



MAKING IT REAL

For some reason, coaches sometimes hesitate to use the Identify Questions. When they eventually do, however, they tell me again and again that they can't believe how easily they guide themselves and their collaborating teachers to a PEERS goal. The truth is that to make this part of the Identify stage real, coaches just have to do it! As with swimming, this can't be learned only from a book; you've got to dive into the pool and swim.

One simple way to practice this process is for coaches to partner with other coaches. The coaches can video record a lesson and share the video with each other. Then, the partners can get together and use the questions with each other. This can involve two coaches or a group. Once coaches have coached another person, and have experienced being coached, it is sometimes easier for them to use the Identify Questions with teachers.

One of the most powerful ways coaches can improve their coaching skills is to video record their coaching conversations and use the Listening and Question checklist included here to review their video and improve their practice. To get really good at coaching, coaches should record and review at least one coaching conversation a week until they are totally satisfied with what they see themselves doing on video. Even then, coaches should continue to record and review video at least once each month—listening and questioning are that important for effective coaching.

TO SUM UP

- When teachers set PEERS goals, coaching gains a momentum of its own.
- PEERS goals are powerful, easy, emotionally compelling, reachable, and student-focused:
 - Powerful: Will this goal, when reached, make a big difference in students' lives?
 - Easy: Is this goal simple, clear, and easy to understand?
 - Emotionally Compelling: Does this goal really matter to the teacher?
 - Reachable: Has the teacher identified a measurable outcome and a strategy to meet that outcome?
 - Student-Focused: Is this goal about student achievement, behavior, or attitude rather than the teacher or a strategy?

- Since coaches are thinking partners with teachers, they must be skilled listeners and questioners. To listen effectively, coaches (and anyone else who wants to listen effectively) need to (a) commit to listening, (b) make sure their conversation partners are the speakers, (c) pause and affirm before responding, and (d) avoid interrupting.
- To question effectively, coaches should ask one question at a time, avoid leading questions, avoid giving advice disguised as a question, and use the other questioning strategies described in this chapter.
- Coaches can use the Identify Questions to help teachers develop PEERS goals:
 1. On a scale of 1–10, with 1 being the worst lesson you’ve taught and 10 being the best, how would you rank that lesson?
 2. What pleased you about the lesson?
 3. What would have to change to move the lesson closer to a 10?
 4. What would your students be doing differently if your class was a 10?
 5. Tell me more about what that would look like.
 6. How could we measure that change?
 7. Do you want that to be your goal?
 8. If you could hit that goal, would it really matter to you?
 9. What teaching strategy can you use to hit your goal?
 10. What are your next steps?

GOING DEEPER

My thinking about goal setting has been shaped by a number of writers and researchers. Two very helpful books are Chip and Dan Heath’s *Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard* (2010) and Heidi Grant Halvorson’s little book *9 Things Successful People Do Differently* (2012). If you buy Grant Halvorson’s book, I suggest you get the Kindle or iBook version, since she marshals numerous studies to support each statement she makes, and there are links back to the many studies in the eBooks.

Two other books that informed my thinking in this chapter are *Steve Jobs* by Walter Isaacson (2015) and *Making Hope Happen: Create the Future You Want for Yourself and Others* (2014) by Shane Lopez. Isaacson’s biography of Jobs might seem like a strange book for coaches, and Jobs’s personality as it comes through in this book doesn’t reflect the partnership perspective at all, yet I found that this book deepened my understanding of creativity

and design thinking. Jobs’s views on simplicity have deeply influenced the way we see innovation at the Instructional Coaching Group.

Lopez’s book on hope is wonderful and describes in many ways the work of coaches “making hope happen.” It really helped me understand the complex activity of creating goals that foster hope.

I also read many books that helped me put together my ideas about questioning. Marilee Adams’s *Change Your Questions Change Your Life*, 3rd Edition (2016) told in the form of a fable, is an easy-to-understand yet wise book about the power of mindset and how the questions we ask can improve our coaching and even shape the way we think. I found Warren Berger’s *A More Beautiful Question* (2016) to be an inspiring description of the centrality of questioning within invention and problem solving. Michael Bungay Stanier’s *The Coaching Habit* is a deceptively simple but powerful book that presents seven effective coaching questions and habits that I think would help just about any coach get better. Finally, Jackie Acree Walsh and Beth Dankert Sattes *Leading Through Quality Questioning* (2010) does a great job of summarizing the literature on questioning that any change leader might need to employ.



Video 3.5

Crysta’s Identify Stage—Complete



Video 3.6

Cat’s Identify Stage—Complete

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impactcycle](https://resources.corwin.com/impactcycle)