



## Tool 10

### Enhancing Performance

As mentor-coach, one of our primary responsibilities is to facilitate conversations in service of building the mentee's capacities. To do this, we need to support the mentee in enhancing their **performance** by accessing and expanding their **potential** and minimizing any **interference** that they encounter as they journey forward (Gallwey, *The Inner Game of Work*, 2000).

To help the mentee maximize their potential, we are always listening, watching, calling on, and helping them stay well-connected to their strengths, creative resources, values, purpose, vision, and intentions.

Given that interference (e.g., self-doubt, fear, anxiety, perceived limitations and shortcomings, self-consciousness) can grow quickly as the mentee faces new challenges, change, or difficulties, it is vital for us as mentor-coach to facilitate a conversation and process that serves to restore a balanced and robust perspective. Often, it is our job to help keep the mentee's potential and creative resources central in the conversation.

We can use the following questions to support conversations for expanding awareness around performance, potential, and interference.

#### Performance

What performance or results do you want to enhance?

Be as specific as possible.

- *What specific behaviours will you be stepping into?*
  
- *What is the shift that will be required of you?*
  
- *What competencies will you be demonstrating? what skills?*



- *Who will we see you being?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- *What will it take in you?*

## Potential

As you consider who you are and what you bring when you are at your best and fully resourced, what potential do you have?

- *What strengths can you count on?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- *What expertise do you bring?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- *What aptitudes do you know you have in this area?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- *What past experiences or roles can you draw on?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- *Where's the passion in this for you?*
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
- *What potential do you want me to be listening for?*



## Interference

### **What interference are you experiencing?**

- *What internal interference or limitations are showing up? (e.g., assumptions, beliefs, expectations, judgment, physical self, mental health, emotions)*
  
- *What external interference are you encountering? (e.g., people, time, resources, directives, contextual limitations)*
  
- *What helps you notice when something is in the way?*
  
- *How do you get what's in the way, out of the way?*

## Strategies to Help Maximize the Mentee's Potential and Minimize Interference

- **Coaching from the mentee's strengths**  
Orienting the conversation and growth around the essence of who the mentee is and their strengths, rather than the opposite, is vital to the capacity-building process. Research reminds us that our greatest potential for growth lies in our strengths and talents. Watching for stretch and increased strengths can help to sustain a mentee on a steep learning curve.
  
- **Watching for and reflecting back what the mentee is doing well**  
As mentor-coach, we want to listen and watch for flourishing, blooming, and emerging capacities in the mentee. Reflecting back the growth and learning we notice, through acknowledgements and observations, can help the mentee notice their own capacities and potential that they might otherwise dismiss or ignore, particularly in the midst of a significant challenge or change.



- **Listening for interference and inviting the mentee to notice and choose alternatives**

As mentor-coach, it's important to help the mentee notice when they are getting in their own way (e.g., making assumptions, mindset, inner critic, exhaustion) or pushing against an external obstacle. Creating the space for the mentee to step back, notice that how they proceed is a choice, and consider possible alternatives is extremely valuable.

- **Focusing on “feed forward” (Goldsmith, *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*, 2007) instead of “feedback”**

To feed the process forward rather than backward and avoid getting pulled in by past events or behaviour, it's important to create space for reflection and feedback that support the mentee's desired change and future intentions.

*“If you treat an individual as he is, he will stay as he is, but if you treat him as if he were what he ought to be and could be, he will become what he ought and could be.”*

—Goethe