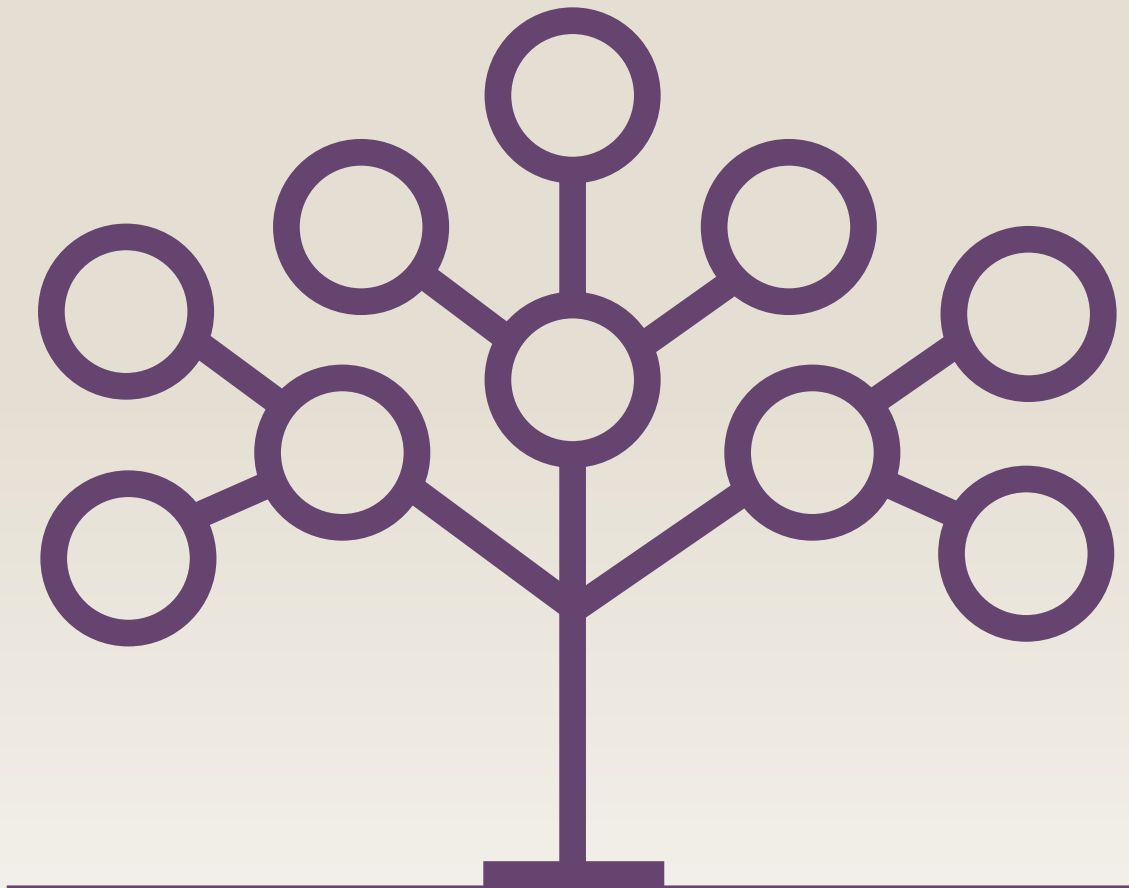




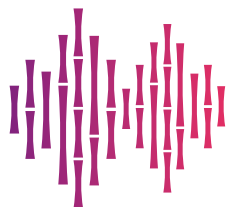
NAVIGATING COACHING AND MENTORING: A PRACTICAL DECISION TREE



A CLEAR FRAMEWORK FOR CHOOSING
THE DEVELOPMENT YOU NEED

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INTRODUCTION



As more women seek to progress, lead and shape the future of the personal finance profession, coaching and mentoring are increasingly recognised as valuable forms of support. Yet understanding what development you need, and how best to access it, is not always straightforward. This decision tree has been designed to help you reflect on your own aspirations, identify what matters most, and navigate your development options with greater clarity and confidence.

Rosanna Williams-Wood, The Secret Coach



We are proud to support the Women's Wealth Alliance's work in this area. We know that access to the right support at the right time can make a significant difference to career development, whether that's through coaching, mentoring or a mixture of both. By helping people better understand these options and how they can support different career goals, we hope this resource encourages more women to invest in their development and realise their full potential.

Eleanor Williams
Partnerships Director, Albemarle Street Partners



When we carried out our Women, Wealth and the Workplace research, one message came through clearly: women value coaching and mentoring, but often need help understanding which form of support is right for them. This decision tree is our response – a practical resource designed to help you explore your options and take the next step in your development.

Vanessa Barnes
Chair, Women's Wealth Alliance



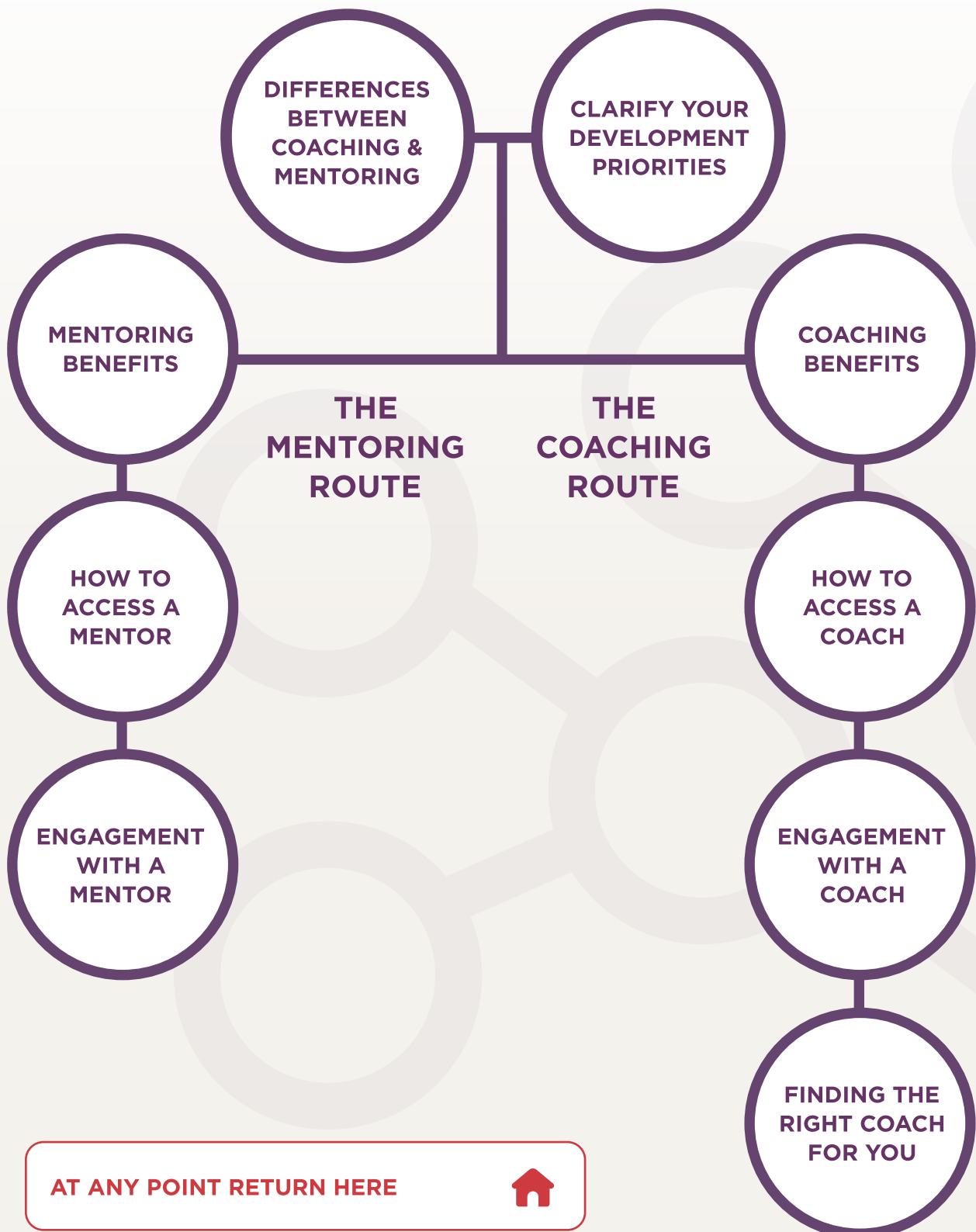
EXPLORING YOUR DEVELOPMENT PATHWAY

Everyone's development journey is unique. Explore the pathways, compare the options and discover the support that's right for you.

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE;

You can follow a pathway from start to finish, you can compare coaching and mentoring as you go, or you can dive into any topic that interests you.

Please interact with the buttons below.



DIFFERENCES BETWEEN COACHING & MENTORING

Understanding the distinction between coaching and mentoring is an important first step in identifying the support that's right for you.

While they serve different purposes, both can play a valuable role in your personal and professional development, either independently or in combination.

MENTORING

Definition: Mentoring is a supportive relationship where a more experienced person shares knowledge, guidance, and advice to help someone develop in their career or life.

KEY FEATURES:

- The Mentor draws on their own experience and expertise.
- It often involves role-modelling and opening doors to networks.
- It can be more directive than coaching. For example, the mentor may say "Here's what worked for me."

Think of mentoring as learning from someone who's walked the path before you.



COACHING

Definition: Coaching is a structured, focused process where a coach helps someone unlock their potential, build skills, and achieve specific outcomes.

KEY FEATURES:

- It's driven by your objectives (e.g., confidence, leadership, career progression).
- It uses questioning, reflection, and practical tools rather than giving direct answers.
- The coach doesn't need to have done the same job; they facilitate personal growth rather than provide instruction.

Think of coaching as a service that helps someone find their own solutions and move forward.



CLARIFY YOUR DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

There's no single 'right' reason to seek coaching or mentoring. The most valuable support is the support that aligns to your goals, aspirations and current challenges. Before you continue, take a moment to reflect on what matters most to you right now. Typical development agendas include....

CAREER & PROGRESSION

- "I would like to develop my career."
- "I would like to strengthen my promotability."
- "Looking ahead, I'm focused on advancing into..."

INFLUENCE & IMPACT

- "I would like to grow my influence."
- "I would like to increase my impact."
- "To keep building my contribution, I'd benefit from..."

CONFIDENCE & SELF-UNDERSTANDING

- "I would like to build my confidence to transition upwards."
- "I would like to deepen my understanding of self and others."

SKILLS & NETWORKS

- "I would like to develop my skills in a specific area."
- "I would like to expand my network."

Tip...can you summarise your needs and wants in a 'How do I?.....' sentence?

Now that you've considered what matters most to you, return to the Development Pathway and explore the coaching and mentoring options through the lens of your own goals, aspirations and challenges.

THE BENEFITS OF MENTORING

Having considered what matters most to you, explore how mentoring can support your development. Consider which benefits resonate most strongly with your current ambitions, challenges and future aspirations.

1. CAREER & PROGRESSION

- A mentor can share their own career journey, highlighting the choices and turning points that helped them advance.
- They can provide guidance on navigating organisational structures, identifying opportunities, and avoiding common pitfalls.
- Mentors often open doors by introducing mentees to networks, projects, or senior leaders that accelerate progression.
- They can help you make career decisions with your longer term aspirations in mind, ensuring today's choices support tomorrow's opportunities.

2. INFLUENCE & IMPACT

- A mentor can model how to build credibility and presence in meetings, presentations, or client interactions.
- They can advise on strategies for influencing stakeholders and shaping decisions within the organisation.
- By sharing stories of how they've created impact, mentors help mentees understand the levers of change in the sector.
- They can encourage mentees to align their work with organisational priorities, amplifying visibility and influence.



THE BENEFITS OF MENTORING

3. CONFIDENCE & SELF-UNDERSTANDING

- A mentor can act as a sounding board, offering reassurance and perspective when self-doubt arises.
- They can share how they overcame similar challenges, normalising the experience of uncertainty.
- Mentors often help mentees recognise their strengths and can articulate them more confidently.
- They can encourage mentees to take on stretch assignments, supporting them through the transition upward.



4. SKILLS & NETWORKS

- A mentor can recommend training, qualifications, or experiences that sharpen technical and professional skills.
- They can provide feedback on practical skills (e.g., client communication, leadership behaviours).
- Mentors often connect mentees with their own networks, expanding access to opportunities and role models.
- They can guide mentees on how to build and sustain professional relationships that support long-term success.

Take a moment to reflect on what you've learned about mentoring.

Does this type of support align with your current development priorities, or would it be helpful to explore the benefits of coaching before deciding what might serve you best?

You can continue along the mentoring pathway to learn more about accessing and engaging with a mentor or return to the Development Pathway to compare mentoring with coaching and explore the options available to you.

HOW TO ACCESS A MENTOR

A valuable mentoring relationship rarely happens by chance. Whether you're seeking guidance, perspective, encouragement or access to new opportunities, there are a variety of ways to connect with a mentor who can support your development journey.

WITHIN YOUR ORGANISATION

- Many firms run internal mentoring schemes, often pairing junior staff with senior colleagues.
- HR or talent development teams are usually the first point of contact.

THROUGH PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

- Membership may include access to mentoring networks.
Eg: Women in Banking & Finance, CFA Society UK.

VIA INFORMAL NETWORKS

- Asking a respected colleague, manager, or industry contact directly.
- Networking events, conferences, or LinkedIn groups can be good places to find willing mentors.

THROUGH SPECIALIST PROGRAMMES

- Some charities, universities, and industry alliances offer mentoring schemes targeted at women in finance or early-career professionals.

Take a moment to consider whether these mentoring options align with the goals and priorities you identified earlier.

You may wish to continue your mentoring journey by exploring how to engage effectively with a mentor or return to the Development Pathway to compare mentoring with coaching before deciding what support will serve you best.



ENGAGEMENT WITH A MENTOR: PRACTICAL POINTS

A successful mentoring relationship is built on more than experience alone. By approaching mentoring with clear goals, realistic expectations and a willingness to learn, you can create a relationship that supports both your personal and professional growth.

COST

- Most mentoring is voluntary and free, especially within organisations or professional associations.
- Some structured programmes may charge a small membership or administration fee, but mentoring itself is rarely a paid service.

TIME COMMITMENT

- Typically, 1-2 hours per month, often in sessions lasting 30-60 minutes.
- Relationships usually run for 6-12 months, though some evolve into longer informal connections.
- Flexibility is common — frequency and format (in-person, online, phone) are agreed between mentor and mentee.

EXPECTATIONS

- Mentees are expected to come prepared with questions or topics.
- Mentors provide guidance, share experience, and open networks, but the mentee drives the agenda.
- Confidentiality and respect for time are key — it's a professional relationship, not casual advice.



You may find that coaching, mentoring, or a combination of both provides the support you need.

You can return to the Development Pathway to explore coaching, revisit your priorities, or continue identifying the support that will help you move forward with confidence



THE BENEFITS OF COACHING

Coaching starts with where you are today and focuses on where you want to be. As you explore the benefits below, consider how coaching might help you build the awareness, confidence and capability needed to move towards your personal and professional goals.

1. CAREER & PROGRESSION

- A coach helps you clarify your career objectives and create a structured plan to achieve them.
- They use questioning techniques to uncover hidden assumptions or barriers that may be holding you back.
- Coaches support you in identifying transferable skills and positioning yourself for new opportunities.
- They hold you accountable for taking action, ensuring momentum towards progression.



2. INFLUENCE & IMPACT

- A coach works with you to develop presence, communication style, and leadership behaviours that enhance influence.
- They help you explore how your values and strengths can be leveraged to create impact in your organisation.
- Coaches use tools like stakeholder mapping or role-play to build confidence in influencing conversations.
- They encourage experimentation with new approaches, then reflect with you on what works best.



THE BENEFITS OF COACHING



3. CONFIDENCE & SELF-UNDERSTANDING

- A coach helps you explore limiting beliefs and reframe them into empowering perspectives.
- They guide you in recognising your values and strengths and aligning them with your professional identity.
- Coaches use reflective exercises to deepen self-awareness, helping you understand how you respond under pressure.
- They provide a safe, non-judgmental space to practise new behaviours and build confidence in transitions.

4. SKILLS & NETWORKS

- A coach supports you in identifying the skills most critical for your next step and designing a plan to build them.
- They help you practise and refine specific competencies (e.g., negotiation, leadership presence, time and priority management).
- Coaches encourage you to explore how to expand your network strategically, rather than just broadly.
- They help you set measurable goals for skill development and track progress over time.

Take a moment to reflect on what you've learned about coaching. Does this type of support align with your current development priorities, or would it be helpful to explore mentoring before deciding what might serve you best?

You can continue along the coaching pathway to learn more about accessing and engaging with a coach or return to the Development Pathway to compare coaching with mentoring and explore the options available to you.

HOW TO ACCESS A COACH

Finding the right coach is just as important as deciding to work with one. While coaching is not a formally regulated profession in the UK, there are established routes and recognised professional standards that can help you identify a coach with the appropriate training, experience and ethical credentials to support your development.

SUGGESTED ROUTES TO IDENTIFY AND SOURCE YOUR COACHING SERVICE.

THROUGH PROFESSIONAL DIRECTORIES

- Accredited bodies such as the International Coaching Federation (ICF), European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC), and the Association for Coaching (AC) maintain searchable databases of professional coaches.

These directories allow you to filter by accreditation level, specialism, and location.

VIA YOUR ORGANISATION

- Your firm may provide access to coaching as part of leadership development or talent programmes.

HR or learning and development teams are usually the first point of contact.

INDEPENDENT RESEARCH

- An internet or LinkedIn search will reveal a wide range of coaches. To make the process more manageable, start by identifying your specific goals and development needs. It can also be helpful to explore coaches who contribute to podcasts, webinars, publications or industry events, particularly if their insights, values and approach resonate with you.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- From colleagues, LinkedIn, or professional networks can be a useful way to identify coaches.

MANY COACHES ALSO MAINTAIN WEBSITES WITH TESTIMONIALS AND DETAILS OF THEIR APPROACH.



Finding the right coach is an important first step, but a successful coaching relationship depends on more than credentials alone.

Continue to explore how to engage effectively with a coach or return to the Development Pathway to compare coaching and mentoring as you identify the support that will best enable your growth and development.



ENGAGEMENT WITH A COACH: PRACTICAL POINTS

A successful coaching relationship is built on clarity of purpose, mutual commitment and a focus on meaningful progress. Understanding the practical considerations of coaching can help you decide whether this form of support aligns with your current goals, aspirations and development priorities.

COST

- Professional coaching is usually a paid service.
- Accredited coaches typically charge £100–£300 per session.
- The cost can be met by either your employer or self-funded.
- Packages (e.g., 6–10 sessions) are a common part of employer-sponsored programmes.

TIME COMMITMENT

- Sessions usually last 60–90 minutes.
- Frequency is often every 2–4 weeks, depending on your goals.
- Typical coaching engagements run for 3–6 months, though longer partnerships are possible.

EXPECTATIONS

- You set the objectives and focus on the areas you want to work on.
- Coaches facilitate growth through questioning, reflection, and practical tools rather than giving direct answers.
- Confidentiality and professionalism are central to the practice and coaching is a structured, ethical process.
- Commitment to action between sessions is expected; progress depends on applying insights in practice.



Take a moment to reflect on whether the practical realities of coaching align with your current development goals, priorities and circumstances.

You may wish to return to the Development Pathway to further explore or compare coaching and mentoring. Alternatively, continue to the next section to explore how to find the right coach, including professional bodies, accreditation considerations and a Discovery Call Checklist to help you make an informed choice.

FINDING THE RIGHT COACH FOR YOU

Choosing a coach is a personal decision. While qualifications, accreditation and experience can provide confidence in a coach's professional standards, the quality of the relationship is equally important.

The most effective coaching partnerships combine professional credibility with an approach that feels aligned to your goals, aspirations and preferred way of working.

Whilst many excellent coaches hold professional accreditation, accreditation is not the only indicator of quality. It can, however, provide reassurance that a coach has undertaken recognised training, works within a code of ethics and is committed to continuing professional development.

WHAT TO CONSIDER

- Professional accreditation can provide additional confidence in a coach's training, ethics and commitment to professional standards.
- Personal connection matters. You are likely to achieve the greatest value when you feel comfortable being open, challenged and supported by your coach.
- Different coaches bring different approaches, specialisms and experiences. Take time to find a style that feels right for you and your objectives.
- Effective coaching should feel tailored to your goals and development needs rather than following a generic process.

PROFESSIONAL COACHING BODIES

The following professional bodies maintain standards for coaching practice and provide directories that can help you identify accredited coaches.



Take time to consider what matters most to you in a coaching relationship. The right coach is not simply someone with strong credentials, but someone whose approach, experience and style align with your development priorities.

A discovery call with a prospective coach will help confirm alignment before committing. There should be no charge for this.

Continue to the Discovery Call Checklist to help you prepare for conversations with potential coaches, or return to the Development Pathway to further compare coaching and mentoring as sources of development and support

FINDING THE RIGHT COACH FOR YOU

Choosing a coach is an important decision. A discovery call gives you the opportunity to explore whether a coach's approach, experience and style are right for you before making any commitment. Use this checklist to guide your conversations and help you consider what will matter most in your coaching relationship.

YOUR COACHING DISCOVERY CALL CHECKLIST

1. ESTABLISHING CREDIBILITY

- Accredited with ICF, EMCC, or AC? At what level?
- What training and supervision have they undertaken?
- What type of situations have they helped clients navigate?

2. UNDERSTANDING HOW THEY WORK

- What is their coaching style — directive, reflective, structured?
- How do they usually begin a coaching relationship?
- What tools or frameworks do they use (e.g., stakeholder mapping, values exploration)?
- How do they measure progress during the coaching journey?

3. ALIGNING WITH YOUR DEVELOPMENT NEEDS

- Take time to reflect:
 - Which of your development priorities (career, influence, confidence, skills) are most important right now?
 - Do the coach's competencies match your requirements?
- How have they helped clients with similar goals?
- What outcomes can I realistically expect in 3-6 months?
- Do they encourage you to set your own objectives, rather than imposing theirs?

4. SOME PRACTICALITIES

- What is their fee structure — per session or package?
 - Is the fee the same for 'self-funded' or employer-funded?
- If receiving employer funding, how do they typically work with a 3-way agreement (the coach / the employer / me as the coachee)?
- How long are sessions, and how often do they recommend meeting?
- Do they offer flexibility (online/in-person, evenings, etc.)?
- Are confidentiality boundaries clearly stated?
 - How do they manage confidentiality with an employer who may be fully or partly funding the contract?

The purpose of a discovery call is not to find the 'perfect' coach, but to identify a coach who feels aligned with your needs, aspirations and preferred way of working. Pay attention to both what is said and how the conversation feels.

Effective coaching requires professional credibility, but it also relies on trust, openness and the confidence to be appropriately challenged.





THANK YOU FOR TAKING THE TIME TO WORK THROUGH THIS COACHING AND MENTORING DECISION TREE.

The Women's Wealth Alliance commissioned the Women, Wealth and the Workplace research to better understand the experiences of women across personal finance. One of the strongest messages to emerge was the value of development support, with **51% of women identifying coaching or mentoring as one of the most beneficial ways to support their career progression.**

We created this resource to help turn that insight into action.

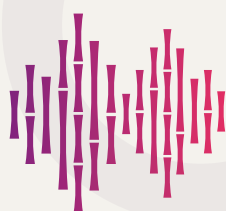
I hope the decision tree has helped you identify the type of support that could make the biggest difference to your next career step. Whether that's finding a mentor, working with a coach, or possibly both, investing in your development can open new possibilities and build confidence for the future.

Remember, career progression is rarely a journey you need to make alone. Reaching out for support, guidance and encouragement is a strength – and often the catalyst for new opportunities.

Vanessa Barnes

Chair, Women's Wealth Alliance

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