

COACH!

ANDREW NEITLICH

FIRST EDITION

Center for Executive Coaching,
Publishing Division, Sarasota FL

© 2016 Andrew Neitlich

All rights reserved. No portion of this book may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means - electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, scanning, or any other - except for brief quotations in critical reviews or articles, without the prior written permission of the publisher.

Published by Center for Executive Coaching,
Publishing Division, Sarasota FL

Every effort has been made to obtain permissions for material quoted throughout the book. If any required acknowledgments have been omitted, or any rights overlooked, it is unintentional. Please notify the publisher of any omission, and it will be rectified in future editions.

ISBN 978-0-9976287-1-5

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016908383

Cover design by William Reynolds
Interior design and formatting by William Reynolds

Printed in the United States

COACH!

CONTENTS

Introduction vii

Part One - Foundations

What Coaching Is And Isn't	13
Clearing Up Some Differences With Sports Coaching	17
Why People Who Work With Coaches Are Better	19
Why Organizations With A Culture Of Coaching Are Better	23
Examples Of Situations That Are Opportunities For Coaching	26
The First Rule Of Coaching	28
How Coachable Are You?	30
The Fundamental Coaching Conversation	32
The Six Most Important Questions to Ask in a Coaching Session	38
Bad Coaching	40
Find Your Coaching Style	47
The Sublime Art Of Asking One Question That Changes Everything	50
Getting Beyond The What And The How	52
Ethics And Confidentiality	54
The Attitudes Of The Coach	56

Part Two - The Coaching Process

Overview of The Coaching Process	61
Confirm and Establish Coachability	63
Set the Foundation for a Successful Engagement	66
Assess the Client/Situation, Diagnose, and Design	71
Coach, Track, Adjust	76
Succeed and Celebrate	77
Choose the Next Situation/Goal	78
Follow-up	79
What Coaching Really Looks Like	80

Part Three - More Coaching Conversations

Overview	83
Agreeing on the Problem and Setting Goals	85
Listening	87
Appreciative Inquiry	90
Accountability	91
Shifting the Conversations when the Client is Stuck	94
Role Play	97
Presenting Observations with Impact	99
Letting the Client Guide the Process	101
When You Are Stuck	102

Part Four - Coaching Situations Individual Effectiveness

Overview	109
Get Grounded: Who does the client need to be as a leader?	110
Coach to Change or Develop a New Behavior	112
Coach to Shift a Limiting Perception	120
Communicate Simply and Powerfully	133
Influence Others	145
Manage Time and Overcome Overwhelm	153
Think Comprehensively About an Issue	156
Develop Leadership Presence	158

Part Five - Coaching Situations Strong Relationships

Overview	161
Improve One's Power Base of Professional Relationships	162
Engage and Mobilize Employees	166
Manage Up	172
Resolve a Conflict	175
Build a Great Team	178

Part Six - Coaching Situations Supporting Organizational Initiatives

Overview 183

Plan Strategy 184

Lead Change 191

Develop a Pipeline of Leaders and Plan for Succession 194

Improve Employee Engagement Throughout the Organization 199

Create a High-Performance Culture 202

Why Can't We Execute Effectively? 206

Conclusion 209

Addendum One:

Seven Habits and a Five-Step Action Plan for a
Culture of Success Through Coaching 211

Addendum Two

Eight Keys to Creating
a World-Class Internal Coaching Group 214

About The Author 217

Introduction

The Difference That Coaching Makes

Coaching has had a profound impact on my life. The best managers in my career were generous enough to be coaches as well as managers. They used coaching as a tool to help me reach new levels of success. By sitting down with me and asking probing questions, they helped me come up with my own observations, insights, and new ways of approaching problems. They gave me the capacity and confidence to advance my career and also to lead others, but these managers didn't just coach. They also mentored me, taught me, and, when required, directed me. I remember most the coaching conversations because they left me with lessons that are now part of who I am.

In contrast, my least effective managers came from the command-and-control school of management. They expected me to do what they said. Why? Just because. One of my worst managers once said, "Andrew, your job here is not to think but to execute." I'm not sure why he recruited MBAs from the top business schools if that was his philosophy. Regardless, I left that company - as did many of my talented colleagues - within only a year of joining.

Now that I run a coaching and leadership advisory practice, I enjoy the privilege of working with amazing clients. All of them recognize that even with the success they have achieved they can still get better. Some face challenges that hold back their careers and organizations. Others want a sounding board to test their ideas in a safe, confidential forum. Still others hire a coach to keep improving their game - the same way athletes have a coach to help them keep getting faster, stronger, and

gain an edge. This work has proven to me that coaching can achieve extraordinary results.

At the same time, for the past fifteen years, I have run the Center for Executive Coaching, which trains and certifies professionals to become coaches. Approximately a thousand people have graduated from one of our training programs. When they arrive for training, they are already successful whether as leaders, business owners, or experts in a particular discipline. Almost all of them share that their most rewarding career experiences have involved both being coached and coaching and developing others to higher levels of performance. Some also note that they decided to become a coach after experiencing the benefits of coaching whether from a practicing coach or from a manager who took an interest in their development.

Some people reading this book are full-time coaches whether internal or external. Others are leaders and managers seeking to develop coaching as a skill. Some coach in a for-profit setting, while others coach in a nonprofit or government setting. To avoid confusion throughout this book, here is clarification of three terms.

First, when I use the word “coach,” I am referring to anyone stepping into the role of coach. It doesn't matter whether you are a full-time coach or a manager who uses coaching as a skill to develop and engage your people.

Second, when talking about coaching, this book is focused on coaching people in organizations to be more effective in their roles. Sometimes this kind of coaching is called leadership coaching, executive coaching, management coaching, high-potential coaching, career coaching, development plan coaching, team coaching, or corporate coaching. Coaching may be defined by the sector, as in corporate coaching, nonprofit coaching, government coaching, and educational coaching. Coaches seem to love to make up new terms, and I am sure I have left out some possibilities. To keep things simple, I am going to call all of these things

coaching. The key emphasis is on coaching professionals to higher levels of performance.

Third, to avoid having to write “the person being coached” every time we discuss the person you are coaching, I use the word “client” or the phrase “coaching client.” Your so-called client might be an employee who has come to you for coaching, or it could be a colleague in an organization where you serve as an internal coach. Perhaps it is a paying client if you run a coaching practice. Even if the client is not paying you, I am still referring to the person being coached as a client.

Again, the emphasis should be on practicing coaching and getting results, not on splitting hairs about terminology. Coaching is fun and productive. Splitting hairs regarding terminology isn't.

Coaching is emerging from its infancy as a profession. Professional coaching associations can be found, and a common language for coaching and some clear core competencies define effective coaching. Research has documented the efficacy and returns of coaching, although common sense would indicate that receiving the support that effective coaching provides would have an impact.

Even as coaching evolves, a great many organizations, leaders, and managers haven't yet embraced it as a tool to develop and retain top talent. My intent with this book is to give you a practical guide without the jargon that unfortunately clouds many coach training programs today to get great results by adding coaching to your capabilities.

The rewards of coaching are fantastic. What leader wouldn't want the ability to help other people advance their careers, develop new skills, and move their organizations forward?

Enjoy!

Part One

FOUNDATIONS



What Coaching Is And Isn't

Coaching has many definitions, and many coaching associations have their own definitions of coaching along with sets of core competencies. This book defines coaching with a primary focus on coaching leaders, managers, and up-and-coming talent in organizations:

Coaching is an efficient, high-impact process of dialogue that helps highly performing people improve results in ways that are sustained over time.

Unlike traditional consulting assignments, coaching is efficient because it does not require invasive processes, large outside teams, or lengthy reports and analyses to get results.

It is a high-impact process because coaching typically gets results in short meetings, which can often last only a few minutes and are rarely longer than an hour. During this time, the coach and the individual being coached can generate important insights, gain clarity, focus, and make decisions to improve performance

Coaching is a dialogue. The coach and the person being coached are working together to make things happen. When you are coaching, you might speak 25 percent of the time, while the other person speaks 75 percent. Even if you are an expert in your field and know all the answers, you hold back to let the person being coached express concerns, challenges, and feelings. The dialogue allows the other person to determine their own answers and action steps, allowing the individual to not only solve immediate issues but also develop the capacity to keep improving.

Third, coaching works with high-performing people. It is not therapy meant to fix a person. As a coach in an organization, you work with people who are already highly functioning and successful. Like any of us,

these professionals need support from time to time to perform better. Some might have serious blind spots, such as a leader who comes across as too abrasive, but coaching assumes that people have tremendous talent and potential.

Finally, your goal as a coach is to improve results in ways that are sustainable over time. The point of coaching is to achieve some sort of valuable outcome, usually related to improved performance, higher profits, career success, organizational effectiveness, or career and personal satisfaction. If you aren't helping people get results through coaching, you aren't coaching well. At the same time, coaching is about helping people improve their own capabilities and effectiveness so that the results and performance improvements last. To use the time-worn and famous quote, you are teaching people to fish, not feeding them for a day.

You can incorporate coaching into almost any role.

If you are a manager, coaching becomes a crucial skill to develop your people, improve performance, and gain leverage on your time.

Likewise, if you have a training role, coaching provides a way to sustain results. It makes common sense that following up after a training event reinforces learning and results. For instance, the coach can help the other person deal with specific challenges that might be preventing the training from having its full impact.

Similarly, if you are a management consultant, you probably already provide coaching as part of what you do. Coaching is the part of the engagement where you work one-on-one with clients to encourage them to make difficult decisions, step out of their comfort zone, stop destructive behavior, embrace change, and shift performance. For me, a long-time consultant, coaching is the fun part. Coaching lets you stop doing the analyses (and most of the time the client already knows the answer anyway), stop revising the PowerPoint presentation, and sit down face-to-face with the client to help them improve results. It's the part of



the engagement where the client turns to you as their objective, trusted advisor—as a colleague and confidant.

It is also important to be clear about what coaching is NOT.

As noted before, coaching is not therapy. You are not fixing anybody. You are not delving into traumatic pasts. Good coaching certainly gets underneath the surface to look at perceptions, but the emphasis is on helping a healthy individual overcome challenges and be more effective. If you do work with someone who might need therapy, refer that person to a licensed professional.

Second, coaching is also not the same thing as management. Coaching is one tool that a manager can use, but it is not the only tool. Sometimes a manager needs to direct, tell, mentor, and/or teach. Coaching is a powerful skill but not the only thing that a good manager does.

Third, coaching is not consulting. Your primary focus is not to analyze and make recommendations. When appropriate and when you have permission, you can add a lot of value by sharing your own observations and insights, but coaching is more about having the other person develop their own insights and then take new actions to improve results.

Put another way, your job as a coach is not to be a “crystal ball” that magically provides an answer. As a coach, you will intervene and provide advice when appropriate. Successful coaches engage in dialogue with their clients and then customize a tool or solution that works for their unique solution. Sometimes there is no easy answer, and your value will be to support your clients in making decisions with incomplete information.

Fourth, coaching is not training or teaching, which focus on sharing knowledge and best practices and also helping people develop and hone skills. Learning usually occurs in a classroom setting, and the trainer or teacher leads the session. A coach might include teaching and training in the session, and good teachers and trainers coach, but the primary activities in each discipline are different.



Fifth, coaching isn't mentoring. Mentors are typically seasoned professionals within an organization who show less senior and experienced people the ropes. Mentors are great at pointing out how things work in an organization along with some of the hidden keys to getting things done and being successful. They also make introductions and sometimes pull strings. Again, there is overlap with coaching. The best mentors typically coach, and many coaches have years of experience to share with the people they are coaching.

Finally, coaching is not progressive discipline. Many organizations confuse the two, which sometimes causes coaching to be seen negatively. Progressive discipline, or probation, is a process of working with employees who are not performing, with the intent of documenting their poor performance and terminating their employment if they don't improve. In the past, this process was conflated with coaching. The word coaching was—and still is in some organizations—a euphemism for the last resort before firing someone. Today, coaching is seen as a standard leadership development tool. It is an investment in the talent the organization wants to develop and retain. Coaching should be separated from anything related to progressive discipline or probation.

Confused? Join the club. There is a lot of overlap among these different disciplines, and not everyone agrees on where the boundaries stop and start. My advice is that you not spend too much time obsessing about definitions. You can go online and see all sorts of self-appointed coaching police telling people what is and isn't coaching. Instead, do two things:

First, practice and keep getting better at coaching as you go through this book. You will learn firsthand about coaching and what it can do.

Second, and most importantly, if you focus more on having impact and helping the people you coach get results, everything will work out great.



Clearing Up Some Differences with Sports Coaching

Coach n 1: (sports) someone in charge of training an athlete or a team 2: a person who gives private instruction (as in singing or acting) 3: a railcar where passengers ride 4: a carriage pulled by four horses with one driver 5: a vehicle carrying many passengers; used for public transport.

-Source: WordNet ® 2.0 via www.dictionary.com

The above, dictionary definition of a coach is interesting because the first reference is to sports coaching. Many coaches who coach leaders, executives, managers, and up-and-coming talent don't like comparing what they do to what sports coaches do. When people think of the word coach, however, they usually think of sports coaches. Plus, it is hard to argue with the dictionary when it associates coaching with sports coaches.

Let's compare traditional sports coaches with the types of coaches described in this book - coaches who work with leaders, managers, and up-and-coming talent. Such coaches tend to meet with our clients in an office setting, where we sit down in a meeting room and coach. Coaching for us largely entails asking many questions so that clients can determine what to do on their own. We provide advice and observations but try to do so only when clients have exhausted their options.

During the heat of an athletic contest, when most people get to observe sports coaches, we don't see much of this kind of coaching. Sports coaches are much more active, drawing up diagrams, putting players in and taking them out of the game, calling time-outs, yelling at the referees, giving quick remarks to motivate the players, and shouting as they walk up and down the sidelines. They also have a role in recruiting players, cutting players, and setting salaries.



In other words, sports coaches are primarily managers. They manage games, and depending on their level of authority and relationship with the general manager, they also help manage their team.

Behind the scenes, though, top sports coaches sit down with the athletes on their teams and do indeed coach them. They watch tapes to learn what went well and what the athlete and team can do better. They ask questions and engage in a dialogue to understand the athletes' perspective about their performance. They make resources available for the player to train and improve, and then they try to connect with the players so that they take accountability for improving their own performance. Some coaches have more of a command-and-control approach, tending to tell players what they need to do. Others are better at engaging the players in a dialogue to understand what drives them, what makes them tick, and how they can take responsibility for improving their own performance.

Coaches who work with executives, managers, and up-and-coming talent can learn from sports coaches, especially the ones who know how to engage their players. Asking a never-ending circle of open-ended questions, as some coaching associations require, is not always the best way for a coach to get results. In real-world coaching, sometimes the coach needs to intervene a bit more proactively as a sports coach might. An effective coach sometimes makes observations, gives tough advice and feedback and, when needed, even gives a firm kick in the pants.

If you manage and coach a team of employees, the lines get even more fluid. Like a sports coach, you wear many hats, depending on your job description and span of control.

Moving away from the sports coach metaphor for a moment, notice the third, fourth, and fifth definitions of the word coach. These definitions focus on the coach as a vehicle. Personally, I like this more traditional definition best. Think of yourself as a railcar or carriage that gets people from where they are to where they want to be. You are a vehicle that moves individuals, teams, and sometimes the people in an entire organization from their current point A to a better point B.



Why People Who Work with Coaches Are Better

This week I started a coaching engagement with a young leader who hired me to become what he calls “a leader of leaders” within his Fortune 500 company. When we explored his aspirations during our first meeting, it occurred to me for the umpteenth time that leaders who hire coaches are just better: more open, more fun to work with, more willing to learn, more willing to stretch for outstanding achievements, more willing to take responsibility, more concerned about the development of their people, more willing to laugh at themselves, and more positive.

In this case, the up-and-coming executive shared some wonderful goals for himself, his employees, and his area of responsibility. He had the self-awareness and wisdom to know that employing a coach could help him have insights about the most effective and efficient ways to get where he wants.

To his credit, he is paying for the coaching with his own money because his company doesn't support external coaching. He had hired a coach a couple of years ago and got so much value out of the experience that he is doing it again, and I am privileged to be the coach that he chose.

Leaders like my new client come across differently from their colleagues who are not so coachable. They are like professional athletes who are committed to being the best and who hire a team to help them stay in shape and keep improving. They have that sense of drive, an internal fire, and the wisdom that an outside perspective is crucial for their ongoing improvement. These qualities are infectious and make them more



attractive to others. One could argue that these attributes alone - even without a coach - will lead to success, and yet these individuals are still willing to hire a coach to get even further, faster.

Clearly, I'm not talking about people upon whom coaching is forced. That's the old way of coaching - in companies where coaching and progressive discipline are still synonyms or in companies that hire a coach as a last resort primarily as a way to document for legal purposes that they tried something before firing the employee. When coaching is forced on someone, he or she rarely wants to be coached.

Unfortunately, despite various studies proving that coaching provides important career and organizational benefits, many leaders still do not want a coach. They will sometimes point to members of their team and say to the coach, "Go fix them. They are the ones who need help." However, they don't see the benefits of coaching for themselves, at least until something really negative happens in their careers, and by then it is often too late.

There is a different feel to leaders who are closed to coaching, at least from my admittedly biased perspective. They come across as a bit more shutdown, unwilling to explore new possibilities, and perhaps even stagnant. They don't like asking for or listening to advice and feedback from others and tend to get defensive when constructive advice is offered. Sometimes they seem more concerned with other priorities than getting results, such as looking good, being the smartest person in the room, dominating others, or winning some sort of popularity contest. They often have some sort of behavioral blind spot, for instance, getting angry too quickly, avoiding appropriate conflict, or letting their egos get in the way of getting results and building positive business relationships. Like the villagers in the story about the emperor who had no clothes, no one in the organization dares to give them a hint that they have opportunities to improve, and they don't believe the messenger, usually from Human Resources, when he or she comes with bad news. Eventually, they get pushed out, never reach the next level, or burn out. This situation is a



tragedy, because with a little bit of coaching and a mind-set of being coachable, they could find new ways to get results and thrive.

One other category of a leader is relevant to this discussion: the leader who has a coach but never does anything despite the coach's best efforts. These leaders like the status of having a coach but aren't really interested in making positive change. A coach is more like a status symbol to them, a way of saying, "Hey, I'm on the leading edge of the coaching trend. I have a coach with amazing credentials and a best-selling book. I'm getting enlightened as we speak. Now leave me alone." That's not the type of leader I am talking about in this chapter either.

Shown below are five attributes that I especially appreciate in leaders that hire a coach with the sincere intent of getting better, advancing their careers, and improving their organizations. You might have a different list or some tweaks to this one. If so, please let me know.

They are committed to continuous learning and improvement. By definition, coaching clients want to get better; otherwise, they wouldn't have hired a coach in the first place. It is refreshing to work with people who seek ongoing improvement compared with those who want to preserve the status quo, complete a list of tasks every day, and hope nothing changes.

Their high aspirations are exciting and often lead to great things. Leaders who seek out coaching usually have ambitious aspirations. They want to see great things happen, and people gravitate toward those with vision and a sense of purpose. At the same time, they hold themselves accountable for achieving their aspirations and goals, including ongoing gains in performance.

They see possibility in themselves and others. It is more enjoyable to be around people who see the potential for greatness all around them than to be around people who are cynical, apathetic, and perceive the people



on their team to be subpar. This sense of possibility makes them more attractive to others and gets people aligned toward a common purpose.

They are willing to be vulnerable in ways that allow them to leapfrog over other leaders. The best leaders have some degree of vulnerability about them. It is not easy to learn the truth about how we actually come across to others compared with how we hope we come across to others. It is not easy to take responsibility for improving a strained professional relationship, to see one's own role in the situation, and proactively make amends. It is not easy to hear feedback from our colleagues and then resolve to improve. It is not easy to allow give and take when pushing an idea forward rather than win at all costs. This kind of vulnerability, however, ultimately leads to improved results, relationships, and success. Leaders who are vulnerable also tend to attract more followers—especially top talent—than those who are pushy, obnoxious, and unwilling to lighten up. By having just enough vulnerability, they are able to learn, grow, and get better.

They are more flexible in how they get results, which gives them more options. One benefit of coaching is that it often helps leaders develop new approaches to handle different situations. Many leaders are like the proverbial broken clock stuck on one time: They stick to a single style that is right once or twice each day and wrong the rest of the time. Leaders who are coachable understand the need to be flexible and have a range of styles and approaches for different people and situations. This allows them to lead more naturally and authentically instead of relying on long-standing patterns that make them rigid.

In essence, leaders who have coaches have a different quality about them and are better. I am so grateful to be in the coaching profession because it allows me to work with the best of the best.

