepare yourself well – you will notice that things are a lot easier if you do.

THE DELEGATION DISCUSSION

Below are the steps in the delegation discussion:

Preparation:

- Describe the task that will be delegated, and the area of responsibility.
- Describe what the employee needs to execute the tasks as independently as possible – for example, information, responsibilities, competences and contacts.
- Describe the desired result of the tasks.
- Which quality standards should the execution of the end result meet?
- Describe the critical moments in the execution of the tasks – issues regarding content, and critical issues regarding consensus and/or co-operation.
- Estimate the weak and the strong points of a particular employee with regard to the execution of the task.

The discussion

- Inform the employee about the tasks that are to be delegated and about the area of responsibility in which they fall.
- Indicate the reasons for delegation and check preparedness.
- Discuss delegation on the basis of the following points: the task, the quality and quantity of the results, the responsibility and competences, the remaining means and the critical moments.

- Agree on where and when you wish to be kept informed.
- Make agreements about the support you will give, about exceptions within the delegation, the training that may be necessary, and in what circumstances you will cancel or extend the delegation.
- Check if the setting of the task is clear and on which points mutual commitment has been reached.
- State that you will inform all parties concerned about the delegation.

Delegating tasks has certain advantages. The advantages for you are getting round to management tasks and core responsibilities more easily, lowering your pressure of work and having more time for long-term activities. The advantages for employees are that their commitment will be encouraged and their sense of responsibility and independence increased. They will develop new skills and be able to develop further. There are also advantages for the organisation. If delegating is implemented, it will lead to greater flexibility and availability. Expertise and potential present on the shop floor will be used and developed in a better way. Better decisions will be made, as the person making the decisions will have gained a better insight into the situation. The vulnerability of the organisation as a whole will be reduced, and the overall sense of responsibility will be heightened. Moreover, there will be a greater volume of work done, as the workload is now much better divided between you and your employees.

Questions for reflection
Which task would you like to delegate? Why do you want to delegate that task? To whom would you like to delegate that task? Prepare the discussion and make an appointment for a delegation discussion with the employee concerned.

GROW

Before I describe the various intervention styles of coaching in the next chapter, I would like to give you a few tips for coaching with the Whitmore GROW model (1995). This is a handy tool with which to structure your discussions.

GROW stands for:
Goal:
This applies to the goal of the discussion or the discussion in the short or long term. Questions you can ask in this phase are: 'What do I want to achieve with this discussion?', 'What do you expect of me in this discussion?', 'What would help you most in this discussion?'

Reality:
This is where you check reality to evaluate the present situation. Questions you can ask in this phase are: 'What is wrong, exactly?', 'What is bothering you the most?', 'What part do you play in the situation?', 'What have you tried up to now?'

Options:
Collecting options and alternative strategies. Questions you can ask in this phase are: 'What can you do / what do you want to do?', 'What other alternatives can you think of?', 'Do you want advice from me?', 'Which solutions appeal to you the most?'

Wrap up:
These are the agreements. What should be done, when and by whom, and do people have the will to do this. Questions that can be asked in this phase are: 'What are you going to do now and how are you going to go about it?', 'What do you need from me to be able to do it?', 'Which SMART agreements can we make now?'

If you use the steps of this model in your coaching discussions, you will heighten the self-directing and problem solving abilities of your employees. It really is worth trying this out.

4

Intervention styles of coaching

Intervention style is the term used to describe the behaviour that coaching managers use in their interactions with their employees.

It is important that you realise that the different styles have various effects. Every interaction between you and your employee has an effect. Every style you use has an influence on the relationship between you and your employee. One of the styles will be the most obvious, depending on the phase of the coaching cycle, the situation or the employee's problem and on how you judge that situation.

As a coaching manager, you will have a particular style with which you feel at home. There are, of course, situations in the coaching process in which your favourite style is less effective. For this reason, we'll pay attention to learning to distinguish and recognise a favourite style and to learning to use various styles together.

The coaching discussion is made up of different phases and each of these phases has a special intervention style. Blake and Mouton (1994) distinguish between the following styles:
* The accepting style
* The analysing style
* The structuring style
* The confronting style
* The directing style

Questions for reflection
Which style do you think you use the most? Keep the answer in mind while you read on.

The coaching discussion has the following phases:
- The entrance phase – this is directed towards getting to know each other and gaining trust (accepting style).
- The contact phase – in this phase the coaching question is clarified, result agreements are made and the role expectations of the coach and the coachee are made clear (the accepting and analysing style).
- Data collection – aimed at collecting data (analysing and structuring style).
- Redefining – the redefinition of the demand (structuring style).
- Making action plans – naming actions and making choices (structuring style, directing style).
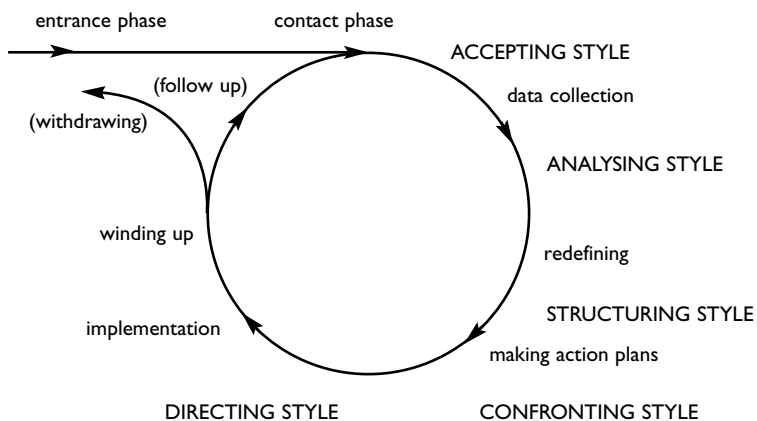- Implementation – measuring effects, reflecting and adjusting (confronting style).

Figure 5. Coaching styles and phases in a coaching discussion

Let's look at the various styles.

THE ACCEPTING STYLE

The aim of this style is to give people who are being coached the idea that they really have been heard, seen and accepted, that they will not feel judged or condemned and that they can feel safe with the coach.

Acknowledging and recognising emotions is the first step in coaching people. The emotions can have to do with the situation itself (the conversation between the coach and the person being coached), emotions concerning work or emotions that have to do with the coachee, or with other people.

Coaching behaviour that goes with an accepting style:
• Coaches are open, friendly and have a welcoming attitude
• They listen, summarise, continue to ask questions
• Encouraging the coachee to tell more
• Empathising with the coachee and being understanding
• Mirroring the feelings the coachee expresses
• Not entering into discussions, or judging
• Paying attention to the question behind the question

Martin works for the human resources management department in a multinational. In his year plan, it says that he will write a policy document about absence management. Susan is head of HRM. She is worried about the policy document, because she has the feeling that Martin has not started writing it yet. She makes an appointment with him.

Susan:	*How's your work going?*
Martin:	*It's very busy.*
Susan:	*What do you mean by busy?*
Martin:	*As soon as I walk into the factory, I'm bombarded by questions and problems.*
Susan:	*What do you do with those questions?*
Martin:	*Solve them, look for answers and inform people.*
Susan:	*If I understand rightly, you are busy with all kinds of ad hoc matters.*
Martin:	*Yes.*
Susan:	*How are you getting on with the policy document about absence management?*
Martin:	*I haven't had time for it.*
Susan:	*Why is that?*
Martin:	*Well, er, I don't seem to be able to get round to doing it.*
Susan:	*What's stopping you, apart from the fact that you're busy?*
Martin:	*It's a job that takes a lot of time and at which you should work without being interrupted – and that's impossible.*
Susan:	*I understand you want to work without being interrupted. Is that the only thing stopping you?*
Martin:	*Well, no, I'm scared of not doing it right.*
Susan:	*Where does that fear come from?*
Martin:	*I always put heavy demands on myself and I'm scared of failing.*

We can conclude from this small sample of the conversation that Susan particularly uses the accepting style. She only asks questions, summarises, gives no value judgements and searches for the problem behind the problem. As becomes apparent, the problem is actually at a different level than Martin simply not having enough time.

THE ANALYSING STYLE

The aim of this style is that people being coached understand what is happening on the basis of certain information and make a diagnosis themselves. Coachees subsequently devise actions and execute these with an eye to solving the problem.

Coaching behaviour with an analysing style:
• Listening, summarising and continuing to ask questions.
• Asking open questions (who, what, where, when, how).

The analysing style has various kinds of open questions that can be classified in the following manner:

Questions for reflection. These questions invite the coachee to think about what they are doing and how they are experiencing this. These questions help them to broaden their outlook on the issues involved. In the above example, Susan could ask Martin 'what are your qualities for this job?' or 'what do you really think of this assignment?'.

Target questions. These lead to thinking about what coachees want to achieve, about their ideas of the future and ambitions. It is forward-looking without reality being part of it – as yet. You do not have to know how you are going to achieve your goal. Here, Susan could ask 'what do you need to be able to write the policy document?' or 'what do you want to have achieved at the end of this conversation?'. Martin could have answered 'I would like more clarity about what exactly you expect of me, and support to help me start'.

Reality questions. These questions invite coachees to think about what the reality is really like, without prejudice. Steps towards the target are made from there. Susan could ask 'what steps have you taken to make time for undisturbed writing?' or 'what are you uncertain about when it comes to writing the policy document?'.

Action questions. These help to list all the alternatives and make choices for actions. Susan could ask 'what can you do to work without being disturbed?' or 'what kind of support do you need to overcome your fear of making mistakes?' or 'how could you mobilise that support?' or 'what are you going to do?'.

The analysing intervention style can lead to a different decision or action by the coachee. The responsibility for this decision or action lies with the coachee – in this case, Martin. It is important for Susan to help Martin find out what the consequences of the decision or action will be. Generally, both the coach and coachee find the style pleasant and effective. The analysing intervention style is most suited to the data collection phase and redefining.

THE STRUCTURING STYLE

The aim of this style is to bring order to the given information and to make gaps in the information visible.

Coaching behaviour with a structuring style:
- Listening, summarising and continuing to ask questions.
- Requesting room to structure the information of the coachee with models and outlines.
- Using images and metaphors to create order.
- Giving an opinion, expressing hypotheses and checking interpretations.
- Encouraging when coachees start to define their problem.
- Indicating possible consequences of behaviour.

In the case of Martin and Susan, the coach could say 'I understand that you're worrying; let's have a look at how we can get rid of those worries'. Subsequently Susan could introduce order and ask if there is anything else that Martin is worried about.

As well as insight and relief, the structuring style can also cause resistance. This especially happens if the coach's interpretations are seen as threatening. In Martin's case, Susan might have concluded that he has a fear of failure. That would probably have caused resistance, because an HRM employee at his level should not really have a fear of failure. The structuring style is most suited to the phase of redefining and action plans.

THE CONFRONTING STYLE

The aim of this style is to focus attention on discrepancies or on the effects of certain behaviour. There are three kinds of discrepancies:
- Discrepancies between the values and convictions that are rated highly and what happens in reality.
- Discrepancies between what coaches say they are going to do and what they actually do.
- Discrepancies between what coaches say and what they convey with body language, voice and expression.

When it comes to the effects as opposed to the discrepancies, that's about the effect that certain behaviour of the coachee has on others and their environment, and about the effect of the coachee's behaviour on you as the coach. The confronting style is the most effective one if the relationship between you and the coachee is based on trust.

Coaching behaviour with a confronting style:
- Listening, summarising, continuing to ask questions.
- Asking direct questions.
- Naming the facts (what you see and hear).
- Confronting the coachee with differences between what they say and do.
- Explaining what the effect of the coachee's behaviour is on you as a coach.
- Helping to look into the effect of the coachee's behaviour on their environment.

In the example of Martin and Susan, Susan could have begun with the confronting style: 'In your year plan it says that you would write the policy document about absence management in the first quarter. It's now the end of February and I've got the impression that you've not started it yet – is that correct?' Or: 'I see you walking around the factory a lot and talking to everyone in the building. I'm getting the impression that you're busy giving the impression that you're busy.'

The confronting style is suited to the phase of making plans of action: 'You say that you are going to work at the policy document now, but can I be certain of that?'

THE DIRECTING STYLE

The aim of this style is to come to a satisfactory decision about an ad hoc problem. This is the style that managers use the most, but it suits a coaching style of leadership the least. This style is, however, suitable if a coachee really doesn't know what to do.

Coaching behaviour with a directing style:
- Thoroughly investigating by means of asking and listening and then making a diagnosis.
- Giving advice and solutions quickly and convincingly.
- If the coachee does not follow advice, pointing to the possible consequences (do not get into a discussion).
- Finally, leaving the responsibility for the choice with the coachee.

For example, Susan could give Martin tips and tools for writing a policy document and also indicate a suitable structure. With the help of the analysing and directing styles, she can also ask questions in such a way that Martin is given ideas.

In practice, you will change your style depending on the progress of the discussion, the aim of the discussion and the coachee's specific need. This will ask a lot of flexibility from you as manager – and also a lot of empathy.

Questions for reflection

- When you have the next discussion with your employee, work out which style you have used and what effect it had on your employee.
- If you find out that a certain style is completely foreign to you, practise that style in private and reflect on your own emotions and the possible effects on the other person.