

## 4 Strategies to Become a Coachable Employee

Coachability is a highly desirable trait among employers. Many employers are looking for curious, ambitious employees to cultivate within their company culture. Being coachable has many benefits like increasing job satisfaction, becoming a better collaborator, and opening career-growth opportunities.

Though your manager has a responsibility to coach you professionally, your ability to grow depends on you. Being coachable requires that you take charge of your workplace actions, accept constructive criticism, and ask lots of questions. In this article, we go over what it means to be coachable, the defining characteristics of coachability, and strategies you can take to become more coachable.

### What is Employee Coachability?

Coachability refers to one's ability to learn and grow from the instruction of another, be it a teacher, mentor, or peer. Coachability works using a novice-expert model: the expert's job is to teach and guide, the novice's job is to listen and observe. The expert "coaches" the novice to work towards honing a particular skillset, and the novice applies the expert's coaching to reach their goals and gain satisfaction.

### What is a Coachable Employee?

A coachable employee is someone who incorporates feedback and instruction to be successful throughout their career. A coachable employee looks for opportunities to learn from their mentors, supervisors, and peers on a daily basis. Coachable employees are team players who understand that group success relies on individual cooperation. They know that in order to produce excellent work, they must accept criticism, uplift their teammates, and embrace differences.

### What are the Characteristics of a Coachable Employee?

A coachable employee has a confident, realistic view of their abilities. They have strong interpersonal skills; they communicate their ideas with respect and listen to their peers with reverence. To be a coachable employee means you are eager, and willing to give new things a try. Coachable employees are thrilled to learn new things and are not discouraged by errors they make along the way. Mistakes only make coachable employees more eager to improve.

### Coachable Employees are Open-Minded

Being willing to receive feedback and take criticism is the biggest component of coachability. Highly effective coachable employees do not view feedback as an insult to their character or

abilities. Instead, coachable employees give thanks for the feedback they receive without being sensitive or dramatic.

Coachable employees know a lot of their project and career success comes from working with others. So they listen; they are not quick to answer or interrupt during conversations. When presented with conflicting or uncomfortable viewpoints, coachable employees ask clarifying questions to gain a better understanding. They are ready to give new opinions a try, even if they're not 100% on-board.

## Coachable Employees are Brave

Because they readily accept feedback and criticism, coachable employees regularly face their shortcomings, errors, and mistakes. This is not an easy task to do and requires mettle in character. Coachable employees accept their shortcomings, admit they don't know everything, and acknowledge there is always more to learn.

Over time, coachable employees learn to be okay with being wrong. Coachable employees acknowledge when they are wrong and use it as an opportunity to grow. They know criticism of their performance is not a direct criticism of who they are as a person.

## Coachable Employees Have Goals

Coachable employees know what they want to achieve in their careers. They may not always know which path they want to take, but they always have concrete achievements they want to make. They are driven to take the necessary steps to achieve their goals.

## Coachable Employees are Determined

Once they define their goals, coachable employees are determined to see them come to fruition. Coachable employees are passionate about improving themselves, practicing their skills, and achieving their desired results.

## Coachable Employees are Risk-Takers

Coachable employees are competitive in nature. They are willing to take risks and fail. They are not discouraged by failures. Instead, failures compel coachable employees to learn, grow, and do better next time.

## What are the Benefits of Being Coachable?

Overall, being coachable can help an individual gain new skills faster, advance in their career quicker, and contribute to overall job satisfaction. People who are coachable have excellent interpersonal and problem-solving skills. They are humble, reflective, and accepting of their flaws, and use their shortcomings as opportunities to level up. These qualities make coachable employees great team players and a pleasure to work with.

## How Can You Tell If You are Not Coachable?

You may struggle with coachability if you are dissatisfied in your career, feel stagnant, or routinely get into disagreements. It may not be obvious to tell if you are not coachable, especially if you are sensitive to receiving feedback. If this is the case, take a look at this list of questions to ask yourself to find out if you struggle with coachability.

- Do you become defensive or feel attacked when someone gives you advice on how to do your job?
- Do you talk back when a suggestion is made? Perhaps saying things like, “Well, that is the way I do it.”
- Do you ignore advice from veteran peers?
- Do you use big words or complex jargon to sound smart?
- Do you apply your company’s philosophy or culture into your day-to-day work?
- Are you disinterested or bothered by collaborative work?
- Do you avoid changing or adapting project plans? Are you set in your ways?
- Do you think you’re an expert or superior to your peers? Perhaps because you have a diploma or certification?
- Are you set in your ways?

If you answered yes to one or more of these questions, chances are you have room to improve your coachability skills. Don’t worry, we’ve got a list of concrete strategies to improve your coachability skills.

## 4 Strategies to Become a Coachable Employee

To become a coachable employee and individual, you have to focus your efforts to change your personality. Improving coachability is not something you can do on your own; you will need the help of others to further your coachability. To improve coachability, seek out activities that foster a student-teacher relationship. Your job will be to take on a student mentality; make yourself humble and see that you have something to learn from a teacher.

We’ve created a list of exercises you can take today to help you become more coachable. We also included short examples of how to implement these strategies at your work.

## Exercise Open-Mindedness

The first step in becoming a coachable employee is to embrace open-mindedness. To improve this skill, engage in social activities that get you out of your comfort zone.

One of the easiest ways to exercise this skill is to have a conversation with someone who has views you don't agree with. Really try to listen and understand the other person's point of view. Don't try to respond as soon as possible. Listen, think, and absorb what the other person is saying. If you feel defensive or frustrated, ask questions to help you see eye to eye with them.

The conversation does not have to be about a controversial topic. It could be about a disagreement as trivial as how to load a dishwasher, the best way to get from point A to point B, or whether or not breakfast is an important meal.

**How to implement at work:** Talk to a peer you butt heads with. Ask them how they would solve a job-related workflow and listen to their ideas. Ask them about the reasoning behind their implementations.

## Exercise Bravery

Having courage to do something you're not good at or don't have confidence in takes grace and patience. For this exercise, do something you've always wanted to do but have been too afraid to do. Commit to doing this activity by making an appointment and telling someone you're going to do it to keep yourself accountable.

If you've always wanted to sing in front of a crowd, book a slot at your local cafe's open mic night. Have your best friend come with you for support. Have you always wanted to learn how to play poker? Have your buddy accompany you to your local bar's poker night and have fun learning how to do it.

The goal of this exercise is to have fun and finish with your pride still intact. It's natural to feel anxiety with these exercises. If at any moment you feel crushed or angry—take a break, take a breath, and try again.

**How to implement at work:** Embark on a project that you really want to be a part of but have little experience doing. Buddy up with a veteran co-worker for this exercise.

## Exercise Goal Setting, Risk-Taking, and Failing

Any activity that is measurable is a good one to exercise goal setting and risk-taking. Think of a hobby or activity you want to get better at. Make a list of concrete actions you want to achieve within this activity. For example, if your hobby is running, your goals could be running everyday after work, running consecutively for 30 minutes, and running 3 miles in 20 minutes.

If you can't think of something you want to improve in, try an activity where there are absolute answers with no room for gray area. Take a math or physics course—something where there is one right answer to each problem. Activities like these will help you gain more comfort with being wrong and being accepting of yourself when your efforts are incorrect.

You can also take on an activity you like to do but know you are bad at. If you have poor rhythm, take a dance class. Odds are you will be terrible at your first class, but by the end of the course, you will have improved with observable results.

**How to implement at work:** During your next meeting with your manager, discuss and write down goals you really want to see yourself accomplish in your role. Identify actionable tasks you can do immediately, and each day after, to help you reach those goals.

## Exercise Fostering Drive and Passion

Exercises for fostering drive go hand-in-hand with improving open-mindedness. Activities that involve creative endeavors are great for improving this aspect of coachability. To nurture passion in your work, take on an activity that can get an “answer” or “result” in more than one way. Some examples of activities include taking a creative writing class, learning to play an instrument, or painting.

**How to implement at work:** Have a brainstorm session with two or three co-workers on how to solve a problem at work. The problem could be related to a task, workflow, or simple everyday activity that happens at work.

## How to Implement Coachability Strategies at Work

Since it is their job to lead you, your manager will have the best insights about how you can implement the above exercises in your day-to-day tasks. During your next meeting with your manager, bring up your desire to improve your coachability. You can ask them for advice, ask if they'll gameplan with you, or ask for feedback. The goal here is to listen to their advice and ask questions instead of suggesting a solution to improve your coachability right away.

If you're interested in learning more about yourself and how you go about learning new things, consider learning about the different types of learning styles and identifying what kind you have. Identifying your learning style type can help you understand the most effective way to process new information, including how to become more coachable.

## No Conclusion with Coachability

If your efforts to improve your coachability are not going well, it may be best to seek professional help from a life coach. Learning to become more coachable is an invaluable journey, albeit an

arduous and emotional one. At the end of the day, your aptitude for coachability relies on you being a curious, humble person and lifelong learner.