

Manjeet - Project worker in Midlands economic development agency

MH had moved from being established in her field to working in a completely different sector. She took up the opportunity offered her by her manager to have coaching with Leap Ahead because she was having to adjust to a completely new work culture, working well over her contractual hours and was having difficulty organizing her time so she could spend enough time with her family and have time to plan and reflect.

“During coaching I learnt how to work smarter, not just get overtired from work; I’m now more in control. I learned to take a more structured approach to getting a job done, by thinking about what I wanted to happen, and then working backwards and identifying the steps to make it happen. At one point, I was living from one session to the next, ticking boxes. But now, as I have learned to change my behaviour, I feel sharper. I speak with much greater clarity and am more considered in what I say to my colleagues.”

“When I looked at the goals I wanted to achieve by the end of April (ie 3 months later) I realised how much I’d moved on. I understood that I had been very process-oriented. Now I am really interested in the end point and what impact I want to have. The planning around long, medium and short terms goals is a recognisable system for me now. I have tools at my finger tips to structure thought and action, look at where I want to be and make it happen. I think that what I’ve learnt is more embedded because I’ve learnt it over a 3 month period.

“The most important thing my coach contributed was to act as a kind of confidant, a safe space for me to say things without being censored. Just by getting something out I can then realise what I ‘m thinking and do something about it.”

MH has addressed the issues she came with and is now operating at a new level. “I am ready to tackle more difficult issues at work now. I’m much better at my work-life balance. I no longer work the overtime I did do; I spend the time I want with my family. It’s been great to see that success.”

Manjeet met with her coach once and the rest of the coaching was over the phone.

Julian - Managing Director of a Recruitment company

Julian has a team of 30 people in 3 locations. He likes his work to be fun. The problem is that some members of his team think that having fun means skiving off or coasting. He ends up doing more of their tasks than is appropriate.

After some initial coaching it emerged that Julian lived out of his belief "I'm on my own". How many managers have that belief? He had built his life round this thinking pattern and clearly had set up a successful company. It was OK when this belief had positive results, not so good when the outcome was negative. It was hard for Julian to imagine members of his team rushing to do a good job for him. He struggled to develop trust that they would. Through coaching Julian began to realize that the patchy performance of his staff might be, to some extent, down to the work culture he had unwittingly fostered.

Through coaching he learned how to commit to a new attitude to his team. After four coaching sessions and several weeks of choosing to act out of a more constructive approach four staff, who had not been performing well at work, were doing a good job for Julian.

As a result of untangling some thoughts and feelings and getting some good results he reported "Every day I am thinking of what I am doing. I am taking myself more seriously and my staff are more focused. I am gaining more trust in them". This work cleared the way for him to observe other issues he hadn't registered before. He identified which of his staff were not taking responsibility for their own behaviour and delivery at work. Julian admitted he had got used to passing over things when they didn't deliver the results and when they behaved badly. Although he had the skills to challenge poor performance, he had shied away from it in the past. Turning the problem over in coaching demonstrated to him that he wanted to address his staff performance issues. Doing some visualisations reinforced his commitment to act. Soon he was reporting "I've had a major turnaround with staff - a member of staff has approached me with a proposal to make my work easier! I am able to do my job as MD now rather than managing 30 people. I don't feel I'm letting anyone down now for being out of the office"

Three months after starting coaching Julian declared "I'm really getting value from the coaching. Work is going swimmingly. It has left me the chance to concentrate wholeheartedly on creating my second home in France. I feel so chilled out"

Julian met with his coach twice and the rest of the coaching was over the phone.

Ben - wanting to make clear decisions about her work and family life

Ben was dealing with the aftermath to the end of a difficult relationship and experiencing indecision about her work. One of the reasons she was struggling was not having very good childcare for her 10 year-old daughter. “I do not see a way forward”, Ben said. “I want to gain greater clarity about the real issues I may need to address and I want to be supported in this journey”.

Ben was encouraged to confront her barriers and in the space of one session she went from seeing no solution to her babysitting problem to identifying a solution which was “totally possible”. She soon was in action exploring swapping babysitting with a friend, arranging to join a rock-climbing group, giving up smoking and starting to look for a new job. “You have helped me cut through some of the crap and get beyond the detail that sometimes bogs me down”, Ben said to her coach,

Through coaching she learned to stop being embarrassed about being successful and to remind herself of her self-worth. By session 6 she said “The things that worried me in the past no longer worry me. I am more comfortable about myself. I can talk to new people more easily about who I am and what I do.”

Then she had a very bad week and her self-esteem took a bit of a nose-dive. “I wanted to avoid making the changes”, Ben said. “Mind you I learnt this was one of my habits that had previously prevented me from achieving my goals and so whilst at my lowest point I was still learning lots about myself.” A week later she reported “The question you asked me at the end of the session really made a difference to me. As soon as I came off the phone from talking to you I just knew what I had to do”.

Now at the end of 3 months of coaching Ben has secured a challenging new job, got her babysitting organised and is enjoying a new social life which includes rock climbing. She said “My relationship with my daughter has blossomed. I even use coaching techniques with her. I understand myself so much more now that I am able to make decisions about my life based on a sound knowledge of who I am and where and what I need in my life.”

Ben met her coach once and the rest of the coaching was by phone.

Hilary - Manager in FE College

HC had been promoted internally to her first management position.

Problems were bubbling. She felt daunted at supervising staff who had been previously her colleagues. She was spending a disproportionate amount of time on some activities at the expense of others; she was putting off tasks which she eventually took home, and this triggered her anxiety. Her line manager noticed her mounting workload and unmet deadlines. HC was offered coaching.

Hilary observed to her coach that she had a problem spending too long on activities, but didn't know how to stop this behaviour. Unwittingly she was repeating the pattern in her coaching session, which gave the coach the opportunity to draw attention to it and challenge it.

Coaching gave her some tools to shake off that anxiety, work more successfully with colleagues and write goal plans which enabled her to plan her work more effectively. In coaching Hilary started to challenge her inner voice *"I can't do it"*. She began to be assertive with her staff and delegated some tasks successfully. She created strategies for organising and prioritising all her work and began to say *"no"* to some activities. By session 4 she had achieved some control back at work and her confidence was growing.

A low point came during a cruise holiday; her anxiety about work returned again and woke her on 3 nights. However, instead of skirting around the issue and dwelling on the problems she identified something she could do each time to move a piece of work forward. By phoning colleagues, she resolved the problems and returned home a few days early so she could relax for the remainder of her holiday.

Learning how to use creative visualisations in coaching sessions helped her shake of the worry more successfully. By session 7 she noted *"Suddenly the anxiety I had been experiencing evaporated. I allowed myself to be realistic about what I could achieve and I became more keenly aware of my responsibility to move things on. Now I look at solutions rather than getting frozen and I am able to keep things in perspective."*

Towards the end of her 3-month coaching contract an opportunity arose at work for her to go to Tenerife. Before Hilary went away she called her team together and made sure her staff had got their work planned out while she was away. *"Before I kept stuff to myself. I have sought help from my team members and they have really demonstrated their abilities. Their great efforts contributed to me being able to go away knowing that things were being left under control. I was able to be relaxed during this work trip, which was in marked contrast to what happened when I was on the cruise. Now I feel supported by my staff; three of them have actually told me how much they appreciate my supervision."*

Hilary met with her coach twice and the rest of the coaching was over the phone.