

Insight Fifteen

Learning to coach myself

So, what happens when the coaching programme is over?



Ben is one of those people who seems to burst with energy and drive and is a constant whirlwind of activity. Having reached the top of his profession, he made an interesting switch of career to a related role within a large, tightly regulated organisation. This required a fundamentally different approach: much more listening, reflection and deliberation before any action. It was also a job that required sensitive ‘political’ antennae and careful conflict resolution. Discussing the transition with his coach, he made a profound observation: “the process is almost as important as the result”. This realisation was the breakthrough they needed to reframe his leadership in his new role. Listening was the particular skill he needed to amplify - and he described it as *deep listening*. At the end of coaching programme, he announced his new model, using the acronym LRA: listen-reflect-act. At a recent review of the coaching, he related how he always says ‘LRA’ to himself before any important discussion!

Barbara was well established near the top of her organisation. She came to coaching because she knew instinctively that her whole life was spinning out of control, but she couldn’t see why. The coaching conversation revealed working practices that had served her well in her earlier career but were completely unsustainable at a senior level. She knew she had to change them – or lose everything. So, motivation was crystal clear and the coaching programme went at a fast pace, deploying a range of techniques and processes to redefine her leadership style and processes. Perhaps because of the intense focus, she developed what her coach called parallel processing. While changing her leadership behaviours, she was observing and absorbing the coaching process itself. Barbara had internalised the coaching completely. When the programme finished, she was confident to coach herself: “I know what to do now and can face any situation”.

