

Coaching Framework Field Guide

A quick-reference guide to 10 evidence-based coaching frameworks

How to use this guide: Match the framework to your client's situation. Use the signature questions as starting points — adapt the language to fit your client's vocabulary. The framework serves the client, not the other way around.

1. Co-Active Coaching

Kimsey-House, Sandahl & Whitworth

Best for: Clients stuck between who they are and who they want to become. Ideal for values clarification and identity work.

Signature Questions:

- Q1. What would the fullest version of you do right now?
- Q2. If you set aside what others expect, what do you actually want?
- Q3. What value are you honoring — or violating — in this situation?

2. The Coaching Habit

Michael Bungay Stanier

Best for: Leaders and managers who over-advise. Perfect for building coaching as a daily habit.

Signature Questions:

- Q1. What's on your mind?
- Q2. And what else?
- Q3. What's the real challenge here for you?

3. Laser-Focused Coaching

Marion Franklin

Best for: Clients who over-explain or stay in the story. Perfect for cutting through to the core issue.

Signature Questions:

- Q1. What's most important to you about this?
- Q2. Say more about that — what do you mean by [key word]?
- Q3. If you already knew the answer, what would it be?

4. Reflective Inquiry

Marcia Reynolds

Best for: Clients whose thinking is keeping them stuck. Excellent for disrupting assumptions and shifting perspective.

Signature Questions:

- Q1. What are you assuming that may not be true?

- Q2. What is this situation bringing up for you emotionally?
- Q3. How would someone who admired you see this situation?

5. GROW Model

Sir John Whitmore

Best for: Goal-focused sessions where the client has a specific outcome. Excellent structure for new coaches.

Signature Questions:

- Q1. What do you want to achieve, and by when? (Goal)
- Q2. What's actually happening right now? (Reality)
- Q3. What will you do, and when will you do it? (Will)

6. Emotionally Focused Coaching

Sue Johnson / EFT

Best for: Clients working through relational patterns, conflict, or disconnection. Powerful for life and relationship coaching.

Signature Questions:

- Q1. What emotion is underneath that reaction?
- Q2. What do you most need from that person that you're not getting?
- Q3. What does this situation say about what matters most to you in relationships?

7. Immunity to Change

Kegan & Lahey

Best for: Clients who know what they want to change but keep not doing it. Uncovers hidden competing commitments.

Signature Questions:

- Q1. What would you be giving up if you actually made this change?
- Q2. What are you afraid might happen if you fully committed?
- Q3. What belief would have to be false for you to move forward?

8. Positive Psychology / PERMA

Martin Seligman

Best for: Clients who want to build flourishing rather than just fix problems. Ideal for strengths-based work.

Signature Questions:

- Q1. When do you feel most fully alive and engaged?
- Q2. What strengths are you underusing right now?
- Q3. What would a flourishing version of your life look like in 12 months?

9. Parts Work / IFS

Best for: Clients experiencing inner conflict — "part of me wants X, but another part won't let me."

Signature Questions:

- Q1.** What part of you is driving this behavior, and what is it trying to protect?
- Q2.** If you could speak directly to that part of you, what would you say?
- Q3.** What does your wisest, most grounded self know about this situation?

10. Best Fit Framework

CoachToolkit.ai

Best for: When you're not sure which framework fits. AI analyzes the client situation and recommends the best approach.

Signature Questions:

- Q1.** Describe the client situation and let AI recommend the best framework.
- Q2.** Review the generated questions and adapt them to your client's language.
- Q3.** Trust your instincts — the AI gives you a starting point.

CoachToolkit.ai — AI-powered tools for professional coaches
Generate 12 framework-grounded questions in seconds at coachtoolkit.ai/tools
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