GROW Mentoring Model

GROW is an acronym for Goals, current Reality, Options (or Obstacles) and Will (or Way forward).

A good way of thinking about the GROW Model is to think about how you'd plan a journey. First, you decide where you are going (the goal), and establish where you currently are (your current reality). You then explore various routes (the options) to your destination. In the final step, establishing the will, you ensure that you're committed to making the journey, and are prepared for the obstacles that you could meet on the way.

The model was originally developed in the 1980s by business coaches Graham Alexander, Alan Fine, and Sir John Whitmore.

G What are your GOALS?

- Mentee identifies the behaviour that they want to change, and then structure this change as a goal
- Make sure that this is a SMART goal
- How will you know that the goal has been achieved?
- Does this goal fit with overall career objectives?
- Does it fit with the team's/company's objectives?

R What is your current REALITY?

- Mentee describes their current reality. This is an important step. Too often, people try to solve a problem or reach a goal without fully considering their starting point, and often they're missing some information that they need in order to reach their goal effectively.
- Useful questions in this step include the following:
  - What is happening now (what, who, when, and how often)? What is the effect or result of this?
  - Have you already taken any steps towards your goal?
  - Does this goal conflict with any other goals or objectives?

O Explore the OPTIONS (or OBSTACLES)?

- Explore all of the possible options for reaching objective.
- Mentor can help mentee brainstorm as many good options as possible.
- Discuss these and help decide on the best ones.
- Typical questions to explore the options
    - What else could you do?
    - What if this or that constraint was removed? Would that change?
    - What are the advantages and disadvantages of each option?
    - What factors or considerations will you use to weigh the options?
    - What do you need to stop doing to achieve this goal?
    - What obstacles stand in your way?

W Establish the WILL?

- Mentee commits to specific actions to move forward towards his goal.
- In doing this, you, the mentor will help them establish their will and boost their motivation.
- Useful questions to establish the Will
    - What will you do now, and when? What else will you do?
    - What could stop you moving forward? How will you overcome this?
    - How can you keep yourself motivated?
    - When do you need to review progress? Daily, weekly, monthly?
    - Finally, decide on a date when you'll both review their progress. This will provide some accountability and allow them to change their approach if the original plan isn't working.

A great way to practice using the model is to address your own challenges and issues. By practicing on your own and getting yourself "unstuck," you'll learn how to ask the most helpful questions. Then, write down some stock questions as prompts for future mentoring sessions.

The two most important skills for a mentor are the ability to ask good questions and the ability to listen effectively.

Don't ask closed questions that call for a yes or no answer (such as "Did that cause a problem?"). Instead, ask open ones, like "What effect did that have?" Be prepared with a list of questions for each stage of the GROW process.

Use active listening skills and let your mentee do most of the talking. Remember that silence provides valuable thinking time: you don't always have to fill silence with the next question.