

Identify: PART 2

IDENTIFYING GOALS

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CHAPTER



3

“...when it comes to altering behaviour you need to help others answer only two questions. First, is it worth it? ...And second, can they do this thing?”



KERRY PATTERSON

Influencer: The Power To Change Anything, 2008

After we have gained a clear picture of reality and have had a chance to reflect on what is going well and what could be improved, we are ready to set a powerful, student-focused goal.

Goals are essential for success. When teachers partner with coaches to set and meet measurable student goals, coaching improves instruction. When there is no goal, we run the risk that coaching will not have a lasting impact.

After studying the literature on goals, we discovered that the most powerful framework for setting a goal is the PEERS model, which we developed further via many iterations with coaches in Beaverton, Oregon, and Othello, Washington.

“Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication.”

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STEVE JOBS

Setting a PEERS Goal

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A PEERS goal is a goal that is powerful, easy (to implement), emotionally compelling, reachable, and student-focused.

POWERFUL

- » Is the goal worth the time you will invest trying to reach it?
- » Will the goal make a significant difference in students’ lives and learning?

EASY

- » Is the goal described in simple terms?
- » Does the goal describe a clear destination and the shortest path to that destination?
- » Does the collaborating teacher believe he or she (and the students) can reach the goal?

EMOTIONALLY COMPELLING

- » Change involves how people feel and think, so to be compelling, a goal needs to speak to a person’s emotions as well as his or her reason.
- » When people don’t change, it often is because they don’t feel emotionally compelled to solve the problem.
- » The coach helps teachers identify what part of the class worries them the most, or what they dislike the most about teaching, and uses that as a signifier of what could become an emotionally compelling goal.

REACHABLE

- » Is the goal reachable? A goal provides hope if it can be reached.
- » Is the goal clearly stated? Clarity dissolves resistance, according to Heath and Heath (*Switch*, 2010).
- » Does the goal provide a vivid picture of what is possible? It’s important to have a clear vision of what the class looks like as a result of achieving the goal.
- » Does the goal spell out exactly what you want to achieve? This makes it less likely that your collaborating teacher will settle for less than is possible, and it also helps you chart your course of action.
- » Are there clear strategies that could be used to reach the goal? Hope comes in knowing the goal can be reached and having a path to get there.

- » Does the goal have a clear finish line? Can you precisely describe what will be different as a result of hitting the goal? Imprecise goals create frustration; clearly described goals build hope.
- » What is the measurable finish line, and will it be clear how to measure progress toward the goal?

STUDENT-FOCUSED

- » Does the goal provide clear feedback on whether or not the changes are making a difference for students? A student-focused goal provides clear feedback on whether or not the changes implemented by the teacher are making a difference where it counts: in the lives and learning of the students (embedded responsible accountability).
- » What will be different for the student if the goal is met?



CHECKLIST:

PEERS Goals



A PEERS GOAL IS:

- Powerful: Makes a big difference children's lives.
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- Easy: Simple, clear, and easy to understand.
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- Emotionally compelling: Matters a lot to the teacher.
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- Reachable: Identifies a measureable outcome and strategy.
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- Student-focused: Addresses a student achievement, behavior, or attitude outcome.
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The Art of Questioning

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Reaching a Goal by Practicing the Art of Questioning via the Following Seven Practices:

SEVEN PRACTICES OF GOOD QUESTIONING

1. Create a welcoming environment
2. Build trust
3. Listen
4. Gain clarity
5. Ask for more
6. Learn rather than judge
7. Keep ourselves out of the answers

The Art of Questioning #1:

Create a Welcoming Environment

- » What soothes—or stresses—your collaborating teacher?
- » In what ways can you create an atmosphere that puts your collaborating teacher at ease? Make sure your coaching conversations take place in a comfortable, private space where it is unlikely you'll be interrupted.
- » What are your collaborating teacher's likes and dislikes?

The Art of Questioning #2:

Build Trust

- » It is difficult to respond authentically, if at all, to someone we do not trust.
- » As a coach, it is critical to embody the Five Components of Trust:
 1. Are you trustworthy, truthful, and fair? Do you need to change something to be perceived as more trustworthy?

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2. Are you reliable? Are there responsibilities you can decline so you will have more time to be reliable? What rituals can you add to your day to help you be reliable?

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3. Are you competent? Are you continually developing your professional skills and adding to your knowledge so you can better help people reach their goals? Are you practicing your skills; for example, by working through the Making It Real exercises at the end of each chapter in *The Impact Cycle*? Are you deeply learning the things that will make you an excellent coach?

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4. Do you have a personality that exudes warmth? That is, are you kind? Are you slow to speak and quick to listen and gain understanding? Do you share authentic, positive information? Are you a good listener? Are you seeking to build emotional connections with the teachers you are collaborating with and hope to collaborate with in the future?

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5. Do you convey an attitude of stewardship or benevolence (charity)? Do you have others' best interests at heart? How can you change so that you are less concerned with yourself and more thoughtful toward others?

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The Art of Questioning #3:

Listen Well

“If coaches don’t listen carefully, they will struggle to coach effectively.”

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The Impact Cycle, 2017

- Do you really want to hear what the other person has to say?
- Are you able to be completely present to others, and, if not, are you working to become more present?
- Is it possible to be a thinking partner with your collaborating teachers if you are not genuinely interested in what they have to say and are not listening carefully to understand where they are coming from?
- Do you believe you can learn from your collaborating teacher?

THE FOUR ELEMENTS OF BEING A GOOD LISTENER

1. Commit to listen. What is your collaborating teacher saying? Award-winning instructional coach Delia Racines has learned to “listen for the request in the complaint.”
2. Make sure your collaborating teacher is at the center of the conversation. Ask: Am I allowing my partner to guide the conversation?
3. Pause to affirm before responding. Ask: Have I heard this correctly?
4. Don’t interrupt too often. There are appropriate times to interrupt and help refocus the conversation.

THE THREE LEVELS OF LISTENING

1. Listen to what is said. Do you understand what your collaborating teacher is saying?
2. Listen for the inner voice—the deeper, real meaning in what people say that is hidden by using guarded language.
3. Be aware of the interview process. Keep in mind how much time is left for a particular coaching conversation. Are you staying focused on the targeted outcome for the conversation? Is the conversation moving too fast or is it too slowly?

The Art of Questioning #4:**Gaining Clarity**

1. Ask one question at a time, and allow time and space for the collaborating teacher to respond. “Let silence do the heavy lifting” (Scott, 2002).
2. Ask for clarity on vague words or concepts or if you need to back track or in any way gain a better understanding of what your collaborating teacher is saying.

OTHER WAYS TO GAIN CLARITY

Ask yourself:

- » Are you focused on the conversation, or are you drifting in and out?
- » Do you have a clear understanding of what your partner is thinking and feeling?
- » Are you giving adequate time for your partner to respond?
- » Do you ask one question at a time and allow time for your conversation partner to form a response before you ask another question?
- » Do you and your collaborating teacher have a clear understanding about what you both are speaking?

The Art of Questioning #5:**Ask for More**

- » Instead of asking “probing” questions (these are often perceived as uncomfortable), ask the AWE question: And What Else? (Michael Bungay Stanier, *The Coaching Habit*, 2016)

The Art of Questioning #6:**Learn Rather Than Judge**

- » Do you believe that your collaborating teachers are doing the best they can, given everything else they are dealing with right now?
- » If you don’t believe they’re doing the best they can, how will that affect your relationship with them?
- » Is there a way you can find the ability to work from the assumption that your collaborating teachers are doing their best so that your relating to them and your coaching will be more effective?

- » Will your collaborating teachers recognize that you are on their side if you don't believe the best about them?
- » Do you have a judging mindset or a learning mindset? If you have a judging mindset, should you work to change that to a learning mindset?

JUDGING MINDSET

- » Judges others' thoughts, feelings, or situations
- » Considers self an expert, regardless of experience
- » Focuses on own role (which may lead to using a self-protective approach) and refuses to take the role of an outside observer, a researcher, or a reporter (unable to detach)
- » Looks at the situation from one perspective: his or her own
- » Fails to look for and find win-win solutions
- » Is intolerant of self and others
- » Fails to ask clarifying questions and just assumes he or she knows what the other person means
- » Fights change aggressively most or all of the time

LEARNING MINDSET

- » Responds without judging others' thoughts, feelings, or situations
- » Considers self a beginner, regardless of experience
- » Avoids focusing on self (which may lead to using a self-protective approach) and takes the role of an outside observer, researcher, or reporter (is able to healthfully detach)
- » Looks at the situation from multiple perspectives, especially the respondent's
- » Looks for win-win solutions
- » Is tolerant of self and others
- » Accepts change as a constant and embraces it

The Art of Questioning #7:

Keeping Ourselves out of the Answers

- » Are you refraining from trying to shape your collaborating teacher's answers and decisions (manipulation)?
- » Are you refraining from asking leading questions?
- » Are you refraining from asking questions that are actually advice disguised as a question?

It is important to balance thinking about how you are practicing the art of questioning and keeping the collaborating teacher's words at the front of your mind. To become better at this, practice until you have made the art of questioning a habit from which you operate by default. The easiest and best way to do this is to video record your coaching conversations to see how you are adopting these habits and identifying which ones you still need to work on.

Use the following form to help guide your practice. You can use it by video recording conversations and reviewing the conversation with the checklist in hand.

Consider practicing one habit daily, or weekly, until you feel it is a natural part of the way you communicate. In addition, you might wish to review the Beliefs section in *Better Conversations*, as communicating from those beliefs naturally results in you becoming skilled at the art of questioning.

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CHECKLIST:

Listening and Questioning Effectively



TO LISTEN AND QUESTION EFFECTIVELY, I:

- Make sure my conversation partner does most of the talking
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- Pause and affirm before I start talking
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- Don't interrupt (except when it is very helpful)
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- Ask one question at a time
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- Ask for clarification when I'm not certain what is being said
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- Ask, "And what else?"
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- Assume people are doing their best
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- Avoid leading questions
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- Avoid giving advice disguised as a question
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The Identify Questions

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The Identify Questions are a list of questions that coaches and our research team have developed, tested, and refined over time. They have proven to be powerful for structuring conversations that lead to the identification of a goal. When sitting down with a collaborating teacher (after reviewing a video) to set a PEERS goal, the Identify Questions are at the heart of the conversation.

“... [P]sychology is not just the study of pathology, weakness and damage; it is [also] about the study of strength and virtue.”

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SELIGMAN & CSIKSZENTMIHALYI

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1. On a scale of 1-10, with 10 being the best lesson you’ve ever taught and 1 being the worst, how would you rank that lesson?

Using a scaling question rather than an opinion question makes for a more constructive conversation by ...

- » focusing on how things ought to be
 - » encouraging change
 - » measuring change
 - » confirming progress
 - » providing a means of deciding priorities and next steps
 - » showing teachers they are in charge of the coaching process
2. What pleased you about the lesson?
 - » This question helps balance the conversation to include both what did and what didn’t go well.
 - » A negative view of reality is as ineffective as denial.
 - » What went well can be a point of departure for getting better.
 - » It is good to build on strengths—both teachers’ and students’!
 3. What would have to change to move the lesson closer to a 10?
 - » This question grounds the discussion in reality while keeping the focus on a better possible future.
 - » Keep the focus on what can be done, not on what isn’t working.
 - » Practice the power of visualization by describing exactly what it would look like if the students were acting in a way that promoted their learning.

“Suppose that tonight you go to bed—and you go to sleep as usual—and during the night a miracle happens—and the problem vanishes—and the issues that concern you are resolved—but you’re asleep, so you don’t know that the miracle has happened—so when you wake up tomorrow what will be the first things that tell you that the miracle has happened? How will you know that the transformation has occurred?”

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JACKSON AND MCKERGOW

The Solutions Focus: Making Coaching and Change Simple, 2013

- » Describe the change you want to see in yourself and your students.
- » Ask the “miracle question” to help clarify the solution:

4. What would your students be doing differently if your class were a 10?

- » What do the students need?
- » What would improve the students’ wellbeing?
- » Asking this question helps to avoid what Michael Bungay Stanier calls “the advice monster,” (The Coaching Habit, 2016) and will help you to stay curious.
- » Consider: Can you be comfortable as an instructional coach with the general ambiguity of asking meaningful questions as opposed to giving advice?
- » The problems with advising instead of asking are (a) we alone are doing the thinking, and (b) we decrease our collaborating teachers’ ownership of the solution and their commitment to change.

5. Tell me more about what that change would look like.

- » This is a variation of the AWE question and provides more clarification on the change the teacher hopes to see in the classroom.
- » The question provides a look at the classroom from a broader perspective before pinning down a goal and strategies.

6. How would we measure that change?

- » If coaching is to succeed, there must be a finish line, a way to measure progress to know when we’ve reached the goal for which we are aiming. How do we identify the endpoint? Are we measuring a behavior? Achievement?
- » Has the teacher created a clear vision and description of what will be different when the goal is met?
- » Quantifying the goal helps the coach and collaborating teacher determine if the changes they are implementing are moving students forward.
- » Progress toward the goal should be measured at least once a week to inform adjustments needed in order to stay on track.
- » Can you describe clear goals that do not require (are measured by) a number?

“There is a difference between having expertise and showing up as the expert”

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LAURELIN ANDRADE

Instructional Coach

Salem-Keizer Public Schools

Salem, Oregon

7. Do you want that to be your goal?

- » After working through the previous questions, the teacher is now ready to choose a goal that will make a real difference for students because she will know more clearly what it is she truly wants for the students.
- » Ask again, what do you really, really want? Allow time for a thoughtful response.
- » As a coach, be reminded that the coaching process must be fully guided by the teacher’s concerns and desires.
- » This question communicates that coaching is an act of service. As an instructional coach, then, ask: Do I see my job as an act of service?

8. If you could hit that goal, would it really matter to you?

- » Unless the teacher cares deeply about the goal, she won’t reach it.
- » Think creatively and remain open to hearing what the teacher’s most pressing concerns are.
- » Does the goal hit the teacher in the gut? Does it feel right? If not, encourage the teacher to identify a more compelling goal.

9. What teaching strategy can you use to hit your goal?

- » As a coach, do you have a deep understanding of a small number of high-impact teaching practices?
- » Do you have an instructional playbook of those practices at the ready?
- » Do you feel prepared with solid strategies and practices to offer the collaborating teacher?
- » Are you willing to see the list of strategies and practices in the playbook as a sort of menu of options from which the teacher is free to choose? Remember: Coaching is not a top-down practice. So, before offering your own strategies, ask the teacher if she knows of a strategy she’d like to try first.
- » Keep the dialogue going and keep in mind the importance of balancing inquiry with advocacy.
- » Two heads are better than one!

10. What are the next steps?

- » What specific next actions do we need to take to move the cycle forward?
- » When and where will coaching occur?
- » What will happen during those sessions?
- » How will the teacher see and learn the strategy to be used?
- » When will the strategy be implemented?
- » When will data be gathered?

TIME AND GOAL-SETTING

- » On average, it takes a coach and teacher five to six hours to work through a cycle. However, it is counterproductive to set a time-bound goal because each situation is unique.
- » Trying to squeeze deep coaching into six weeks or stretch it out into a longer amount of time is not as sensible as simply continuing the coaching cycle until the goal is met.

MAKING IT REAL

- » Use the Identify Questions in every Impact Cycle.
- » Practice the coaching process with other instructional coaches.
- » Video record your coaching sessions with teachers and use the Listening and Questioning checklists to improve your coaching practice.
- » Self-coach once a week until the habit of Impact Coaching feels like second nature. Then, coach yourself once a month to maintain your skills and add new ones.

GOING DEEPER

With your coaching learning community, pick a book or books from the Going Deeper section in *The Impact Cycle* to study this month/quarter.

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FORM:

Coaching Planning



| GOAL | PROGRESS | NEXT ACTIONS | WHEN | COMMITMENT LEVEL (1-5) |
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| ○ | ○ | | | |
| ○ | ○ | | | |
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