

## The ACHIEVE Model by Sabine Dembkowski & Fiona Eldridge

The ACHIEVE model was developed in 2003 by Sabine Dembkowski and Fiona Eldridge. It was developed using John Whitmore's GROW model as a starting point, but it incorporates additional opportunities for feedback within its seven stages.



### Step 1: Assess the current situation

As a first step, the coach establishes rapport with the learner and begins the dialogue, using open questions. Learners become aware of their current situation and quite often start to recognise behavioural patterns that are hindering their success.

### **Step 2: Creative brainstorming of alternatives to the current situation**

In step 2, the coach encourages the learner to consider what they might like to change about their current situation. According to Dembkowski & Eldridge, the 'secret' to getting the learner to think creatively about potential alternatives is for the coach to ask an unexpected question that takes the client out of their stuck state. Brainstorming should be as free as possible, with no limits on what is suggested.

### **Step 3: Hone goals**

Once the learner has identified some potential changes to their current situation, they need to refine these ideas into some goals. Dembkowski & Eldridge recommend using SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic and time-bound) criteria to help design these objectives and to ensure they are meaningful to the individual. The best coaches devote significant time to working with clients to develop and refine the goal(s) they really want to achieve.

### **Step 4: Initiate options**

In step 4, the learner and coach work together to explore the practical steps they can take to achieve their goals. Dembkowski & Eldridge warn that this fourth step should not be rushed - and that coaches should not be tempted to just 'tell' the learner what to do. They say "advice is not coaching ... great coaches take time, ask open questions and let the client generate new options for action and behaviour. It is only when the options come from the client that real commitment can be generated for action and change. Perhaps one of the greatest skills for a coach is to know when to keep silent and wait."

### **Step 5: Evaluate options**

In this step the coach works with the learner to develop a set of criteria to evaluate the different options they have come up with. For example, what investment - in terms of money, time and energy - will be needed to put a specific option into practice?

### **Step 6: Valid action programme design**

In step 6, it is time to put together the plan of action - as well as some criteria the learner can use to judge whether they have achieved their goal. Dembkowski & Eldridge liken this to building a bridge: "The best coaches work together with their clients to bridge the gap between where they are at present and where they want to be. This step requires rigour from the coach in order to gain the client's commitment to action. It's all very well planning, but nothing will happen unless the client actually takes the first step. As with any journey, it is also important to know when you've arrived. So, time is spent on working with the client to recognise when they have achieved their goal."

### **Step 7: Encourage momentum**

The coach's final duty is to provide motivation and keep the learner on track. According to Dembkowski & Eldridge, "a good coach is also a professional nagger". Coaches may need to send regular emails and make frequent phone calls to the learner to help them maintain their momentum towards achieving their objectives.

Once these objectives have been achieved, the cycle can begin again - with the coach helping the learner to assess their new situation.

## **References**

Dembkowski, S. & Eldridge, F. (2003). Beyond GROW: A New Coaching Model, The International Journal of Mentoring and Coaching, Volume 1, Issue 1, November 2003.

Eldridge, F. & Dembkowski, S. (2004) The ACHIEVE Coaching Model, Coach the Coach, Issue 3.