



THE GROW MODEL

COACHING SPECIAL REPORT & GUIDE

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Introduction to GROW

*There are many, many different coaching models out there but I still haven't found anything that beats the **GROW Model** for simplicity, effectiveness - and results.*

The GROW coaching model provides a framework for the core elements of an effective coaching session.

If you embrace the GROW Model your clients will love you because it's results oriented. And you'll feel supported too because you'll know you've got the key elements of a coaching session covered. And once you know this model off by heart, you'll never lose focus in a coaching session again.

The GROW Model often includes a T for Topic at the beginning. As it is helpful, I have included it in this special report.



Quick GROW Overview

You may already use the **GROW model** (or **T-GROW**) without even realizing it. Here's a quick overview:

- **T - Topic** (choose a topic or theme for the coaching session)
- **G - Goal** (choose a goal or required outcome for the coaching session)
- **R - Reality** (explore where they are around the topic - and what's going on for them)
- **O - Options** (explore ideas and brainstorm what they could do to move forwards)
- **W - Will Do** (identify the actions they WILL do to move forwards)

IMPORTANT: This is not a sequence to be followed absolutely. In reality a session may flow more like ROTGOW or TROWG or TRORGWOW - however if you always cover the 5 T-GROW elements you will have a thorough session.



T - Topic

Why it's important:

When the client is unclear what they want from their coaching session, establishing a session topic up front - even a loose one - is an essential start point. It focuses the client and also makes the session manageable for you, their coach.

The **T-Topic** is not an essential part of the GROW model. However, the addition of a topic comes in very handy when the client is unfocused or has several session goals to choose from.

In addition, the quicker you get your clients to narrow down a topic for the session, the quicker and easier it is to decide on the session goal, and to brainstorm and help your client choose their next moves.

How it fits with other parts of the model:

Establishing the coaching session **T - Topic** often blends with the **R - Reality** part of the GROW model. That's because it's sometimes necessary to have a discussion around what's going on for your client in their life to drive out a session topic to focus on.

Coaching Questions to Establish a Session Topic:

1. "So, how have you been?" (*Great open-ended question to drill down from*)
2. "So, what will we be looking at today?"
3. "What ideas did you have in mind for this coaching session?"
4. "What's been working for you since the last session?"
5. "What hasn't been working for you lately?"
6. "What do you need most from me today?"
7. "I'm curious. How do you think I can help you this week?"
8. "What's been niggling at you lately?"
9. "What's disturbing your peace of mind?"
10. "What area of your life could do with a tune-up?"



G - Goal:

Why it's important:

Having a session **G - Goal** is how you make sure your client gets what they want from each coaching session with you. The session goal enables you to deliver value as well as manage the session timing and stay focused.

One of the things that makes coaching different from many other therapies is our focus on action and change. When we help the client get clarity over what they want to get out of each session - we ensure the client receives value from coaching - and that they continue to learn and grow.

In particular, when the coaching session drifts (as most sessions do), the session goal allows us to say, "We seem to be heading in a different direction to your session goal here. Is this what you want?"

TIP: This tactic can be especially helpful if you have a client that likes to tell long stories.

How it fits with other parts of the model:

When a client comes with a clear session **T - Topic**, the next step is to establish the **G - Goal** of the session.

The **G - Goal** part differs from the **T - Topic** in that now you're going to *get clear on the specific outcome/s your client is looking for* from discussing the session topic with you.

You may need to explore your client's **R- Reality** first to find out what's bothering them or what they want to work towards.

Finally, you refer back to the stated session **G - Goal** during the **O - Options** and **W - Will Do** parts of the session to ensure that the ideas and actions identified give the right outcomes.

More about G - Goal:

Does the session goal have to be SMART? The session goal doesn't have to be super-specific or 'SMART' - but it does need to be clear enough to give the coaching session a purpose that is understood by both you and the client. And it needs to be clear enough to enable you to keep the session on track.

Do you have to agree the session goal at the beginning? No, the session goal doesn't *have* to be agreed right up front - although it's helpful if you can. A session goal is sometimes 'evolved' as the session unfolds and the client gets clearer about what they want or what's bothering them.



Other types of session goals: Sometimes there's an underlying goal for the session that doesn't come out until the end, when we ask our clients what their "biggest win" of the session was. This is when the client realizes their 'goal' for the session was simply to get clarity, feel heard, supported, to commit to themselves, to be held accountable or feel stimulated and challenged.

How many goals can you have for one session? Ideally your client will have one goal/required outcome per session. If the client wants to address more than one issue, you'll need to make the session goals smaller, and work a little bit harder to stay super-focused and on topic. You may also want to manage expectations too, and say something like, "I'm not sure if we'll have time for both these goals in this session but I'll do my best. And if there *was* a priority here, which goal is most important to work on first?"

In summary, a session goal is what helps us deliver value and keep the client focused as the session progresses.

Coaching Questions to Establish a Session Goal:

1. "What is the outcome you're looking for from our session today?"
2. "What could we do in this session that would make you jump for joy?"
3. "What would you love to have happen by the end of this session?"
4. "What would you most like to get out of the next 30/45/60 minutes?"
5. "What would you like to have achieved by the end of this session?"
6. "What would be the most helpful thing you could take away from this session?"
7. "What if we worked on it right NOW, would REALLY put a smile on your face?"
8. "What could we work on that would help you the most over the next few weeks?"
9. "What would you be disappointed we didn't work on today?"
10. "What's important to focus on today?"

*"The successful man is
the average man,
focused." Unknown*



R - Reality:

Why it's important:

The **R - Reality** part of a coaching session is where you help the client understand their situation and how they got there. It's where we question, challenge, reframe and reflect back to our client what we see, what they've done so far, what's working for them and what isn't. It's about really getting into where the client is right now and how it impacts them. The **R - Reality** should also include talking about feelings and digging into emotions, beliefs, gut-feelings and intuition - often new or uncharted frontiers for our clients.

The **R - Reality** is the 'meat' of any coaching session. It's where we raise our client's awareness around their values, habits, priorities, limiting beliefs, actions taken and not taken, and more - so they gain powerful ideas, insights and learn about themselves.

How it fits with other parts of the model:

The **T - Topic** and **G - Goal** frame up what gets explored in this **R - Reality** part of the session. In most coaching sessions, we are likely to spend most of our time in the **R - Reality** part.

It's your client's understanding of their reality that will give the impetus and motivation for them to make changes. And it's your client's reality that limits what they believe they can do and what they're willing to commit to doing. So explore your client's reality well, before moving onto brainstorming **O - Options** and committing to what the client **W - Will do**.

A caution on prematurely exploring O - Options and W - Will do (actions) during R - reality:

It's likely that some **O - Options** and **W - Will do** (actions) will be uncovered during exploration of the client's **R - Reality**. But remember to keep an open mind about the action steps your clients will eventually commit to.

That's because when you do focus on brainstorming **O - Options**, your client may identify another idea that works better, or come up with a wonderful tweak on their first idea. Or your client may think they've identified the perfect action at the time, but on exploring the **W - Will do**, they later realise they can't fit that action into their busy life, and need to choose a different approach.

As coaches we help our clients go beyond the obvious. When we delve into the **O - Options** or **W - Will do** our client could choose an action step not previously thought of. They might identify an action with a much bigger impact, a more easily achievable or more enjoyable action! Or we might stretch them to think bigger. So, the actions and options/ideas a client comes up with during the **R - Reality** part of the session *could be* the actions they leave the session with - but not necessarily.



AND yet...

If it feels right, or your client is in flow, you can absolutely delve into brainstorming **O - Options** for a particular idea in the middle of **R - Reality**. Or perhaps your client is excited and ready to commit to what they **W - Will do**.

So feel free to jump into the **O - Options** and **W - Will do** parts of the GROW model at any time.

Just remember that you may well need to return to **R - Reality** and revisit the **O - Options** and **W - Will do** to ensure your client fully achieves their session **G - Goal**.

Don't worry. It's easier in practice than it sounds!

Simply remain focused on the client's required **G - Goal** for the session and explore the **R - Reality**, **O - Options** and **W - Will do** as many times as you need to, and in whatever order works for your client, until you have an action plan your client will commit to.

Coaching Questions to Explore the Client's Reality:

1. "Describe a day in your life - as it relates to this issue or goal."
2. "Where are you now in relation to your goal?" and "What have you already done towards your goal?" and "What have you learned so far?"
3. "How do you feel about your current situation?" and, "How do you feel about yourself in this situation?"
4. "What are you not looking at or hiding from?" and, "What have you been avoiding?"
5. "What is your intuition telling you?"
6. "Where are you not being respected - or not respecting yourself - right now?"
7. "What is your prevalent mood?" and "What habits are getting in the way?"
8. "What are you telling yourself, that's getting in the way?"
9. "What do you like about this situation?" and, "How does it suit you to stay as you are?"
10. "What has stopped you from doing more/moving towards your goal?"
11. "What would happen if you did nothing?"
12. "In a nutshell, who or what's got in the way?"
13. "Who will be the 'winners' and 'losers' if you achieve your goal?"
14. "What other considerations do you have that we haven't looked at yet?"
15. "Who are you now? Who will you need to become to complete your goal?"



O - Options:

Why it's important:

If the client could solve their problems alone, they would have. Often what they need from us is help brainstorming, a push or some support to take an action they have been putting off.

This may involve tweaking an existing action, challenging and inspiring your client to make an action bigger, or it could also mean shrinking an action to make it more achievable. Either way, a good dig around in the **O - Options** to discover actions and solutions that *really* work for our clients pays huge dividends in moving our clients forward.

How it fits with other parts of the model:

It's great to explore **O - Options** once the **R - Reality** has been 'fully' explored. But our minds are not linear (however much we might like them to be). So, often while exploring options, another aspect of a client's **R - Reality** may come up that needs dipping into. Or a client may just 'know' they've found the action they **W - Will do**.

So be flexible. And remember to stay focused on the ideas and actions that move your client towards their session **G - Goal**.

More about O - Options:

Remember that in brainstorming - anything goes! *Literally* anything. This is where the client can come up with the wildest and wackiest ideas - because who knows what practical or doable idea might result? Sometimes the best actions are a 'toned down' version of an outlandish idea. And sometimes the client suddenly sees a way to implement something that initially seemed "crazy" or "impossible". Encourage your client to throw out as many ideas as they can - and remind them that doesn't mean they have to do it, these are just ideas...

I have often found that the best - and breakthrough - actions come out toward the end of the **O - Options** part of the session, so be sure to allow enough time to relax into it...

Tip: For clients who are very literal minded and struggle with freely identifying ideas, a helpful frame is to remind them to focus on what's "Possible" and not what's "Probable".

"The vast majority of problems, decisions and situations which confront us daily are those which do not have just one answer. Several solutions are usually possible. Logic suggests that if one can mentally generate many possible solutions, the more likely it is that an optimum solution will be reached. This a creative process - the formation of new and useful relationships." Richard E. Manelis



Coaching Questions to Explore the Client's Options:

1. "What hasn't worked yet?"
2. "What could you STOP doing?", "...Do LESS of?", "...Do MORE of?", "...CONTINUE doing?" and "...START doing?" (Make a list)
NOTE: If you like this, you may like or [*Free* Action Brainstorming Coaching Worksheet](#)
3. "If you had a choice, what could you do?"
4. "Let's imagine it's a year from now and you've accomplished your goal. What steps have you taken to achieve it?"
5. "Suppose, just for a moment, you live in a world where fear does not exist. What could you do now?"
6. "Suppose you had all the information you needed, what would be the next step/s?"
7. "Let's imagine you're really excited about this. What would you do?"
8. "If you were at your best, what would you do right now?"
9. "What could you do if you knew you couldn't fail?"
10. "What could you do if you didn't care what other people thought?"
11. "Imagine you had all the time you needed what would you do?"
12. "Suppose you could look through the eyes of someone you admire. What options do you have?"
13. "What would you suggest if you were advising your best friend?" and "What would your best friend suggest if they were advising you?"
14. "Imagine you're fully confident in your abilities, what could you do?"
15. "Imagine you're an expert in this area. What ideas do you have now?"
16. "Imagine having a chat with the wisest person you can think of (whether you know them or not). What would they suggest you do?"
17. "What if money were not an issue?"
18. "If you were rich beyond your wildest dreams how could you approach things differently?"
19. "What could you do if you didn't have to live with the consequences?"
20. "If you (secretly) knew what you had to do, what would it be?"
21. "What else could you do?" then, "Good. And what else?" (Keep repeating and remember to praise and appreciate options as they arise to encourage the client to continue coming up with ideas)

"Creativity consists of coming up with many ideas, not just that one great idea."
Charles Thompson



W - Will Do:

Why it's important:

The essence of coaching is facilitating change. This usually, but not always, means some kind of action. And that's where the **W - Will do** of the GROW model comes in.

I make sure every client leaves their session committed to at least ONE **W - Will do**.

NOTE: When we use the word action, it sounds like actions should be concrete, visible steps - but actions can take innumerable forms. While a client's actions could be visible steps, an action could also be to change *the way* they approach or do something. An action could be for the client to shift their focus eg. *paying attention* to how they feel, it could be *to stop doing* something or even to consciously *do nothing!*

Another key part of **W - Will do** is to ensure your clients fully commit to the actions they choose. Is there time to fit the actions into their busy lives? Would they like to be stretched more so the action seems more exciting? Or do they need to simplify their actions to maximise the chances of success?

How it fits with other parts of the model:

The **W - Will do** part of the GROW model is the culmination of your coaching session's work.

In theory, your client deciding what they **W - Will do**, follows on from the **O - Options** part of your coaching session. Now it's time for your clients to review the options and action ideas they've just identified - and choose one or more actions to commit to.

The actions being chosen should focus on achieving your client's stated session **G - Goal**.

NOTE: It's also possible that your client will also identify actions for other areas of their lives ie. actions not related to the session goal. This is fine, but for consistency and maximum client satisfaction, be sure your client leaves the session with at least one action to move them forwards in the area of their stated session goal.

"When we are interested, we do what is convenient. When we are committed, we do whatever it takes." Nithya Shanti



Coaching Questions to Explore the Client's Will Do/Actions:

Choosing Actions to Take

1. "So, re-play your key options to me..."
2. "What could you do as the very first step towards meeting your goal?"
3. "What actions NEED to be taken?"
4. "What actions do you WANT to take?"
5. "Which actions WILL you do?"

TIP: You can also use many of the questions from the **O - Options** section, simply rewording the questions slightly to ask them what they *will* do, instead of what they *could* do.

Establishing Commitment

6. "How do you FEEL about your actions?" and "What would it take to get excited about your actions?"
7. "How might you commit to that?"
8. "Tell me exactly how these actions move you towards your goal." (*connect actions with outcomes*)
9. "How will you stay committed to your goal when the going gets tough?"
10. "On a scale of 1 to 10, how likely are you to complete that action?"
Then, "What stops that being a 10?" And, "What could you do to raise the score?"

Identifying and Dealing with Obstacles to Action Completion

11. "What could get in the way of you completing that action?"
12. "If you were going to sabotage yourself, how would you do it?"
13. "How might you *unintentionally* get yourself off track?"
14. "What would make this more fun?"
15. "What if something comes up this week, then what will you do?"

Accountability

16. "What 3 things could you do to support yourself and make sure this gets done?"
17. "How would you be able to show this action is completed?"
18. "What are you ready to change to ensure you achieve your action?"
19. "How will you be able to show me you have completed your action?"
20. "How would you like to be held accountable for these actions?"

Other Useful Ws

W can also be - "WHAT do you need from me?": Ask this question to find out what they need from you to support them in moving forwards.

W also stands for - WIN: "[What was your biggest win of the session today?](#)" By asking this question, we not only reinforce the value of coaching, but over time both you and your client will learn what's really important to them.



A Few Final Considerations:

GROW - and Different Types of Coaching Sessions

What if a coaching session is dedicated to brainstorming and coming up with ideas? Or if a coaching session is about taking a deep dive into a particular area of a client's life?

The GROW model still applies - but the balance of time you spend in each area may be different.

It's still important to agree the **T - Topic** of the session and the **G - Goal** or required outcome. This could be a brainstormed list of ideas or to gain a fuller understanding of a situation. As always, the session topic and goal help you keep the client - and session - on track.

Then, if you're taking a deep dive into an issue you may spend most of the time in **R - Reality**. Or if you're brainstorming ideas to get unstuck you may spend more time in **O - Options**.

Finally simply ask the client, "So, what will you do with this information?", or "What's the next step?" to get to the **W - Will Do**.

What if the goal of the session is to set goals?

The GROW model *still* applies! Simply set the **G - Goal** of the session to set a particular type and number of goals eg. "Set my annual goals" or, "Identify my career goals". Then use the **R - Reality** to explore what they've done so far, their values, required outcomes etc. of the goals they want to set. Then in **O - Options**, explore the possible goals and goal variations (eg. dates, relative goal priorities). Finally, identify what your client **W - Will do** next with the goals you've identified.

What's Missing in the GROW Model?

For me the only thing that's not specifically covered - and is missing - is *ongoing* accountability. The GROW or T-GROW coaching model is a "coaching session model" rather than an entire coaching model or process.

The GROW model *does* allow us to help the clients be accountable to themselves in the **W - Will do** part of the GROW model - as part of the action-setting. But it doesn't cover the follow-up in the future - because we can't do that until the *next* session.

We live in a world where it's so easy for people to find "more important" things to do than the non-urgent and challenging job of working towards life and career goals. So, for many people, *ongoing* accountability is a key benefit of coaching. Their coach is someone who will be asking (and checking) whether they followed through on their commitments to themselves.



In the GROW or T-GROW model, there isn't anywhere to review actions agreed at *previous* sessions. Which also means there isn't anywhere to celebrate actions completed - or explore and learn why actions were not completed. Unless we explicitly ask, this could easily get missed.

So, if the client doesn't raise it themselves, I usually start my coaching sessions by reviewing the actions from the previous session - *before* I start on the T-GROW model.

On GROW and "Dancing in the moment":

Above all, remember the GROW or T-GROW model is not a fixed sequence. Instead, use the GROW model as a framework to help you stay on track- *while* you dance in the moment!

Wrap-up:

To wrap-up this special report, despite the lack of ongoing accountability, I see the GROW model as the coaching session ESSENTIALS. Without any one of these elements in a coaching session, something important would be missing.

We want our clients to feel satisfied and to get what they want from coaching with us. The GROW model is a framework that keeps us on track, and that makes sure the client leaves their coaching session with powerful actions.

What I also love about the GROW model is that you can *also* apply any coaching tool or broader coaching model over the top - and still use it to manage and deliver value in your coaching sessions.

The GROW model really is your ultimate coaching tool!



The Final Word

I hope this GROW Model Special report helps you and your clients have more enjoyable and satisfying coaching sessions! How will you use GROW going forwards?



If you liked this special report on the GROW Model, you may also like:

1. Our Free Resource: [21 Questions to Extraordinary Goal-Setting](#)
2. [Coaching Questions 101: 5 Easy Ways to Identify Your Clients' Limiting Beliefs!](#)
3. [3 Areas to Explore \(+ Questions\) When Your Client Consistently Fails to Complete their Actions!](#)
4. [How to Make Your Questions More Powerful! 3 Pointers and a Questioning Model](#)

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Did you know that at The Coaching Tools Company.com we specialise in ready-to-use coaching tools, forms and exercises for you to use with your clients?

- Get inspiration and ideas! Over 100 forms, exercises and worksheets to concretize coaching.
- Save yourself lots of time with our ready-to-use coaching forms and exercises.
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About the author: Emma-Louise Elsey is the CEO of Simplicity Life Coaching Ltd. (The Coaching Tools Company.com is a division of Simplicity Life Coaching Ltd.) She is a certified Life Coach, NLP practitioner and recovering perfectionist who loves meditation, questions, quotes, creating coaching tools and writing. Since qualifying as a coach in 2004 she has worked with many successful professionals and business owners.

For inspiration and to help you with your businesses, there are many more **Free Coaching Tools & Templates** at **The Coaching Tools Company.com** including coaching questions, coaching exercises, business admin templates for new coaches and forms to help with your workshops. If you have any ideas, suggestions, great questions to add or comments - we'd love to hear from you. Warmly, Emma-Louise



Emma-Louise

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