

# Summarizing and paraphrasing

A key coaching skill is the ability to summarise and paraphrase. Using Christian van Nieuwerburgh's (An introduction to Coaching Skills: A Practical Guide, 2014) work, here is how they can be defined in a coaching context:

**Paraphrasing** refers to the act of reflecting back what your conversation partner has said. It is used to check for understanding, and to raise the awareness of the coachee by providing a new perspective or insight. It is not about saying something in fewer words. In fact, sometimes in the coaching context, coaches use the exact same words (also called 'mirroring') for the coachee.

See an example (21 seconds) of paraphrasing [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8kYfY8n1SW0): (Try this if the link doesn't work-  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8kYfY8n1SW0>)

**Summarising** is about listening attentively to what a coachee says and then playing it back succinctly. It is a 'in a nutshell' moment. A summary can be used more strategically to highlight an aspect of what the coachee has said or to reframe the coachee's interpretation of a situation. According to van Nieuwerburgh, summarising is useful during coaching conversations for the following reasons:

1. It demonstrates that the coach is listening
2. It allows the coach to check for understanding
3. It can refocus the attention of the conversation
4. It can be used to reframe the coachee's perception of a situation.

See an example (55 seconds) [here](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=efo_phze1Mk): (link is also here  
[https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=3&v=efo\\_phze1Mk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=3&v=efo_phze1Mk))