

## What People Are Saying About *The Heart of Coaching*

I have not seen the powerful communication and collaboration tools provided in this book anywhere else. *The Heart of Coaching* creates a shared vocabulary and high-performance focus that will get results in any organization!

**Skip Oppenheimer, Chairman/CEO  
Oppenheimer Companies, Inc.**

*The Heart of Coaching* has its focus where it should be: on the bottom line. Tom, however, does not neglect the all-important dimensions of emotion, caring, and "doing the right thing" in addition to "doing things right."

This comprehensive and sensible coverage of the topic of coaching—providing practical models based on research, yet models that are useful for the practitioner—is both refreshing and enlightening. Highly recommended!

**Robert Gregory, Manager, Learning and Organizational Development,  
BP**

For every aspect of management, there are a few fundamental building blocks. For the element of leadership, coaching is one of those critical cornerstones. In this book, Tom captures the full dimensionality of both the spirit and practice of coaching.

**Jerrold R. Bratkovich, President & Chief Operating Officer  
Organization Resources Counselors, Inc.**

This book broadens the role of leadership in organizations by effectively defining the multi-dimensional skill needed for success today and in the future.

This book should not be IN every executive's bookshelf; it belongs ON THE DESK as a just-in-time resource for high-impact coaching.

**Scott Tempel, Senior Consultant  
PacifiCare Health Systems**

*The Heart of Coaching* arrives at the right time, when leaders need a vision to help them go beyond teamwork. This approach to Transformational Coaching places ownership for the problem where it belongs, with the person responsible for finding a solution. This is true empowerment.

**David M. Lehmann, Vice President & General Manager, Mfg.  
Solar Turbines, Division of Caterpillar**

Tom Crane makes a compelling and passionate case that Transformational Coaching is THE REQUISITE SKILL for creating truly aligned and powerful organizations.

The book is full of information, tips, and models that help explain this significant art and skill.

**Robin Reid, Managing Partner  
Reid, Moomaugh & Associates**

Today's marketplace demands that leaders place a renewed focus on coaching—the same attention as on strategy. Tom gives us valuable insight on precisely how to best coach others as we continue to strive for excellence throughout the workplace.

**Ronald J. Burns, President & Chief Operating Officer  
Entergy Corporation**

Tom Crane has devoted much of his professional career to the art and practice of coaching. He has "walked a mile" in these moccasins. Here he offers a clear, accessible and proven guide for all leaders who are committed to deepening their coaching skills.

This book represents his "heart advice" to those of us who would call ourselves "coaches." Both wisdom and compassion are needed, and Tom's exploration of these themes is useful to the seasoned leader/manager, as well as to fellow practitioners of coaching from the heart.

**Timothy Smith, President  
Wheelwright Associates**

*The Heart of Coaching* gives valuable insights for setting the right performance targets and effectively communicating for results. It shows us step by step how to use coaching to develop people and manage the process of change.

It is one of those books that we all wish we read 20 years ago because it would have made a world of difference in our own development as coaches.

**John A. Brady, Ph.D., President  
Brady & Associates**

Managers and human resource professionals are increasingly being held accountable for making a difference in the performance of their people. This book is a highly practical, "hands-on" approach to managing human and organizational performance.

The models and methods are based on the solid integration of experience in a wide array of organizations. This book shows you how to generate strategically focused learning and get desired results through the development of the organization's most important resource—its people.

**John E. Jones, Ph.D., President  
Organizational Universe Systems**

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# *The Heart of* Coaching

*Using Transformational Coaching  
To Create a High-Performance Culture*

SECOND EDITION



Thomas G. Crane  
with Lerissa Patrick

**FTA**  
PRESS

**The Heart of Coaching:  
Using Transformational Coaching to Create a High-Performance Culture**

Second Edition, July 2002

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# Contents

Changes in the Second Edition 7

Acknowledgments 9

Introduction 11

## PART ONE

**The Heart of the Transformational Coaching Process 15**

1 Why Coach? 17

● 2 Transformational Coaching Defined 31

23 An Overview of the Transformational Coaching Process 43 ✓

● 4 The Foundational Phase 53

5 The Learning Loop 67 ✓

6 The Forwarding-the-Action Phase 83

7 Coaching Language 91 ✓

8 Coaching Through Dialogue 97 ✓

9 Special Coaching Situations 111

## PART TWO

**The Heart of the Transformational Coach 117**

10 Why Does a Coach Need a Heart? 119

11 Communication Filters 131

12 Coaching Styles 147

13 Miscellaneous Coaching Tips 161

14 Self-Esteem and Healing 175

● 15 Transformational Coaching Is Applied Leadership 187

## PART THREE

**Creating a High-Performance Coaching Culture 193**

16 The Vision of High Performance 195

17 Creating a High-Performance Organization 205

Epilogue: Coaching Is a Journey 217

Appendix One: Transformational Coaching Session Worksheet 220



## DEDICATION

*My first coach was Hubert Hansel. He was my science and physical education teacher in seventh grade and coached my junior high school basketball team.*

*Since becoming a consultant and helping leaders to become coaches for their organizations, I have reflected on the effect my coaches had on me. It is clear that the beliefs and values on which I've constructed my life were articulated, taught, and strengthened on the basketball court by Coach Hansel. Although I've had many coaches since Coach Hansel, none so completely epitomized the essence for me of **who** a coach is.*

*I learned the following life principles from Coach Hansel, who served as a role model for them all:*

- *Be a good sport, play by the rules*
- *Practice the fundamentals, how you practice is how you play*
- *Give it your best effort, never hold back*
- *Commit to winning, but lose gracefully*
- *Work hard at getting better, you can always improve*
- *Cheer and support your teammates on and off the court*
- *Live life in a spiritual context with a purpose*
- *Be a role model, other people are watching you*

*I can track the successes I've had in my life back to these principles of life success. With sincere gratitude, I dedicate this book to Coach Hansel, for his unselfish giving and his commitment to bringing his heart and the best of **who** he is to the practice of coaching.*

## *Changes in the Second Edition*

The original 1998 version of *The Heart of Coaching* captured my best thinking and experience about coaching as a requisite leadership skill with far-reaching impact on an organization's culture and success. This 2002 Second Edition incorporates the experience I've gained over the past four years of facilitating coaching workshops and the input I've received from my gracious clients. This revision is designed to make the coaching process and its implementation even more user-friendly. You will see the changes reflected in the **Transformational Coaching Model** as follows:

- \* • The **Foundation Phase** includes a modification to "Set Expectations" to include GRRATE expectations, adding  
• *Resources* to the acronym.
- \* • The **Learning Loop** expands the focus of the dialogue to include all the elements of *The Results Cycle*—Beliefs, Behaviors, Relationships, and Results.
- \* • The **Forwarding-the-Action** section describes concrete ways to emphasize that coaching is all about change.

Chapters 3 to 6 have been substantially rewritten to reflect these changes in more detail.

To aid the Coach, the book now includes a color, tear-out **Coaching Card**, giving the user a quick reference tool to use during the coaching process. The Card shows the Transformational Coaching Model, "learning" questions, the Results Cycle, and useful coaching tips.

We are also pleased to introduce the new **Facilitator Guide**, which includes all the tools necessary to facilitate *The Heart of Coaching Workshop* in-house with your own resources. Call us for details.

Included in the "About the Author" section you will find a description of the various consulting services we offer, in addition

to the popular Coaching Workshops. We believe that Coaching is "Leadership in Action" and have found far-reaching implications for the development of this critical skill, which are reflected in our Leadership Development, Team Building and Culture Change work.

I thank all of you who continue to contribute your feedback on how this book has helped you become a more effective coach and leader for your organization. I have been especially touched by the stories many of you have shared about how the coaching process has transformed your family relationships for the better as well. *How you do anything is how you do everything.*

In the spirit of coaching,

– Thomas G. Crane

*July 2002*

## *Acknowledgments*

According to African wisdom, "it takes a village to raise a child." Well, it took a team to finish this book. There are many people who contributed in very important ways to support me in this project. I wish to publicly thank them all here.

My numerous friends at Senn Delaney Leadership provided me coaching for my personal growth and an opportunity as a consultant to work on the human side of the enterprise. This is now my life's work.

Cathy Zaitzow helped me to create the original book outline as something coherent and potentially intelligible. Robin McLinden, Mary Jo Jenkins, and Anne Machen added their listening and word-processing skills to help me get the words down on paper.

Lerissa Patrick, as editor, helped to shape the book into its final form. Through our ongoing dialogue, she helped me to develop and refine the ideas I started with and to present them more gracefully than I ever could have on my own.

Many associates and colleagues added their constructive comments to the earlier drafts, helping me to look at the book from a readers perspective: Robin Reid, John Jones, David and Rebecca Grudermeyer, Scott Tempel, Lynn Ripplemeyer, Deb Fortune, Cheri Huber, C.O. Woody, Elizabeth Brown, Jim Sale, Alanna Roberts-Lal, and my mom, Maryellen Crane.

Rebecca Taff brought her keen eye in copy editing. Arlette Ballew added her considerable editing skills to polish the final presentation of the material. Troy Scott Parker added his creative talent in cover and interior design, further adding to the elegance of the Transformational Coaching model.

I received strong encouragement and emotional support from two special people. John Brady and Tim Smith have been role models for who a coach is and a constant source of inspiration to follow what was in my heart.

I would also like to acknowledge my kids, Andy, Jason, and Claire, for being in my life and for providing me lots of opportunities to grow as a parent and to transform myself into a more loving and accepting person. I am a better coach as a result.

Maggie, my life partner, has been my strongest teacher. She also has provided very substantive feedback on the writing and final revisions of the manuscript. I especially thank her for supporting me in realizing more of my potential as a caring human being capable of sharing this heartfelt approach to working with people.

that organizations must do more with less. Even as economic and business cycles begin to change and shift into growth and expansion, the competitive pressure is unrelenting. Organizations and individuals still feel the pressure to perform at higher and higher levels.

Stress levels for employees are extremely high, as they try to maintain balance between their personal lives and work demands. Many of us long for the "good old days," but are haunted by the creeping knowledge that the "good old days" are not coming back. These are the new "good old days." We had better learn how to perform, survive, and lead fulfilled lives in these challenging times.

How do modern organizations respond to these pressures for higher and higher levels of performance with employees that are growing more tired by the day?

## Enter Coaching

Progressive leaders are choosing coaching as a fundamental part of their response. Coaching is a healthy, positive, and enabling process that develops the capacity of people to solve today's business problems.

The premise of this book is simple:

**As coaching becomes a predominant cultural practice,  
it will create a performance-focused, feedback-rich  
organization capable of creating and sustaining  
a competitive advantage.**

Therefore, it is important that we take another look at this uncommon management practice and see it with new eyes—as a

## *Introduction*

What if people in your organization:

- Knew the mission of the business and their role in creating success?
- Knew the organizational priorities and acted with a sense of urgency?
- Were committed to give their personal best efforts and did not hold back because of fear of failure?
- Freely contributed to organizational goals without worrying about who got the credit?
- Consistently achieved the results they were capable of achieving?
- Valued one another's thoughts and ideas and treated their teammates with respect and compassion?
- Openly shared feedback with one another without fear of reprisal?
- Sought out and responded appropriately to performance feedback?
- Had fun at work?

These "what ifs" are not pipe dreams but are conditions frequently found in high-performing teams. These teams are able to consistently outperform their rivals because their high-performance culture energizes and focuses people on the strategic goals of the business, especially during times of change.

Take a look around at the changing business landscape. High performance is no longer an option for companies that now compete in international or expanded regional markets, whether they want to or not. Technology-driven change is extremely rapid and is creating unprecedented competitive pressures for survival. Downsizing, mergers, re-engineering, and constantly changing customer demands contribute to the compelling economic reality

transformational leadership skill and a requisite for creating true high performance.

Transformational Coaching is the leadership process for the new millennium. It is a potent communication process that helps people connect to the performance of the team and to the things that are important in their lives.

Touching people's spirits and rekindling what deeply matters to them is what *The Heart of Coaching* is all about. We do not need another book on managing people that shows us yet another technique on how to get them to do what we want them to do. People are crying out for *real* leadership from leaders who are open and vulnerable and real. That is what Transformational Coaches learn to do.

## Trust Your Experience

*Believe nothing* that you read in this book. Rather, *trust your own experience to validate the ideas and principles of human interaction offered here*. If you chose to incorporate any of the practices described, pay attention to how your relationships are enriched and your results are enhanced.

The questions interspersed throughout the book are designed to stimulate your thinking and engage your heart. To the extent that you become clear about your thoughts, your beliefs, and your experiences, you will be better able to integrate coaching as a new way of thinking and a new way of interacting with people.



# The Heart of the Transformational Coaching Process

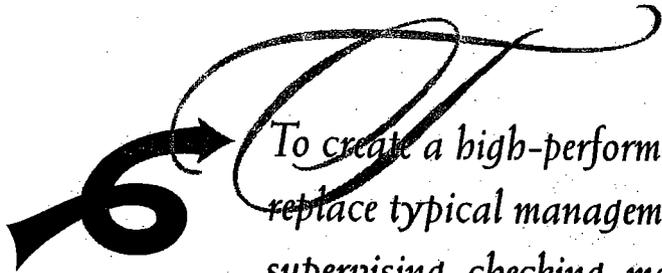
THE TRANSFORMATIONAL COACHING process provides a practical framework for understanding coaching and its applications in any area of your life. It is a process of mutual learning and partnership that allows you to reach your highest potential.

In this book, the author discusses the essential elements of the coaching process, the Transformational Coaching methodology, and illustrates its application to various areas of your life, including personal and professional development, individual and team performance, and leadership.

## Our Deep-seated Fear

It is our deep-seated fear that we are not good enough. It is our deep-seated fear that we are not smart enough. It is our deep-seated fear that we are not capable enough. It is our deep-seated fear that we are not worthy enough. It is our deep-seated fear that we are not loved enough. It is our deep-seated fear that we are not accepted enough. It is our deep-seated fear that we are not valued enough. It is our deep-seated fear that we are not respected enough. It is our deep-seated fear that we are not heard enough. It is our deep-seated fear that we are not seen enough. It is our deep-seated fear that we are not known enough. It is our deep-seated fear that we are not remembered enough. It is our deep-seated fear that we are not missed enough. It is our deep-seated fear that we are not loved enough. It is our deep-seated fear that we are not accepted enough. It is our deep-seated fear that we are not valued enough. It is our deep-seated fear that we are not respected enough. It is our deep-seated fear that we are not heard enough. It is our deep-seated fear that we are not seen enough. It is our deep-seated fear that we are not known enough. It is our deep-seated fear that we are not remembered enough. It is our deep-seated fear that we are not missed enough.

Marlene Williams



*To create a high-performance team, we must replace typical management activities like supervising, checking, monitoring, and controlling with new behaviors like coaching and communicating.*

**RAY SMITH**  
CEO, Bell-Atlantic



# Why Coach?

## *Implications of a Paradigm Shift*

In the past few years, an old term, coaching, has received renewed interest in business literature. One author after another urges managers and leaders to develop and apply the motivational skills of athletic coaches to their work teams. Business conditions today have made coaching an essential element of success. Let's take a look at the business conditions that are driving this change.

### **The Business Case for Coaching**

By now, most of us know that a *paradigm* is a mental model that describes a particular view of the world—a set of rules and regulations that define boundaries and provide a means for being successful within those boundaries.

A *paradigm shift* is a big change—a surprising, abrupt, unprecedented, revolutionary, rules-alerting change. When a business paradigm shifts, the success of the past becomes less relevant, because the criteria for success has been altered and a new standard established. The victories of the past no longer apply to the present or the future. The rules change, the roles change, and the

required results change. Everyone goes back, however temporarily, to a lower point on the learning curve.

The business world is in the midst of just such a paradigm shift, as is shown below. The rules have changed. The processes that people previously used to achieve their objectives are no longer valid, and the traditional roles and hierarchical working relationships are no longer effective. High performance is no longer an option, it is a requirement for the survival of both individuals and organizations. Competition is worldwide and technological change brings new challenges on a daily basis. Leadership skills are needed now more than ever.

**The Changing Paradigm**

Dimension	From	To
The Competitive Environment	Local competition	Global competition
Technological Change	Incremental	Radical
Organizational Strategy	Growth through productivity increases	Survival through innovation
Structure & Systems	Hierarchical with centralized authority	Network with distributed authority
Culture	Individualism Centralized control Command and high control	Shared responsibility Collaboration Empowerment
Leadership Roles	Managerial Director Coordinator Facilitator Organizer	Partner Coach Mentor Facilitator Role model Sponsor
Leadership's Core Skills	Telling Directing Controlling	Coaching Influencing Role modeling

In this new world, the paradigm-shift question is: *What is impossible to do today (or is not done today) in your business that, if you could do it, would fundamentally change the way you do business?*

The answer is: *Transformational Coaching*. This chapter examines how and why this is so.

### **Corporate Culture and Performance**

Corporate culture sets the organizational context for human behavior. It creates the framework for performance expectations and the ways in which people relate to one another.

Authors John Kotter and James L. Heskett wrote *Corporate Culture and Performance* to explore the consequences of the paradigm shift for corporate culture.<sup>1</sup> Kotter describes three theories that link cultural characteristics with financial performance.

<sup>1</sup>The Free Press, a Division of Macmillan, Inc. (New York, 1992).

#### **THE STRONG CULTURE**

Theory I hypothesizes that a "strong culture" will produce vitality and long-term financial performance.

*In a strong corporate culture, almost all managers share a set of relatively consistent values and methods of doing business. New employees adopt these values very quickly. The style and values... tend not to change much when a new CEO takes charge—their roots go deep.*

(p. 15)

Strong cultures are characterized by broad goal alignment (all employees marching to the same drummer), high motivational levels and the presence of structure and controls (but without a stifling bureaucracy). IBM is probably the most famous strong-culture company, with loyal and highly motivated employees. Wal-Mart, Procter & Gamble, and Time are also examples of strong-culture companies.

Contrary to the Theory I hypothesis, strong cultures are not guaranteed long-term financial vitality and high performance. Although Kotter and Heskett's data do suggest that strong culture correlates with long-term economic performance, the correlation is only modest.

### THE STRATEGICALLY APPROPRIATE CULTURE

Theory II holds that a "strategically appropriate" culture is the secret to long-term economic performance. Kotter and Heskett define a strategically appropriate culture as one in which

*... values and behaviors are common, (and are) as important if not more important than its strength... a culture is good only if it "fits" its context... only those contextually or strategically appropriate cultures will be associated with excellent performance. The better the fit, the better the performance. (p. 28)*

Kotter and Heskett say that, for example, "rapid decision making and no bureaucratic behavior" would be appropriate "in the highly competitive deal-making environment of a mergers acquisitions advisory firm." They cite Swissair as a good example of a strategically appropriate culture, as is the VF Corporation. The appeal of Theory II is obvious: it suggests that one uniform culture will not work for every company and that each culture must create its own strategy to meet the needs of the industry it serves. The culture must "fit" its business conditions.

But even a strategically appropriate culture is not immune to failure. Kotter and Heskett's study showed that, even in companies with a good fit between strategy and culture, change in the business environment (because of, for example, increased competition) produced deterioration in performance when the company's culture did not change. Companies that did well in the face of change, they said, "successfully adapted to change, despite having reasonably strong cultures."

Which leads us to Theory III.

### THE ADAPTIVE CULTURE

Theory III hypothesizes that the cultural characteristic most highly correlated with high performance is *adaptability*—the ability of the organization to continuously respond to changing markets and new competitive environments. "Only cultures that can help organizations anticipate and adapt to environmental change will be associated with superior performance over long periods of

time," Kotter and Heskett say. They further define "adaptive culture" as one in which:

*...managers throughout the hierarchy... provide leadership to initiate change in strategies and tactics whenever necessary to satisfy the legitimate interests of not just stockholders, or customers, or employees, but all three. (p. 46)*

Digital Equipment, 3M, and Hewlett-Packard are good examples of adaptive companies. The following Performance Measure shows how important adaptability is to the bottom line.

**Performance Measure (over an eleven-year period)**

	<b>Organizations with Performance-Enhancing Cultures</b>	<b>Organizations Without Performance-Enhancing Cultures</b>
Revenue Growth		
Employment Growth		
Stock-Price Growth		
Net-Income Growth		

The Economics and Social Costs of Low-Performance Cultures (1977-1988), (Kotter & Heskett, 1992)

According to Kotter and Heskett, adaptive organizations tend to:

- Be run by strong leaders who are committed to winning the hearts and minds of people
- Give balanced attention to serving all three constituents of the organization: customers, employees, and stockholders
- Be highly energized and aligned on common goals
- Be receptive to change, responsive to opportunity, and dedicated to creative risk taking
- Provide a cheerleading, encouraging environment that builds confidence and morale
- Provide a high-trust environment that identifies and confronts problems

- Be filled with supportive and enthusiastic people who recognize initiative
- Emphasize fairness, integrity, and "doing the right thing"

It sounds like a great place to work, doesn't it? This almost perfectly describes a high-performance organization. As a matter of fact, progressive leadership recognizes that these characteristics as important to supporting high performance. My experience in large organizational change efforts, however, has shown that one element critical to creating these conditions is frequently missing from the equation.

The missing element is *coaching*.

### **Mixed Messages**

In 1979, *Training and Development Journal* published an article in which the following two figures appeared.

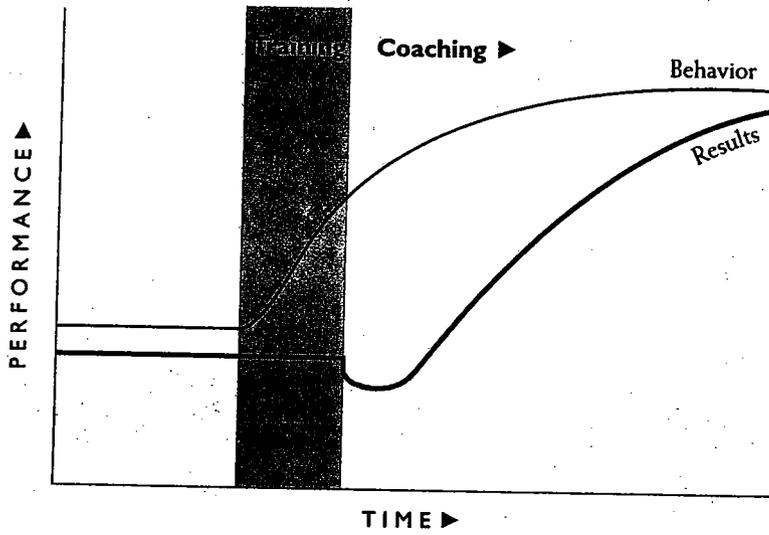
Figure A illustrates what seems to be a reasonable expectation of training: it will produce new behaviors that, over time (and in spite of a small and temporary dip in performance immediately after training), will lead to improved results.

Figure B shows what actually happens after training if no coaching is provided: old behaviors quickly resurface, and sustained performance improvements never materialize. Without coaching, the opportunity that training provides for permanently improving behavior—and for the improved results that could have followed—is lost.

By not providing coaching to people after providing them with behaviorally based skill training, we set them up to fail. Such approaches offer a mixed message, to the employee's face, we say:

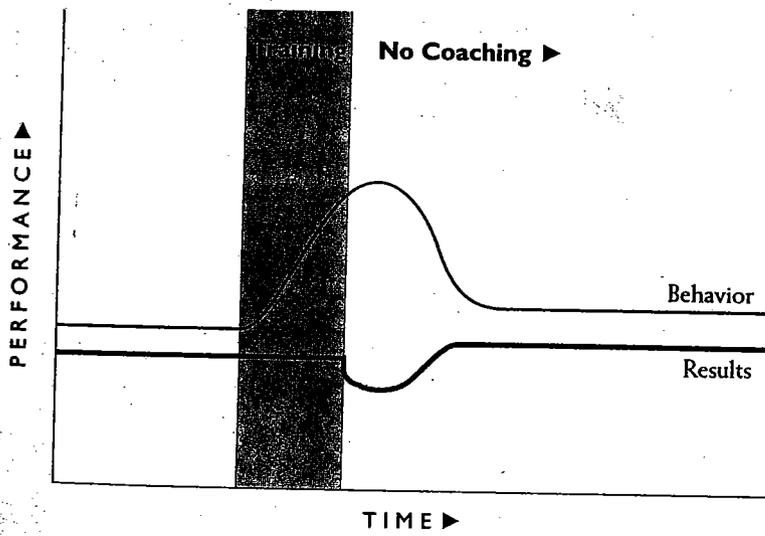
*We will send you to this training program in which you will learn new skills and behaviors to apply on the job. We have selected you because we believe you can do a better job afterward and, of course, we expect to see improved performance after you return. Now, go and learn.*

**A. What Should Happen with a New Skill (with Coaching)**



Adapted from *Training and Development Journal*,  
November, 1979.

**B. What Actually Happens with a New Skill (Without Coaching)**



But the unspoken organizational truth the employees hear and usually experience is more like this:

*We hope you can implement all the changes we expect to see without any help from us, because we are just too busy to coach you or reinforce new skills after you return. But we know from experience that you probably won't be able to do it—the effect of training frequently is negligible. That's why it is the first thing we cut when times get tough. Thanks for going to the workshop!*

## Feedback and Leadership Effectiveness

A study led by Marshall Goldsmith of Keilty, Goldsmith & Company adds another dimension to developmental training and follow-up. It surveyed more than 8,000 "direct reports" about their perceptions of their managers' levels of effectiveness after participating in a leadership-development program. During the leadership-development process, each manager was asked to respond to direct reports who provided feedback to him or her, implement an improvement plan that responded to the feedback, and follow up with the direct reports as to progress made. Eighteen months later, direct reports were asked about their managers' current levels of effectiveness and to what degree the managers had responded to feedback and followed up.

The data were clear: the higher the level of response and follow-up, the higher the direct reports rated their bosses' effectiveness (see the following two tables for summaries of the data). Leadership effectiveness is dramatically affected through asking for, responding to, and following up on feedback, and those are the essential steps of Transformational Coaching. In table B, the trend toward more perceived effectiveness is pronounced and dramatic, shifting from 7 percent to 55 percent in the highest degree of improvement (the +3 category).

Let's take a look at another good reason to coach: the effect it has on the hearts and minds of human beings.

**A. Leadership Effectiveness and Feedback Follow-Up  
(Keilty, Goldsmith & Company, 1994)**

	Perception of Effectiveness As a Percentage		
	Worse	Same	Better
No response/No follow-up	19*	34	48
Response/No follow-up	21*	34	45
Response/Little follow-up	10	24	66
Response/Some follow-up	3	9	
Response/Frequent follow-up	1	5	
Response/Consistent follow-up	1	4	

\* Expectations were raised with responding and fell with no follow-up.

**B. Detail of Shaded Area in A**

Degree of Follow-Up	Degree of Improvement in Relative Effectiveness			
	%	+1	+2	+3
"Some"	89	44	38	
"Frequent"	95	21	53	
"Consistent"	95	9	31	

## The Human Case for Coaching

The traditional approach to management has its roots in an autocratic, military-style "command-and-control" model that works well in the environment for which it was designed: war. But in most business settings, it has serious unintended consequences.

### Theories X, Y, and Z

Business researchers have described a number of management approaches over the decades. Two of the most famous are Theories X and Y, articulated by Douglas McGregor.<sup>2</sup>

Theory X, a traditional style of management, assumes that people are lazy, uncreative, and need clear directions and penalties to support productivity. Two different metaphors are associated with the Theory X explanation of motivation: the "carrot" (based on using *reward* as the motivator) and the "stick" (based on using *fear* as the motivator). The drawback with these two motivators is that they are polar opposites and, therefore, provide no middle ground to guide a manager's actions in today's environment.

Nor do they bring out the best in people. The stick approach achieves compliance, at best. The carrot approach frequently leaves people feeling manipulated. We either threaten someone's job or throw money at the problem. Neither strategy works for very long.

One of the first essential things lost under Theory-X management is initiative. People learn to wait for "The Boss" to tell them what to do. In the worst situations, they degenerate into a state of "learned helplessness," allowing small problems to reach critical proportions because no one has given them orders. People learn to delegate up.

Employees managed by a Theory-X leader never develop a sense of ownership of problems. If The Boss makes all the decisions, these decisions never become the employee's solution. Consequently, people's sense of accountability and responsibility is lower than what is required for high performance.

<sup>2</sup> *The Human Side of Enterprise*,  
(New York, McGraw-Hill,  
1960).

*The carrot and stick are pervasive and persuasive motivators. But if you treat people like donkeys they'll perform like donkeys.*

**John Whitmore**

Creativity suffers. Most autocratic bosses throttle their employees' creativity by ignoring their ideas or ridiculing them for getting "outside the box" or creatively interpreting the rules. People treated this way become poorly motivated and ineffective in creating innovative solutions.

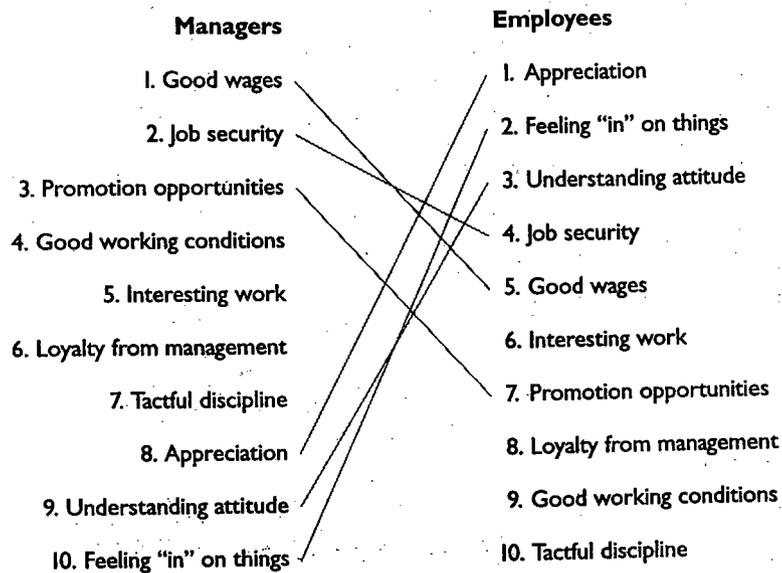
When people are treated like cogs in a wheel—or worse, like children—they are stripped of their dignity and feel diminished in the process. Spirit sickens and dies. Unmotivated, emotionally dead people never contribute their discretionary energy to their work. They do the minimum they believe is required of them to keep their jobs, then they go home.

Theory Y is a much more humanistic approach to working with people. It presumes that people are creative, capable, and internally motivated to achieve. The resulting management style is more supportive and nurturing of people. This outlook forms the philosophical basis for much of the material in this book.

The Z organization, typified by Japanese companies, takes the long view toward building relationships and decision processes that involve the collective whole. It works well for Japan, but American workers are usually too individualistic to be able to buy in to this approach.

### **A New Theory**

We need a new theory. Perhaps we could call it "Theory C," for "coaching." This theory builds on the best of Theories X, Y, and Z and is supported by the results of research conducted by Glenn Tobe & Associates. In this survey, managers and employees were asked to rank a list of ten performance motivators. What managers thought employees wanted most from their jobs and what employees said they wanted most bore little resemblance to each other. Here are the results:



The three top motivators on the employees' list—appreciation, feeling "in" on things, and an understanding attitude—landed in the bottom three positions on the managers' list. Managers' assumptions of the top three only made the middle of the employees' list. Many managers, however, still operate on these erroneous assumptions—with disappointing results.

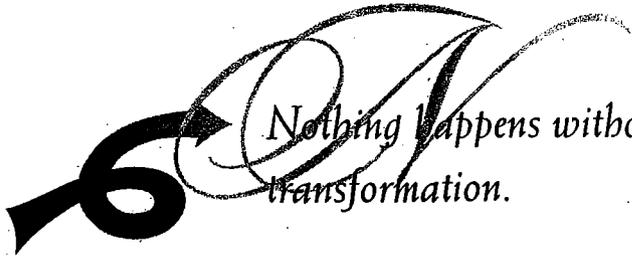
Theory C would hypothesize that people are motivated by:

- The intrinsic satisfaction of accomplishing the work itself
- Emotional ownership of the work, which occurs when they are allowed to be creative (and creativity can be nurtured in anyone)
- The opportunity to understand and contribute to goals that are meaningful to the organization
- Leaders and managers who provide *direction* (vision) rather than *directions*, who are honest yet compassionate in all their communications, and who challenge and support people in achieving their goals
- Feeling appreciated and knowing that they matter to the company they work for and the people they work with

This is a theory of empowerment and it is the foundation for everything in *The Heart of Coaching*. The four management theories are compared below.

### Comparison of Management Theories

<b>Attitude Toward</b>	<b>Theory X</b>	<b>Theory Y</b>	<b>The Z Organization</b>	<b>Theory C: Transformational Coaching</b>
<b>Work</b>	Is essentially distasteful	Is natural, at least under favorable conditions	Is provided for a lifetime	Is one source of fulfillment and growth
<b>Creativity</b>	Workers have little capacity	Workers have much capacity	Subsumed by the collective wisdom	Creative choices unleash commitment and a sense of ownership
<b>Motivation</b>	People are irresponsible and lazy; they need a boss and orders to follow	People are internally motivated; motivation operates at social, self-esteem, and self-actualization levels	Belonging to the whole is the motivation. High social involvement; blending	Opportunity to contribute to meaningful goals; focus is on self-esteem and self-actualization
<b>Management Approach</b>	Highly structured and controlled; short-term fixes are the order of the day	Openness and trust; support and encouragement	Consensus decision-making; slow process; holistic concern	People are treated as adults, with honesty; vision is provided for direction; coaches challenge and support performance



*Nothing happens without personal  
transformation.*

W. EDWARDS DEMING



# Transformational Coaching Defined

## *What It Is and Its Connection to Leadership*

The working definition of Transformational Coaching is:

*"the art of assisting people enhance their effectiveness,  
in a way they feel helped."*

To accomplish this outcome, coaching must be a comprehensive communication process in which the coach provides performance feedback to the coachee. Topics include all work-related dimensions of performance (personal, interpersonal, and technical or business skills) that affect the coachee's ability and willingness to contribute to meaningful personal and organizational goals.

A coach acts as a guide by challenging and supporting people in achieving their personal and organizational performance objectives. If this is done as a trusted learning partner, people feel helped by the coach and the process. As they say, help is only help if it's perceived as help.

This coaching process becomes the foundation for creating the true "high-performance, feedback-rich" culture that is supported by feedback flowing in a full 360° fashion—down to direct reports, across to peers, and up to one's supervisor.

## The Meaning of Transformation

Let's talk about what "transformation" is and why this process fits that description.

Transformation is huge, sweeping change. To transform means to change in the way that a caterpillar transforms into a butterfly, or a baby into a child, and then into an adult. After the process is completed, the previous form ceases to exist. Ice no longer resembles water after its transformation; steam no longer has the properties of water.

The outcomes from applying the approach described in *The Heart of Coaching* are transformational in these ways. The process is transformational because it creates egalitarian, mutually supportive partnerships between people that transcend the traditional boss/subordinate relationship. The process changes the way that you, as coach, begin to think about these roles. It transforms your actions and your relationships. With transformed thought and behavior on behalf of the coach, and transformed working relationships built on mutual trust and respect, the working results are transformed. Greater resiliency and trust in the relationship create a more resourceful, creative reservoir from which to draw business solutions for challenges faced by individuals and the enterprise.

Using a big word like "transformational" to describe this process has many benefits. It certainly signals change. It encourages the coach and the coachee to engage fully in personal and professional development to support the accomplishment of goals and objectives. It sets the expectation that something big is going to happen.

In Transformational Coaching, we learn to look at business success factors differently—more broadly. Rather than focusing only on the bottom-line financial results, a Transformational Coach appreciates and develops the people and the processes by which they achieve those results.

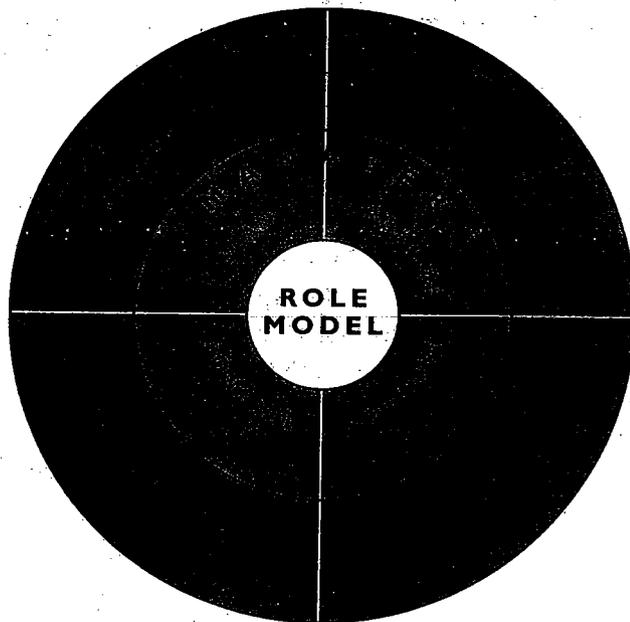


## Transformational Coaching and Other Leadership Roles

Transformational Coaching and leadership are inextricably linked, "coach" is one of the key roles a leader must play. Leadership is not restricted to the few people at the top and in charge of organizations. A broader definition of leadership is:

*The constructive influencing of others in the achievement of organizational goals and objectives by providing direction, support, and a positive example through role modeling.*

In my work with leaders at all levels of organizations, I have synthesized a model that captures the essence of the transition from "manager" (the person at the top, performing the traditional role) to "leader" (an expansive, new-paradigm role). This model (described below) builds on what Peter Drucker has identified as core management competencies (planning, organizing, motivating, and controlling) by adding five roles that form the essence of contemporary business leadership: visionary, servant, coach, facilitator, and role model.<sup>3</sup>



*We lead by being human.  
We do not lead by being  
corporate, by being  
professional or by being  
institutional.*

**Paul Hawken**

<sup>3</sup>These concepts appear in current business literature but are uniquely combined in this model.

*If you can dream it,  
you can do it.*

**Walt Disney**

*I don't know what your  
destiny will be, but one  
thing I do know: The  
ones among you who  
will be really happy are  
those who have sought  
and found how to serve.*

**Albert Schweitzer**

*A manager's task is  
simple—to get the job  
done and grow his staff.  
Time and cost pressures  
limit the latter. Coaching  
is one process which  
accomplishes both.*

**John Whitmore**

### **Visionary**

Leaders must be visionaries. They must have a clear, bright, compelling vision to provide the people they lead with a sense of direction. Their vision sets the context for strategy, mission, and goals; it serves to lift people's expectations to the possibility of creating a more desirable future together. Even leaders who are not directly involved in creating the organization's vision can use it as a guidance system and a touchstone for themselves and the people they lead. Leaders continually connect themselves and others to the vision of the business.

### **Servant**

The ability to be "in service" is a vital component of modern leadership. To become servants, leaders must mentally place themselves in that role, visualizing themselves in an upside-down organization in which the leaders serve others in the organization who, in turn, serve the customers. It is a huge mindset shift and is difficult to achieve. It is the rare leader who steps back and looks, listens, and appreciates the wonder of humanity surrounding him. Truly helping and being helped by others is an awesome experience, one we do not spend much time pondering. Making a real difference in people's lives is a privilege we all search for. Leaders are in a position to accomplish this by touching people in ways that honor them for the special people they truly are. The opportunity to serve others as a leader is a gift.

### **Coach**

Leaders can vastly increase their leverage by becoming coaches. Each of the other roles the leader plays is enhanced by the abilities he or she develops when learning to coach, because coaching is a communication process that focuses on connecting people to performance. Coaching helps people to clarify objectives and to discover more effective approaches for achieving those objectives.

## **Facilitator**

To "facilitate" means "to make easy." The purpose of facilitation is to draw people and their ideas out and to connect them (like an alchemist combines substances) with other people in a way that leads to positive outcomes. Leaders facilitate communication, change, collaboration, healing, connection, decision making, continuous improvement, and more. This list is incomplete but provides a sense of the initiatives, activities, and processes for which leaders need to assume a facilitative role. The paradigm-breaking portion of this role is to empower others to act on the organization's behalf by relinquishing control. This is easy to say and harder to accomplish.

*When actions are  
performed without  
unnecessary speech,  
the people say,  
"We did it ourselves."*

**Lao-Tsu**

## **Role Model**

The heart of leadership is to model the attitudes and behaviors valued by the organization. Those leaders at or near the top of organizations, by virtue of their highly visible positions, possess an incredible amount of influence over people's attitudes and behaviors. They define the culture by their words, actions, and deeds. They set the tone, pace, expectations, and standards for conduct across the organization. The shadows they cast are bigger than life, endure after they are gone, and constitute how they are remembered. In being role models, they create their legacies. Mid-level leaders, including first line supervisors, have the same ability to influence others by their actions.

*Modeling may not only  
be the best way to teach,  
it may be the only way  
to teach.*

**Albert Schweitzer**

## **Training, Counseling, Confronting, Mentoring, and Transformational Coaching**

What about other common management practices—training, counseling, confronting, and mentoring? Each of these management processes is a unique expression of coaching and occupies a place on the long continuum of Transformational Coaching. Although there are significant areas of overlap, and the terms are frequently used interchangeably, each practice has its own character. The most helpful distinctions may be in purpose, process, and content. Let's see how they relate.

### The Coaching Continuum

Training	Counseling	Confronting	Mentoring
Technical & job skills	Personal problems	Negative attitudes	Career development
Policies & procedures	Personal-growth issues	Behavioral problems	Political orientation
Work-task orientation	Coping/healing strategies	Substandard performance	Networking & exposure
Goals & objectives	Physical & mental health	Persistent concerns	Cultural fit

**Training** is the instructional process by which specific knowledge and skills are transferred to the trainee. Training usually focuses on technical job skills and orientation to the rules and regulations under which the trainee is expected to perform his or her role. Training is not optional, and usually occurs early in the employment cycle at any time when new skills are required. In a high-performance learning organization, training is an ongoing and never-ending process of continually improving the capacity and quality of the organization's biggest asset—its people.

**Counseling** is helping people who have personal or interpersonal issues, inside or outside of work, that are interfering with work performance. Often, this type of intervention leads to external professional counseling services, in which the focus is on clarifying the exact nature of the problems and healing the emotional issues. When counseling is needed, most organizations fulfill their sense of responsibility by finding a helpful way to see that these needs are addressed. Counseling usually is not optional, especially when management is aware of issues on which people need help.

**Confronting** is how we deal with negative or disruptive behavior or less-than-acceptable job performance. In this form of Transformational Coaching, the coach directly addresses issues and concerns about what is not working. The coach clarifies goals and objectives and the related shortfall of current performance, and then helps the coachee move toward solutions. When confronta-

tion is handled effectively, it results in positive resolution and changed (or enhanced) behavior and/or performance. Confronting is not optional; it is required for teams and individuals who want to achieve high performance.

Mentoring is a process in which mature and more experienced managers share their wisdom and experience with younger employees on a one-on-one basis. Mentoring typically addresses issues of inculturation, career growth, political savvy, and personal networking in the organization. It usually occurs within a formal, structured program. Mentors assist their "mentees" to gain perspective, exposure, and opportunities within the organization. Although highly desirable, mentoring is optional for both the individual and the organization.

Because each of these practices can be viewed as a specific expression of coaching, the Transformational Coaching model you are about to see should provide a deeply helpful framework to support your ongoing development in these related areas.

## Characteristics of the Transformational Coaching Process

As a practitioner of Transformational Coaching, I am always trying to learn and grow and become more effective. As I used and studied a variety of coaching models, I became aware of their strengths and limitations—especially the limitations of what I regard as the "telling" approaches. In designing the Transformational Coaching model, I incorporated the best of what I have seen, addressed problems inherent in some of the models, and added my own ideas. As a result, the process of Transformational Coaching is distinctive. Its characteristics include the following:

First, **it is data-based.** It is important that any coaching process be based on objective facts; the coach shares perceptions of an event or a situation in objective, behavioral terms. Although it is impossible for anyone to filter out all of his or her subjective evaluations and judgments, it is essential to base a coaching session on as objective a description of the situation as possible.

Second, **it is performance focused.** It is important to focus on behaviors in the context of the effect they have (or do not have) on individual and organizational performance. Organizations exist to provide products and services for their customers. Consistently achieving that objective extremely well is becoming more complex and difficult. Our ability to remain our customers' choice by providing those products and services at competitive prices is what this process facilitates. This model is designed to help keep the focus on addressing issues that either enhance or inhibit performance.

Third, **it is relationship focused.** As you may have noticed, the quality of people's working relationships form the context for their ability and willingness to work together effectively. Your effectiveness as a coach is directly proportional to the quality of your relationship with the coachee. Rapport, trust, and permission are the essential building blocks of an effective coaching relationship. Therefore, in this book you will find many communication processes that create a connection and mutual respect between people.

Fourth, **it is slower, not faster.** Most of us work at a breakneck pace. The unintended consequence of this fire-fighting mentality is often a diminished quality of interaction and communication between people. The Transformational Coaching process, when effectively used, requires people to slow down, listen more deeply, learn, and become less reactive. It requires more patience than most people are accustomed to exercising in their interpersonal communications. This allows them to become better connected. Personal connection is one of the missing elements in contemporary society and in many people's work lives.

Fifth, **it requires "dialogue."** Transformational Coaching is not based on telling. Assuming nothing, sharing feedback, asking questions, listening to answers, making suggestions, and exploring options are key Transformational Coaching skills. This usually means that a different kind of relationship is necessary. Information-age working relationships are becoming more egalitarian and less autocratic and include a mindset shift from being "The Boss" to being "The Coach." This will be discussed in more detail later.

**Sixth, it requires more heart.** I have been touched by the concept of *unconditional positive regard*.<sup>4</sup> This phrase defines "more heart." Being able to value and esteem people establishes a tone of openness, compassion, vulnerability, and humility on the part of the coach. Invariably, this improves the quality of the human connection and the coach's ability to work effectively with people.

Bringing more heart into work represents a dilemma for most managers in modern organizations. We have been conditioned to believe that the appropriate way to treat employees is to keep them at a distance. We think, "*Don't get too close to people. If you do, you can't retain your impartiality. They will take advantage of you.*" We carry these messages around in our heads—what Peter Senge, in *The Fifth Discipline*, calls our "mental models"—and they prescribe how we are to act as managers.

Transformational Coaching is a very personal process; it will be neither helpful nor effective unless the coach is able to develop mutual positive regard with the coachee. Our humanity enables us to connect through the heart.

**Seventh, it requires humility.** I have worked with feedback and coaching models that assume that the coach's observations are always correct and the accompanying recommendations are always appropriate for the coachee, as if the coach sees all, understands all, and has all the coachee's answers. Nothing is further from the truth. Transformational Coaching is based on mutual dialogue, with the intentions of eliminating arrogance and fostering a mutual understanding between the parties. In this approach, learning occurs for *both* the coach and the coachee *throughout* the process.

**Eighth, it requires balance.** The intent of Transformational Coaching is to improve the balance in the thinking, language, and behavior of both the coach and the coachee. It aims to improve the balance between head and heart; performance and relationships; what is known and what is unknown; and mind, body, and spirit. To this end, legitimate areas for Transformational Coaching include not only the measurable results that management usually focuses on but also the subjective areas of attitude and behavior.

<sup>4</sup>A phrase originated by pioneering psychologist Carl Rogers

*Self-responsibility is the understanding of, and acceptance of, the fact that your interpretations, not outer circumstances, determine your ability to respond to people and situations.*

**Drs. David and  
Rebecca Grudermeyer,  
Sensible Self-Help**

Finally, it **requires self-responsibility**. People sometimes need encouragement to be fully accountable for the aspects of their behavior that affect others. An intentional and challenging thread of self-responsibility runs through Transformational Coaching. It is there to assist coaches and coachees to take conscious ownership of their thinking, feelings, and actions and the effect they have on their co-workers. A coach role models this value (among others) and explicitly uses assertive and self-responsible approaches to communicate clearly and effectively.

## **What is Possible?**

As mentioned earlier, the power of a paradigm is that it reflects deeply held beliefs which describe what is acceptable and expected. It is clear that if we are to shift people's behaviors, we must ultimately shift their underlying beliefs. (More is described in the next chapter about The Results Cycle that shows the connection between Beliefs, Behaviors, Relationships, and Results.)

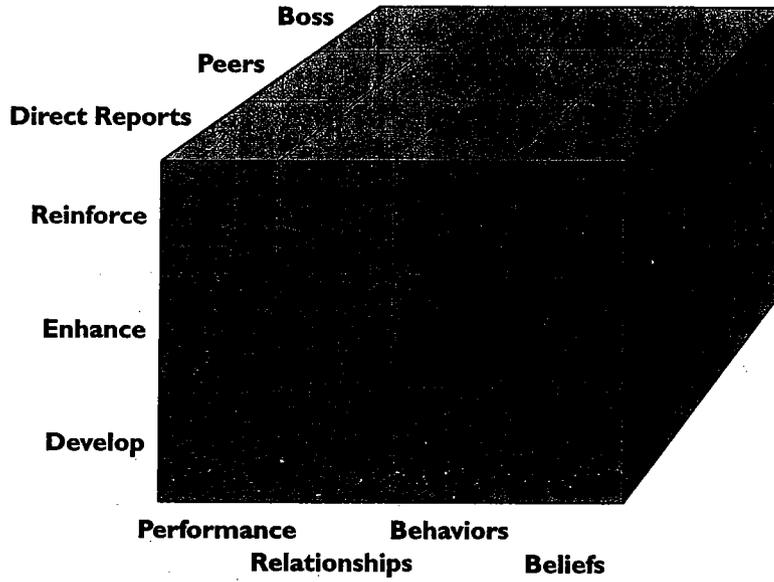
If the intention of an organization is to truly transform their culture into one that is egalitarian and built upon high mutual trust, a new organizational belief system may be necessary.

The Transformational Coaching Paradigm shown here opens up the possibility of coaching becoming a cultural practice where feedback flows up, down, *and* sideways throughout the organization. This three-dimensional figure shows how deep and wide the feedback patterns can become. It replaces the belief system that coaching *only* comes top down from the boss to the direct report. Feedback is delivered to Reinforce, Enhance, and Develop people and their skills. It covers the spectrum of Performance, Relationships, Behaviors, and the Beliefs lying beneath the behaviors.

This paradigm becomes the foundation for the practice called *Transformational Coaching*.

## The Transformational Coaching Paradigm

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*Coaching is a profession of love. You can't  
coach people unless you love them.*

**EDDIE ROBINSON**

Head Football Coach, Grambling University

(One of only four football coaches to win over 300 games)



# An Overview of the Transformational Coaching Process

This chapter gives you a job description of the coach and a bird's-eye view of the process.

## The 7 Key Elements of a Transformational Coach's Job Description

A job description for a coach would look something like this:

The coach must:

- Invest time to get to know people as people
- Understand people's roles, goals and challenges on the job to be helpful
- Set clear expectations (GRRATE)
- Observe people's work closely enough to have relevant and substantive feedback
- Provide timely, candid and specific feedback regarding what you observe and interpret as the impact on yourself, other people and performance

- Stimulate learning, growth and performance improvement by asking effective learning questions—offer suggestions as necessary
- Leave people feeling supported and empowered to contribute at increasingly higher levels

This job description represents a compilation of thousands of people's input regarding what truly effective coaches do. The model that follows is a systematic and comprehensive framework that will help you meet all the requirements of the job description.

## The Three Phases of Transformational Coaching

Transformational Coaching is accomplished in three phases:

- **The Foundation Phase**, in which you create a coaching relationship (the climate where coaching occurs) and in which you prepare for a particular coaching session;
- **The Learning Loop**, in which you share your feedback, listen to your coachee, engage in dialogue to learn from the exchange, and
- **The Forwarding-the-Action Phase**, in which you create positive momentum and a commitment for change.

This chapter provides a brief overview of the process itself; Chapters 4, 5, and 6 describe each phase and step of the process in detail. In Chapters 7, 8, and 9 you will find specific guidance about what you might say during a coaching session and how you might say it.

### Phase I: The Foundation Phase

Transformational Coaching requires a foundation of trust and shared expectations, laying important groundwork for what is to follow. The foundation phase consists of four steps:

- **One: Connect.** In this step, you establish the coaching relationship, whether with a direct report, a peer, or one's supervisor. It occurs in a series of interactions between you and your prospective coachee. Use this time to establish

rapport, clarify your expectations of each other, review the Transformational Coaching process, and make a commitment to using the coaching process in your work. It is also important to identify what job-related challenges each of you would like to address, especially with one's peers or supervisor.

- **Two: Set GRRATE Expectations.** After the ground rules and coaching roles have been established, the second step for coaching relationships between a supervisor and a direct report is being clear on responsibilities. This includes Goals, Roles, Responsibilities, Accountabilites, Timeframe, and Empowerment. In peer coaching relationships, this step is



usually irrelevant because the areas for focus have been shared in step one. Peers could explore how each might support the other more effectively on shared work processes or special projects on which they directly interface. In a coaching relationship with one's supervisor, each might share developmental goals and relationship issues that could be worked on together in the coaching partnership.

- **Three: Observe.** Observe your coachee's performance, how he or she interacts with others, and your perceptions of the outcomes and results. Coaches need data on which to base their coaching. The challenge is to gather it with as little subjective distortion as possible to set up the conditions for optimal mutual learning.
- **Four: Prepare.** This is your internal and independent work as the coach. Become conscious of your thinking (the assumptions, beliefs, interpretations, and judgments) that may be influencing your perceptions. With this heightened awareness, collect your thoughts and develop the information and strategy for the coaching intervention. This self-awareness pays huge dividends in helping you to be objective and self-responsible in the exchange that follows.

The Foundation Phase is covered in detail in Chapter 4.

### **Phase II: The Learning Loop**

This is of central importance to the Transformational Coaching process. Its purpose is to create mutual learning, and deepen insights and respect for one another. Although the other two phases of Transformational Coaching are more or less linear, the Learning Loop is purposefully circular, thus more "organic." Continue to iteratively use this part of the coaching process as long as needed to clearly communicate and "get on the same page." It consists of five steps:

- **One: Be Present, Request Permission, State Your Purpose and Your Positive Intentions.** Focus your conscious attention on the person and the situation at hand. Do a "permission check" with your coachee to ensure you are about to exchange coaching at a time and place that works for both parties, and establish the purpose and positive outcomes you intend to achieve during the coaching session. These actions set the tone for the coaching session, which might continue on the spot, or be scheduled for later.

- Learning Process
- **Two: Share Perceptions of the Results Cycle.** The Results Cycle (described in more detail in Chapter 5, and found on the back side of the snap-out card in the back of the book) captures the essential elements of how we go about getting results. It suggests a "causal effect" as you rotate around what becomes a self-reinforcing cycle. Simply, our *beliefs* drive our *behaviors* which influence our *relationships* that lead to our *results*.

Any and all of these aspects are appropriate for the coaching conversation, and include: **Performance** (as quantified and expressed in dollars, time, quality, customer satisfaction, etc.); **Relationships** (between yourself and the coachee, or between the coachee and others and includes trust, rapport, respect, collaboration, sharing, etc.); **Behaviors** (style, habits, work practices, sense-of-urgency, etc. observed or reported to you by others).

Once the actual conversation has begun, lead the discussion by sharing your perceptions of the above factors in objective and non-judgmental terms. Since most of us have been conditioned to focus on what is wrong or could go wrong, it is important to balance your feedback on both what is working and what could be improved. We are helpful to the coachee if we are willing to share the connections we perceive exist between their behavior and the results, outcome, or impact (the ROI) upon their performance and working relationships.

- **Three: Ask Learning Questions to Explore Beliefs.** This aspect of The Results Cycle includes: assumptions, interpretations, values, and judgments that stand behind one's actions. People usually do things with a purpose in mind. Our primary job as a coach is to understand our coachee's purpose and perceptions. Once we better understand their perceptions of performance or a specific event, we are in a better position to figure out what we each might do differently.

*"I'll see it when  
I believe it."*

**Wayne Dyer**

- **Four: Respectfully and Reflectively Listen.** Listen deeply to people's answers. Simple reflection or mirroring back to the coachee is a powerful process that supports you being fully present with your coachee and listening with both your mind and heart. This deeper listening demonstrates respect and builds trust and rapport, even though you may disagree with the ideas you hear.

If the dialogue process has been effective, you and the coachee feel listened to, respected, and "on the same page."

The Feedback Loop is covered in detail in Chapter 5.

### **Phase III: The Forwarding-the-Action Phase**

In this phase, the coach moves the action forward in several ways. How this occurs depends on the situation and who you are dealing with. Regardless of whether you are working with a direct report who is on the verge of being fired or a star employee who is meeting all expectations and then some, or your peer or supervisor, you will forward-the-action by some combination of the following five steps.

The first three steps represent intervention options depending on the type of situation that is faced. Most successful coaching occurs at the first level, given there is a positive coaching history and relationship between the coach and the coachee. The second and third optional steps require more assertiveness on behalf of the coach and would be utilized if the first option yields unsatisfactory results over time. The first three progressive optional steps are:

- **One: Solicit and Suggest Options.** Since the best improvement ideas usually come from people who are actively engaged in doing a task, first ask the coachee for the options they see available to them. Being asked for input continues the feeling of a collaborative conversation, and, ultimately, leaves the coachee feeling empowered to act on idea(s) that may end up coming from them. If the coach has suggestions that have not been identified by the coachee, offer them up as well. As a coach, resist the

tendency to "show how smart you are" by solving the problem first. Be patient. Continue to ask questions. The coach can best focus on supporting the coachee developing their critical thinking skills, being actively engaged in the solution, and building competencies.

- **Two: Request Specific Changes.** Based on your ongoing perception of the coachee's recent attitude, behavior, results, and the state of your relationship, you may need to escalate beyond offering suggestions. As coach, you be more assertive by specifying the nature of the change you want or need to see. Being specific by explicitly stating your needs can clarify expectations for both parties. These types of conversations may feel a little less collaborative, but are important in helping a coachee who is either struggling or resisting the previous approach of step one.
- **Three: Require Changes in Performance Levels and Clarify Consequences.** This option is a highly assertive and directive intervention. It is used when none of the other preceding interventions have been effective at creating a positive, sustained change. You may have begun an informal or formal progressive-discipline process, and need to state the behavior and performance level required for continued employment. It includes a timetable and full disclosure of the consequences of not meeting the requirements. If there is still hope for a "turn-around" this step is appropriately characterized as coaching. Only if hope is gone and the person is in the final stages of being terminated, does it cease to be authentic coaching.

Steps four and five can be included in nearly all coaching conversations.

- **Four: Clarify the Action Commitment and a Follow-up Plan.** Often, it helps the coachee gain focus if the coach asks them to state their understanding of their action commitment regarding what is going to happen and when. This is especially helpful if the conversation has explored various options and alternatives, and potential confusion exists on

either side. This is also a good step to complete for assignments or projects that either the coachee or coach has a large stake in the outcome. The follow-up plan simply addresses when and how the next progress check might occur. Given the fullness of people's job responsibilities these days, this accountability-setting step may be critical for the coachee's/project's success.

- **Five: Offer Support.** A powerful way to conclude a collaborative coaching session is for the coach to ask the question "How can I support you?" Without taking ownership of any "problem" or action steps that belong to the coachee, this signifies commitment on behalf of the coach. It is designed to uncover possible actions the coach can take to optimally support the coachee, which reinforces the feeling of a true partnership between both parties.

Chapter 6 covers the details of the Forwarding-the-Action Phase.

If this third and final part of the process model seems familiar, it is. Most managers and leaders have a tendency to focus on Forwarding-the-Action. "Make things happen NOW!" is classic Theory X in action—driving, pushing, and demanding results. It may be comfortable and familiar, yet this vital part of the coaching process often leads to unproductive stress, resistance, and resentment on behalf of all parties because little or no learning occurs. At best, Theory X achieves compliance.

The first two phases of the Transformational Coaching process are designed to create the relationship to support committed action that evolves through the collaborative, high trust dialogue. If people are not fully engaged at work, they are simply "going through the motions." Coaching that engages the heart leads to the release of discretionary energy, passion, and best efforts.

It is also important to note that the coaching process repeats itself. The content from one session becomes the context for the next session. It is a threaded dialogue through time that becomes more focused and empowering for both players who are co-creating the future in a collaborative partnership.

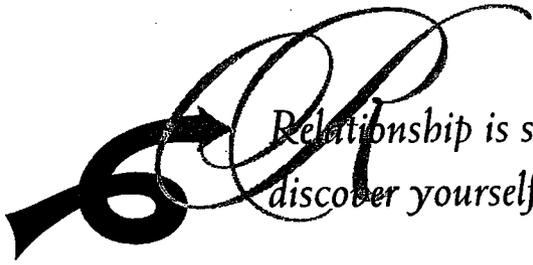
The Transformational Coaching process both guides the creation of the coaching relationship and guides each ongoing coaching conversation.

Let's look at this process in more detail.



*Until one is committed, there is hesitancy, the chance to draw back—  
Concerning all acts of initiative (and creation), there is one elementary  
truth that ignorance of which kills countless ideas and splendid plans:  
that the moment one definitely commits oneself, then Providence moves  
too. All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise  
have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising  
in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and  
material assistance, which no man could have dreamed would have  
come his way. Whatever you can do, or dream you can do, begin it.  
Boldness has genius, power, and magic in it. Begin it now.*

**Goethe**



*Relationship is surely the mirror in which you  
discover yourself.*

**K R I S H N A M U R T I**



# The Foundation Phase

*Connect, Set Expectations, Observe and Prepare*

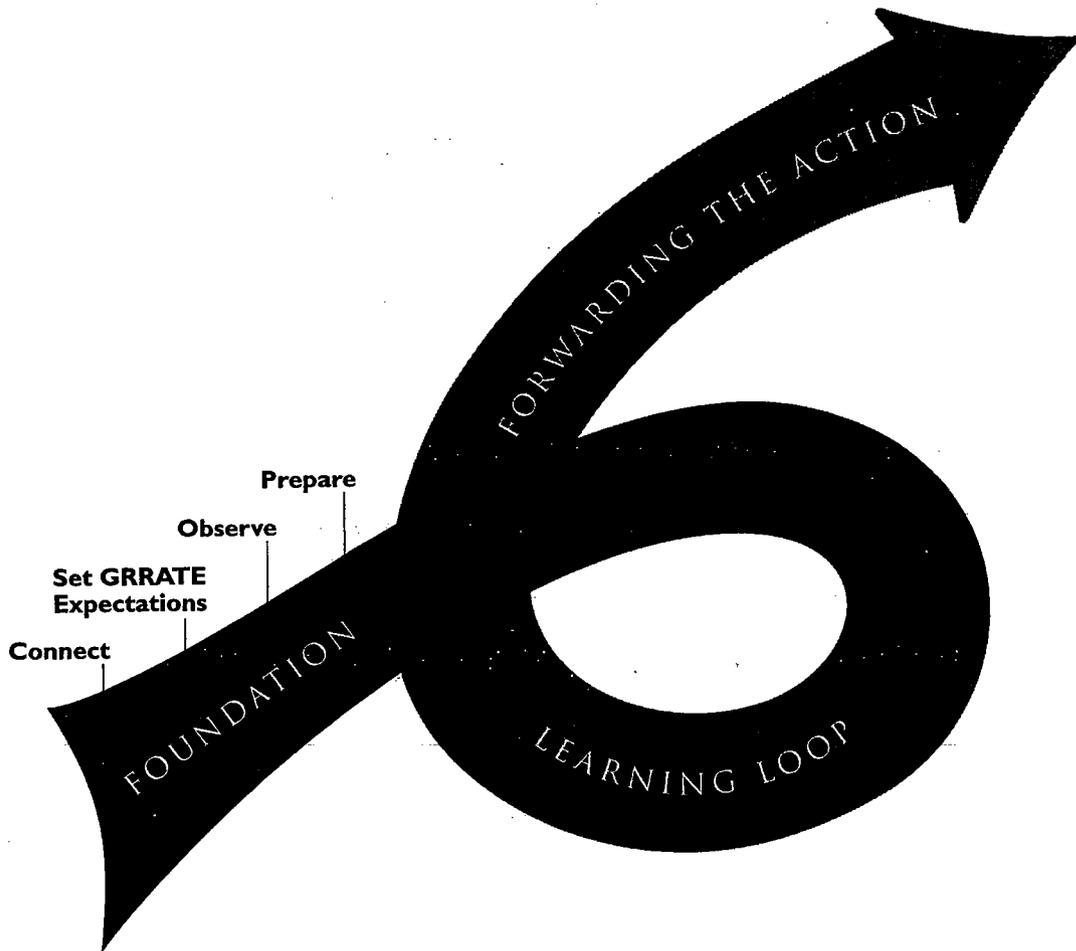
This phase consists of four steps: connecting, setting expectations, observing, and preparing. These steps flow chronologically, each one building on the preceding and forming the basis for the next step. The first two steps provide an effective way for the coach and coachee to establish a strong and ongoing coaching relationship, plus form the basis for each future coaching conversations.

## One: Connect

This is the time when the coach and the coachee establish the rapport and trust that create an enduring coaching relationship. For most leaders, managers and supervisors in today's working environment, there is already some level of rapport and relationship present. With new employees the process starts fresh. With peers and one's supervisor, the conversation is different, yet will contain several of the following topics that should be discussed fully and explicitly for all coaching relationships:

## Transformational Coaching: The Foundation Phase

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- Get to know one another as people—share personal aspects of one another's lives that may be unknown, yet appropriate to know
- Share each person's motivations and passions about their work
- Develop a common understanding of the purpose and process of Transformational Coaching and commit to using the process as they work together
- Establish expectations for the mutual coaching roles each will play in this partnership
- Discuss the goals or objectives that will be the initial focus of the coaching sessions
- Share how each wants to be coached in this two-way process

### **The Creation of Rapport**

Establishing rapport is critical to the success of the coaching relationship. Consider this—without rapport, the feedback between people is likely to be just more "noise." With rapport—and the trust that usually accompanies it—feedback is much more likely to be appreciated, accepted, and used for learning. Here are several steps to guide your behavior through the ongoing process of developing rapport and trust with people.

- Be approachable and easy to talk to; take the time to be available to listen; be fully present
- Be a "safe" person who does not hold what people say against them and never engage in reprisal
- Acknowledge people when they speak; appreciate that their communication may involve personal risk taking
- Validate their experience through empathic and reflective listening
- Be open and authentic in sharing your thoughts and feelings and the lessons learned from your life experiences
- Build and nurture trust in all your relationships

- Find the common ground—the dreams that excite you and the goals that you share
- Keep all agreements; renegotiate quickly when you see that you can't keep your end of an agreement
- Be congruent in your thoughts, words, and deeds

## Two: Set GRRATE Expectations

Setting expectations is critical for the ongoing coaching relationship to be successful. For a supervisor and a direct report, the process may be effective delegation—the process of handing off a task or project for completion. Between peers, the conversation would address how they might work together more effectively; between a direct report and their supervisor, address the nature of their working relationship and how it might be enhanced. In teambuilding and coaching workshops I conduct, the people who are direct reports of supervisors who do not provide much coaching frequently would like to know more about how their work performance stands in their supervisor's eyes. Establishing a coaching relationship UP addresses that need.

The acronym "GRRATE expectations" provides the framework for discussing important areas between people that most frequently need clarification:

**G = Goals.** What are you/we attempting to accomplish? Clear goals are more difficult to establish than most people think. The coach and coachee should work on goal setting as collaboratively as possible so that they share ownership and end up being in full alignment. If the goals come top-down from the organization, then the goal-setting can focus on the HOW of implementation. Goal setting is usually more effective if your goals are: Strategic, Compelling, Specific, Measurable, Doable (yet a source of challenge), and supported by detailed Action Steps.

**R = Roles.** Who is going to be involved? This may be only the coach and coachee, yet many other players might need to be identified as part of the team responsible for completing the goals and action plans.



**R = Resources.** What resources are available for use on the project/initiative? Resources include people, equipment, information, ideas, books, websites, etc.—and, importantly, how to access them.

**A = Accountability.** Who “owns” what part(s) of the process or action steps? It may be a question of one process owner, or there might be other players from the organization who need to be accountable for results, and, thus, should be a part of this overall expectation-setting process.

**T = Timeframe.** The expectations need a timeframe to calibrate all parties thinking and coordinate planning. Without tying a timetable to the activities and final outcomes, you invite disaster.

**E = Empowerment.** Perhaps the most critical element of having clear expectations is the all-important feeling of empowerment. While the term may have accumulated negative baggage in the last decade, without a deep feeling of empowerment, people are not able to do their best.

In coaching situations where you are working with direct reports, the operative word is delegation.

## Delegation

Effective delegation between a supervisor and their direct report systematically addresses these areas: the dimensions of the task or project you are handing over, including its purpose, its importance, the details of the work itself, what success will look like, how the results will be measured, and questions your coachee may have. Each of these dimensions is described in the paragraphs below. This lays the foundation for the coaching sessions that follow, and the coachee to win. Poor or ineffective delegation guarantees confusion, disappointment, and ultimate failure.

## Purpose

Let people know the real “why” or intent of the tasks you are assigning them. It provides a context against which performance will be measured and provides the backdrop for the action. For instance, it is less effective to tell Bill to “Get the truck loaded

now" than it is to tell him, "Let's load the truck now because we have a new customer who is relying on this overnight shipment to get his production line back up." More information is more helpful. This also models inclusive language, which acknowledges that you are both on the same team.

### **Importance**

A few words about the relative importance of the task or project helps people to understand your sense of value and urgency about the job. Convey the necessary overall levels of quality, schedule completion date, and relative priority. For example, link the task to overall mission or strategy (if relevant) and indicate how it fits into the bigger picture. Seeing how their individual work directly connects to the larger organizational picture is usually a powerful motivator for people.

### **Details**

If the experience level of the coachee is low, fully describe the nature of the project to be undertaken, including all the nuances and fine points. Share any personal experience that may help the coachee understand the work. Share your understanding of technical or organizational obstacles. Most important, tell the coachee about shortcuts and remedies that might help things go better.

### **Success**

Define what successful goal achievement looks like. Do not leave it to your coachee's imagination or assumptions. What will the project look like, accomplish, and so on, when it is done to high-quality standards? Your role is to set clear expectations with the coachee so that when the job is completed, nobody is disappointed, especially customers.

Again, go for mutual understanding. Paint a vivid picture to make clear the results you (and the organization) are expecting and then ask the coachee to paint his or her version of the picture. Make sure that they match.

### Measurements

"No surprises" is the goal, so be clear about how success will be measured. What, how, when, and by whom will quality measurements be taken? Coaches frequently miss this step because it takes time to think it through. Make it part of your ongoing dialogue and follow-up process. What precisely is measured can be a collaborative decision, with the entire team involved. And, of course, keep a record of the commitments established, to be referred to when the assessments are conducted or reviewed. This provides great opportunities for reinforcing progress and celebrating successes along the way.

### Questions

Answer all questions. Encourage the coachee to reflect back to you, in his or her own words, how he or she understands the job. Be sensitive to the relative level of expertise and commitment he or she possesses. You do not want to offend by talking down, but you need a clear, mutual understanding. Using effective questions (see Chapter 8) will help you accomplish this goal and enable you to model this important skill.

### Three: Observe

In this step, you pay attention to your coachee's performance and how he or she interacts with others. You may want to take notes of the results of your coachee's actions and your perception of the ROI.

Your primary objective is to create a balanced perspective by considering how the coachee's behavior or actions (or lack thereof) negatively and positively affect his or her work performance and working relationships. It is important to consider the effect on people and working relationships, as most work is accomplished in groups or teams.

Several guidelines will help you to remain objective in your observation:

- Suspend judgment
- Assume innocence

*One thing I never  
want to be accused  
of is "not noticing."*

**Don Shula**

- Identify your assumptions
- Become curious
- Embrace humility

Each of these guidelines is explained below.

### **Suspend Judgment**

Our minds are conditioned to make snap judgments of situations and people. We attribute motives instantly, usually without a clue about the other person's reality. This is frequently followed by a negative assessment about the way the person did something, because we are often focused on what is *not* there, instead of what is there. We compare it to how we would have done it, and usually the person loses in our evaluation.

Effective Transformational Coaches learn to monitor their thinking processes and the content of their thinking. If they find themselves having critical thoughts, they learn to recognize them for what they are and set them aside, knowing that these negative thoughts will work against their ability to coach effectively.

### **Assume Innocence**

Give the benefit of the doubt to the coachee. Ask yourself, "How many people do you think get up every morning with the intention of screwing up?" Most of us are doing the very best we know how with the ability and awareness we have at that moment. This conscious question about people's intentions sets up the awareness that part of your job is to help people become aware of things they might not see. That is different from blaming them for what they do not see or for not being aware.

### **Identify Your Assumptions**

We all know the joke about how to spell "assume" and have probably experienced the negative consequences of not checking our assumptions. Effective coaching requires you to bring to awareness and validate your implicit assumptions for the following reason: to minimize their affect on your thinking. Additionally, it makes it easier to present and validate them during the dialogue that follows.

*One way to change people  
is to see them differently.*

**Barry Stevens**

### **Become Curious**

The older we become, the wiser we are—when we learn to acknowledge that we really don't know very much. Adopting an attitude of curiosity, especially in working with other complex human beings, is both healthy and effective. It requires us to suspend judgment, which facilitates the learning process. (Chapter 11 discusses how curiosity is the beginning stage of healthy mood management.)

### **Embrace Humility**

In the musical *Brigadoon*, there is a song entitled, "There, but for You, Go I." Although it is a love song, it also reminds me that we all face challenges in life. If we remember how fortunate and blessed we are, we can't take the full credit for our life situations. I believe there are greater powers at work in my life and in other's lives. I have found that becoming more humble helps me to transform negative thinking into compassion, and wanting into gratitude. These are important steps in the journey of becoming a Transformational Coach.

### **Four: Prepare**

In those coaching situations that permit time to prepare, this step offers an opportunity for the important and significant inner work of the coach. A Transformational Coach looks inside to the thoughts and feelings that color his or her judgment and, thereby, broadens the range of possible behaviors for the coaching intervention.

When coaching is delivered spontaneously or in-the-moment, the discipline of this step will help the coach to be authentic and appropriately responsive to the situation, as opposed to being reactive. The following guidelines help in this process.

### **Center Yourself**

Do what you need to do to become centered, calm, and collected before you coach. In most cases, you will be more effective if you have adjusted your mental and emotional state into being

*The will to win is important, but the will to prepare is vital.*

**Joe Paterno**

open, receptive, nonjudgmental, compassionate, and willing to learn. Feeling compelled to deliver the feedback at the moment of upset is the first clue that it is probably not the right time. It is a wonderful time, though, to hold up the mirror and take a closer look at why you are upset. What can you learn about yourself in this moment? Do you ever do what you perceive the coachee has just done? Do you need others' input before you (over) react? Use the upset to learn about yourself. You'll be a better coach. (More on centering appears in Chapter 11.)

### Handle Your Anger

Although you may have a message that you feel strongly about, you can permanently harm the relationship if you vent your anger, upset, and judgment on the coachee. It is, however, important for people to be authentic. Having anger is normal. During the coaching interaction, being genuine about how you feel about the outcome or the behavior under discussion is appropriate. It's OK to tell people that you are angry or upset or at your wit's end. That's real.

For example, what does not work is:

*"Henry! You make me angry every time you screw up on these customer quotes. You don't have a brain in your head!"*

It would be more effective to authentically say something like:

*"Henry, these quotes have mistakes in them. It angers me when this happens. We have got to start doing more accurate work. We need to talk about this and fix the problem—permanently!"*

What is not helpful is to let out-of-control feelings cause an outburst of blaming, accusation, or threatening language. There are many ways to ventilate strong feelings. Write a "damn you" letter but do not send it. Hit a punching bag. Work out extra hard. Scream into a pillow. Talk to a friend who can stay calm and listen, and perhaps coach you on your options. Prior to the session, use what works for you. Find whatever form of support you need.

*Helping people better manage their upsetting feelings—anger, anxiety, depression, pessimism and loneliness—is a form of disease prevention.*

**Daniel Goleman**  
*Emotional Intelligence*

To the extent that you can bring yourself under control and come to the process in a learning mode with the clear intention of helping, you will be a more effective coach.

### **Be Conscious**

This is a time to fully disengage your autopilot and consciously bring forward what the Buddhists call a "beginner's mind." Remember that you do not know the answers, the reasons, the rationale. Be ready to ask questions and listen with your heart. In the coaching dialogue that follows, your knee-jerk reaction may be your worst enemy. Purposefully set aside your conditioning and look at the situation through the eyes of your coachee. Be open, not righteous.

*Real freedom is the  
ability to pause  
between stimulus and  
response and in that  
pause...choose.*

**Rollo May**

### **Demonstrate Vulnerability**

In our society, being vulnerable often means risking being exploited. This dynamic is certainly true in competitive athletics, politics, and the free-enterprise system. However, operating from openness can have a powerful effect on working relationships. A coach can build trust by sharing his or her personal learning experiences (that is, mistakes). This makes the coach a real person to the coachee. When a coach shares at this deeper level, rather than continuing the exhausting dance of "image maintenance," the relationship becomes safer for both to learn. Vulnerability leads to approachability.

### **Limit Your Words**

It is easy to overwhelm people with too much information, too many ideas, or too many suggestions. You will be more effective as a coach if you can restrain yourself from telling the coachee everything you think he or she needs to know about the subject. Prepare your thoughts and say only what is required to convey your message. Less is more.

Never use the coaching session to deliver your version of the Sermon on the Mount. Moralizing is a sure-fire way to distance yourself from the coachee.

### **Contemplate Your Questions**

Learning is best facilitated by asking questions from your heart. Offer them openly, without setting up the coachee for embarrassment or backing the person into a corner. Ask questions with a genuine intent to discover the answer and gain insight. Such questions invite people into the process of discovery through sharing, growing, and being involved. In this way, the coach becomes a Socratic teacher.

### **Distinguish Between Requirements and Preferences**

It is a product of our conditioning to see something done by others, believe that it needs to be done differently, and assume that we know the right way to accomplish it. If coaches adopt this (possibly parental) view, they limit their ability to share a wider range of options, alternatives, and possibilities with their coachees.

Learn to appreciate your ideas for change as *preferences* (suggestions, options, alternatives, different approaches) rather than as *hard-and-fast requirements* (unless, of course, they really are requirements). Usually, people have good reasons for doing things the way they do and good ideas for implementing changes. Transformational Coaches take the time to find out and, in doing so, involve the coachee more effectively in the desired change.

## **Reflective Questions To Use in Preparation for a Transformational Coaching Session**

The following questions will guide you through the process of collecting your thoughts and preparing mentally and emotionally for a transformational coaching session.

1. What have you observed another do or not do (or heard from a third party) that you believe would help the coachee become more effective as a result of your sharing your perception? Is it within the coachee's personal control?
2. What do you perceive as the result/outcome/impact (ROI) of the coachee's behavior on performance and people?
3. What personal filters (assumptions, attributions, beliefs, stress level, personal needs, etc.) may be distorting your perceptions?
4. How do you feel about what you are perceiving (pleased, upset, irritated, angry, delighted, hopeful, depressed, etc.)?
5. What do you believe to be the coachee's level of awareness, openness, and willingness to address this attitude or behavior?
6. Is this a good time for you to have an authentic, fair, helpful coaching session? Is there a better time?
7. What is the broad focus of the coaching session (individual performance, working relationships, career development, cultural integration, etc.)?
8. What is your clear purpose for this session, and what would you like/need to accomplish as a result? Do you have any boundaries or specific requirements that must be met? Are there personal preferences you need to communicate?
9. What history (past experience, including agreements and current level of trust) do you have with the coachee that could be incorporated into how you approach this issue?
10. What is your best judgment of the optimal approach to use with this coachee about this topic?
11. Is this a matter that should be documented for disciplinary/legal reasons?
12. How does this situation mirror something of yourself back to you? What can you learn as a result?



*It is impossible for a man to learn what  
he thinks he already knows.*

EPICETUS



# The Learning Loop

## *Dialogue Fuels the Learning Process*

The heart of the Transformational Coaching process is using feedback and dialogue to gain insight—before you launch into action. Culturally, it is common to skip over this step because we are usually in such a hurry. Dialogue requires us to slow down some, but allows us to speed up later.

Let's start by taking a look at the concept of feedback.

### What Feedback Means

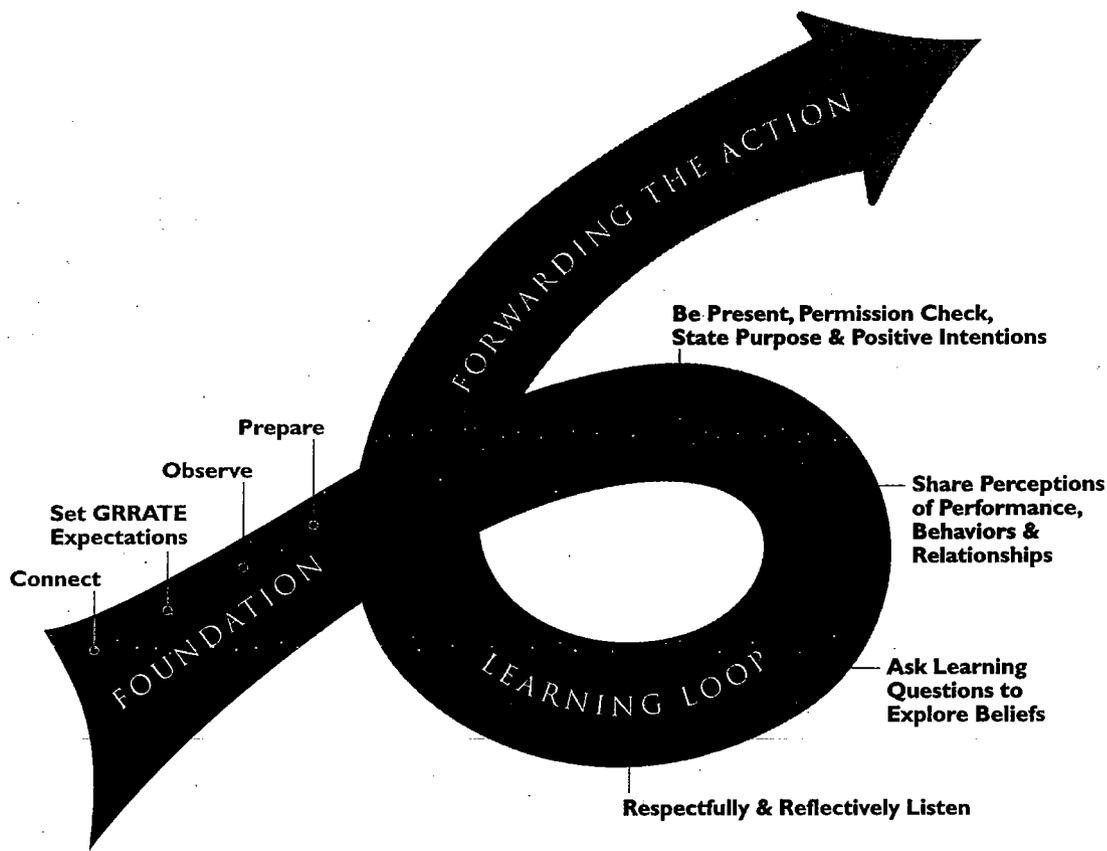
The term *feedback* originated in the field of cybernetics. It is derived from the dynamics of systems control. In closed-loop systems (such as a building thermostat that controls heating and cooling), feedback mechanisms deliver information about changes in physical states within the system, which allows the system to be controlled. Feedback is the data or information in the system regarding its performance.<sup>5</sup>

In a business context, feedback provides information from the environment about how individuals and groups are performing in terms of their goals. Financial reports, performance appraisals,

<sup>5</sup>For more background on feedback, read *What Did You Say? The Art of Giving and Receiving Feedback* by Charles N. Seashore, Edith W. Seashore, and Gerald M. Weinberg, (North Attleborough, MA, Douglas Charles Press, 1991).

### Transformational Coaching: The Learning Loop

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project evaluations, status reports, and a myriad of other tools provide feedback. In this context, feedback is also a *process* by which people share information and learn about certain aspects of work performance or the working relationship. However, negative feedback is not the same thing as criticism.

### Criticism

You have probably heard the phrase *constructive criticism*. If something is truly critical, how can it be constructive? "Constructive criticism" is an oxymoron; these two conditions cannot coexist. The affect of criticism on human beings, regardless of intent, is almost always negative. People usually do not feel helped when they are being criticized. Criticism is usually:

- A personal attack
- Focused on the problem rather than the solution
- Destructive, rather than constructive (even when it is called "constructive")
- Focused on past instead of future performance

Most critics are difficult people to work with. Their energy is usually negative or cynical. They are difficult to be around, as they usually drag good energy down to their level. Their presence can make already challenging work impossible to enjoy—or even to tolerate. Critics typically stress what is missing or wrong with an idea. That behavior usually creates defensive reactions and a critical state of mind for the receiver of the criticism.

The most important and helpful energy to create and nurture in people is positive energy. Although you need to acknowledge the reality of the business situation, learn to stress the positives, the possibilities, and the potential for greater things. This focus stimulates openness, innovation, and creativity and is a more helpful framework for solving problems. Helping people to focus on the path forward is much more productive than keeping them focused on what is wrong. (More on this appears in Chapter 6.)

Of course, some feedback is going to be negative—that is addressing performance-related issues where results are negative or less than expected. But the experience of receiving it does not

*"Constructive Criticism"  
is a scam run by people  
who want to beat you  
up. And they want  
you to believe that they  
are doing it for your  
own good.*

**Cheri Huber**  
***There Is Nothing  
Wrong With You***

have to be. When you have negative performance feedback to deliver, you will be more congruent with the positive intent and energy of coaching if you refer to it as *feedback*, *constructive feedback*, or *coaching*. Calling it *constructive criticism* sends a mixed message. Consider changing your vocabulary.

*Every time man makes  
a new experiment he  
always learns more.  
He cannot learn less.*

**R. Buckminster Fuller**

## Steps of the Learning Loop

With this background in feedback, let's look at the four steps of the Learning Loop:

- One: Be Present, Permission Check, State Your Purpose and Positive Intentions
- Two: Share Perceptions of Performance, Behaviors and Relationships
- Three: Ask Learning Questions to Explore Beliefs
- Four: Respectfully and Reflectively Listen

### One: Be Present, Permission Check, State Your Purpose and Positive Intentions

As effective coaches (and leaders) we must master our ability to focus our conscious attention on who and what is before us in the moment. Most of us have had experiences interacting with people who are scattered, frenzied, or anxious. It is not pleasant, however familiar this experience has become. Our western society actually encourages "multi-tasking" because we have a belief that we must "do it all." Many of us are really proud how many things we can get done—all at the same time.

While "multi-tasking" can at times be useful, it usually does not work well when dealing with people. We can all relate to the experience of feeling "lost in the shuffle." If we are too stingy with our attention, we inadvertently send a message that the person in front of us is really NOT that important. The "meta-communication" (*i.e.*, what is "felt" through body language and tone of voice) outweighs the verbal message that says we are paying attention.

As coaches, we have to pay attention to what we pay attention to, and people need be at the top of our list. "Being present" can be facilitated by doing simple things such as removing unnecessary



distractions, placing your phone on 'call forward,' making good eye contact, facing the person you are coaching, being emotionally honest, and listening with your head for the data and your heart for the meaning. Developing this mindful presence often takes a lifetime to master. These behaviors of "attending"—to the person and the communication environment—may not come easily, yet are very potent in building rapport and trust, both personally and professionally.

Requesting and receiving permission to give feedback is one of the most crucial steps in the Transformational Coaching process. Done well, it sets up a learning tone for the conversation. When you ask permission, you give your coachee an opportunity to make sure that it is a good time and the right place, that he or she can give you full attention, and that he or she is willing and able to listen. The simple act of asking permission demonstrates respect, which is the foundation for trust. You owe your coachee the opportunity to decline and wait for another time and place that will better meet his or her needs.

It is easy to catch people off-guard. If your coachee is under stress, in a low state of mind, or in a bad mood, a good coaching session is not likely to occur. Although it may seem extreme, I suggest that you *not proceed* with coaching unless you determine that the person is truly open to it right then. No permission, no coaching. It is better to defer it to another time.

Actually, the "permission check" is good for the coach as well. Can you imagine times when, although you might feel compelled to give feedback right this very moment, that it might not be the *best* time? Unmanaged anger causing a need to lash out, or your temporary inability to express your anger in a self-responsible way, may cause more harm than good to the relationship.

It is helpful to explicitly disclose your purpose and intentions up front. The Transformational Coaching paradigm from Chapter 1 can guide you. Is your purpose to Reinforce, Enhance, or Develop the coachee? This "RED" agenda provides a useful framework.

Hearing your positive objective up front will tend to put the recipient of the feedback at ease. Some supervisors inadvertently send shivers up and down the spines of their direct reports when they say (or worse yet, have others pass on the message), "I want

to see you in my office right now." Many people's minds go straight to "Uh oh! What have I done now?"

There are, of course, situations (such as award ceremonies or company-wide celebrations) in which it is impractical to request permission to offer feedback, especially if it is positive. But even in an established, time-tested coaching relationship, it is best to check anyway.

Asking for permission, stating your purpose and positive intentions is simple and straightforward and sounds like this:

*"Hey, Joe. Have you got a few minutes now, or would later be better? [PERMISSION CHECK] I'd like to share some feedback with you about that big project you're working on. [PURPOSE] I've got some ideas that might help you make the results even better." [POSITIVE INTENTIONS]*

## Two: Share Perceptions of Performance, Behaviors, and Relationships

In this step, you share with your coachee what you have observed and/or experienced.

### Offer Your Feedback

Share the experience on which your feedback is based. Describe your personal experience as perceptions or observations.

Initially, it is helpful to focus on three of the dimensions of The Results Cycle—performance, behaviors, and relationships. Behaviors are, perhaps, the easiest place to start—and the most challenging. The challenge is to be fair, objective and factual. Our tendency may be to come across as judging, blaming, accusing, or criticizing. One approach that will help us maintain a good balance is to cover both "what is working" and "what is not working."

We want to reinforce what is working well or has improved since our last conversation. Steven Covey often describes this approach as making deposits into the "trust account," so that we have a positive balance of good will to pull from when we have to deliver the more difficult feedback.

Part of our coaching conversation is to make clear the connections we see between our coachee's actions or behaviors, and the

ROI (the result, outcome, or impact) we perceive on performance and working relationships. It is useful to note that any given behavior often has both helpful and unhelpful (often unintended) consequences.

As we deliver feedback, remember to use self-responsible language by beginning your statements with the word "I." "You" statements tend to evoke defensive reactions.

Building on our conversation with Joe:

*"I noticed yesterday in our meeting with Production, that you seemed upset as you responded to Gene's questions. I know you are concerned and really want to do a good job on this new product, Joe, yet the impact on Gene was to make him feel like his concerns were not being taken seriously. Did you notice how his body language and tone of voice changed?"* [DESCRIBED PERCEPTIONS OF BEHAVIOR AND THE BALANCE OF GOOD NEWS AND UNINTENDED CONSEQUENCES]

It is especially powerful to share the impact the coachee's behavior might have had on you. Bosses and managers rarely take the time (or believe that it is important) to share what their "personal" experience has been.

#### SHARING FEELINGS

It may also be important to include how you *feel* about the subject at hand. Some people mistakenly believe that feelings have no place at work, and avoid or deny feeling content in work settings. Quite the opposite is true. High-performance teams freely exchange information about their feelings, both positive and negative, but they learn not to take it personally. In high-performance environments it is appropriate, normal, and healthy to share feelings, rather than to suppress them. Sharing them appropriately releases the emotional energy and passion that is a highly desirable commodity in the workplace.

In addition, the quality of interpersonal communications often is improved when people share explicitly what is happening at a feeling level. Offer this information in the spirit of full disclosure and authenticity. You are not likely to surprise anyone, most

*Authenticity in an adult is the ability to choose with whom and how to convey one's feelings, thoughts and boundaries in a self-responsible, non-defensive and respectful manner.*

**Drs. David and Rebecca  
Grudermeyer  
Sensible Self-Help**

people are aware of your feelings anyway, no matter how hard you try to conceal them.

So, with Joe:

*"I feel uneasy that we may be getting off to a bad start with these guys. This new product line has got to come off without a hitch. This makes me anxious."*

#### SHARING THIRD-PARTY INPUT

If the information you are sharing is from a third party, be sure to say so early in the dialogue. Minimize using third-party input. Instead, encourage everyone to deliver feedback directly. When you deliver third-party feedback, you risk perpetuating an inappropriate (and usually ineffective) communication triangle, and triangles exacerbate problems more often than they resolve them.

However, a productive use of a triangle would be to use the third party (with his or her permission) as a resource and coach for the particular problem you may be experiencing with your coachee. He or she may have helpful input, especially if they also speak directly.

One of the most powerful acts that coaches perform is letting people know that what they are doing is important and makes a difference. Ken Blanchard<sup>6</sup> says, "Catch people doing something right." Ken's point is well taken, but wouldn't you rather catch people doing something well or better? This de-emphasizes the 'rightness' vs. 'wrongness' of people's actions, and leaves more room for 'improvements'.

In American business, we frequently are so micro-focused on financial results that we miss tremendous opportunities to reinforce the positive and helpful things that people do to create those results. Let him or her know that what he or she is doing is important, how he or she contributes, and that he or she makes a difference.

Reinforcement is easily and elegantly expressed just by saying,

*"That was a nice job you did yesterday morning with our production plan. I appreciate your professionalism and responsiveness to our past concerns. Keep up the good work."*

<sup>6</sup>Co-author of *The One Minute Manager*, with Spencer Johnson, (Berkeley Books, New York, 1981.)

People value hearing these kinds of acknowledgments, in private or in public.

Let's take an in-depth look at the important aspects of feedback that make it most "hearable" to the coachee.

### **The 7 Qualities of Effective Feedback**

Delivering feedback is a key skill of Transformational Coaching. It forms a foundation on which the coaching relationship is built. To be effective, feedback must embrace these imperatives:

- Be intended to help, not to control or manipulate
- Be understood as a subjective interpretation and use "I" language
- Be delivered in the moment (or soon after)
- Presume innocence—without attributing negative motives
- Describe observed behaviors and impacts, not evaluate or judge
- Be authentic and candid—yet compassionate to build trust and respect
- Stimulate mutual learning and inspired action

Above all, effective feedback allows the receiver to maintain a sense of dignity, self-respect, and control over his or her choices or how to respond to the feedback.

The following paragraphs describe each of these qualities.

#### **FEEDBACK MUST BE INTENDED TO HELP, NOT TO CONTROL OR MANIPULATE**

Most of us have some control issues, and we all came to them quite honestly. It is normal (conditioned behavior) to try to persuade others to do what we want them to do. Controlling others is not right or wrong, but it is ineffective for creating high-performance, high-trust relationships. It is a short-term strategy for achieving results, because people eventually see the manipulation for what it is and end up resenting the controller.

What is in question is the coach's *intention*. Foremost in the coach's mind should be the question, "What am I really trying to do here?" The true intention to serve and help others is far more

*The simple act of paying positive attention to people has a great deal to do with productivity.*

**Thomas J. Peters and Robert H. Waterman, Jr.**

noble than attempting to control them. Controlling is the predominant (unconscious) strategy of a manager locked into the paradigm of being The Boss.

#### **FEEDBACK MUST BE UNDERSTOOD AS A SUBJECTIVE INTERPRETATION AND USE "I" LANGUAGE**

If you present information about what you have observed as The Truth, you run the risk of triggering a defensive reaction in the coachee. This, in turn, shuts down communication and learning—the qualities on which the coaching process thrives. When you use language that qualifies your feedback as *your point of view*, you level the playing field and remove judgment and arrogance from your dialogue.

*Projection* is the process by which I judge you for behaving in a way—or for having a trait or shortcoming—that I consider wrong or stupid, while pretending that I am free of the same behavior, trait or shortcoming. A good coach becomes aware of this (usually unconscious) internal process and continually monitors his or her tendency to project. Transformational Coaches choose to work on themselves, especially when they become extremely upset or judgmental. They know that whatever upset them about the other person is also true about themselves—which is why they became so upset to begin with.

To "own" your feedback, deliver it in self-responsible language. This means using "I" messages. ("I am annoyed with your tardiness," as opposed to "You make me mad when you are late.") Remember that you can only provide information from a subjective point of view; you can not deliver "The Truth", with a capital T. This is *your truth*, and it is worthy of being shared as potentially helpful information for another. This approach helps take the emotional charge off feedback, especially if it is negative.

#### **FEEDBACK MUST BE DELIVERED IN THE MOMENT (OR SOON AFTER)**

The most helpful feedback is received very soon after the incident on which it is based. Stale feedback is almost worthless, having lost its context and relevance, especially feedback saved up for year-end performance reviews. And you have to be cognizant

of sharing feedback at inappropriate or ineffective times. For instance, giving constructive feedback in front of other people might easily be embarrassing; if the coachee is really feeling good about something they just completed, you don't burst their bubble that moment.

#### **FEEDBACK MUST PRESUME INNOCENCE WITHOUT ATTRIBUTING NEGATIVE MOTIVES**

(These points build on the ideas presented under the Observation step in the Foundation Phase.) Give the coachee the benefit of the doubt. When you assume that another person is up to something devious or trying to get away with something, it affects your attitude and changes your tone of voice. Go into a coaching session assuming that the coachee was simply:

- unaware of how his or her actions came across
- distracted temporarily or under a lot of stress
- doing the best he or she was capable of doing at the time

Assume that your coachee was innocent of any negative intention to perform poorly. You will probably be right. Most people do not set out to make your day miserable; they set out to do the best they can, given the load they carry.

#### **FEEDBACK DESCRIBES OBSERVED BEHAVIORS AND IMPACTS, WITHOUT EVALUATION OR JUDGMENT**

Pay attention to the behaviors and interactions about which you want to provide feedback. Feedback based on personal observation is most accurate. Do not collect feedback from third parties, assume it is accurate, and blindly deliver it to the coachee assuming it is correct. The human filtration process (described in Chapter 11) creates so much bias and distortion that you must be sure to treat secondhand feedback with great care. Your job is to get both the facts and the context understood before you leap.

Feedback is most likely to be helpful and easy to hear when it consists of a simple, unadorned description of the behavior observed. Feedback draped in accusations, blame, or judgment is difficult to hear; the valuable information it may contain can go completely unnoticed.

Evaluative feedback sounds like this: *"Harry, you really screwed things up royally when you made those stupid mistakes. Why can't you ever get it right?"* Harry will not be able to do much with that type of feedback. Harry has just been attacked.

A non-evaluative, nonjudgmental version of the same feedback might be: *"Harry, I see a mistake here, and that is going to affect people's trust in these numbers. I would like to work with you on a way to keep these kinds of mistakes from occurring in the future. When can we talk about it?"*

#### **FEEDBACK MUST BE AUTHENTIC AND CANDID, YET COMPASSIONATE TO BUILD TRUST AND RESPECT**

In the Transformational Coaching process, coaches learn the value of accessing their hearts; in so doing, they bring more compassion into their coaching. Compassion does not mean "be soft on people." On the contrary, it means "be authentic and candid in delivering the message that needs to be delivered." To shade the truth or shield people from hearing what you perceive as the effect of their behavior is doing them a great injustice. The greatest gift you can bring to your coachees is to be true to your innermost thoughts and deliver authentic messages honestly and directly.

Caring about people is one of the basic reasons many of us choose to become a coach. Coaching is a path of service and can only be traveled out of genuine honesty with others.

#### **FEEDBACK SHOULD STIMULATE MUTUAL LEARNING AND INSPIRED ACTION**

The mark of a Transformational Coach is entering the conversation eager and open enough to learn from the coachee. Learning is the pathway to sustaining enhanced results. Without it, we are doomed to repeat the same actions that created the results in the first place. Someone defined insanity is doing the same thing over and over...and expecting different results.

If we have both learned something from and about one another, we are in a better place to take an inspired step toward better results in the future. Inspiration connotes enthusiasm, passion, and commitment. If we stay focused on this outcome, the coaching relationship stands the best chance to create "win/win" outcomes for both.

*We don't see things  
the way they are;  
we see things the  
way we are.*

**The Talmud**



### Appropriate Feedback Topics

Performance feedback at work can and ought to be delivered for any dimension of The Results Cycle. These dimensions are both subjective (including difficult-to-measure attributes such as attitude, morale, and cooperation) and objective (measurable results such as sales, cost reductions and production levels).

It is important to deliver feedback for both objective and subjective dimensions because the subjective components make up the processes by which the objective components (measurable results) are achieved. Subjective components of Relationships, Beliefs, and Behaviors include:

- Attitude and morale
- Alignment with organizational values and behavioral expectations
- Communications, openness, rapport-building skills
- Coaching skills (giving and receiving)
- Leadership style and its effect on others
- Specific behaviors and actions taken or not taken
- Collaboration and teamwork
- Creativity and openness to change
- Flexibility and adaptability
- Persistence and dedication
- Personal attitude of accountability
- Honesty and integrity

The more objective components of Performance include:

- Financial measurements of work tasks
- Organization of and approach to work
- Specific technical skills and competencies
- Achievement of departmental goals
- Sense of urgency, timeliness/tardiness
- Accuracy, thoroughness and completeness
- Planning effectiveness

*If at first the idea is not absurd, then there is no hope for it.*

**Albert Einstein**

### Three: Ask Learning Questions to Explore Beliefs

Ask questions that are specifically designed to elicit your coachee's points of view. Use open-ended (who, what, when, where, why, and how) questions that genuinely invite open sharing and begin with phrases such as:

- How does that affect...
- What did you notice about...
- What were your expectations when...

Phrasing questions this way invites coachees to share the situation that *they* perceive. Your job is to seek and create mutual understanding. Stay away from questions that can be answered "yes" or "no."

With our friend, Joe:

*"What do you think was going on with Harry and his team after things became tense?"*

Ask open-ended questions that explore values, assumptions, intentions, interpretations, etc. If we help people test their assumptions, ours get tested too. When we help people explore interpretations, we can't help but to share ours. This gentle questioning approach at this point in the conversation is for the purpose of personal discovery in the best sense.

Here is an easy-to-remember formula to guide your questioning process based on the vowels in our English alphabet. Here they stand for areas which to *explore* in your dialogue:

- A = Awareness (what has been noticed)
- E = Experience (thoughts and feelings)
- I = Intention (purpose and goals)
- O = Ownership (their part in the outcome)
- U = Understanding (their interpretation)

### Four: Respectfully and Reflectively Listen

Paying attention and listening deeply demonstrates respect and builds mutual trust by being sensitive and empathic.



Using a simple reflective listening process can be very effective. After Joe has responded for a moment or two, simply reflect back to Joe what you hear him saying... *"This is what I hear you are saying... have I got it right... are we on the same page?"*

The power of reflective listening cannot be overstated. Our tendency too often is to rush in and "fix" the situation. More often than not, people just want to be listened to. As a coach, we get to practice patience... and listening from the heart. When someone shares an issue or source of job frustration with us, after listening attentively, we can simply ask... "What do you think your options are?" They often KNOW what to do if we act as a sounding board, and encourage them to look within for their own answers.

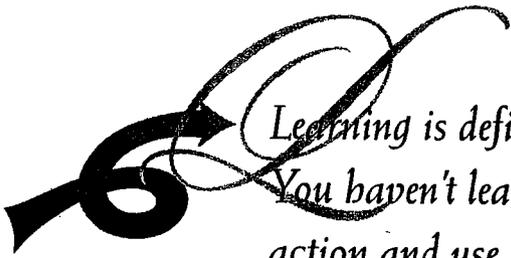
### How long do we talk?

This process of mutual dialogue and listening continues until the two of you discover common ground. Finding this sometimes-elusive common ground means discovering the goals, objectives, or purposes that you share, making it possible to align your thinking and actions. It is easy to focus on how people and their opinions are wrong when they differ from ours, but that kind of attitude creates walls in relationships and maintains separateness and conflict. (See Chapter 8 for a fuller treatment of the art of dialogue and how to ask effective questions.)

In my experience, stopping here is not only possible, but often advisable. This is because of the power of the Learning Loop. Most people, when they have a chance to slow down and hear compassionately delivered feedback about how their actions and behaviors affect their teammates, are genuinely touched by the experience. When their hearts are in the right place, it is obvious to them what their next steps might be. It need not be stated.

As the dialogue process draws to a close, those who want or need to focus their actions will naturally move into the next phase. For others, a gentle nudge is required. Transformational Coaches learn to 'invite' people into the next step of Forwarding-the-Action.

*Nothing is more  
terrible than activity  
without insight.*  
**Thomas Carlyle**



*Learning is defined as a change in behavior.  
You haven't learned a thing until you take  
action and use it.*

**DON SHULA AND KEN BLANCHARD**

*Everyone's a Coach*



# The Forwarding-the-Action Phase

## *Building Focus and Momentum*

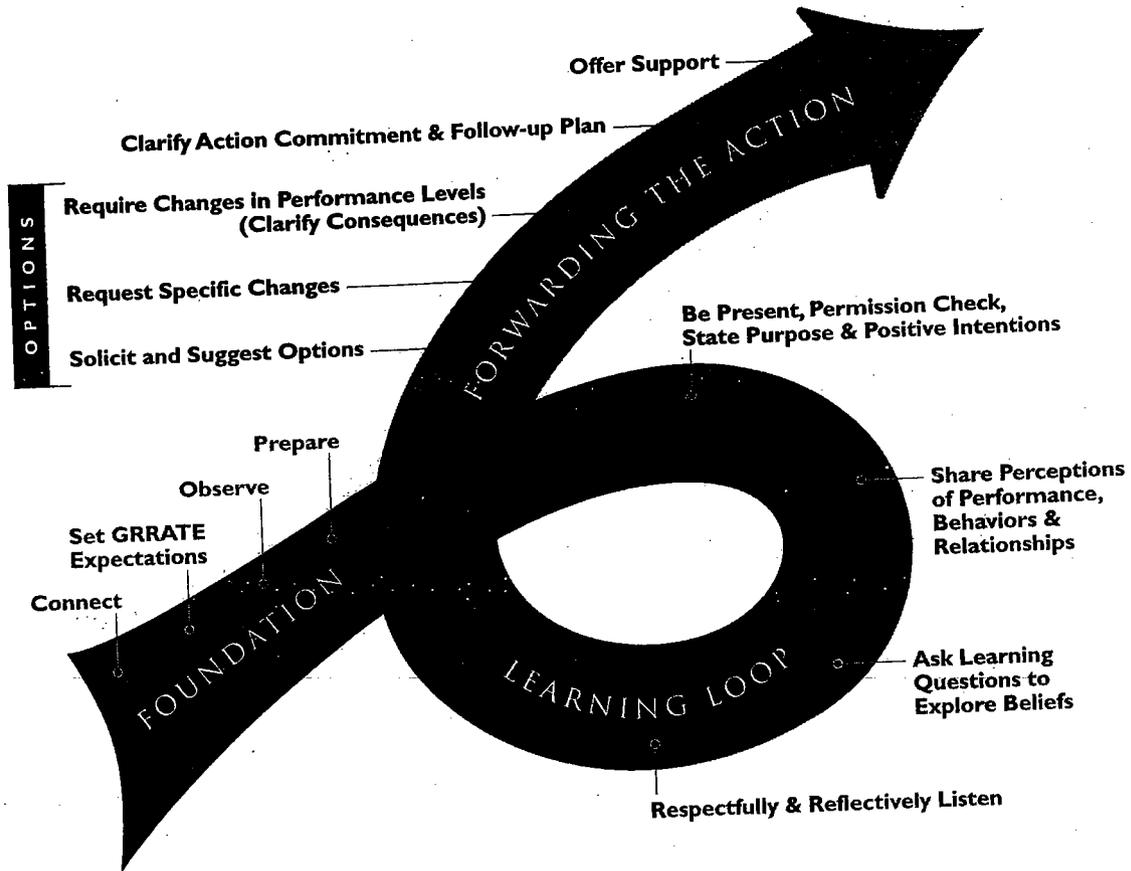
"Forwarding-the-Action" means the coachee creates a clear focus and momentum for success. There are several styles of intervention that vary in terms of the coach's assertiveness. The challenge for the coach is to select the most effective method through which the coachee feels motivated, clear and unstoppable.

Remember the spinning top you played with as a child? People are just like that top. After you overcome inertia, they keep moving. But sooner or later, they wind down—unless you add more energy. Forwarding-the-Action is the phase in which the coach adds more focus, energy, and passion.

Regardless of your coachee's level of performance, you will accomplish the intent of this phase in using either steps one, two, or three, and closing the conversation with steps four and five.

- One: Solicit and Suggest Options
- Two: Request Specific Changes
- Three: Require Changes in Performance Levels and Clarify Consequences
- Four: Clarify the Action Commitment and Follow-up Plan
- Five: Offer Support

## Transformational Coaching: The Forwarding-the-Action Phase



Within these steps, you will choose an approach based on the current performance success (or lack thereof), the state of the coaching relationship (the level of rapport), and your sense of what would be helpful for the coachee at this moment.

### One: Solicit and Suggest Options

Dr. Deming, the quality guru, tells us that 85% of the problems come from the system, not the people. And, we know that people performing job tasks often have the best ideas about how to improve the process. It stands to reason that the most effective action a coach could take is to simply ask the coachee what their ideas and suggestions might be. We empower people by encouraging them to be engaged, think critically, and tap their creative potential. Asking "what if" questions that encourage "outside the box" thinking are effective.

During the conversation, the coach can collaboratively offer their ideas, if they have not been mentioned. Make sure you present them as another options or suggestions, not directives. An open and trusting coaching relationship provides the forum for the exchange of lots of ideas regarding options, alternatives, and possibilities. It can be a great source of enjoyable learning, as long as nobody becomes too invested in having his or her way.

Options for enhanced performance can be offered simply.

*"I've got an idea that may help you cut costs another five percent. I think you could be even more effective in reaching your goal by using a zero-based approach on next year's budget. What do you think?"*

A suggestion does not have to be a big deal. The coach is just sharing ideas and the benefit of his or her experience in such a way as to be helpful. It is not a demand or a requirement—it is an offering.

### Don't Request Specific Changes

After several rounds of suggestive feedback, and performance or results do not show signs of shifting, perhaps the message is not getting through. Or, the relationship is suffering from poor trust

*I consider my ability to arouse enthusiasm among my greatest assets I possess. The way to develop the best that is in a man is by appreciation and encouragement.*  
**Charles Schwab**

or respect. In either case, the overall performance situation needs to be re-visited. First, determine whether or not the planned suggestions and commitments from previous sessions were acted upon, what the results were, what worked and did not, what was learned in the process, etc.

If the negative situation appears to be based on behavioral aspects of the coachee's performance, consider using a Behavioral Change Request (BCR)<sup>7</sup>. The BCR is a straightforward way to deal with a situation in which a behavior or attitude is ineffective or disruptive and is getting in the way of performance. It allows you to explicitly describe needs and expectations and gain a commitment for the behavioral change.

When this step is necessary, it assumes that the coach has already made suggestions but has yet to see a change in behavior or an improvement in results. The reasons could be many—the coachee is just not trying, is not paying attention or is not focused, has a lack of rapport with or respect for the coach, or has any number of other problems.

If you decide to ask for a behavioral change, first have a clear idea of what behavior you want changed. Then make a specific request for the change and focus on being clear. Attempt to keep rapport with the coachee as much as possible, but be firm in your request.

A BCR might sound something like this:

*"Mary, we have talked previously about your being late to meetings. I noticed that you arrived about ten minutes late again today. Because this continues to be disruptive, I need to ask you to either stop coming in late or to find a replacement to represent your department. How would you like to handle this matter?"*

This approach reminds Mary that this has been an issue before and is grounded in recent facts. It is also non-blaming and non-threatening. The coach states a clear, rational need and holds Mary accountable to choose her course of action. The problem remains Mary's, not the coach's. What Mary actually does as a result of this conversation becomes the topic of ongoing coaching sessions.

<sup>7</sup>A term learned from Mac Eaton, a heartfelt psychotherapist and friend in Del Mar, CA.

*I am always ready to learn, although I do not always like being taught.*

**Winston Churchill**

I also offer some words of caution. If, from your perspective, overall performance is less than what you believe is needed or possible, set up a coaching conversation for the purpose of discovery. I'm sure we have all, at one time or another, rushed to judgment about an event, a person, or a situation, only to find out later that our assumptions and interpretations were way off base. It is a fine line between our wealth of related job experience vs. our blind arrogance that causes us to think we know exactly what has happened and what ought to be changed.

If we slow down and ask questions and are willing to engage in dialogue to make sure we hear all sides of the story, we will discover that people usually do things for good reason. Coming from a mindset of 'curiosity' allows us to sidestep our tendency to judge, blame, and attribute motives. Being willing to see things with "fresh eyes" usually avoids defensive reactions or aggressive behavior from our coachees. Patience never fails to serve us well.

### Three: Require Changes in Performance Levels and Clarify Consequences

If unacceptable levels of performance continue, you may be left with no alternative but to escalate the coaching intervention to the highest, most intense level. You may have discovered through the coaching process that you are dealing with a problematic employee, and need to lay down the law in clear, unmistakable terms and fully document what has become a progressive discipline process. In these cases, the coach would reiterate the behavioral expectations, clarify the precise level of job performance needed to maintain employment in the current role, and identify the organizational consequences that will occur if the situation does not turn around in a specific timeframe.

In all cases, make sure that you are willing and able to enforce the consequences. Otherwise, you will lose credibility if you do not hold the coachee accountable for his or her personal behavioral choices or performance. If the coaching process works as it should and can, it will be clear to you that you have done all that can be done to make it work for this employee. We sometimes

*What gets measured,  
gets done.*

*What gets measured and  
fed back gets done well.*

*What gets rewarded  
gets repeated.*

**John E. Jones**

\*Someone once told me that the term "firing" came from the seafaring days of old. Apparently, troublemakers at sea were tied over the end of a cannon and the cannon was fired. This solved the problem. With this image in your mind, maybe "releasing" people to other opportunities—where they have a better fit and may contribute up to their full potential—may become the way you prefer to describe this process. It is for me.

lose sight of the fact that people make choices in the attitudes and behaviors they exhibit at work. Transformational Coaches understand that the most compassionate act they may be able to perform is to release people to find other places to work in which they can bloom.<sup>8</sup> They have no regrets because they know in their hearts that they did what they could do.

#### Four: Clarify the Action Commitment and Follow-up Plan

Regardless of which of the preceding three steps you use in the Forwarding-the-Action Phase, it may be helpful to move to the commitment step because of the clarity it creates.

If the coachee has received your suggestion openly, simply ask what the coachee thinks the steps "going forward" might be. This can be expressed and acknowledged verbally or written down for additional clarity. Do whatever is appropriate and most helpful to the coachee.

If the coaching situation has already escalated somewhat, it may be more important to document the plan, using some form of performance contract that captures the commitment for the behavior or performance change and states the timetable.

The basic Follow-up Plan does not have to be elaborate but should be taken seriously to ensure that the actions or contract for change are fulfilled. Such opportunities can become turning points in relationships and careers. However, if performance fails to improve over time (with lots of ongoing coaching), the appropriate disciplinary steps should be taken to protect the interests of the individual, the department, and the organization.

#### Five: Offer Support

Since the spirit of Transformational Coaching is creating a partnership, it is effective and helpful for the coach to offer support by simply asking, "How can I support you?" Agree to those things that are within your control and are reasonable to do. If the coachee is under a lot of pressure to meet performance targets, the support will be greatly appreciated.

You want to avoid taking on accountability for what coachees need to hold themselves accountable for doing, but your willingness to support them sends a strong signal of true partnership and collaboration. That builds trust.

Examples of appropriate support include: touching base at certain times to offer emotional support and encouragement, reviewing work output prior to completion or presentation for the purpose of providing feedback, making a phone call to "facilitate" changes with others, etc. Whatever is appropriate for the situation and helpful to the coachee should be considered by the coach as part of the role of empowering the coachee to win.

Chapters 6, 7, and 8 clearly illustrate (with examples) the language and conversational flow of the process. It is really easy to implement once the purpose and intent are clear.

*I believe people will do their best, provided they are getting proper support.*

**Debbie Fields**



*In any situation, the individual most able to describe reality without blame will emerge as the leader, whether designated or not.*

**Edwin Friedman**



*Believe that life is worth living, and your belief  
will help create the fact.*

WILLIAM JAMES



# Coaching Language

## *Finding the Best Words*

The words we use flavor everything we do. Coaches need to heighten their awareness and sensitivity to the words they use, becoming aware of the emotional energy and the impact they have on people. This chapter examines some of the more potent words and word combinations that, consciously or unconsciously, influence the quality of rapport and the connection we create and maintain.

In general, it may be appropriate to coach others when they seem to be unaware of how they sound. It is a coach's judgment call, but increasing another's awareness of how he or she may be perceived can really help the person to build rapport and trust with others. And, of course, relationships are the cornerstone of organizational performance.

### Specific Word Choices

A single word can change an attitude. The next paragraphs list word choices that can make a difference for you and your

### You vs. I or We

- *You* sets up potential judgment, blaming, and defensive reactions.
- *I* denotes self-responsibility and personal ownership of a point of view and is easier to listen to.
- *We* clearly includes others and stresses teamwork.

As you work to build collaborative and trusting work relationships, you will find that it is helpful to use inclusive language rather than words that separate or potentially trigger defensiveness. Self-responsible language always contains lots of *I*'s and very few *you*'s.

### Should vs. Could

- *Should* is controlling and over-directive and can set up feelings of guilt (which are not helpful).
- *Could* is more open and sets up additional possibilities in our thinking, acting, and cooperating.

*Shoulding* on others is an unconscious act of control and manipulation. Most of us do not appreciate this parental approach; in fact, most people are offended by it and resent being treated like children. Avoid *shoulding* on yourself and others. Good coaches have their antennae up regarding this particularly troublesome form of communication.

### But vs. And

- *But* tends to cancel out or discount what was said prior to the "but," and sets up an argumentative tone.
- *And* feels inclusive, makes room for other points of view, and indicates respect for the speaker.

Transformational Coaching is a process of sharing points of view that requires both parties to make a large enough "container" of their dialogue to hold all the ideas without anybody or anything being canceled out in the process. *And* does a great job of

creating a feeling of openness and space for all of the paradoxes that coexist in life—especially in working situations, in which everyone has a portion of the whole truth and nobody can see it all.

### Try vs. Will

- *I'll try* can often give people an excuse for not succeeding, as in "Well, I tried."
- *I will* is a much stronger commitment.

Constructively challenging your coachees is part of the Transformational Coaching process. Stretching others begins between their ears, in how they think about themselves and their capabilities. A coach often sees more capacity than the coachee does. So be vigilant for "weasel" words that psychologically leave a back door open to failure. Encourage your coachee to make a commitment in the form of "I will."

### Jargon

Jargon can create confusion; it keeps some people from understanding and it sets up a sense of exclusivity. Common language is clearer and simpler, and it facilitates understanding by more people.

Most business environments develop shorthand communications over time. They are efficient and effective; they communicate a lot of information in a short period of time and are easier to say. Technical or industry-specific terms fall into this category. However, there is no substitute for full expression in common, ordinary words for the more subjective thoughts and feelings that arise during interactions at work.

Several years ago, I worked as a consultant in a large company that had developed a powerful set of shared values and guiding behaviors. The core values included specific behaviors that defined and exemplified each one. For example, the core value "integrity" had three or four behavioral statements, one of which was "speaking your personal truth with respect for others."

A senior leader in one of the divisions, an engineer by training, decided to simplify communications by developing alpha-numeric symbols for each of the values and its associated behaviors. He explained that, using his system, people could simply say, "Nice I-4, Charlie," thus streamlining the process of feedback and making it easy to bolster morale.

I had some concerns about the potential overuse of this shorthand. I shared them with the senior leader in two ways. I reinforced his commitment to consciously remind people of how their behavior was consistent with the values and guiding behaviors; that part was helpful to everybody and clearly was something that needed to be done. I then suggested to the leader and the team that a more effective way to accomplish their objective would be to better match the words of the coaching to the actual experience.

Instead of saying, "Nice I-4, Charlie," a coach might say, "Charlie, it helps me understand your thinking when you speak up directly and tell us exactly how you see it."

The leader and the team accepted my coaching—as far as I know.

## Body Language

Because a coach's first concern in communication is the quality of communication, it pays to notice how a message *lands*. Watch your coachee's body language and facial expression; lack of eye contact, folded arms, facial grimaces, bitten lips, and other cues can tell you a great deal about what is going on beneath the surface. The big dividends are in attending to and acknowledging these cues and helping people to work through the emotional aspects of hearing feedback or making personal changes.

## The Self-Fulfilling Prophecy

One of the key skills for coaches is reframing—helping others to think about issues and problems in new ways that help to create breakthroughs in their thinking and, thus, in their actions.

Transformational Coaches are sensitive to and aware of their personal thought and action patterns, and they help others to recognize their own.

Try reframing some common words and see what happens to your attitude:

- Reframe *always* or *never* as *sometimes* (hardly anything is always or never true)
- Reframe *can't* as *won't* (because the truth usually is *won't*)
- Reframe *mistakes* as *learnings* (because there is no shame in learning something)

And then try eliminating the following:

- *yes, but...* (because it is usually argumentative or just an excuse)
- *it* (because you can almost always more clearly identify whatever "it" is)
- *they* (because it separates and excludes people)



*The deepest principle in human nature is the  
craving to be appreciated.*

WILLIAM JAMES



# Coaching Through Dialogue

## *The Art of Conversation*

Dialogue is critical to the success of Transformational Coaching. It is an effective approach to discovering commonality and connection. Using it takes discipline and a personal commitment to remaining open.

*People are no longer primarily in opposition... rather they are participating in this pool of common meaning which is capable of constant development and change.... Thus far we have only begun to explore the possibilities of dialogue... but going further along these lines would open up the possibility of transforming not only the relationship between people, but even more, the very nature of consciousness in which these relationships arise.*

**David Bohm**

### **Why Dialogue?**

The purpose of dialogue is to inquire and learn about others and to discover the shared meaning that makes human connection and aligned action possible. It is heuristic in that new information and perspectives emerge as the process unfolds.

Organizations are living human systems. Human beings have basic needs, some of which are fulfilled through their work.

### My Five Basic Needs

*I need to be seen.*

*I need to be heard.*

*I need to be respected.*

*I need to be safe.*

*I need to belong.*

*When all of my basic needs are met... then...*

*I'm ready to learn.*

**Anonymous**

For me, this says a lot. It is a beautiful reminder that we are all human beings and share fundamental needs. The implications for engaging in dialogue are tremendous. Sharing back and forth through dialogue is the process by which people connect.

*Dialogue* has its roots in the Greek *dia* and *logos*, which translates to "meaning flowing through." Dialogue can be defined as:

*The respectful, two-way, open-ended flow of communication that balances listening and speaking for the purpose of learning.*

Many organizations have cultures that inhibit people from really hooking up at an emotional level. I have worked with some of them. These organizations do not seem to have the spirit, the commitment, and the vitality that high-performing organizations possess.

Conversely, what is always true of high-performing organizations or teams is that their members have developed deep personal bonds with their teammates; these relationships form the context for achieving high performance.

Other terms of communication—discourse, debate, directing, and discussing—can be characterized as attempts to influence, impress, or control the other person. The best you can hope for in these situations is compliance, but more often they disintegrate into people becoming locked into positions and doing combat with their opponents.

## The Value and Power of Dialogue in Transformational Coaching

Dialogue creates a pathway and a safety zone for an open conversation in which both coach and coachee learn. Effective dialogue requires emotional safety for all participants; there must be no negative outcomes for expressing a point of view honestly and candidly.

Introducing dialogue into an organization (or a relationship) can lead to profound, positive changes in the nature of the working relationships. Openness, trust, willingness, and support are dramatically enhanced when open dialogue exists.

The conscious use of dialogue sends a clear signal that people are valued and respected as a vital part of the whole. It levels the playing field and creates a more egalitarian and participative environment. This is entirely consistent with the tone of respect and mutuality that high-performance teams create and sustain. Transformational Coaches lead the way.

The nature of true dialogue (as opposed to using words as a way of protecting yourself or your position) can be illustrated as follows.

### The Nature of True Dialogue

Using Words to Protect	Using Dialogue to Learn
Listening to argue	Listening to understand
Pointing out faults	Clarifying with questions
Manipulating and controlling others	Respecting, valuing, and partnering with others
Proving one's "rightness"	Proving one's commitment to learning
Locking into positions	Truthfully sharing points of view and being willing to change them
Changing others	Supporting others
Protecting and defending	Disclosing and being open

*The most important  
thing a captain can do  
is to see the ship from  
the eyes of the crew.*

**D. Michael Abrashoff**

## Telling vs. Questioning

Telling tends to control conversation, shuts off the flow of ideas, and may trigger combativeness or other forms of self-protection. Questioning tends to open people up. It stimulates learning, creativity, and understanding. It allows people to own their own ideas from the beginning.

Recall the incident I described in Chapter 8, with the engineer who wanted to reduce positive feedback to statements such as, "Nice I-4, Charlie." I have reflected on that coaching moment many times since. At that time, I used the tool I had available to me: simply offering my suggestion in a respectful way. The response I remember from the leader and the team was polite listening and maybe a nod or two. My guess is that because the suggestion came from me, it remained my idea and may or may not have been implemented after the meeting. I believe I could have been more effective as a coach if I had taken a different approach.

If I had the Transformational Coaching model available to me, with its emphasis on dialogue, I could have helped the leader and the team start a dialogue about this very real and important aspect of changing their culture through reinforcing alignment with its core values. I might have been able to ask questions in a way that allowed them to discover for themselves the limitations of creating another head-based (as opposed to heart-based) communication system. If they had discovered and articulated that for themselves, it would have been more powerful than hearing it from me.

## Why Dialogue Is a Challenge

Western culture has conditioned most of us to use a telling style in our communications. Certainly, there are times and situations in which simply and directly telling somebody what you feel they need to know is appropriate. However, we often overuse this approach.

In the command-and-control paradigm, The Boss tells people what to do, when to do it, and how to do it. People who are bossed and managed in this way may never truly feel empowered to initiate action on their own. In these environments, risk taking

is, sadly, an act of *personal* risk because of the organizational and political consequences of making a mistake or standing out by being different. One ends up standing alone.

Under these conditions, people's performance usually reflects compliance with the directions, rules, procedures, and bureaucratic requirements. Command-and-control styles that rely on "telling" techniques may create stability, predictability, and uniformity, but they do not bring about deeper commitment and creative problem solving.

Here is a better way: Learn to ask intelligent, effective questions. It requires a conscious effort to reprogram our autopilot responses by paying attention to our conditioned urge to tell and control others.

## What Makes Learning Questions Effective?

Learning questions are effective because they accomplish several things for both people:<sup>9</sup>

- They demonstrate a willingness on the part of the questioner to listen for the answer
- They demonstrate respect for the individual
- They help people discover their own answers, rather than waiting for an expert (The Boss)
- They clarify direction, purpose, expectations, and goals, which are necessary conditions to create alignment across the team
- They solicit people's ideas, input, and recommendations, which creates a significantly higher level of participation and involvement
- They help people understand the roles they play in the problems that exist and in achieving improved results
- They teach people to contemplate their thinking processes
- They focus people's attention on the future, not on the past, and on discovering solutions, not on staying stuck in problems

<sup>9</sup> Based on material in *Enlightened Leadership* by Ed Oakley and Doug Krug. (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1991).

To this end, effective learning questions must be:

- Open-ended rather than close-ended (they cannot be answered simply with "yes" or "no")
- Placed appropriately in the dialogue to clarify, illuminate, and draw out
- Authentic, coming from a sincere desire to learn
- Followed by (sometimes deafening) silence, to demonstrate the coach's sincere intention to listen
- Supportive in tone, to minimize the possibility of triggering people's defensive reactions<sup>10</sup>

<sup>10</sup>Tone of voice is extremely important. An unconsciously critical or intimidating tone of voice can cancel out all your good intentions and helpful content. Be sure to ask for feedback about your tone of voice, and take it seriously.

## Questioning Tips

Before you open your mouth to speak, it is helpful to take a moment to frame the purpose of the question you are about to ask. By sharing your intention up front, you set a context for the question rather than just dropping it on your coachee. People do not like surprises. It stands to reason that letting them know where you are coming from is really helpful to the process. It creates more openness to listen, effectively gets people's attention, and provides a clear context for the line of questioning that follows.

Ask open-ended questions rather than closed-ended questions for the obvious reason that closed-ended questions have the unintended consequence of shutting down communication. People respond to closed-ended questions with "yes" or "no" and that is not what you want. Open-ended questions require respondents to share their thinking and their ideas.

Phrase questions in such a way as to genuinely invite the other person to offer his or her personal response. Asking personal questions tends to force personal thought and expression. Try:

- "What do you think about this idea?"
- "What do you think is important?"
- "How would you solve this?"
- "If you were in my shoes, what would you do?"
- "What other factors should we be considering?"
- "In your opinion, why is this approach going to work?"
- "What do you see as the obstacles we face?"

It is helpful to have the questions begin at a general or higher level of inquiry and, through the course of the dialogue, become more specific. Here are some examples of questions that flow from global to specific.

### Sample Problem-Solving Questions

---

#### Global

- "How are things going?"
  - "What are your goals?"
  - "What are you trying to accomplish?"
- 

#### Problem Identification

- "What results have you achieved so far?"
  - "Where are you stuck?"
  - "What kinds of problems are you encountering?"
- 

#### Options & Solutions

- "What solutions have you attempted?"
  - "What do you see as your options?"
  - "Do you want input from me?"
- 

#### Planning

- "What is your "go forward" plan?"
  - "How can you apply what you've learned to your job?"
  - "Who else would benefit from knowing this?"
- 

#### Support

- "What can I do to better support you?"
  - "Whose support do you need?"
  - "Would it be helpful to talk again?"
- 

*Never do for others what they can do for themselves.*

**The Iron Rule**

Avoid asking "Why?" Why? often triggers defensiveness. It frequently pushes people into a justifying or rationalizing mode, which is counterproductive. If you feel you need to ask "why," pay attention to the tone you use and be vigilant about the coachee's response, or substitute a phrase such as "What is it about that..." or "What is it about that solution that made you choose it?" In

the realm of feelings, rather than ask, "Why are you angry?" say "What is it about this situation that makes you angry?"

One of the most powerful aspects of supporting others with penetrating questions is that, if they are framed effectively, they empower people to think more deeply about their situations and, in so doing, to discover their own answers. The benefits include greater clarity in understanding, greater perspective, discovery of options and alternatives, and clarity about the next step. The coach functions as a guide and a sounding board who is proactive rather than reactive, which demonstrates a willingness to partner with the coachee in making progress toward goals.

### Transformational Coaching Used in Dialogue

Let's look at an example to illustrate how the Transformational Coaching principles sound as they are wound into conversation. (I have identified each step of the coaching process so the example is clear.)

Fred, the coach, has observed Sally, the coachee, make a presentation during a meeting. During the presentation, Sally did some things that Fred felt were less effective than they could have been. Assuming that mentioning those things during the meeting was inappropriate, Fred approached Sally about his feedback after the meeting was over.

**Fred:** *"Sally, would you have a few moments for me to share my thoughts with you? [PERMISSION] I'd like to talk about the presentation you just made to the marketing staff. [PURPOSE] I loved your creativeness, and I've got some ideas that you might incorporate for your next presentation." [POSITIVE INTENTIONS]*

**Sally:** *"Thanks, Fred. I'd like to hear your ideas and, based on my schedule for the rest of the day, I've got ten or fifteen minutes right now."*

**Fred:** *"Great! Let's go to your office and grab a cup of coffee on the way."*



In the office:

**Fred:** "I saw you do a couple of things that I thought were really effective. First, the color in the graphics made the presentation very professional and interesting. It really held people's attention. Another thing that helped you make your points was how well you seem to have prepared. The effect you had on Jim was clear to me. I think you've made him a real believer in the wisdom of this approach. [REINFORCED POSITIVE BEHAVIORS AND INCLUDED THE ROI]"

**Sally:** "Thanks for sharing your perceptions on how you see Jim coming around to this idea. I was not as sure as you are that he was really getting on board. Obviously, I'm delighted that he is."

**Fred:** "Well, I really appreciate your dedication to heading up this project and taking the lead on these meetings. It's really helping us to establish our own credibility. [CONTINUED REINFORCEMENT OF POSITIVES TO SET CONTEXT FOR UPCOMING SUGGESTION]"

"I noticed one thing that you did in the presentation that was a little confusing to me. Could I offer you a suggestion on what would help me, and maybe others?" [ASKED PERMISSION TO OFFER A SUGGESTION]"

**Sally:** "Sure."

**Fred:** "Somewhere I got lost in the transition between Phase II and Phase III. Perhaps some transition statement or overhead could be inserted there to better establish the linkage. What do you think of that idea?" [OFFERED SPECIFIC IDEA THAT WOULD HAVE HELPED HIMSELF]"

**Sally:** "I thought that was a little rough as well. Let me work on that this afternoon. I'll show you what I come up with before we make this presentation next week to Operations."

**Fred:** "Great! Thanks again for a job well done. I'll see you tomorrow." [NO NEED FOR NAILING DOWN AN ACTION PLAN—SALLY OFFERED TO RUN IT BY HIM]"

Let's look at another example—a situation that is a little more stressful and a relationship that is not running quite as smoothly as Fred and Sally's. In this scenario, George, the CEO, is coaching Peter, the CFO, about performance problems in the accounting area. For months, financial reports have contained errors that have caused tremendous problems for the company. This is another installment of an ongoing conversation between George and Peter about the problem. The first part of the conversation takes place in the CEO's staff meeting.

**George:** *"Peter, I know you've been working on the recurring problem with the financial reports. What's happened this last week?"*

**Peter:** *"I think we've got the turnover problem under control. Without John creating the problems for us that he did in his role, we should be able to attract and keep good people who are more qualified for their jobs."*

**George:** *"That sounds like you're going in the right direction. Rather than deal with the details here, let's meet later today, okay?"*

Later in the day:

**George:** *"Is now a good time for this discussion? [PERMISSION] I'd like to spend some time on this issue because it's critical for a lot of people. I think it's important that we talk about the underlying issues that, in my opinion, have contributed to the situation. [PURPOSE] I'd like to talk about your leadership, and what you can do to support the team more effectively from your role." [POSITIVE INTENTIONS]*

**Peter:** *"George, I know this is important. I am really frustrated with this situation, too. If you have some insights that will help me to be more effective, I'm willing to listen."*

**George:** *"What I see in your department are performance issues that have occurred consistently over the last couple of years. I believe that you, as CFO, are having a difficult time confronting people directly. It's great to have somebody on the leadership team who is easy going and fun to be around, but the implications for*

overusing that style translate to ineffective leadership.

**[BEHAVIORAL DESCRIPTION]**

"It's upsetting to me, because the division presidents do not have accurate, reliable financial reports. This year is tough enough without having to second-guess what the numbers mean.

**[PERSONAL AND ORGANIZATIONAL ROI]**

"Are you aware of this tendency to smooth over performance issues like these?"

**[LEARNING QUESTION TO OPEN UP DISCUSSION]**

**Peter:** "This is difficult to hear, George. I realize that I'm letting the team down and I know these issues are affecting everybody. If I'm real honest with myself, I have to admit that I have a very difficult time giving people bad news. I see things that I know need to change, or could be better, but I have a hard time finding the words, and sometimes the time, to talk about them."

**George:** "I appreciate your honesty and I want to coach you through this. **[SUPPORT AND INTENTION]** I have a suggestion regarding how you might have resolved the issue with John earlier. Is it okay if I share it with you?" **[PERMISSION CHECK IN EMOTIONALLY STRESSFUL SITUATION]**

**Peter:** "Absolutely. I'm not sure I know what I could have done."

**George:** "Earlier in my career, I had a guy who reported to me when I was in Operations who kept making little mistakes that, by themselves, didn't seem to be too big of a deal. However, since these mistakes were visible to the other managers, he began to lose credibility with his peers. This sloppy work was reflecting poorly on the entire team and, quite frankly, setting a poor example for everybody who worked for him.

I got some coaching from the CEO at the time that prompted me to act on what I knew needed to be done. I should have addressed the performance issues with Charlie sooner, maybe with a performance agreement. I ended up doing just that, but the CEO had to open my eyes first. **[SHARED PERSONAL EXPERIENCE IN VULNERABLE WAY]**

I suggest that you consider using performance agreements with all of your direct reports that clearly spell out your

*expectations and standards for their performance. Even your good performers would find this valuable in setting direction. It sets you up to coach them more effectively on an ongoing basis and provide the amount of performance feedback that people really need to be successful. What do you think?" [MADE SUGGESTION AND ASKED FOR RESPONSE]*

**Peter:** *"This is a great idea! It sounds like a good way to establish coaching relationships and to clarify the goals and objectives that all my direct reports should be focused on achieving.*

**George:** *"What do you see as your first steps?" [BEGINNING AN ACTION PLAN]*

**Peter:** *"Well, I think I'll bring this up in my staff meeting this next week and share the idea of the performance agreements. I can follow-up with people one-on-one over the next few weeks. This should get the ball rolling. I'll keep you informed with my progress." [CONFIRMS ACTUAL NEXT STEPS]*

**George:** *"What can I do to support you going forward?" [ASK THE SUPPORT QUESTION]*

**Peter:** *"I think just keeping our conversation going—and always giving me the benefit of your perceptions and experience. That would be great!"*

**George:** *"You can plan on it, Peter." [CONFIRMS AGREEMENT GOING FORWARD]*

**Peter:** *"I really want to thank you for taking the time to support me with this. Thanks, Coach."*

This is an example of the coaching process effectively used to confront difficult "people" issues in a way that sets people up to win. It was filled with dialogue and even included the CEO letting the CFO know that he was upset. This approach encourages people to be authentic and explicit in sharing their personal experiences, thoughts, feelings, and ideas. The conversation was very candid, yet supportive.



## Three Types of Coaching Interventions

To simplify things, you can choose from at least three types of coaching interventions depending on your purpose, situation, timeframe and needs.

**Coaching Shorthand:** There are times when we simply want or need to share appreciative and/or constructive feedback. Real feedback might sound like this: *"Hey Jack, I appreciated your staying late to finish that report yesterday. In the future, let me know a day ahead that you're needing support and I'll be sure you get it!"*

Most people do not receive enough positive, reinforcing feedback, and if offered sincerely, it makes a huge emotional impact. People also appreciate suggestions offered in the spirit of helping.

Our second option is **Problem Solving**, usually initiated by the coachee. It is used when someone comes forth asking for assistance or advice. The artfulness of this approach lies in being able to ask effective, learning questions and *not* just giving them the solution or answer, which often creates a dependency on us to resolve their problems. The basic Coaching Learning Questions appear on the front side of the Coaching Reference Card and more information on this approach is detailed in Chapter 8.

Coachee asks: *"I'm not sure how to handle this past due account. What do I do?"*

Coach responds: *"What are your ideas? Has this happened before? What has worked in the past with this customer? How can we make sure this doesn't happen again?"*

The third option, **Coaching Dialogue**, is usually initiated by the Coach in order to engage in mutual learning, "get on the same page," and create an action plan to initiate change that both can support.

This is where the Transformational Coaching model is most useful, and it takes some planning and thought from the Coach *before* the actual intervention. It's important for the Coach to work through any judgments, anger, or righteous attitudes and understand their intentions.

In all these situations, the Coaching Reference Card is a valuable tool, providing you with learning questions, reminders and guidelines for being an effective Transformational Coach.



*It's a funny thing about life, if you refuse to accept anything but the best, you very often get it.*

SOMERSET MAUGHAM



# Special Coaching Situations

## *Practical Applications of Transformational Coaching*

It is all just theory until you begin to apply it. In this chapter, we look at specific situations and provide examples of dialogues for dealing with them.

### **The Difficult Boss**

*"Okay," you're thinking. "This sounds great. Coaching is a 'top to bottom' process that creates safety, cohesiveness, and good feelings between people. I like it, but it will never happen where I work. Coaching isn't even a blip on my boss' radar screen. He's from the old school. He runs the business by the numbers. He cares about the bottom line and nothing else—especially not touchy-feely programs that waste time."*

I have known plenty of bosses and I have some good news and some bad news for you. The good news is that "Bosses" (in the pejorative sense) are a dying breed and will be going the way of the dinosaur. No one knows exactly when this transformation will be complete, but the signs are all around. The bad news is that you will have to live with them for a while longer in many organizations.

In the meantime, coach your Boss.

That's right. *Coach your Boss.*

If you "assume innocence," you can give the benefit of the doubt to your Boss. After all, he (or she) is most likely unaware of how his actions, tone of voice, brusqueness, rushing about, changing meetings at the last minute, and so on (you complete the list) affect you and possibly other members of the team.<sup>11</sup> Apply the principle of "we teach others how to treat us." Take responsibility for stating your needs. Honestly and compassionately confront The Boss. If you have been practicing with others for a while, you will have developed some level of proficiency and confidence. Prepare fully. Select a good time, state the purpose of the meeting, lay the groundwork in your opening remarks, and stay the course. Trust the Transformational Coaching process to guide you through what may be a very ticklish and sensitive conversation. Keep the Transformational Coaching process model handy. Take it one step at a time. Keep breathing. People can usually hear what you have to say if you say it from your heart and with good intentions. Trust yourself.

<sup>11</sup> Be cautious about using third-party feedback.

Refer to the payoffs for remaining The Boss in Chapter 10. With those in mind, do not set out to convince your boss by arguing that a coaching style is better than what he or she may be doing now. Demonstrate the truth. *Prove* that your coaching gets better results by documenting the results and business outcomes that Transformational Coaching actually creates. This information can become part of your conversation. When Bosses begin to see hard results through application and mastery of "soft" processes, they will begin to respect you and your new approach. It gets results!

## Coaching Peers

In today's flatter organizations, more interdependence is necessary for high performance to be created and sustained. Not only can you coach your peers, but it is necessary to create an organization-wide, feedback-rich culture. This is covered in detail in Part Three.

Prepare yourself as you would for any other coaching session, focusing on a specific situation or incident. The feedback most people want to deliver to their peers has to do with issues of cooperation, support, and collaboration. Set the date and time and create an agenda that focuses on learning how you could work together better. Even if the other person has no familiarity with Transformational Coaching, you can facilitate the meeting and keep the conversation on track. Trust the process and your heart to guide you into saying what is appropriate at the moment. If your heart is in the right place, you will connect and have the best chance of working things out. This is not necessarily easy, but it is important.

## Coaching Difficult Employees

Sometimes it seems that certain people just have a way of really getting under your skin. You probably have relationships at work that challenge you to remain composed, dignified, or even kind. Difficult people have a way of showing up in everybody's life from time to time. How do we coach the "uncoachable?"

Think of it this way: In some finite amount of time, this difficult person will need to choose to "get with the program," or he or she will be working someplace else. Nothing is forever. This ought to give you some sense of relief.

Then, prepare well for this more confrontive meeting. Setting a helpful tone will be challenging, because you may be carrying emotional residue and anger from all the things you have left unsaid.

Do not think of what you are doing as "managing." People do not like being managed. Besides, a manager tends to retain the problem as well as the responsibility for finding the solution. Become the Transformational Coach instead. Coaching is easier, as it maintains the ownership of the problem where it belongs. Keep the discussion on the behavior or actions causing the problem and focus on the ROI that you see. Discuss the implications for you, the team, and the person. Sometimes, people need to hear clear and direct consequences that

communicate, in no uncertain terms, precisely what will happen if their behavior or performance does not change.

This is when you need to use the more assertive aspects of the basic model. It is a good opportunity to use performance agreements—signed and dated documents that specify all the major points of your discussion. Let the difficult employee choose solutions and hold him or her fully accountable for the outcome. You can do no less, for the organization's integrity and yours is at stake. Offer support, but be firm and fair. The fact is that some people will bloom better if planted in different soil. Releasing them, if done compassionately, is a gift for both parties.

### Situations in Which Coaching Is Requested

If you are like most people, you have already helped others many times with problems and issues. You may not have known it, but in these situations, you were really coaching. You can consciously apply what you have learned about Transformational Coaching the next time someone asks you to be a resource, a sounding board, or a source of support, especially by asking effective questions, listening, using dialogue, and prompting your coachee to forward-the-action.

Explore things like the nature of the problem, the goal or objective in mind, what solutions have been tried so far, what have been the results, what worked, what did not work well, where the person is stuck, what or who the barriers are, and what the person sees as his or her next step. Last, explore how you might support the person in taking action. The questions from "Sample Problem-Solving Questions" on page 101 should help.

### Executive Coaching

There is a growing awareness and acceptance of the power of coaching for executives. Executive coaching has become a hot topic. Indeed, an executive coaching industry has been formed to serve executives in their development as leaders. Executive coaching is not a fad. It will become a requirement in the tool chests of

leaders who wish to develop the perspective and skills required to lead organizations in continually changing conditions.

The executive coach performs several functions for the leader:

- First, the coach helps the executive to gather and interpret performance feedback gathered from psychological profiling instruments and/or organizational feedback tools
- Second, the coach is a guide through the executive's own thinking processes, helping him or her discover what next steps to take toward his or her goals
- Third, with permission, the coach probes and challenges these thought processes to clarify and strengthen the executive's ideas
- Fourth, the coach acts as a conscience, supporting the executive in remaining accountable for his or her choices
- Fifth, the coach provides emotional support for the process of change and thereby bolsters the courage and resolve needed to initiate and sustain positive changes
- Finally, the coach assists the executive to connect his or her thoughts and actions and create a balance between personal and professional goals. The coach helps the executive take action on what is known or has just been discovered

The key skills the coach must bring to this intimate relationship are: listening from the heart, effective questioning, establishing high levels of rapport and trust, and coaching the executive to take action.

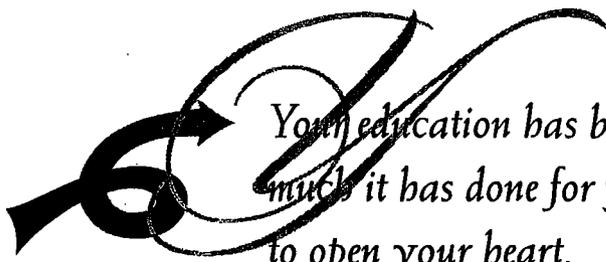
The tool usually used to enhance executive effectiveness is a leadership-development plan, which is completed by the leader. Leaders who pay attention to feedback and respond with positive changes in their thinking and behavior (remember the Leadership Effectiveness Study cited in Chapter 1) are shaped by this learning process, just as professional athletes are. The coach often makes the difference between success or failure.



# The Heart of the Transformational Coach

*Discover the HEART of Transformational Coaching & learn how to use your  
admirable traits to create a positive, vibrant, and successful coaching  
practice among coaching methods and how to bring the most of yourself  
you can give yourself into the coaching process.*

*Transformational Coaching  
The Heart of the Transformational Coach  
Antoine de Saint-Exupéry*



*Your education has been a failure no matter how much it has done for your mind, if it has failed to open your heart.*

**J . A . R O S E N K R A N Z**



# Why Does a Coach Need Heart?

## *Bringing Heart to Work*

Most managers have been conditioned in traditional Western organizations, in which they have adopted a hierarchical command-and-control mentality. Moving from this traditional mindset into Transformational Coaching requires us to do more than learn a few new management techniques. It requires us to *change the way we think*. It requires us to discover *what* we think—about our roles and the outcomes we attempt to achieve with people—and to transform both our thinking and behavior.

Why is it necessary to change at such a deep level? Shouldn't business stay out of the personal arena? Why *can't* you just learn some new methods and techniques and begin coaching?

The fact is, personal aspects of our lives do not stay out of the business arena. Everyone brings to work the entire array of his or her personality—thoughts, attitudes, behaviors, habits, needs, wants, fears, desires, roles, and conditioning. Transformational Coaching does not *bring* the personal into work situations. It simply acknowledges that the personal element is a part of work and provides a framework—the heart of the coach—for dealing effectively with the whole human being.

## Becoming a Boss

Be honest, now. If you have had authority over others, haven't you found it compelling? Didn't you at times feel powerful and strong?

It is easy to see how even well-intentioned managers can enjoy the power trip of being The Boss. Most of us possess at least some of the human shortcomings that make us prey to this mentality:

- Our egos become invested in the roles we play and in the trappings of our authority
- We believe that, because we have paid our dues, it is fair to expect others to do the same
- We fear change and letting go of control
- We fear failing in the eyes of the world
- We develop habits of behaving and thinking that reinforce the "correctness" of the "Boss" approach

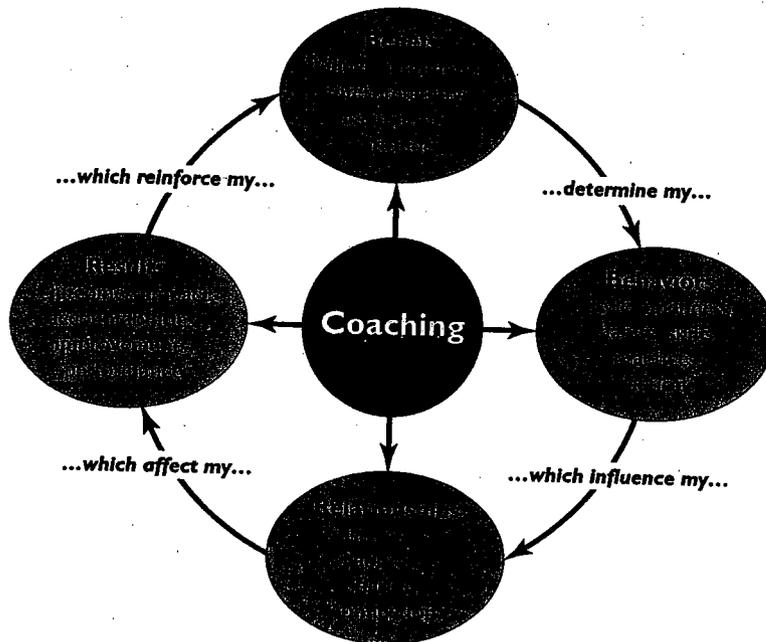
Add to this list the fact that most of our role models at work are Bosses and that the human system of which we are a part does not accept changes to long-established roles very easily, and there you have it: a Boss in the making.

## Beliefs and the Results Cycle

*The Results Cycle*, on the next page, illustrates the inevitability of this mindset. The key to stopping the cycle is understanding it. Let's begin with beliefs.

Our beliefs have a great influence over the ways in which we interact with people. As you can see in from the figure, what you believe tends to determine how you behave toward others. Your behavior tends to influence the quality of the relationships you have with others, which affects *their* behavior. This, of course, influences the results you obtain from these people. In turn, the results usually reinforce your belief in the correctness of your beliefs.

## The Results Cycle



For example, if you believe that it is inappropriate to share your feelings with your co-workers, you might behave in very formal and rigid ways with them to keep distance between them and your feelings. If *that* behavior is experienced by some of your co-workers as aloofness or coldness, they may feel put off and intimidated and begin drawing their own (potentially negative) conclusions about your feelings. Because they do not feel comfortable communicating with you, they may do work based on inaccurate interpretations of your instructions rather than checking back to make sure that they understood. When you see the results, you may say to yourself, "See! If I can't trust them to get the most fundamental instructions right, how can I trust them with personal information? You just can't bring personal feelings into the workplace."

Another example: If you believe that a manager is supposed to be strict and unbending with the rules, you may be tough and demanding on those who break the rules. In turn, your direct reports may become intimidated and stop taking risks. As a result, your department

*At the heart of any  
good business is a  
chief executive officer  
with one.*

**Malcolm Forbes**

*If you keep doing what  
you've always done,  
you'll keep getting what  
you've always gotten.*

**Anonymous**

may do all right, but turnover may be high and other departments win awards from top management for innovative and creative solutions to business problems. In frustration, you may hold even more tightly to your belief in the need for control and adherence to the rules. This cycle is self-reinforcing and self-perpetuating.

On the other hand, if you believe that collaboration between people leads to better results, you might be open with your thoughts and encourage others to be open in sharing their needs and ideas for solutions. Relationships become more open and trusting; the people you lead are more willing to take risks with presenting ideas, and you get better results.

The easiest place to break the power of the Results Cycle is at the top, the beliefs. Which beliefs support Bossing and which ones support coaching? Here's a short list:

- Bosses believe that their job is to push people or drive them; coaches believe that they are there to lift and support people
- Bosses believe that they should talk at people by telling, directing and lecturing; coaches believe in engaging in dialogue with people by asking, requesting, and listening
- Bosses believe in controlling others through the decisions they make; coaches believe in facilitating others to make decisions and empowering them to implement their own decisions
- Bosses believe they know the answers; coaches believe they must seek the answers
- A Boss triggers insecurity through administering a healthy dose of fear as an effective way to achieve compliance; a coach believes in using purpose to inspire commitment and stimulate creativity
- Bosses believe that their job is to point out errors; coaches believe that their job is to celebrate learning
- A Boss believes in solving problems and making decisions; a coach believes in facilitating others to solve problems and make decisions

- A Boss believes in delegating responsibility; a coach believes in modeling accountability
- Bosses believe in creating structure and procedures for people to follow; coaches believe in creating a vision and promoting flexibility through values as guidelines for behavior
- A Boss believes in doing things right; a coach believes in doing the right things
- Bosses believe that their power lies in their knowledge; coaches believe that their power lies in their vulnerability
- A Boss believes in focusing on the bottom line; a coach believes in focusing on the process that creates the bottom-line result

**A Summary of Comparative Mindsets**

<b>Boss</b>	<b>Coach</b>
Pushes / Drives	Lifts / Supports
Tells / Directs / Lectures	Asks / Requests / Listens
Talks at people	Engages in dialogue with people
Controls through decisions	Facilitates by empowering
Knows the answer	Seeks the answer
Triggers insecurity using fear to achieve compliance	Stimulates creativity using purpose to inspire commitment
Points to errors	Celebrates learning
Problem solver / Decision maker	Collaborator / Facilitator
Delegates responsibility	Models accountability
Creates structure and procedures	Creates vision and flexibility
Does things right	Does the right things
Knowledge is power	Vulnerability is power
Focuses on the bottom line	Focused on process that creates the bottom-line results

## The Challenge of Change

If we did not get something out of the roles we play, change would be easy. Traditional working roles and relationships do offer a lot that is appealing. Let's take a look at the payoffs—and the penalties—for not changing.

### Payoffs and Penalties for Bosses and Subordinates

Remaining a Boss has its advantages. For example, Bosses feel that they are in control, are "right" a lot (at least in terms their egos understand); maintain power, position, and authority and therefore fit in with the establishment; make efficient short-term use of their time; maintain old habits; and keep all their current thinking or beliefs.

But they pay for keeping their positions as Bosses (rather than transcending the role to become Coaches). The costs include losing the optimal contribution of other people's creativity; missing others' ideas, options, and alternatives; maintaining ownership of problems; and not learning from and about others. Bosses are more likely to create resentment with employees. Furthermore, there is always the risk that they will have the *wrong* answer sometimes (and create more resentment when they can not admit it).

There are prices and payoffs for being Subordinate to a Boss, too. On the plus side, Subordinates have it easy—they usually wait for The Boss to make decisions. They do not have to think or assume responsibility, do not have to be afraid of making waves, are safer politically, and can get out of many difficult situations simply by saying, "It's not my job." They are likely to be able to retire on the job.

On the flip side, Subordinates must often put up with not being allowed to think (yes, this appeared in the list of advantages, too); not feeling valued or trusted; and feeling discounted and diminished. They often have to deal with their own resentment toward their Bosses and they usually can not expect much in the way of growth and development on the job. Their self-esteem can suffer.

## Payoffs and Penalties for Coaches and Coachees

Changing to a coach-coachee relationship is not necessarily a bed of roses, however. It, too, carries compelling prices and payoffs. For example, coaches learn more about others and themselves, witness the development of other people's capacities, and build better teams. They also benefit from improved working relationships and performance overall and watch themselves grow and improve as coaches.

But they also usually find that the risks are higher (both personally and politically). They must learn to trust others more. Transformational Coaching takes more time and more personal courage than bossing. Coaches must share accountability. Coaches must become comfortable with confrontation of performance issues and they must let go of their illusion of control.

Coachees also discover a set of positives and negatives when they make the transition. Although they have the opportunity for more growth and development, being a coachee means that more is required than before. Their working relationships improve, but they have more responsibility and accountability. There is usually a new pride of accomplishment, but it is uncomfortable becoming used to new ways. They feel valued, but find that the new paradigm requires that they risk more. Work is more fulfilling, but they have to change. They are performing at higher levels than before, but it is not always easy to hear their coach's feedback; sometimes they take it personally by interpreting the suggestions as if they were personal criticisms.

If you look closely, you will notice some trends here. Most of the payoffs for the Boss and Subordinate are short term. The traditional Boss/Subordinate roles allow people to remain in their personal comfort zones.

The prices paid, however, are long term and weaken the overall capability of the individual, the team, and the organization.

This transformation is not easy. Each of us tends to be governed by our belief system about how things "ought to be." These beliefs filter our incoming experience, causing us to ignore what is outside our own system.

## Beliefs That Block Transformational Coaching

It can be extremely helpful to acknowledge your own personal barriers. Do you see yourself in any of the statements below?

- "I don't know how to coach. I don't want to coach. I don't consider myself coaching material."
- "Coaching is not valued around here. There are no coaching role models here. I'll look different if I'm the only one doing it. I won't be supported."
- "The benefits are unclear to me. Look at me—I didn't have coaching and I'm successful. I'm doing okay; I don't need feedback."
- "It's not my job. Somebody else will do it."
- "It takes too long to learn to coach and then to do it. My immediate needs are greater than their developmental needs. Other things are more important. I'll do it later."
- "It is inconvenient. It's difficult. It's time-consuming. It's unnecessary."
- "Change is scary. I'm afraid to ask how. I'll lose control. I'll make mistakes."
- "I had a bad personal experience with coaching. It doesn't really work."
- "I don't trust others to coach me. I do not want to confront others."
- "I can't change. I don't want to change."
- "It won't make a difference. People won't change with coaching. People won't keep their agreements. People don't want to be coached. People are really lazy and won't respond. My people already know what I think about them."
- "It's just another management fad. Coaching is just a fancy word for 'bossing' people around."
- "Real work is more important."



Looking at the above list, which ones might describe beliefs you can identify as your own? Are they close? Are there other beliefs you may hold about coaching?

If you are committed to becoming a coach, these beliefs will act as anchors around your neck. Suspend them for a moment while we look at a belief system that may support your changing your personal Results Cycle as a Transformational Coach.

## Empowering Beliefs of a Coach

Just as Bosses have underlying belief systems that support their Results Cycle, coaches have beliefs that support theirs. Let's explore their thinking.

*As a supervisor, manager, or leader, I am responsible for my own and others' work performance. I want to be successful in my role. I realize that all of the important work of this enterprise is done by and through people. I can't succeed unless my teammates—above me, below me, and beside me—also are successful.*

*If you think you can, you can; if you think you can't, you're right.*

**Mary Kay Ash**

*I appreciate that I do not have other people's answers. They will become more effective if they are permitted to discover them for themselves. However, I have experience, wisdom, insights, and good ideas to pass along.*

*I may be able to help others achieve their goals even more effectively if I share what I know and what I see. I can use coaching as the process of empowering and inspiring others to higher levels of performance.*

*Therefore, I choose to be a Transformational Coach.*

This leads us to a Transformational Coach's credo, which includes the following beliefs:

- People are inherently good and they want to contribute
- People are doing the best they can with what they know and are aware of at any given moment
- People make mistakes, but most do not set out to make mistakes on purpose

- Mistakes can be framed positively as learning opportunities for everybody on the team
- Most people's limiting beliefs about their capacities and capabilities keep them from accomplishing more than they do
- Because most work is done by, through, and with the cooperation of people, transforming their individual effectiveness will transform the performance of the team
- People support the changes and commitments that they create, not the ones forced on them
- Unnecessary control is resented; people prefer to be "led" rather than "managed"
- Outside input from anybody is most helpful when it is really desired
- Coaches can build strong trusting relationships by being open and honest in owning and disclosing their thoughts and feelings
- People's feelings must not be ignored; a holistic view of people allows one to see the whole person
- People appreciate clear, honest feedback delivered in a straightforward manner
- People really do want to improve

All these beliefs can be summed up in a Transformational Coach's version of the "golden rule": a coach has *positive regard* for others. This is the attitude that typifies Transformational Coaching.

The challenge is to suspend our beliefs that block us from becoming coaches. When we consciously explore and replace our limiting belief systems, our energy, tone, and intention shift. It is a journey and it is well worth the effort.





*You've got to keep talking to your people. You've got to keep believing in them. You must be a confidence builder.*

*I try to refrain from using the words  
"can't, won't, I don't know, maybe."*

*I want my men to say "I can, I will, I must, I shall, I know."*

*You have to always try to do everything you can to help them maintain their confidence level. Put positive pictures in the minds of your staff.  
Your attitude is critical.*

**Tommy Lasorda**



*Communicate unto the other person that which  
you would want him to communicate unto you  
if your positions were reversed.*

AARON GOLDMAN



# Communication Filters

## *Distortion, Ego, and All That Stuff*

*I know that you think you understand what you heard me say,  
but I'm not sure you realize that what I said was not what I meant.*

**Unknown**

Maybe you have been in a relationship or worked in an organization in which communication was simple, clear, direct, and spotless. I never have. Communicating in all areas of our lives, personal and professional, is always a challenge. Because communication forms the basis for the Transformational Coaching process, it is important to understand it.

Human beings need to connect with one another intellectually, emotionally, spiritually, and physically. Communication is the word we use to describe the process of making and keeping this connection. If it is such a powerful and basic need, why is it so complicated?

## How Filters Distort Communication

According to research, only 7 percent of the objective message communicated is composed of spoken words. The remaining 93 percent is made up of "style," or meta-communication: tone of voice (38 percent) and body language (55 percent). Ideally, what one attempts to communicate, both verbally and nonverbally, is transmitted unimpeded and uncorrupted to the receiver or "hearer."

*Total Communication:*  
7% spoken words  
38% tone of voice  
55% body language

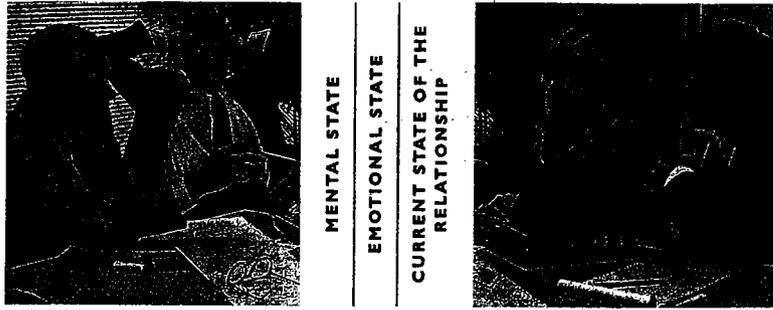


Unfortunately it hardly ever happens that way.

Each individual has created (with the assistance of an ego) a reality—a way of looking at and interpreting life and the world—that is separate and distinct from all others. This reality consists of the total of all the experiences and conditioning each person absorbed from his or her socialization, the development of the genetic heritage he or she carries from birth, and the choices he or she made along the way. These separate realities act as "communication filters."

Communication filters distort the clarity of a message the way a prism or a camera filter bends or distorts light. They operate at both the transmission and reception points—that is, they affect how you say what you say *and* how I hear it.

The following shows how communications are distorted between people. As the group becomes larger, the potential for confusion and chaos rises exponentially as each person's filters distort group communications in unpredictable ways.



*Filters Block Effective Communication*

As we have seen, the key to Transformational Coaching is to create a shared understanding. Your personal effectiveness as a coach—and your ability to communicate clearly—will be dramatically affected by your ability to understand and appreciate your own filters and the filters of others. You need to know how they operate and you need to master the skills to compensate for their distorting effects.

## The Primary Communication Filters

There are three primary groupings of communication filters: mental state, emotional state, and the current state of the relationship.

### **Mental State**

Mental state refers to our frame of mind during the communication experience—for example, our relative feeling of optimism or pessimism. Mental-state filters mostly affect our internal processing of information.

Your state of mind also includes your current focus or awareness. When your mental state is clear—or at least relatively uncluttered—you can focus in spite of distractions and remain alert to moment-to-moment experiences. An uncluttered state of mind allows you to sort through and understand communication.

Mental-state filters include assumptions, intentions or hidden agendas, beliefs, and judgments of others and self.

**ASSUMPTIONS**

One of the great disappointments in business (and personal) relationships that often leads to their demise is unmet expectations on one or both sides. Expectations are rooted in assumptions, and assumptions are so much a part of the fabric of our roles and responsibilities as to be invisible. They look like facts: "Everybody knows that we only use twenty-pound bond. I was sure you knew that. Anybody who would use fifty-pound bond must be irresponsible, because we all know the consequences."

It takes concentration and constant self-examination to become aware of our own assumptions. If they remain unconscious and unexpressed, people become disappointed and frustrated, and performance suffers.

Assume nothing.

**INTENTION AND HIDDEN AGENDA**

We are often unaware of what motivates our behavior—our intention or our personal agenda. If we remain unconscious to our underlying needs and desires, we give our habits and conditioning control over our behaviors. We become more reactive, and less able to respond appropriately or effectively.

Transformational Coaches learn to consciously monitor their intentions. We can accomplish this by asking ourselves, "*In this moment and in this communication, what is my purpose?*" This simple reflection can lead us to discover our true motivations, and to realize we have more choices.

We can choose to disclose our experience that led up to this moment, thus using it as a way to authentically describe our needs, wants, and desires. Or, if we discover our intention/purpose is unhealthy, inappropriate, or dark in nature, we can rethink it and choose a course of action that better suits us and the relationship.

The primary benefit of becoming clear on our intention and personal agenda is that this "mindfulness" provides us with a wider range of possibilities. If we can discover them for ourselves, we can help others do the same. In this way, we use intention and personal agenda to learn about ourselves, others, and how to better forward-the-action together.

## BELIEFS

Beliefs are the conclusions we draw over a lifetime about our experiences. Our belief systems comprise our personal values as well as the cultural norms and extensive set of rules on which we base value judgments. Our belief systems either limit our thinking and action or empower them.

People seem to operate under one of two major postures in life: to protect or defend themselves against the world or to live, learn, laugh, and love their way through life (the Four L's).

The protector's approach to life is closed, resistant to change, and often overreactive to life situations. People with this life posture are difficult to coach and do not make very good coaches themselves.

People who approach life through the Four Ls tend to be more open, resilient, and receptive to the people around them. These people are more likely to be open to change, easy to communicate with, and receptive to coaching. They probably also make the best coaches.

## JUDGMENTS OF SELF AND OTHERS

Humans have a cognitive ability to discern; unfortunately, we frequently apply this talent to making negative judgments about others. We stereotype and categorize people who are different from us, making them or ourselves somehow wrong. In either case, we lose. If we think that other people are better than we are, we feel defective, deficient, or somehow "less than." If we think that we are better than others, we feel arrogant and self-important and often behave in condescending ways.

The judgments we make reflect our internal communications (self-talk) regarding our self-esteem. For someone with low self-esteem, it may be difficult to accept praise from others for a job well done. Because the mind cannot hold two opposing thoughts simultaneously (a condition called "cognitive dissonance"), a person with low self-esteem resolves the tension by discounting the positive input that does not match the self-perception.

As you can imagine, it is almost impossible for a person in this situation to be very open to the process of being reinforced with

*Suspicion ain't proof.*

**Charles and  
Edith Seashore  
What Did You Say?**

appreciative feedback, let alone to be an effective coach for others. (See Chapter 14 for more on healing and self-esteem.)

Projection is a very powerful version of judgment that heavily influences the quality of our relationships. In projection, we assume that what is true for, or of, us is also true for, or of, other people. Although most people engage in projection to some degree, the issue is whether or not we are aware of it and how much we allow it to distort our perceptions of others. Projection may be the basis for empathy. For example, if I judge your action as selfish, I can ask myself how I am also selfish (on occasion) and find compassion for both of us since that is part of the human experience. I do not believe that I can see anything in another that I do not have an experience of in myself.

### **Emotional State**

Our emotional states are heavily affected by our mental functioning. Research has shown a strong link between the quality of our thinking processes and our resulting emotional states.

Emotional states clearly affect the communication process. Different levels of negative feelings include insecurities, threats, stress, fear, ego needs (the need for approval or connection, the need to be perfect, the need to be right), and unhealed wounds that may reopen during the course of the interaction. On the positive side, joy, delight, hopeful expectations, and laughter change our moods and affect us as well.

When we are in a good mood and feeling buoyant, we are often more resourceful, easygoing, and open to change. At the other extreme, feeling insecure, threatened, and self-conscious usually makes us difficult to work with; we are more likely to feel threatened by change and may be caught up in protective or defensive behaviors. From a coaching standpoint, it is extremely critical to monitor not only our own emotional states, but those of our coachees.

### **The Current State of the Relationship**

Relationships with others are unavoidable; none of us works in a vacuum. The quality of relationships within work teams has

*People are disturbed  
not by events but by  
their interpretations  
of these events.*

**Epicetetus**

a tremendous effect on the effectiveness of individuals, the performance of the teams, and the success of organizations. Relationships are the foundation of all human enterprise.

Negative feelings between the coach and the coachee, unfinished business, emotional residue, unresolved conflicts—all can poison an interaction.

Transformational Coaches focus their energy on developing clean, honest, and helpful working relationships within and across teams and on coaching others to do the same.

## Being Centered

"Centered" refers to a self-aware, less reactive state of mind. Our filters have less effect on us as we become more aware of them. Given that we probably can not get rid of all of our own communication filters—and we certainly can not rid others of theirs—what does a coach do about them?

Begin with two steps:

1. Be self aware
2. Be explicit

Effective Transformational Coaches develop an awareness and an appreciation for their own communication filters and those of their coachees.

## Being Self Aware

Coaches pay particular attention to:

- Spoken and unspoken role expectations
- Underlying assumptions
- The quality of the relationships between people who need to work together
- The degree of openness, trust, and rapport that is maintained in working relationships

As coaches, we can become aware of filters by listening carefully and keeping our eyes and hearts open.

*Make your ego porous.  
Will is of little  
importance,  
complaining is nothing,  
fame is nothing.  
Openness, patience,  
receptivity, solitude is  
everything.*

**Rainer Maria Rilke**

Examine your own relationships to see to what extent projection is operating. Someone once said, "If you spot it, you got it." This saying is helpful in developing a modicum of humility. See others as mirrors of yourself; it is healing (and more helpful) to work on *your own* versions of the behaviors that you experience as offensive in others.

With each interaction, be aware of your own agenda and be clear about the goals and outcomes that you are attempting to create.

Make your coaching relationship a safe place in which to discuss beliefs and the implications of those beliefs as they affect the working relationship. This level of dialogue creates an opportunity for people to connect deeply with one another and to develop solid trust.

Manage your mental state. Practice being aware of your mental processes. Unique among the planet's species, humans have the ability to *think about* what they think about. Become aware of what you think about and how you think about it; monitor the effect that these thoughts have on your experience. For example, it is helpful (and maybe amusing) to think of our conditioned, habitual thoughts as uncaged monkeys on a bus. We can get on the bus and try to control the monkeys, but this is futile.

Another choice is to just notice the bus passing by with the monkeys jumping out of control, and remain fascinated about the thought process in a detached way, knowing they are just our thoughts, and refusing to let them rule us. Will Rogers had a saying that ran something like this: "I've had some awful experiences in my life, and most of them didn't happen."

Become aware of the tone you set in your verbal communications—your personal style—and the effect it has on others. Style, when it comes to communications, refers not to *what* we say but *how* we say it. It includes our speaking volume, tone, pitch, and pace.

Become aware of your personal style preferences and those of your coachees. For example, one of the topics for the early coaching meetings ought to be how each person would prefer to be coached—what style works for him or her. Some people want extremely direct communication, some want it fast and to the

point; some prefer their coaching with lots of detail to back it up; some just want the headlines; some want to share their feelings as they go along. Effective coaches will honor these requests and see them as just another way to build rapport.

### **Be Explicit**

Explicitly state your intentions and help to bring to the surface the intentions of others. If you do not state your intentions yourself, you risk people attributing motivations (often negative) to your actions.

Validate your assumptions. Most of us talk at such a rapid pace that we skip over the obvious step of clarifying assumptions as we go.

Ensure a common understanding of the goals and objectives (what success looks like) and the timetable for completion. Ask effective questions to align expectations and make sure that a project starts off on the right foot. Listen to the answers. Simple feedback often gives the coach the clue that he or she and the coachee are not in agreement or are not making the same assumptions.

Our minds take the current event, pull past experiences from our memories to create a context, and blend them together to formulate an interpretation of the current event. The mind forms assumptions, draws conclusions, and creates the basis for our actions. It happens instantaneously, in about one-tenth of a nanosecond. To compensate, one of the most effective things a Transformational Coach can do is to slow down the process of drawing conclusions and attributing motives. One way is through effective listening.

Invest time in a listening check. Check out your understanding by simply asking for validation of what you think you heard. This simple two-step process will help: First, summarize in your own words what you heard. "This is what I heard you say... (summarize what you heard)..."; then ask, "Is that what you meant? Do I have it right? Am I understanding you correctly?"

Make frequent use of specific agreements that articulate mutual commitments. Coaches can contract to establish the terms of the

coaching relationship and the commitment each will keep in that relationship. Create a joint mission (and goals) with your coachee so that you share a common purpose in working together.

Develop your communication skills. Coach others to develop theirs. Communication skills include clear speaking, effective use of language, reflective listening, and engaging in dialogue. The coach also has a responsibility to provide feedback to people who may need skill development to enhance their effectiveness.

## The Ego vs. The Self

One of the most interesting aspects of the human condition is that we all have egos.<sup>12</sup> Egos allow us to grow into separate, distinct, and independently functioning human beings, each with its own identity. Ego strength is necessary to survive. That's the good news.

The bad news is that the ego's belief in the self as separate, distinct, and independent extracts a price from us. It creates an illusion of separateness that limits our ability to connect with others. Left to its own devices, an ego can begin to rule a self. The self becomes ego-driven.

At its best, being ego-driven means that we make judgments about ourselves compared to others that leave us feeling either better-than or worse-than. In either case, we feel separate and disconnected. At worst, we live in fear of losing control. We work to preserve our self-images; then we react defensively to protect ourselves.

"Centered" can also be described as a state of mind in which one becomes detached from the ego's preoccupation with seeing itself as the center of the universe. The next page lists the differences between these two states of mind.

The two columns could also be labeled Unhealthy and Healthy, Dysfunctional and Functional, Ineffective and Effective. The most helpful place from which effective coaching occurs is from a centered state.

I believe that the term "centered" will be unfamiliar for some readers of this book. But I also believe that everyone has had the

<sup>12</sup>For a wonderful treatment of ego, read *There Is Nothing Wrong With You* by Cheri Huber (Mountain View, CA: Keep It Simple Books, 1993).

*Healing comes only from that which leads the patient beyond himself and beyond his entanglements with ego.*

**Carl Jung**

### Differences Between Ego-Driven and Centered States

An Ego-Driven State	A Centered State
Self-Conscious	Self-Aware
Separate	Connected
Busy mind	Quiet mind
Righteous/Always right	Learning/Beginners mind
Wanting attention	Paying attention
Fixing others	Accepting others
Invested in image	Authentic/Real
Takes things personally	Detached
Resistant	Reflective
Denial/Stuck	Accepting/Open to change
Driven by fear	Choosing from love
Closed	Open
Locked into expectations	Open to interpretations
Arrogant	Humble
Critical/Judgmental	Accepting/Discerning
Resentful	Respectful
Hurried/No Patience	Patient/No Hurry
Talks a lot	Listens a lot
Seeks approval	Seeks truth
Insecure/Anxious	Secure/Confident
Getting (Gives to get)	Giving (Unconditionally serves)
Absent-minded	Mindful
Protective	Purposeful
Controlling	Nurturing
Triggered/Angry	Grateful
Follows external authority	Follows innate wisdom
Analyzing/Comparing	Noticing "what is so"
Striving	Graceful
Pushing	Allowing
Cautious	Creative
Being perfect	Being "in process"
Not making mistakes	Not telling lies
Projecting	Reflecting

experience of being "centered." For some, it may be in prayer; for others, meditation provides this peaceful, restful state. Others have experienced it walking in nature, or looking at a magnificent sunset or sunrise. It is when you have a felt sense that: *"There is more to life than it appears, Everything is as it should be, I am going to be all right, This discomfort, too, shall pass."* It is different for different people.

What is also common is for this experience of feeling centered to inevitably be disrupted by our ego's conditioned thoughts shouting at us: *"Something is really wrong with me, I am not going to make it, People should act better than they do, They are out to get me, I do not deserve this."*

### Aids To Becoming More Centered

Accepting this concept as helpful and actually moving to it are two different things. The rest of this chapter focuses on this transition.

#### The Mood Map

Mental and emotional functioning are closely connected. Our conscious awareness and the quality of our thinking directly influence our emotional and feeling responses. To the extent that we are able to become aware of this relationship and begin to manage the thinking processes for ourselves, we may be able to function at higher levels of emotional health and performance.<sup>13</sup>

The Mood Map, on the next page, can help.

Reading from left to right on the Mood Map, we see the causal connection between our thinking state and our feeling response, which influences our behaviors, which affect our outcomes. In addition, there is a vertical dimension, with upper and lower levels of thinking that manifest unique outcomes.

It is helpful to use the Mood Map in reverse, as a guide to understanding how your thinking impacts your personal effectiveness. Think of a personal or work situation in which you might have strong feelings. Start on the right side of the map by locating the ROI that you are currently experiencing. Next, check to see if the behavioral pattern is similar to what is indicated in the

<sup>13</sup> For more background, read *Sanity, Insanity, and Common Sense*, by Rick Suarez, Roger C. Mills, and Darlene Stewart (New York: Ballantine Books, 1987).

## The Mood Map—from Thoughts to Reality

Thinking State (Beliefs and and Attitudes)	Feeling State (Emotional Response)	Behaviors (Actions and Reactions)	ROI (Results, Outcomes, and Impacts)
<b>"I'm resourceful"</b> Up to my life Worthy Enough	Confident Inspired Eager Optimistic	Graceful Creative Purposeful Responsive	Joy Peace Bliss Resiliency
<b>"I'm grateful"</b> Appreciative Unique Precious	Generous Empowered Abundant Positive	Contribute Give Support Thanks	Fulfillment Intimacy Safety Partnership
<b>"I'm curious"</b> Wonderment Interested Inviting	Open Accepting Fascinated Surprised	Ask questions Attentive listening Disclosing Respectful	Learning Connection Trust Rapport

### ◆ CHOICE ◆

<b>"I'm separate"</b> You vs. Me Judgment Comparing	<b>"Better Than"</b> (Arrogant) <b>"Less Than"</b> (Resentful)	Critical/Discount Judgment/Blame Defend/Protect Stuff	Tension Distance Withdrawal Compliance
<b>"I am my role"</b> I am identified Take it personally Win/Lose	Insecure Threatened Suspicious Afraid	Attributions Resistance Attack Sabotage	Conflict Struggle Politics War
<b>"I'm powerless"</b> I can't I'm stuck I'm helpless	Depressed Out of control Alone Despair	Frozen Wait/Hope Negative Reactionary	Victim Sinking Others control you Giving Up

Behavior column. Reading to the left, determine whether the associated Feeling State may underlie those behaviors and the extent to which your Thinking State has brought about the results. If you find connections and determine a causal relationship, work on the left side of the map.

Examine, accept, and consciously change (elevate) the beliefs, thoughts, and attitudes that may be creating the context for your present result. High-performing individuals seem to have high-performance belief systems that they consciously develop, monitor, and feed with helpful and powerful thoughts. This starts with high levels of self-awareness.

Many of my life experiences pretty well match the words on the Mood Map, which are meant to be indicators only. Your personal life experiences may match to a greater or lesser degree. Play with this Mood Map and see what connections you can make as you coach people (and are coached). Keep it light. If it works, use it. You may find that you and others are able to see issues and problems more clearly, and to more quickly discover solutions, when you are experiencing a more elevated, healthier state of mind.

### **Your Spiritual Path**

Many of the world's spiritual practices lead to a release of the ego's grip on personality and to finding one's "center." Some of the most profound movement I have made on this journey has come from consciously attempting to bring more of my heart into my relationships and coaching practice. As I have worked on my own spiritual growth and emotional healing, it has become clear to me that egocentricity drives the negative aspects of the communication filters. Ego is the "mother of all filters." My ego causes the greatest amount of communication distortion and dysfunction in my personal and professional relationships.

There are many paths to enlightenment, and enlightenment is really what I am talking about. This is important to coaching because the Transformational Coach learns to come from a self-aware (centered) place so that he or she can focus on the other person. As a coach, I can not do that very well if I am preoccupied

with my ego needs. To become the powerful and magnificent  
 person I am capable of becoming, I must learn how to detach, to  
 put my needs aside, and to listen deeply with my heart.

When I am relatively detached from what is going on around  
 me, I do not take things personally and I am better able to give  
 other people the benefit of the doubt. I am more able to assume  
 that people are truly innocent in their motivations. I am less likely  
 to believe that people set out with the intention to make mistakes  
 or to ruin my day. I am more likely to choose to believe that most  
 people are trying to do the best job they know how to do, with  
 what they are aware of at the time.

There are many spiritual paths available to us. We choose the  
 one that most honors our deepest sense of who we are. What has  
 been important for me on my journey has been the connection  
 between being on a spiritual path (that is, having a spiritual con-  
 text within which to live my life) and coaching. I encourage you  
 to discover the connection that brings you joy in this transforma-  
 tional way of working with people.



*For one human being to love another:  
 that is perhaps the most difficult of our tasks,  
 the ultimate test and proof,  
 the work for which all other work is but preparation.*

**Rainer Maria Rilke**

*We meet ourselves time  
 and again in a  
 thousand disguises  
 on the path of life.*

**Carl Jung**



*Using feminine principles in business is  
wonderful—leading a company with gut  
feelings, instinct, intuition, passion.*

*Very strong female ethics revolve around the  
concept of caring and sharing....*

ANITA RODDICK



# Coaching Styles

## *What Works When with Whom*

A discussion of behavioral styles is important and relevant to coaching. The personal behavioral patterns we each develop as we mature represent other filters through which we interact with the world and everyone in it. We all have a unique set of characteristics and attributes that defines our personalities. Since the dawn of time, man has sought to understand and explain these differences among people.

Early astrology taught that the alignment of the heavens created the foundation for human behavior. This system postulated twelve signs in four groups: earth, fire, air, and water. Hippocrates refined the system to four temperaments: choleric, phlegmatic, sanguine, and melancholy.

In 1923, based on scientific-research methods, Carl Jung described these four styles as intuitor, thinker, feeler, and sensor. Since then, numerous brain and behavioral studies have added to our understanding about why people act and interact the way they do.

**Behavioral Styles Down Through the Ages**

Source	The Four Categories			
Astrology	Water	Fire	Air	Earth
Hippocrates	Melancholy	Sanguine	Phlegmatic	Choleric
Jung	Feeler	Intuitor	Thinker	Sensor
Merrill/Wilson/Allessandra	Amiable	Expressive	Analytical	Driver
Performax/Carlson	Steadiness	Influence	Compliance	Dominance
Cathcart/Allessandra	Relater	Socializer	Thinker	Director
Crane Consulting*	Collaborating	Creating	Clarifying	Conducting

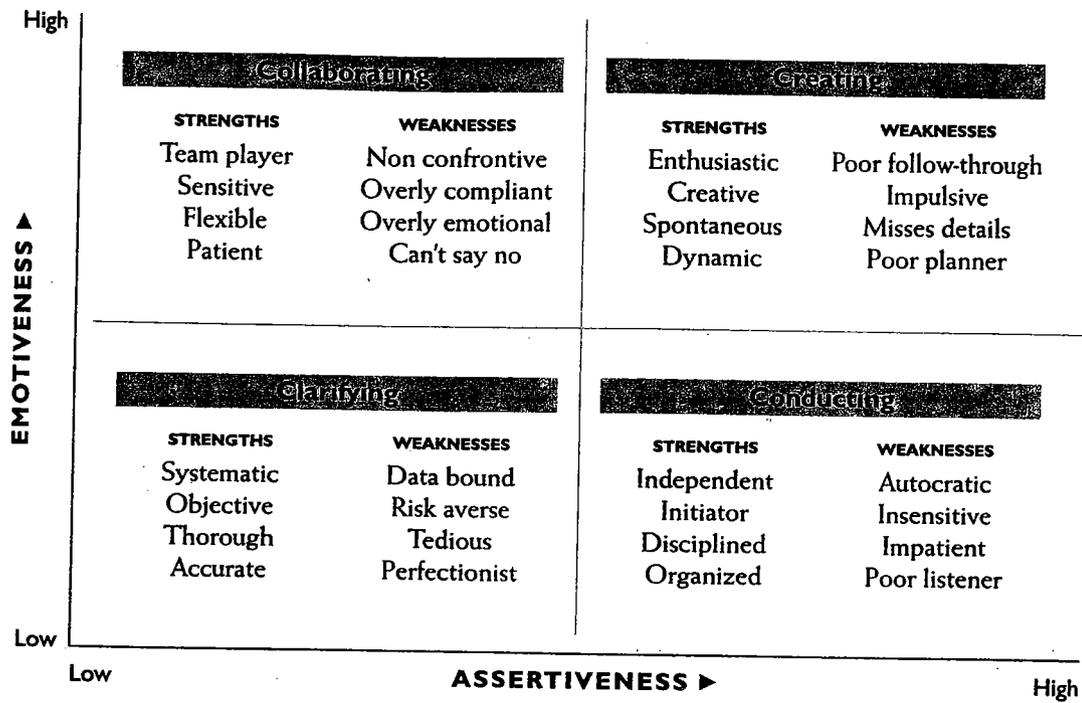
\*Note: The "verbal noun" (gerund) form of these words is used to discourage the labeling that occurs with nouns.

**The Four Behavioral Styles**

Style can be distinguished on the continua of assertiveness and emotiveness. The the four basic styles shown at right reflect the contributions that individuals bring to a team. I call them Collaborating, Creating, Clarifying, and Conducting and have selected these names to capture the true gift each style contributes.

The quality of rapport and connection the coach and coachee develop in their coaching relationship has a profound impact on the effectiveness of Transformational Coaching. Understanding stylistic differences is a key to creating more rapport. Both the coach and the coachee can learn to use the information from these behavioral styles to their advantage. The operative principle for all is the same: Know your own and your coachee's style and be flexible with your coaching approach so that you can match the coachee's style.

## The Four Behavioral Styles



### The Collaborating Style: Low Assertiveness, High Emotiveness

#### KEY STRENGTHS

People who have this style are sensitive to and aware of people's feelings, flexible in finding win/win solutions to problems, good team members, and patient in working with people.

#### KEY WEAKNESSES—POTENTIAL AREAS FOR COACHING

Collaborators may find it difficult to confront others, they tend to be overly compliant and can be overly emotional, and they find it difficult to say "no" to people.

### THE COLLABORATING STYLE AS COACH

The collaborating coach is usually very trustworthy and in touch with the coachee's feelings and needs, but may have a difficult time confronting tough issues in performance or the relationship. Collaborating coaches may, therefore, be too patient with their coachees. They may use indefinite words in dialogue with them, creating confusion and lack of a sense of urgency for the coachee. They may never proceed to Forwarding the Action.

Collaborating coaches can learn from conducting coaches (the style diagonally across the matrix) about being assertive enough to name the issues. They need to learn that it is possible to be supportive while simultaneously challenging coachees to be accountable for results. Using documented performance-improvement plans helps coaches with this style to identify and address the issues.

### TIPS FOR COACHING THE COLLABORATING COACHEE

To coach a collaborating person, be *people-focused*: warm, relaxed, involving, caring, inviting, and concerned. Create rapport with a collaborating person by saying something like this:

*"Sally, I have some strong feelings about something that might be negatively affecting the team's ability to work well and I wondered if you would be open to hearing my thoughts on what might help everybody."*

### **The Creating Style:** **High Assertiveness, High Emotiveness**

#### KEY STRENGTHS

People who display the creating style tend to be highly energetic and enthusiastic about work, able to generate lots of ideas and options, and highly spontaneous. They use intuitive powers well, are dynamic in speech, and have a flair for the dramatic.

### KEY WEAKNESSES—POTENTIAL AREAS FOR COACHING

Such people tend to be impulsive and overly reactive, tend to neglect details, are relatively unfocused on follow-through, and are not good at planning ahead.

### THE CREATING STYLE AS COACH

Although good at talking on their feet, creating-style coaches are frequently so spontaneous as to be unprepared; they often do not have the facts the coachee needs. Their extreme optimism may make it difficult for them and their coachees to see the reality of a given coaching situation. As a result, they may fail to focus on real issues and obstacles to progress. Talking in "rough draft" is a characteristic of this style, a trait that others may perceive as wishy-washy and confusing. Follow-through may also be a challenge, as the creating person is quickly ready to move on to new things.

A coach who has the creating style can learn from the (diagonal) clarifying style. Creating-style coaches need to learn to be more thorough in their coaching and to make sure that they are adequately prepared for the coachee's need for specifics. They should concentrate on slowing down and reflectively listening through the feedback loop to make sure that they connect with the coachee and his or her point of view before offering ideas. Creating-style coaches need to remember to keep their agreements to meet and follow up with their coachees.

### TIPS FOR COACHING THE CREATING STYLE COACHEE

To coach a person who displays the creating style, be *idea-focused*: enthusiastic, expressive, friendly, flexible, open to possibilities, and a big-picture thinker. Try saying something like the following in order to build rapport:

*"Fred, I've got a fantastic idea about how you might blow this year's goals out of the water! Have you got a minute to see how this might fit into your business plan?"*

**The Conducting Style:  
High Assertiveness, Low Emotiveness**

**KEY STRENGTHS**

Conductors are able to take charge and initiate projects, think independently, are highly disciplined, focused on results, and good at organizing people and tasks.

**KEY WEAKNESSES—POTENTIAL AREAS FOR COACHING**

Conductors may be insensitive to other people's feelings and needs, they tend toward autocratic decision making, may be impatient, and tend not to listen well.

**THE CONDUCTING STYLE AS COACH**

The conducting-style coach is really good at organizing things but is often insensitive to the fact that people desire leadership, not moment-to-moment management. Autopilot for the conducting approach is command and control and micro-management. Conductors tend to coach only in the measurable-results arena and leave out the relationship realm. Telling is comfortable for the conducting coach, asking effective questions and listening for the responses is really challenging work.

Lessons for conductors come from the style most unlike them: the collaborative coach. Conductor coaches need to balance coaching on the objective, results side of the ledger with proper attention to the people side. They need to learn to listen with their hearts to what their coachees are saying, not just to focus on the numbers.

**TIPS FOR COACHING THE CONDUCTING COACHEE**

To coach a conducting personality, be *results-focused*: clear, concise, focused, relevant, decisive, and efficient. Enhance rapport with a conducting personality by saying something such as:

*"Doris, I know you are pushing really hard to get this operations project off the ground, with stellar results. I think I see something that might be in your way. Would you want to discuss it?"*

## **The Clarifying Style:** **Low Assertiveness, Low Emotiveness**

### **KEY STRENGTHS**

Clarifiers are very systematic and deliberate in their thinking and planning, they are able to maintain an objective perspective based on facts, and they are very thorough, complete, and accurate in their work.

### **KEY WEAKNESSES—POSSIBLE AREAS FOR COACHING**

Clarifiers can be tedious and boring in their interactions with others; perfectionism tends to create analytical paralysis. This type of person tends to be too conservative and risk-averse in decision making and execution, and gets too caught up in the numbers of life and work.

### **THE CLARIFYING STYLE AS COACH**

In striving to understand thoroughly, clarifying coaches tend to go so slowly that some coachees run out of patience. If the audience is lost, the message is lost. In addition, clarifying coaches need to make it okay for people to make mistakes (provided that they learn and share their learning with others). Thoroughness can come off as nit-picky, so coaches with this style should remember to lighten up a little.

The clarifying coach's opportunities to become more effective come from the strengths of the (diagonally situated on the matrix) creative style. Clarifying coaches should move along at a fast enough tempo to keep their coachees' interest. These coaches should remember to keep coaching focused on the coachees' goals, rather than on their own interests. Clarifying coaches must strive for balance between the details and the big picture, without losing sight of the purpose. They need to watch their tendency to become preachy (teachers of lessons) when dealing with adults.

### **TIPS FOR COACHING THE CLARIFYING COACHEE**

When coaching a clarifying person, be *data-focused*: specific, thorough, prepared, accurate, rational, and orderly. Build rapport with communications such as:

*"Paul, these data seem inconsistent with what I thought you were looking for. I have two ideas that would improve the quality and timeliness of the team's efforts. I need fifteen minutes to discuss this with you. Can we meet at four-thirty today?"*

## What To Remember About Behavioral Styles

It is easy to misuse any tool. Most people resent being labeled or placed in a box. When I cover this material on behavioral styles in workshops, I ask people to remember the following points:

- Style is a preference and a choice. It is not what people are. Each of us have some of the skills and abilities from all four styles.
- No one style is better. Any style can be effective in almost any situation. It is the situation and the person with whom you are interacting that determines the approach that may work best. Flexibility is the key.
- Weaknesses are merely overdeveloped strengths. As you become aware of your preferences, try seeing your strengths as blind spots that filter out other possibilities. Continually expand the range and the flexibility of your style.
- Each style has its own language, beliefs, and skills. Each style is effective. Each style has a place on the team. High-performance teams value and blend all the styles.
- Do not take this structured framework too seriously. Do not use it to evaluate and separate people into categories. Use it to connect with and value them.

## Coaching and Generational Differences

There are three distinct generations working side by side in most organizations. This has been true for decades, but it is especially significant now.

## Contrasting the Generations—Three Generations in U.S. Society Today

	<b>Traditionalists</b> "The Silent Generation"	<b>Boomers</b> "Yuppies"	<b>X'ers</b> "Yiffies"
Birth Years	1925-1945	1946-1964	1965-1980
Conditioning Years	30's-40's	50's-60's	70's-80's
World Frame	Depression, WWII Struggle and sacrifice Delayed gratification	Sexual revolution Economic expansion Abundance, Spending	MTV, AIDS epidemic Cynical Grim economic reality
Family Structure	Nuclear	Divorced	Latch key kids
Who, What Is Trusted	Doctors	Feelings	Technology
Music Favored	Swing Old standards Elevator music	Rock & Roll Jazz New Age	Rap, Punk Heavy Metal Alternative
Work Ethic	Work hard Pay dues Keep head down "I am my job"	Climb the ladder Build career Workaholics "Work is my life"	Distrust big business Nine to five Independence "Work gives me a life"
Attitude Toward Authority	Respect it	Question it	Challenge it
Management Style Favored	Command and control	Collaborative	Entrepreneurial
Loyalty To	My company	My profession	My family
Organizational Structure Favored	Formal Hierarchical	Informal Accessible	Unconventional Connected network
How Job Is Valued	Stability, Security	Career growth	Stepping stone
How Communication Is Perceived	No news is good news	Any news is good news	Need news, straight talk, and feedback
How Organizational Life Is Dealt With	Dedicated Committed Social contract	Disillusioned Downsized Broken agreement	Realistic Risk takers No agreement
What Is Resented	Change Lack of respect	Control Slackers	Corporate politics Boomers clogging the system
What Is Valued	Stability Respect Trust Hard work Loyalty	Variety Achievement Actualization Career Flexibility	Learning Quality of life Involvement Stimulation Fun

Sources: "Why Busters Hate Boomers," *Fortune*, October 4, 1993; "The Luck of the X'ers" by Jane Bryant Quinn, *Newsweek*, June 6, 1994; "More Light on Generation X—The Psychological Contract," *Training*, May, 1994; "It's Just a Job" by Bob Filipczak, *Training*, April, 1994; "The X Generation" by Kim Macalister, *HR Magazine*, May, 1994.

The three generations are the Traditionalists, the Baby Boomers, and Generation X. Each grew up and was inculturated at a different time in this country's history, over a span of sixty years that has included huge social, economic, and political shifts in the United States and the world. As a result, each generation has embraced different values, beliefs, and paradigms.

The differences have implications for coaches. Coaching people from these three generations creates unique challenges in establishing and maintaining rapport and connection and accomplishing the important work of the company. It is easy to stereotype others because of their age, gender, race, style, and perceived values. Our perceptions of generational differences are manifestations of the "judgments" filter. Coaches must become aware of this potentially unhelpful aspect of human nature and consciously choose to value differences, especially those based on the richness of diversity available to us today. In high-performing environments, team members consciously embrace and cultivate the diversity of the team's members and view their differences as strengths. See "Contrasts in the Generations," on the previous page, for an outline of the differences among generations.

### **Coaching the Traditionalist**

People from the Traditionalist generation have been required to deal with more changes than any other generation. The world they grew up in was very different than that of the Boomers or the X'ers. That fact alone is cause for compassion and understanding. Connecting with them is easier when one is:

- Respectful of their experience and values the perspective they bring to the organization
- Patient with and understanding of their resistance to quick changes
- Respectful of their need for orderliness and a clear sense of direction
- Empathic about the emotional effect on them of the changed social contract

- Willing to find ways to enroll them as wise coaches and mentors for the organization.

### **Coaching the Boomer**

Baby boomers were conditioned in an age of unparalleled economic prosperity. They believe that anything is possible if they throw enough money at it. In an economic age that has richly rewarded individual achievement, Boomers have become caught up in the materialistic pursuit of toys, and many have lost a sense of balance in the process. Approach them with:

- Respect for their achievements and the range of choices they may have become used to exercising
- Appreciation for their energy and commitment to working hard for their results
- The willingness to help them create more balance in their lives
- A challenge to collaborate with and involve those around them in solving the problems of today's organizations
- An intent to involve them in articulating the direction of the organization, especially the implementation of change initiatives
- Offers to enroll them as coaches in the process of change

### **Coaching the X'ers**

Many people in the younger generation of workers have grown up in broken homes and have learned to be relatively independent about having their needs met. They have developed the ability to discern lies and half-truths quickly. They make up their own minds about things, rejecting many of the beliefs that the Boomers took at face value. In coaching X'ers, one needs to:

- Respect the extraordinary times and life experiences that shaped their thinking and beliefs (AIDS and computers, for example)

- Understand that their relative lack of attachment and excitement about material things may come from having so much
- Tell them the truth, including placing boundaries around what cannot be talked about
- Provide career-enriching opportunities to satisfy their passion for learning
- Honor the sense of balance and respect for family that they bring to work
- Spend as much time as necessary orienting them to the organization's culture and be clear about your expectations

### Using the Knowledge

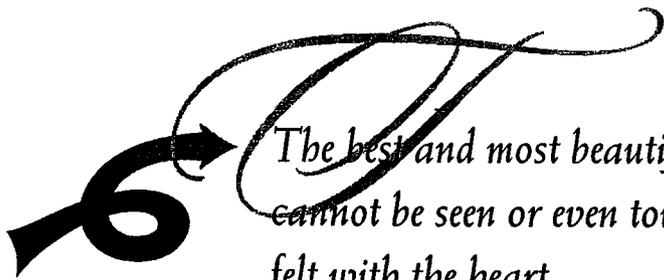
Some of the tips in this chapter may assist you in connecting with potential coachees. But remember, not everybody fits a mold. I am the father of Generation-X kids and I have had some struggles in understanding and staying connected with them. The information in the table "Contrasting the Generations" has helped me to better appreciate the world in which my children grew up. It has given me more to talk about and share with them. I hope it has the same effect for you with people at home or at work.

We always need to find ways to connect and collaborate with people to achieve the goals of the organization. It is a strategic error to maintain emotional distance from people just because they are different, because they do not look like us, like different music, or are "bugged" or excited by different things. If they work for our company, they are on our team. *They* are not the enemy, the competition is. A Transformational Coach knows this and facilitates connection at every opportunity.



*To be surprised, to wonder, is to begin to understand.*

**Jose Ortega Y Gasset**



*The best and most beautiful things in the world  
cannot be seen or even touched. They must be  
felt with the heart.*

HELEN KELLER



# Miscellaneous Coaching Tips

*A Collection of Ideas and Hints*

Although coaching is more than a technique, there are some specifics to keep in mind to keep the process on track. This chapter provides a number of helpful tips for both giving and receiving coaching that will make the process easier and more successful.

## **Giving Coaching**

If your coaching comes from the heart, the chances are that it will be transformational for you and for your coachee. Check this list of tips from time to time just to make sure that you are on the right track.

## **Remember Your “ABCs”**

ABC stands for “Ask Before Coaching”—an easy way to remember that requesting and receiving permission is critical to the Transformational Coaching process. The danger of “dumping” feedback on people when it is convenient for you is that it may not be convenient or the right time or place for them. Asking first

is a clear sign of respect for the coachee and will always serve you well in building and maintaining trust in the relationship.

### **Make It Mutual**

For the coaching process to achieve its full potential to connect people in an environment of trust, respect, and rapport, the coach must frequently ask for coaching from the coachee. This demonstrates the coach's intention to learn and grow as a teammate by creating the sense of a level playing field. It must become normal for a coachee—often a subordinate—to offer coaching to the coach.

One of the things that the coach can ask for feedback on is the work relationship with the coachee. Work performance is another area of inquiry. The coaching process itself is another topic for feedback. Ask questions such as:

- "What's working?"
- "What's not working?"
- "What should I do more of?" "Less of?"
- "What should I stop doing?" "Start doing?"

This gives the coachee an opportunity to share his or her thoughts and feelings and contribute to improving the process. Just as important, it identifies anything that may be keeping your coaching from being its best.

### **Be Conversational in Tone**

A conversational tone is informal, relaxed, good-hearted, easy to listen to, and full of humor. Most people would rather be conversed with than talked at. Many coaches fall into the trap of using a "telling" style of speech. This directive approach should be saved for situations for which it is truly appropriate. Otherwise, you risk coming across as condescending or parental, which interferes with the coaching process.

### **Check for Understanding**

For any conversation to have the feel of mutual dialogue, both parties should use questions to clarify their understanding

*The primary medium for all coaching interventions is conversation.*

**Robert Hargrove**



throughout the conversation. The coach should take the lead in clarifying not only what has just been said but also what has been heard. The interpretation is critical to creating a shared understanding. Simply saying, "This is what I heard you say. Is that what you meant?" is an easy and effective way to check for understanding.

### **Support Their Goals**

Support the goals of your coachees. U.S. business people are results-focused and bottom-line driven. Most bosses have clear agendas and strong ideas about what must be accomplished and how it should be done that interfere with their ability to listen to people and understand what *their* problems and issues are in achieving the results for which they are accountable. Learn to ask questions and listen deeply to the responses. In this way, you can become more focused on helping people to remove barriers that stand in their way. If a coachee's goals appear to be out of alignment with yours, and that is not appropriate for your work situation, then that requires a different conversation. By all means, hold it soon!

*To love what you do and  
feel that it matters—  
how could anything  
be more fun?*

**Katherine Graham**

### **Pay Attention to How It Lands**

As you deliver feedback, pay close attention to the coachee's response. Focus on his or her body language, facial expression, and tone of voice. Certain clues tell you how he or she is hearing what you have shared. When you perceive that the person is becoming upset or taking it poorly (usually personally), check to see if he or she is okay and then decide whether to continue or not. Placing yourself in your coachee's shoes and summoning empathy will pay great dividends in the relationship. It is possible to say almost anything to almost anybody if you speak from your heart.

### **Share Accountability for Success and Failure**

In many corporate cultures, people invest considerable time in placing blame, ducking responsibility, and punishing the guilty. Coaches can change this practice for the entire culture by hold-

ing themselves fully accountable for the success of their coachees. Accountability is the empowering attitude through which both people in the relationship accept 100 percent of the responsibility for the success of that relationship and the results that they *jointly* produce. Accountable coaches always seek to understand their effect—positive and negative—on performance and on the working relationship, and then act on the behaviors that are within their control.

### **Progress, Not Perfection**

Our society values perfection in all things—in faces, bodies, control, parenting, and so on. This is dysfunctional thinking at worst, and it is easy to get caught up in it. *Nobody* is perfect, and no one ever will be. Waiting for a person to perform a task or accomplish a goal without making a single mistake is an unrealistic and unhealthy expectation.

Your job is to encourage and support people in moving in a positive direction. Effective coaches are continually alert to incremental improvements in attitude, behavior, or work processes; they provide recognition to people when they have achieved progress. Stay focused on reinforcing positive progress toward meaningful goals.

### **Talk About What Needs To Be**

Things will come to your mind from time to time that may seem inappropriate as topics for coaching or personal feedback, for example, bad breath, dandruff, a nervous tick or mannerism, bad table manners, or alcohol abuse. There is almost no topic that cannot be broached under the right conditions, with the right intentions, with the right trusting relationship. This is especially true if you sincerely believe that the information may be relevant, important, or helpful to your coachee. If you believe the behavior in question is adversely affecting or limiting otherwise good performance, find a way to talk about it from your heart.

*The real art of conversation is not only to say the right thing in the right place, but... to leave unsaid the wrong thing at the tempting moment.*

**Dorothy Nevill**

### **Make It "Face Time"**

In light of the huge growth in popularity of electronic communications, do not forget the power of face-to-face meetings. Writing a memo or sending an e-mail message is a distant and poor substitute for personal communication. Nothing is as powerful as looking another human being in the eyes and having a real dialogue. That is where the connection happens. If you feel that you may be starting to lose touch with someone (or you receive feedback that you are losing touch), pay attention to the processes you are using to maintain your communications.

### **Carpé Momento (Seize the Moment)!**

Robin Williams' character in *The Dead Poets Society* reminded us of the importance of *seizing the day* (*carpé diem*). For coaches, the motto is *carpé momento*—seize the moment. Within the context of a safe, established coaching relationship, do not be afraid to offer coaching "in the moment." People who are open to hearing feedback in the heat of the action have an opportunity to respond instantaneously and change their course of action. This is only possible, of course, when the coach and the coachee have developed a high level of rapport and can openly and skillfully incorporate feedback received from moment to moment.

### **Be Prepared**

Being prepared is important in anything you do, it is especially important to the coaching process. Be very clear about how you want to describe, in objective terms, the behavior that you have observed. Take a few moments before a coaching session to gather your thoughts on suggestions that you want to offer and to refresh your memory of your personal experiences related to the current situation.

### **Balance Your Feedback**

We are psychologically wired to want and need reinforcing feedback far more than we are able to admit (or get it). No one receives too much. We especially need lots of support and

encouragement when we try new things in today's changing workplaces.

Make sure that your feedback is lopsided in favor of giving too much appreciative feedback, at least compared to what you have been giving. Provide significantly more supportive and appreciative feedback than you do suggestions for change. Deliver feedback in the following ratio: 80 percent positive and reinforcing—20 percent constructive ideas for change. Transformational Coaching requires a new mindset. Do not focus on errors; focus on progress and on what is going right.

### **Be Clear**

Many people are pretty good at innuendo, speaking around issues, and speaking in general terms. It is far more helpful to speak clearly and directly in your coaching conversations. Always be clear about your intention and the purpose for the session, and be very specific in the information and ideas you share and direct in the delivery of the message.

### **Keep Your Commitments**

Do not let other business supersede a commitment for a coaching session unless you first renegotiate the time of the session. Priorities are always changing; that is not the issue. Less experienced coaches sometimes make the mistake of delaying a coaching meeting without explicit communication. First, agree to reschedule the session. Do not assume that you don't have to talk about it. You do, if you are to preserve the trust and respect that you have worked so hard to build. (Here is a Transformational idea: consider sending the signal to the organization that a coaching session *cannot* be changed because it is so important.)

### **Transformational Coaching Is a Process**

The difference between an event and a process is that events end and processes cycle without end. Transformational Coaching is a process. Many managers make the mistake of saving their coaching for the annual performance evaluation. They operate



under the mistaken belief that this is effective and helpful. It is too little, too late.

Progressive organizations and leaders are finding that coaching is a powerful way of staying in continual dialogue about performance-improvement issues throughout the year, quarter, month, and day. People simply need more feedback and ongoing coaching to leverage their performance.

### **Transformational Coaching Is Not a Performance Review**

Although the process is not a performance review, it supports such processes. If Transformational Coaching is working well in your organization, the coachee will, theoretically, learn nothing new during the actual review. Everything already will have been discussed, so there will be no surprises, just a confirmation of the content of the many dialogues held throughout the performance period.

### **See Coaching As Learning**

If you are going to be an effective coach, you must do whatever is humanly possible to remove your ego-based filters and protective routines and replace them with an open, learning stance toward life. If you can focus on *learning* about people, processes, or principles every time you coach, you will create more results in the long run. Someone once invited me to exchange my *rightness* for curiosity. It helped. I now invite you to do the same as a way to hold yourself open for learning.

### **See Coaching As a Gift**

In many cultures, people share gifts when they want to acknowledge one another because they care about one another and wish to demonstrate their caring. The gift is usually a token that will be appreciated by, or is helpful to, the recipient. The feedback in the Transformational Coaching process also can be viewed as a gift. Seen that way, you may be able to hold it more lightly and deliver it with more care.

Consider how you might feel if someone in your organization had feedback for you that might help your performance or working relationships, but he or she withheld it. If you found out, you might feel angry or be disappointed. You might even feel cheated. One good strategy to keep that from happening in your organization is to do your part and offer all the feedback that you have to give. Give it away because you care about the recipient.

## Receiving Coaching

The following story is a powerful example of what can happen when you do not accept feedback.

*A ship was sailing through a heavy fog when its crew sighted a faint light through the mist. The radioman signaled:*

*"Please divert your course 15° to the north to avoid a collision."*

*The reply came:*

*"Impossible. Recommend you divert your course 15° to south to avoid a collision."*

*The radioman signaled again:*

*"This is a U.S. Navy ship. I say again, divert your course."*

*The radioman was surprised to get the response:*

*"No can do. I say again, you divert your course."*

*The radioman consulted with the ship's captain. The captain got on the radio and said:*

*"This is the Captain of a U.S. Navy aircraft carrier. Divert your course now!"*

*The response came:*

*"This is a lighthouse. Your call."*

This story can offer some lessons to us as coaches.

- If you can imagine the captain's tone of voice, what message do you think accompanied his or her words?
- What would you project as the emotional state of the captain?
- Have you ever caught yourself acting like the captain?
- What happened the last time you were absolutely certain that you had all the facts you needed to proceed?
- How do you tend to react to those who use a "telling" style?

"Crashing into the lighthouse" is a great metaphor for how we sometimes treat feedback (and the people who bring it).

Receiving feedback is important to Transformational Coaching because of the mutual nature of the coaching relationship. You cannot be an effective coach if you learn how to give feedback but never learn how to graciously accept and respond to it. You are not going to encourage your direct reports to provide feedback if you react badly to it. Don't shoot the messenger.

The following are some tips to remember:

### **Be Honest in Giving Permission**

In corporations in which hierarchy still prevails, it is standard protocol to defer to your boss. This behavior demonstrates respect for positions above and protects you from the consequences of making waves, stirring the pot, or offending those for whom you work. If your coach (whatever his or her position in the organization) approaches you and asks permission to deliver feedback, it is really more helpful, and more in your own best interest, to give an authentic and sincere response. There will be many times in which you will have a difficult time being receptive to feedback. If you cannot be emotionally available and present in that moment, thank your coach for the opportunity and defer the conversation to a time that will work better for you. This requires courage but demonstrates the utmost respect for the process. It has to be okay to say no from time to time.

### **Receive Feedback As a Gift**

This is the flip side of *offering* feedback as a gift. Hold yourself open for the learning opportunities provided by feedback. It is easier to listen to feedback if you visualize an open space in your heart for the information and if you see it as a way to learn about yourself and how you affect others. Regard all input as potentially valuable.

### **Do Not Take It Personally**

For those of us who have vulnerabilities, unhealed wounds, and emotional sensitivities (in other words, all of us), it is common to feel hurt by even well-intended feedback. Sometimes, we can be emotionally triggered by feedback. When this happens, our egos filter the feedback through our inner critics, who convince us that the feedback is about our lack of worth. Many of us come from families—or have worked in environments—in which criticism is an everyday occurrence. There always will be people who have a difficult time changing criticism into feedback, but that is not the issue. The issue is how we interpret and respond to the feedback.

Learn to remind yourself that the feedback may or may not be about you. Your coach, if unaware, unwittingly may be projecting something onto you. Understand that feedback often is more about the person who is delivering it—his or her beliefs, values, assumptions, expectations, and current filters—than it is about your own performance or worth. Cultivating this awareness may allow you to remain detached yet curious about what the feedback tells you about the giver.

### **Monitor Your Emotional Reactions**

It is your job to pay attention to your own thinking and feeling states at the time that you receive feedback. If you are a normal human being, you may find some feedback to be upsetting and personally offensive. If you find that you are emotionally triggered and beginning to react defensively, or tempted to respond by returning what you perceive to be an attack, just stop. Take a deep breath, remind yourself that receiving feedback is *always* a

*Remember, no one can  
make you feel inferior  
without your consent.*

**Eleanor Roosevelt**

learning situation (often about the feedback giver), and listen. If you indulge in a negative emotional reaction, you lose your ability to *hear* the feedback. Consider calling a time out and getting back together when you can really listen.

### **Focus Your Coach on Your Goals**

People tend to deliver feedback on things that are important to them. I am sure that you know people who project their beliefs and judgments about how things ought to be. Frequently, people who have strong agendas do not take the time to find out what is important to you. So it may increase the value of the feedback if, early in the conversation (or the relationship), you let your coach know your goals, objectives, and challenges. This provides an appropriate and clear focus for *most* of the feedback that may follow.

### **Clarify Your Feedback**

Make sure that you truly understand your coach's meaning. Ask for specific, clear examples to help you to understand the ROI of your actions. An unexpected benefit is that you may develop a deep appreciation for your coach's perspective. Try to stay engaged in dialogue until you can come to appreciate and value the message.

### **Take Time To Reflect and Respond (Instead of Reacting)**

It is important to not overreact to feedback, regardless of its source. People often have a tendency (especially when feedback comes from a supervisor) to react immediately by promising to change their actions. Be responsive, but be aware that a quick, knee-jerk reaction may not be the best choice.

Remember, you are the one who decides what to do with the feedback and suggestions you receive. Receive the feedback, acknowledge the person giving it, then take time to reflect on the meaning and gradually integrate personal changes that you believe are appropriate, sustainable, and authentic—for you. (You may sometimes choose to change immediately, but it is always your choice.)

On the flip side, you may find yourself reacting to feedback by defending yourself or arguing. This is a wonderful opportunity to breathe deeply and focus on taking in the information. Your objective is to understand the feedback and to consciously choose an appropriate response to it. In the moment of receiving feedback, you need to do nothing but listen calmly. Focus on understanding as much of it as possible and asking any clarifying questions that occur to you.

### **Perception Is Reality**

The feedback you receive is the subjective reality of another person. It is important to understand and appreciate it in those terms. Whether you *intended* to create the effect or outcome that is being described to you is irrelevant. What is important is to listen and to learn from this person's perception and experience. You need others to share with you what their experience is, good or bad, so that you have the option of considering making a personal change.

### **Look for the Kernel**

We live in a world that bombards us with enough information to overwhelm most sane people. The burden is on us to figure out what to do with it all. If we are diligent in the way we handle this information, we can find what is true for us. It takes work to discover the themes in our feedback that relate to our lifelong issues of personal growth and development—the kernel of truth. That is where to focus.

### **Let an Acknowledgment “Sink In”**

For some strange reason, most of us are pretty good at deflecting acknowledgment, affirmation, and accolades. Somewhere in our Western culture, there is a belief that it is not okay to brag or boast about ourselves and our accomplishments. Research in the last decade regarding development of healthy self-esteem and a strong self-image suggests that it is important for people to learn to accept positive feedback and use it to develop self-esteem. This takes practice. (A deeper discussion of this follows in

Chapter 14.) Try this simple technique. The next time someone offers you positive feedback or a compliment, just say, "Thank you," and smile.

### **Always Thank Your Coach**

Always demonstrate openness and gratitude for the feedback you have just received, whether it was positive or negative. It does not matter if you agree with it. As a matter of fact, at the time you hear it, you may believe that the feedback is wrong, off base, judgmental, or a result of the coach's projection. Often your coach took a risk to deliver the feedback; acknowledging his or her courage is your way of supporting your coach and developing trust in the relationship.



*Outstanding leaders go out of their way to boost self-esteem of their personnel. If people believe in themselves, it's amazing what they can accomplish.*

SAM WALTON



# Self-Esteem and Healing

*You Can't Lead Where You Haven't Traveled*

The challenges that we coaches face at work require us to bring out the best in people and in ourselves. It is impossible to consider being a coach without addressing the subject of self-esteem and emotional healing.

Few judgments we make in life are as important as the ones we make about ourselves. The state of our self-esteem colors all our life experiences. It has a profound effect on our performance at work. It affects how we deal with people, how we operate within our social constructs and work environments and how much we achieve.<sup>14</sup>

Self-esteem includes our internal image of *self-efficacy*—our confidence in our ability to think, act, cope, and face challenges in our lives. Self-esteem also includes *self-respect*, which is our sense of worthiness, importance, and entitlement to assert our needs with others. It sets the context for our life choices.

<sup>14</sup>For more information about self-esteem, read *The Six Pillars of Self-Esteem* by Nathaniel Branden (New York: Bantam Books, 1994).

*The curious paradox  
is that when I accept  
myself just as I am,  
then I can change.*

**Carl Rogers**

## **Implications for Coaching**

As I have said earlier, the effectiveness of the coaching relationship is based on developing and maintaining the highest levels of trust, honesty, intimacy, and mutual respect with coachees. With regard to self-esteem, a coach's objective is to support and nurture the development of self-esteem and positive self-regard in all aspects of the coaching relationship.

The following attitudes and behaviors will help build your awareness and facilitate the development of healthy self-esteem for both you and your coachees.

### **See Others As Unique**

There never have been two individuals on the face of the planet, living or dead, who were identical. The fact that we are all unique can form a basis for appreciation and respect for one another. A good coach learns to experience, honor, and celebrate people's uniqueness.

### **Invest Time to Appreciate**

There is probably a direct relationship between the quality of the coaching relationship and the time invested in the coaching process. Truthful and caring dialogue produces a natural discovery: we learn more about the people with whom we work and therefore have more to appreciate and support in them as human beings and as members of the team.

### **Support Others' Life Values and Purposes**

A coach can contribute to the discovery and development of another person's life purpose, mission, and values. With high levels of trust, rapport, and permission, a coach can learn about these aspects of the coachee's life. Conversations of this kind may extend into the mentoring arena, and that's okay. It is natural for the coach to want to honor these personal aspects of people when he or she becomes aware of them. These types of conversations flow easily, given the heartfelt connection that develops between the coach and coachee.

### **Connect Role and Contribution to Life Purpose**

Life purpose can provide the context in which we choose our life's work. A coach who has done this exploratory work in his or her own life will find it easier to help coachees to connect their roles and contributions with their vision of their life purpose.

To the extent that people can become clear about the purpose of their lives, the mission they believe they have been placed on this earth to accomplish, and the values they hold close to their hearts, they will have more fulfilling experiences at work, especially if they are able to connect those values and goals to their roles at work. Transformational Coaches are willing to talk about these kinds of things to help people discover such vital connections.

### **Stretch and Challenge**

Positive self-esteem usually develops in proportion to our accomplishments. Achieving meaningful goals creates a sense of pride and positive image that contributes to our sense of well-being and enhances our ability to perform at higher levels. A good coach will assist the growth and development of a coachee by helping him or her to set goals and objectives that stretch and challenge his or her performance levels. Left to their own devices, people often remain within their personal comfort zones; they may not choose objectives that require their best. An effective coach can help people developmentally by encouraging them to try new things, adopt new roles, and learn new skills.

### **Become a Cheerleader**

Become a huge fan of other people's work and accomplishments. Reinforce people's achievements in a way that they might not do for themselves. Coaches can develop individual esteem if they seize every opportunity to acknowledge, cheer, and underscore people's successes. In this area, do more, not less.

### **Support Learning and the Growth of Self-Esteem**

One of the most important questions that a coach can ask is, "What did you learn about yourself?" Keeping the focus on

learning helps people to become aware of insights and connections that might otherwise go unnoticed. If, in the course of our overloaded, stressed-out world of work, we can become conscious of and accept our thoughts, feelings, insights, and attitudes, we become more able to support the growth of positive self-images. Coaches learn to facilitate people's development of new and positive ways of thinking about themselves.

## Team Esteem

Beyond facilitating the development of individual self-esteem, a Transformational Coach plays a major role in contributing to a team's collective self-image—to team esteem. A strong team identity is vital to its ability to perform at high levels. It shows up as team spirit, high camaraderie, mutual support, and lots of good-natured fun. It is an intangible part of the fabric that holds a team together during tough times and it fuels the extraordinary results that high-performing teams are capable of achieving. Create good team esteem by following these principles:

*I think if organizations are doing their job, then they create self-esteem in the workplace. The way a company works is because of the people. I think the attitude in the workplace completely dictates the quality of the product.*

**Nick Graham**

- Create a clear and compelling vision, mission, strategy, and challenging goals on which to focus. Establish clear priorities that minimize internal competition and turf conflicts.
- Clarify roles and responsibilities for all members that enable each to fully contribute his or her personal best to the team mission. Instill individuals with the obligation to act accountably toward one another and freely exercise the full range of their abilities to influence events and people.
- Foster an environment of inclusion and belonging in which teammates feel welcomed and accepted for who they are and what they bring to the team. Use diversity as a source of strength, not of tension and distrust.
- Support team members emotionally through thick and thin to demonstrate healthy caring for one another. Honor people's personal struggles.

- Maintain a balance between task performance and relationship effectiveness. Refuse to sacrifice working relationships to short-term business results. Respect process as the path to improving performance. People experience healthy and productive lives by balancing work and play.
- Create and maintain a feedback-rich environment in which people are expected and welcomed to freely give and receive feedback and coaching with teammates. Encourage appropriate risk-taking and learning behavior. Make it safe to fail (as long as the resulting learning is shared across the team).
- Insist that the team routinely invest time to celebrate and recognize its achievements and learnings. This nurtures pride, feelings of well-being, and a team image of high-performance capability. Such a team learns to deeply believe in itself and the abilities of its members.

Take a moment to assess your organization's use of these principles to help you to decide what you need to do to develop more team esteem.

**Our team has clear goals.**

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Frequently	Usually	Always

**Team members know their roles and responsibilities.**

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Frequently	Usually	Always

**Our team works in an environment of inclusion.**

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Frequently	Usually	Always

**All team members support one another through thick and thin.**

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Frequently	Usually	Always

**We maintain a balance between task performance and relationship building.**

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Frequently	Usually	Always

**We nurture the development of a feedback-rich environment.**

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Frequently	Usually	Always

**We remember to celebrate.**

1	2	3	4	5
Never	Rarely	Frequently	Usually	Always

With this assessment fresh in your mind, what are some of the key areas that your organization might need to work on first? Who could help you in addressing these issues? What steps might Forward the Action?

### **Coping with Change and Loss: How Coaches Can Facilitate Healing**

Most survivors of corporate America's restructuring activities go through an emotional adjustment period. People get hurt in organizational shake-ups. Deep feelings of loss resulting from what are extremely traumatic events often require time to heal. People need time to adjust to new bosses, locations, products, and teams. Most need time to fully understand their new roles and the new rules associated with the change. Coaches are in a position to facilitate healing.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> A wonderful resource on healing is *Sensible Self-Help: The First Road Map for the Healing Journey* by Drs. David and Rebecca Grudermeyer and Lerrisa Patrick. (Del Mar, CA: Willingness Works Press, 1995).

Much of the internal work that high performers do is with healing.<sup>16</sup> Almost invariably, high performers work on the principles described as The 7 H's of Healing: being here in the present, honesty, humility, honoring self and others, having a sense of humor, hope, and helpfulness.

### Being Here in the Present Moment

The human mind operates much like a pendulum. It swings to the *past*, where it accesses memory and all that it holds. It swings to the *future* and focuses on the potential that is not yet here. The precise bottom of the pendulum's cycle represents *here*, this present moment.

It is natural for our minds to work this way, but this emphasis on past and future sometimes is not helpful. It is not helpful to dwell on negative aspects of the past, such as regrets over mistakes made, resentments, and grudges against people whom we perceive have harmed us, judgments and negative attributions of motives, or the residue and "yuck" of unhealthy relationships.

It is more helpful, when recalling the past, to focus on our achievements (and those of other people), lessons we have learned, understandings we have developed, and the richness and personal growth of our unique histories. These thoughts correlate with higher thinking states such as curiosity, gratitude, and resourcefulness on the Mood Map (page 141).

When looking at the future, it is unhelpful to worry about what *might* happen,<sup>17</sup> to catastrophize (imagining the worst that could happen), or to fear change and the challenges that the future will bring. It is far more helpful to direct one's thoughts toward the positive aspects that change can create, the opportunity for renewal and a fresh start, the unforeseen beneficial possibilities just out of sight, and the very real hope for a better tomorrow.

Usually the human mind passes through the present moment very quickly, in small snippets. Typically, we spend far too little time focused on what or who is before us. To better capture the present moment, we must realize that the present moment is all that we really have. The past is over and the future is not yet here. Right here, right now, is where our lives happen.

<sup>16</sup>The process described below is connected to the Mood Map (page 141). Work in these areas helps to elevate people into the higher states of mind and facilitates higher levels of functioning.

*In order to be utterly happy the only thing necessary is to refrain from comparing this moment with other moments in the past, which I often did not fully enjoy because I was comparing them with other moments of the future.*

**Andre Gide**

<sup>17</sup>Someone once defined worrying as "suffering in advance."

Transformational Coaches learn to manage their attention and focus their listening in the present moment. They learn to eliminate or minimize distractions and to effectively mitigate the effect of their communication filters. Have you ever been in a meeting physically but not emotionally? Have you seen others do the same? What is the outcome of the meeting if a large portion of the attendees are distracted by the past or future? Given the current stressful demands of our work, coaching others to stay focused becomes very relevant and helpful. Learning occurs and solutions present themselves in the here and now. All we have to do is to pay attention to what is before us.

### **Honesty**

We often vacillate between two extremes in our communications. At one end, we are indirect, afraid to speak up and tell the truth. At the other extreme, we can be so direct that we are brash and abrasive. Neither of these ends of the continuum is effective.

Honesty means having the awareness and courage to express your inside truth to the outside world. To be honest means to have integrity, to be authentic.

The trouble is that many corporate environments make it unsafe to be totally truthful. Often well-intentioned leaders believe that they are better off with a spin on the facts; they interpret events and situations in the best light to maintain the corporate image. Although this practice may be appropriate in some situations, shading the truth is not a long-term successful strategy when it comes to people. People prefer to be treated as adults.

Transformational Coaches challenge themselves by:

- Checking their own intentions or purposes in all interactions
- Maintaining internal emotional integrity (doing frequent "gut" checks to be sure that things feel right)
- Refusing to lie to themselves or others
- Confronting the real issues in the workplace that affect people

*Everybody talks about wanting to change things and help and fix, but ultimately all you can do is fix yourself. And that's a lot. Because if you can fix yourself, it has a ripple effect.*

**Rob Reiner**

- Offering feedback to those around them
- Learning how to constructively handle negative feelings such as anger, resentment, and emotional upset

### **Humility**

Humility is important in healing. Arrogance is the polar opposite of humility. Arrogant people usually are very difficult to work with because they always know the "right" answers. Arrogance parades as self-righteousness and condescending or judgmental behavior that alienates people.

Learning to live with humility means developing the ability to see ourselves in the actions of others. Other people become mirrors for us. We can learn to know that we *do not know* and to ask questions to find out. We can reject perfectionism as a disease of the soul and learn to accept ourselves and others with genuine positive regard.

#### **Transformational Coaches:**

- Realize their fallibility as human beings
- Learn to forgive themselves and others
- Embrace healthy curiosity as a lifelong learning stance
- Develop a practice of reflecting, praying, or meditating to deepen their appreciation for their lives and for the people in them
- See life as a journey and their choices as their unique paths

As a result, they become more compassionate with themselves, then they are able to offer that compassion to others.

### **Honoring Self and Others**

The antithesis of honor is judgment and lack of respect. To honor ourselves and others means to become compassionate and accepting of ourselves and our life experiences. We learn to develop *positive regard* for other people, the value they bring to us, and the organizations in which we work. We come to view our journeys through life and the work that we do as sacred, as containing a spiritual dimension.

*It is never too late  
to give up your  
prejudices.*

**Henry David Thoreau**

Transformational Coaches ask effective questions and listen deeply to the responses. They listen more with their hearts than with their heads in order to honor the human experience. They drop positions and point-counterpoint arguments. They listen between the lines for the real messages.

### **Having a Sense of Humor**

When we stop taking things so seriously, we are able to see the lighter side of life. When we stop taking things so personally, we know that we are far more than our roles at work, our material possessions, or our achievements. We become detached from our outer images, the results that we create, and all the things that go on in our external worlds. We appreciate the folly of the human experience and are able to hold all of life more lightly.

Transformational Coaches realize the link between their thoughts and their realities and they learn to manage their thought processes. They realize that their work is too important to be taken seriously. They learn to see the humor in life and to share the funny things that happen all of the time, everywhere.

### **Hope**

We all know people whom we would describe as cynical or pessimistic. These people feel like black holes, sucking energy out of anybody who comes in contact with them.

An optimistic outlook on life accentuates the positive possibilities that could, can, and ought to be created. That is where a Transformational Coach places his or her energy for change. Effective leaders bring a positive yet realistic view of the future into clear focus when they articulate organizational vision and missions. Having hope includes adopting a long-term view.

The Transformational Coach learns the art of "possibility thinking" by focusing on a positive and compelling picture of the future. Holding a vision for the future that is brighter than today engenders commitment from people. Coaches capture people's hearts in the process of creating that future together. People learn to maintain a long-term and high-level perspective. They see

*When people are not happy doing what they do, they don't do it as well as when they are happy.*

**Tom Landry**

things from a fresh viewing point with open, beginners' minds, as if they were seeing things for the first time.

### **Helpfulness**

Helpfulness has everything to do with intention. To be truly helpful means being able to set aside personal needs and to focus instead on the needs of others. The Transformational Coach learns that a service mindset is essential to coaching others. Helpfulness comes from the heart, not from the head. Therefore, Transformational Coaches practice a form of "tough love" in order to support and empower others to change rather than to enable them to stay stuck in ineffective behavior.

### **Having a Real Effect**

Working on the seven principles will allow you to develop the full potential of what it means to be human. As you learn to make amends (request forgiveness), let go of your need to control things and people, acknowledge your losses, and work on your own issues, you become more emotionally healthy. As you work on healing yourself, you become capable of facilitating healing in others. You cannot lead somebody where you have not yet journeyed.

The healing processes described above represent a lifetime's work for most of us. Unfortunately, there is no magic pill that will transform our lives overnight. Healing is less a destination than it is a journey. Through your own healing process, you can help other people see to themselves more clearly and to make healthier decisions about themselves in relation to their work, their relationships, and their lives. People who are able to live in states of curiosity, gratitude, and resourcefulness seem to have richer and more productive lives, and they create and contribute more to their teams and their organizations.



*You can read all the books you want.  
What makes a difference is your willingness  
to look into a mirror.*

**DR. LAURA SCHLESHINGER**



# Transformational Coaching Is Applied Leadership

*Walking the Talk*

*What you do speaks so loud that I cannot hear what you say.*

**Ralph Waldo Emerson**

## **Applied Leadership**

Becoming a Transformational Coach calls forth the very best of who we are as human beings. It causes us to reach down into the depths of our soul and apply principles of effective leadership in the ways we conduct ourselves and interact with others. It's not about doing things right, as much as it's about doing the right things—by people. Transformational Coaching becomes the road map and the process through which we bring our leadership to our life's work and our relationships.

To be truly effective in carrying the mantle of contemporary leadership, we have to "walk the talk" of the principles in which we—and our organizations—believe. We become congruent role models.

## Role Modeling

Role modeling derives its power from the psychological need for affiliation and approval. We need to fit in with the rest of our society, so we mimic the behavior of those around us, especially those who are obviously powerful.

When we are young and dependent on our parents or care-takers, they are, by default, our first role models. Later in life our teachers and other adults with whom we interact become our role models. In our work lives, our organization's leaders have the greatest effect on our behaviors. They become our role models for the world of work.

You probably have heard the phrase, "walking the talk." It is used to describe people whose actions are consistent with their spoken words. When leaders learn quickly to "talk the talk" but stop short of "walking the walk," they lose the credibility and trust that is essential to building a high-performance team. Many leaders are quick to enhance their vocabularies with the current buzz words of the program-of-the-month but are slower to align their behaviors to match.

Transformational Coaches learn to become aware of the significant effects of their personal behavior. They build integrity into their daily lives and encourage commitment from the people around them by acting out both their personal and the organization's values. Congruity is the key. The challenge is to live your message in all aspects of your being.

*As I grow older, I pay less attention to what people say.*

*I JUST WATCH WHAT THEY DO.*

**Andrew Carnegie**

Every culture operates according to implicit and explicit values. It is important for coaches to reinforce the values of their organizations in all of their coaching behaviors and dialogues. People respect any coach who has the courage to follow his or her own convictions and advice. Conversely, people disrespect (and probably will not follow) the coach who says one thing and does another. Successful coaches *are* their messages.

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Share more of your feelings about your work, including your hopes, joys, fears, and frustrations. This "feeling" content may make you more human and easier to connect with. Even riskier, on a personal basis, would be sharing what you are working on to improve your personal effectiveness. What are you learning about yourself from your feedback? What goals do you have to grow and develop professionally and as a human being? Obviously, use judgment in selecting the people with whom you share.

Second, ask for feedback. We all have blind spots in our attitudes, behaviors, and actions. We are not able to perceive clearly how we affect others in the various roles we play in our organizations. This information, if we could receive it with the right attitudes, could be immensely valuable in helping us to understand how to make positive changes in the ways in which we interact with others.

Asking for feedback is one of the most powerful actions you can take as a coach. Earnestly communicate your own desire to learn and grow as a person, as a professional, and as a coach. Let people know that you cannot do that in a vacuum. You need their feedback. Ask questions of your teammates that are personal and that promote learning. "Questions to Promote Feedback," which follow, can serve as inspiration.

On a more structured basis, 360° feedback processes promote deep individual and team learning, especially when they are focused on the organization's core values and guiding behaviors.<sup>19</sup> *I have helped many leaders interpret their feedback and create potent and responsive action plans to address the issues raised. The powerful role modeling this demonstrates cannot be overstated.*

<sup>19</sup> 360° feedback processes have become a very popular way of gathering feedback from one's boss, peers, and direct reports.

*Men's natures are alike, it is their habits that carry them apart.*

**Confucius**

## Questions To Promote Feedback

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### Questions by the Coach

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#### Questions Leading to Reinforcement:

- What am I doing that you find helpful?
- What behaviors should I keep doing?
- What are improvements you have seen me make?
- What aspects of my leadership/coaching are becoming better?

#### Questions Leading to Learning:

- What behaviors might be unclear or confusing?
- Do I send mixed signals to you or the team?
- Do you believe that I am on the right track?

#### Questions Leading to Change:

- What behaviors seem counterproductive or out-of-phase?
- What suggestions would you like me to consider?
- What behaviors could I consider stopping or starting?

#### Reflective Questions for the Coach:

- Am I listening and responding to feedback regarding my leadership effectiveness?
- Am I becoming less effective, more effective, or maintaining the status quo?
- Am I initiating informal requests for feedback on my effectiveness as a coach?
- What does this feedback indicate for my coaching effectiveness?
- What am I learning about the coaching process (what's easy or challenging)?
- What are the key themes suggested by the feedback?
- What improvement steps might I take to enhance my coaching effectiveness?
- Where am I stuck and what support do I need to improve?
- How am I sharing what I'm learning about coaching with other members of my team?

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38 39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46 47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54 55 56 57 58 59 60 61 62 63 64 65 66 67 68 69 70 71 72 73 74 75 76 77 78 79 80 81 82 83 84 85 86 87 88 89 90 91 92 93 94 95 96 97 98 99 100

# Creating a High-Performance Coaching Culture

THE FIRST TWO PARTS of this book have defined, illustrated, and measured the process of coaching. This section will address the application of transformational coaching throughout the organization for the purpose of increasing performance, increasing retention, increasing productivity, and increasing the effectiveness of the organization.

*Men and women can do a good job  
and if they are provided a proper environment*

*they will do so.*

Bill Hewlett



*Real education consists of drawing the best out  
of yourself.*

**MAHATMA MOHANDAS GHANDI**



# The Vision of High Performance

## *The High-Performance Paradigm*

Organizations that consistently achieve high performance are supported by high-performance cultures. Certain characteristics distinguish these cultures.

### Traits of a High-Performance Culture

The traits of a high-performance culture can be synthesized into what I call *The Seven Cs of High-Performance Teams*. They are:

- They are on a *clear course*. Everyone knows in what direction the organization is moving and everyone is purposefully moving in the same direction
- Team members demonstrate a high sense of *commitment* to the organization, the team, and one another
- *Communications* among the team members are extremely effective in promoting learning and focused on Forwarding the Action

- The *character* of the organization is defined by members' behaviors being congruent with the organization's stated shared values
- The organization—and the individuals in it—are open to and comfortable with *change*. The organization anticipates, responds, and adapts creatively when changes are desired
- There is a spirit of *collaboration* among the organization's members, as the operative way of interacting in functional and cross-functional teams
- *Coaching* is practiced up, down, and across the organization

The figure on the next page shows the Seven C's of High-Performance Teams, and the following paragraphs describe each of the seven traits in detail.

### **Course**

If the course is sufficiently clear and supported, it provides context for and guides the team's actions. A clear course is a necessary condition for strategic success. A clear course is composed of:

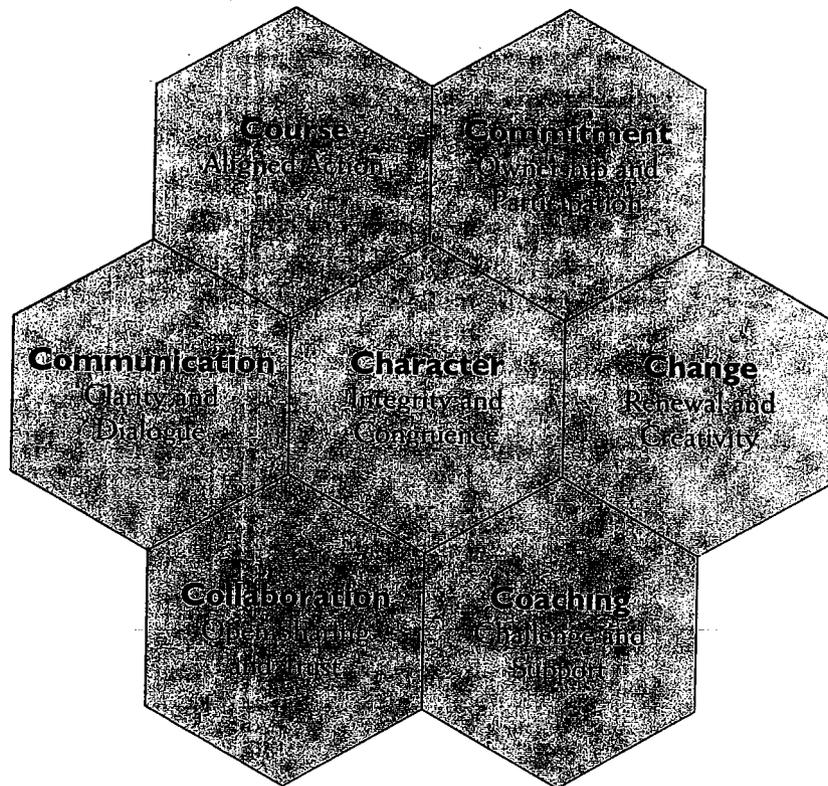
- A clear purpose, vision, mission, strategy, goals, priorities, and action plans to move the business forward. These components define the directional system for the business—a sort of internal gyroscope
- Goals and objectives that are clear, specific, achievable, challenging, measurable, current, understood by all, and well coordinated to minimize internal competition
- A clear sense of the key strategic priorities of the business and how they change over time
- Performance measurement and reporting systems that are effective in clearly indicating success or failure in achieving the goals



## The Seven C's of High-Performance Teams

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This illustration provides a clear "high-performance paradigm" of the strategic competencies that are necessary to create a significant competitive advantage for organizations and teams. Performance can be systematically assessed against the core curriculum for each dimension and a process designed to develop the missing or underdeveloped competencies that are required to produce a feedback-rich, team-based, high-performance environment.



*You may occasionally  
give out—  
but never give up.*

**Mary Crowley**

### **Commitment**

Commitment is the unwavering choice to support the team and the team's objectives with one's best personal efforts. This quality establishes the necessary conditions for individual and team excellence. High performance requires clear roles, responsibilities, accountabilities, and the explicit individual and group agreements that empower people to risk action in the face of uncertainty. The characteristics of high commitment include the following:

- People who are committed to the clear roles and responsibilities of all team members, which are properly aligned to support the business direction
- People who are motivated to give their best personal performance
- People who think and act accountably, taking full responsibility for their actions and the results they create
- Performance targets that are collaboratively established, which ensures ownership and the highest levels of participation

### **Communications**

High-performance communications are facilitated when information and learning is shared among people and teams. When it is effective, it facilitates forward action and positive results; if ineffective, it creates chaos. The following qualities describe high-performance communication:

- Organizational communications are consistent, timely, accurate, thorough, clear, and focused on the strategic imperatives of the business
- People are well informed about external market issues, especially about customer satisfaction and competitive threats
- Organizational communications help people to complete their jobs more effectively and perform better in their roles
- Interpersonal communications are characterized as respectful and healthy and serve to build trust and connection across teams

## Character

Character refers to the defining qualities and values of the team which guide decisions concerning internal and external constituencies of the organization. The values and behaviors modeled by leadership establish the tone and expectations for the entire organization, making it a place in which people feel proud to work.

High character includes the following:

- The organization is guided by clearly articulated values and guiding behaviors that establish an internal code of conduct for behavior and a framework for business decisions
- All levels of the organization understand, appreciate, and demonstrate their commitment to the values through their congruent behavior
- Standards of high integrity and ethics guide all daily activities and long-term strategic decisions
- The organization does the right thing for its employees, treating them with utmost respect, compassion, and fairness

## Change

Change is the process through which people and organizations continuously enhance their effectiveness. As John Kotter and James Heskett (1992) note (see Chapter 1), the adaptability of an organization determines how well it weathers changes in the business environment. The business case for change outlines the big picture; continuous-improvement processes provide process-improvement technologies to improve systems; and Transformational Coaching provides the empathy to support people during the emotional process of letting go.

Savvy leaders follow an enlightened approach to leading change by directly addressing the issues that create fear, resistance, and sabotage of the change initiative. This process stimulates creativity and innovation, and resistance evaporates. Key characteristics for high-performing teams include:

*Some say  
knowledge is power,  
but that is not true.  
Character is power.*

**Sathya Sai Baba**

- The team quickly adapts to the changing external environment by changing internal processes and systems
- People who are affected by change are highly involved in its creation and implementation
- People are supported in being innovative and creative in solving business problems and taking appropriate levels of risk
- People are encouraged to learn from their mistakes and share their learning across the team

### **Collaboration**

Teamwork in a high-performance organization is demonstrated by people's willingness to form partnerships beyond simple "win/win" outcomes to create synergistic gains for the business. Internal politics, competition, and conflict inhibit the open sharing of breakthrough ideas which are needed to solve difficult business problems. Beyond common goals, skills for conflict resolution, trust building, and effective decision making are needed to create the optimal environment of mutual support. Characteristics of collaboration include:

- Teams openly support other teams and functions in working on common goals
- Turf battles and conflicts across functions are resolved quickly into "win/win" solutions
- People frequently and openly discuss and resolve issues that interfere with organizational performance
- Consensus decision-making models build participation and enhance trust throughout the organization

### **Coaching**

Transformational Coaching is the art of empowering people to improve their effectiveness, in a way in which they feel helped. This process engages the huge untapped potential within people and organizations by focusing energy on key performance objectives. Coaching, as a key component of leadership, brings out the



best in people. Characteristics of high-performance teams include:

- Leaders and managers become excellent performance coaches, role modeling both giving and receiving performance feedback
- The culture becomes "feedback-rich," as teammates at all levels provide performance feedback in all directions
- Performance feedback is delivered on an ongoing basis and is not saved up for year-end performance appraisals
- People eagerly anticipate opportunities to be coached because the process helps them to develop personally and professionally

All of the characteristics described above create and are supported by a "feedback-rich" environment.

### **The 7 Dimensions of a Feedback-Rich Environment**

High-performance teams accomplish things better, faster, and more simply than non-high-performance teams. Their communication processes create and nurture a feedback-rich environment. The members of these teams invest time in developing and maintaining the quality of intragroup and intergroup communications to achieve the highest levels of performance. The following characteristics both describe and facilitate the development of the feedback-rich environment that is required to create and sustain high performance.

- Mutual accountability
- Willingness to learn
- No fear
- No surprises
- Truthfulness
- Self-responsible language
- Coaching

### **Mutual Accountability**

In a feedback-rich environment, team members accept 100 percent responsibility for the outcomes of their communications. You might think that 50/50 would be fair, but look at it this way: If each person in a partnership assumes 50 percent of the responsibility for the outcomes of their joint communications, each can always blame the other for failures, claiming that "I kept my end of the agreement, but you didn't."

Alternatively, if both parties agree that each is fully accountable for the results of their communications, it sets up a condition of no blame, no excuses, no hiding, and no victims. Each takes responsibility to clear up misunderstandings and emotional residue that could build up between them. Each commits to creating and maintaining a squeaky-clean relationship in which thoughts, feelings, and experiences are quickly shared. This minimizes complications downstream and keeps the feedback flowing.

### **Willingness To Learn**

Learning is an orientation and a mindset. People who are willing to learn facilitate the expression of new ideas, including those that are "off the wall." In a feedback-rich environment, everyone seeks fresh input continually, to expand the thinking processes and the knowledge base on which decisions are made. The culture emphasizes ongoing personal, professional, and technical developments that support the capability of the team to expand its performance. Frequent, frank, and fair debriefs focused on sharing the lessons learned are the norm.

### **No Fear**

Fear inhibits the flow of feedback. When messengers are shot for delivering bad news, the emperor insists that everyone admire his new clothes, and all the cows are sacred, the environment breeds fear and distrust. In this artificial, emotionally unsafe environment, people will fear the consequences of making even an occasional mistake (regardless of whether they learn from it). They do not offer feedback because they fear reprisal, especially when the receiver of the feedback is The Boss.



The prerequisite for a feedback-rich environment is emotional safety—room for people to honestly (and without fear of the consequences) express their thoughts, feelings, and opinions; deliver performance feedback as easily upward as downward, and challenge conventions and traditions.

### **No Surprises**

It takes continual ongoing communication to eliminate the surprises that frequently derail individual or team performance. Communications need to be explicit and frequent, focused on continually updating status, progress, and obstacles to achieving goals. In this environment, the baton is not dropped as it is passed between players. People take accountability for keeping the information flowing and for not allowing "black holes" (where information disappears) to develop. People are comfortable in examining trends (positive or negative) and they rely on and express their intuition. Early warning is the operative approach that builds trust levels.

### **Truthfulness**

When people tell intellectual and emotional truths, others trust them implicitly. A high-performance team values honesty and encourages team members to share their thoughts and feelings in order to develop trust across the team and to make better business decisions. Issues are confronted constructively and quickly, with full disclosure of all agendas, needs, and wants. People choose not to waste energy by posturing, manipulating, and doctoring communication. The net result across the team is that the messages are trusted and do not have to be filtered.

### **Self-Responsible Language**

In a feedback-rich environment, people express their points of view from the "I" perspective. Feedback is, therefore, highly owned by the individuals who express it. People do not attempt to speak for others, only for themselves. This keeps communication very clean and clear. The word "we" is not used very much either, unless

all parties in the *we* are present. Again, high-performance teams are clear.

Similarly, the word "they" is rarely used. *They* so easily become the enemy because, first of all, *we* do not know who *they* are, and second, we do not know if *they* said it. "They" is confusing and unclear.

Self-responsible behavior includes confronting counterproductive gossip. Somewhat paradoxically, high-performance teams with feedback-rich environments rely on the informal communication system (the grapevine) to enhance the overall connectivity of the organization. In these cultures, the formal and informal communication systems synchronistically coexist and mutually support performance improvement across the organization. Both systems tend to carry the same information.

### **Coaching**

A feedback-rich environment relies on coaching as the requisite communication skill of all members of that high-performance culture. Transformational Coaching flows freely among teammates, teams, and functions. Coaching occurs in a 360° fashion, up, down, and all across the team. Every person in a leadership role is committed to mastering coaching. Customer feedback is always sought and responded to and becomes one of the driving forces for strategic change.

# Creating a High-Performance Organization

## *Implementing Corporate Culture Change*

Cultural change must be crafted to touch the hearts and minds of people. It is less a matter of managing than it is a matter of leading. As a successful cultural-change initiative unfolds, it should be obvious to every member of the culture that leaders embrace the change. Senior leadership must share full accountability for the success of the initiative, even if the change effort includes the use of outside consultants.

Do not underestimate the challenge of creating a cultural shift. Human organizations build up tremendous inertia over time, and it takes tremendous initiative and determination to budge them. Imagine a fully loaded oil tanker steaming ahead at 30 knots. It takes *miles* of ocean and massive amounts of force for it to change direction substantially. It takes similar amounts of energy for people to change their beliefs, habits, thinking, and rationale for how things always have been done. Such changes require a long-term commitment and sustained application of time and energy from the leadership and the organization.

It is also critical that the cultural-change process be viewed as an ongoing process, not as a project with an end point. Senior

*The moment we break  
faith with one another,  
the sea engulfs us and  
the light goes out.*

**James Baldwin**

leaders should be directly supported with a personal executive coach for at least the first year of the change process so that they can sustain their commitment and effectiveness in role modeling the new cultural behaviors. If they do not change, the culture will not change.

## The Challenge

Creating high performance requires the strategy, structure, and culture of the organization to be in alignment. Having these major components out of sync creates interference. With high levels of alignment, the strategic direction of the business is the primary organizing principle for the supporting organizational structure and the operative culture.

"Culture" is loosely defined as "how we do things around here." It consists of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors that both describe and guide the ways in which people interact. When business leaders talk about cultural alignment, they mean how well the organizational culture fits the current strategy of the business.

For a classic illustration of how alignment affects performance, look at the telecommunications industry. Before deregulation, AT&T's organizing principle was "Universal service, anywhere in the country." To make this a reality, AT&T created a huge bureaucratic organization resembling an army steeped in uniform procedures and systems. Efficiency was important, especially to support extraordinary emergency actions in the face of disasters.

Culturally, it was not important to be creative. It was, however, critical to follow the chain of command. Costs of operation were allowed to be passed on to customers. After all, it was a monopoly.

With deregulation in the early 1980s, the industry was turned upside down.

Initially, the regional telephone companies (the "baby Bells") still had protected territories, but with ongoing deregulation, cable companies, television stations, and entertainment giants have entered the field. Now, the telephone companies' organizational structures need to be lean, nimble, and focused on serving

customers. Culturally, teamwork, creativity, openness to change, and a sense of urgency have become important strategic values, because more nimble, entrepreneurial skills are needed to face the competitive threats.

For an organization to be successful in a changing world, the culture must adapt to the push and pull of the customer and the changing competitive landscape. Feedback from the marketplace regarding customers and competitors is a vital information link—so vital, in fact, that it must be the organizing principle.

To assess how well aligned your culture is with the realities of the marketplace, answer the following questions.

Does your culture:

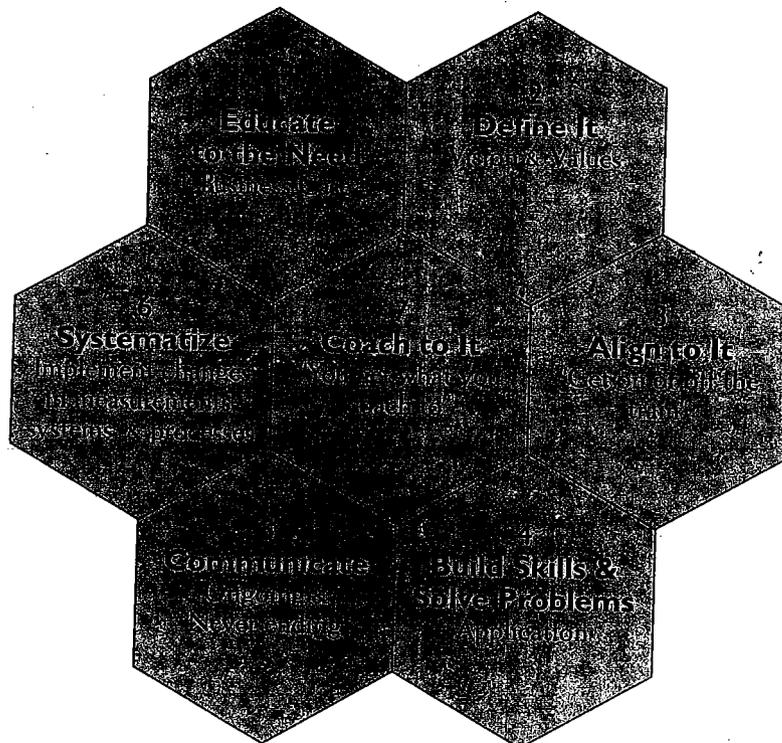
- Focus on the common purpose of serving the customer?
- Foster aligned action, collaboration, and support across the business?
- Energize people's creative problem-solving talents?
- Stress a balance between efficiency and effectiveness?
- Encourage learning to create a competitive advantage for the business?
- Create a mindset of accountability and reward performance?
- Enhance people's commitment and mutual trust with open dialogue?
- Nurture a set of shared values as the "glue" for teams?

The next section describes the principles of creating the culture that enables an organization to become and sustain high-performance.

## The Seven Principles of Cultural Change

There are seven distinct, interdependent, synergistic, and compulsory principles that make cultural change possible. Without them, it is impossible. The seven principles are:

1. Educate to the need
2. Define the new culture
3. Align to it
4. Build skills and solve problems
5. Communicate continuously
6. Systematize
7. Coach to it



**Principle 1: Educate to the Need**

The first step in cultural change is educating the members of the culture about why changes are necessary. Because leaders set the tone, pace, and expectations for performance, education begins with the senior leadership team and focuses on developing the case for change. Change is more effective—and only will be sustained—when leaders are its champions. The case for change defines the business imperative with a sense of urgency to stimulate immediate, enterprise-wide action.

During the educational phase, information is gathered about the current culture's key strengths and challenges. After analyzing this information, leadership can determine the culture's ability to support its long-term business goals. The data help to shape a change strategy to accomplish the objectives. In addition, this fact-finding and learning process will help create among the senior leadership team a shared understanding of what needs to be done and why.

**Principle 2: Define the New Culture**

The leaders articulate or update the organization's purpose, vision, mission, and strategy documents. They answer the questions, "Who are we?" "Who are our customers?" "Where are we going?" and "What steps will take us there?" They need to accomplish this task collaboratively in order to create a high level of ownership and to set the conditions for alignment across the leadership team. This means that, as the culture-shaping process unfolds, other members of the culture must have an opportunity to provide input. Processes follow to ensure that result.

Equally important is a shared set of core values—behavioral guides that explicitly define expectations of everyone in the organization. It is crucial that these values be comprehensive, appropriate for the business environment, and 100 percent supported by leadership. These values are fully aligned to support the business strategy.

*Trust is the lubrication that makes it possible for organizations to work.*

**Warren Bennis and Burt Nanus**

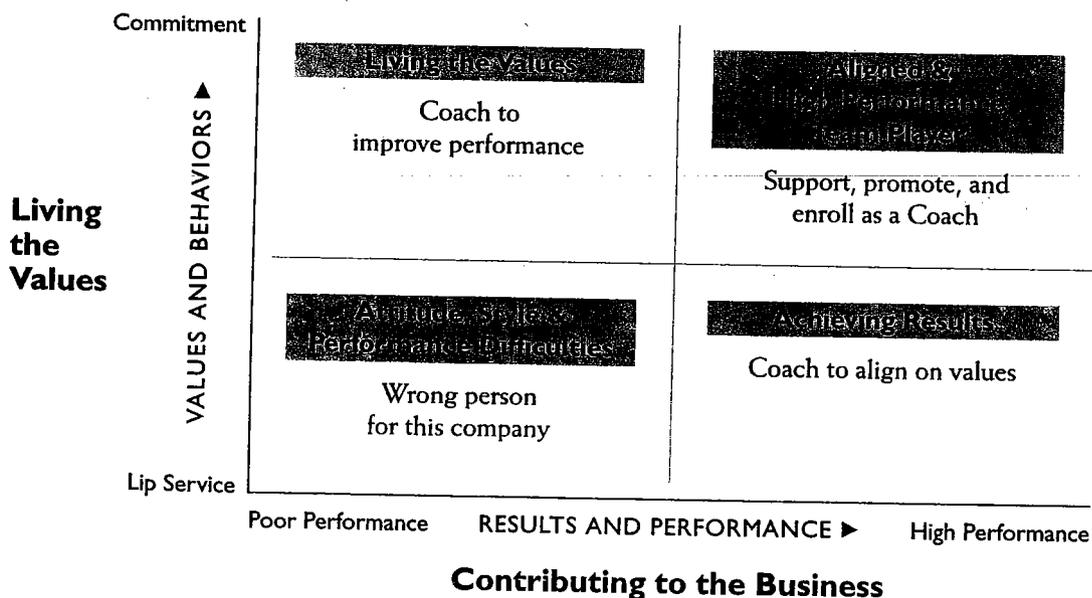
**Principle 3: Align to It**

Alignment is not a matter of adopting new slogans and buzzwords. You can not lead an organization by only "talking the talk." You must walk it every day or else it is a sham. People see right through it. In addition, fractionalized or self-serving leadership—leaders who seek to fulfill their own agendas—zaps organizational spirit and performance.

To be credible to the rest of the organization, the values and guiding behaviors articulated during the definition process must be genuinely embraced by the leadership team. So long as there is a high level of congruency between what leaders say and what leaders do, trust blooms. Lack of trust creates huge interference, which inhibits high performance and stalls the cultural shift.

A 360° feedback process is an extremely powerful alignment tool when it is used to provide feedback about alignment with organizational values. It also produces a rich database that can serve the ongoing development of executive leadership through an executive-coaching process.

**General Electric's Leadership Alignment Model**



During the alignment process—and after a reasonable adjustment period with ample coaching—those who are not willing or able to align their attitudes and actions with the new direction and focus of the culture should be released to other endeavors. Energy drains on the enterprise simply cannot be tolerated.

Successful organizations have started to use values-based hiring profiles to help find people who “fit” their organizations. Years ago, Jack Welch of General Electric instituted a practice whereby people are evaluated not only on their objective performance but also on the degree to which their behaviors reflect the values that are in “alignment” with GE’s. People whose values are “out of phase” are coached and, even if their job performance is great, if they do not adjust to “living the values,” they are asked to go elsewhere. GE’s Leadership Alignment model, at left, graphically illustrates this concept. GE’s application of the principle of “finding the right fit” is important for coaches. High performance hangs in the balance.

#### **Principle 4: Build Skills and Solve Problems**

During this part of the culture-strengthening process, team workshops are used to build new attitudes and skills and to make sure that workshop participants apply their new skills to create solutions for strategic issues already defined. Energy and momentum are added to the change process when people see immediate results from their efforts; commitment is built when problems are solved by working together in the change process.

The most important collaborative skills are:

- Strategic thinking
- Planning and prioritizing
- Leading and supporting change, creativity, and innovation
- Interpersonal and organizational communication
- Fostering commitment
- Transformational Coaching
- Continuous-improvement processes

It is in this step that people learn Transformational Coaching skills.

During these team workshops, formal, written agreements can be used effectively to create a strong bond of mutual commitment and to provide clear guidance and support for the journey that lies ahead. Team agreements capture the behavioral components of working together in the new culture. Individual leadership contracts help all team members to focus on appropriately responding to their feedback in order to enhance their overall effectiveness.

### **Principle 5: Communicate Continuously**

A feedback-rich, high-performance environment is possible only in an organization in which cultural values and expectations set the standard for continual communication. From the very beginning of the cultural-change initiative, the organization must be informed of the business case for change, the change process envisioned, and the ongoing progress made toward the objectives of this initiative. The rationale contained in the business case for change must reach the entire organization, so that everybody understands the necessity of the change process.

It is critical that ongoing performance and process improvements and individual and team commitments be broadcast across the organization in order to acknowledge and reinforce their effect. As a guideline, all business communications should contain some cultural message or update. At least 20 percent of communications should be focused on the culture and no more than 80 percent should be focused on the business. This keeps the change message alive and in front of people.

### **Principle 6: Systematize**

Ignore this phase and you will fail. This sixth principle gives the cultural-change initiative the teeth it needs to be taken seriously.

Systematization means aligning all the processes and systems within the organization to the vision and values of the change effort. Make and reinforce clear links among vision, mission, strategy, and goals and other concurrent organizational initiatives, such as

continuous improvement, total quality, process re-engineering, customer service, market growth, and/or new-product development.

Any system or process that touches people, such as hiring, training, promoting, rewarding, reassigning and releasing, needs to be aligned with the values and guiding behaviors that define the new strategy and culture. The trick is that these efforts must be executed *while the other phases are under construction*. It is a little like passengers redesigning and reconstructing an airplane while in flight.

### **Principle 7: Coach to It**

Coaching is absolutely critical to this change process. Wise management practice has always been that performance follows what we pay attention to. In other words, we get what we coach to. Coaching activates the power of the self-fulfilling prophecy. If goals and outcomes are clearly stated, and the measurement and reward systems support those goals, organizational transformation can occur.

Coaching helps people to connect to whatever leadership defines, measures, and rewards. Coaching connects:

- People to people—to form trusting relationships
- People to processes—for continuous improvement
- People to performance—to focus on creating sustainable results
- Processes to performance—to create more results

The following paragraphs describe these connections in greater detail.

#### **CONNECTING PEOPLE TO PEOPLE**

As people enter into a coaching relationship, they learn new things about one another, including likes, dislikes, preferences, personal values, career objectives, and personal and professional frustrations. The coaching journey is truly a process of mutual discovery through which deeper levels of trust, respect, and appreciation can develop. It is through Transformational Coaching

dialogue that people learn how to work together more effectively and use the coaching process to leverage enhanced results.

*A culture is defined by how well its people connect.*

MCI television commercial, 1997

### CONNECTING PEOPLE TO PROCESSES

The Transformational Coaching process can be used to effectively focus people's attention on the continuous-improvement processes that lead to positive change, innovation, and renewal.

Continuous improvement leads to enhanced ways of meeting the challenges of the business. It starts with seeing the advantages and benefits of examining "the way we've always done it" and discovering better, faster, and simpler ways of satisfying customers' needs. This also includes developing a full range of quality-improvement tools to systematically capture improvement opportunities.

### CONNECTING PEOPLE TO PERFORMANCE

Connecting people to their accomplishments is another primary objective of Transformational Coaching. It is an irony that our results-obsessed Western culture generally does a poor job of acknowledging people for their contributions. Modern corporations, while evolving out of the Industrial-Age mentality and its Theory-X management philosophy, still tend to view people as interchangeable and replaceable parts of the profit machinery. Too often, managers take people for granted and fail to deliver genuine appreciation and acknowledgment for the part they play in accomplishing the objectives of the organization. A Transformational Coach realizes that performance is enhanced when people develop genuine pride in themselves, their teams, and their organizations.

### CONNECTING PROCESSES TO PERFORMANCE

The coaching process helps people to connect the performance objectives of their teams with the business processes used to attain them. Western business mentality tends to discount process in favor of results. The total-quality movement and

*The best way to cheer  
yourself up is to cheer  
everybody else up.*

**Samuel Longhorn  
Clemens  
(Mark Twain)**



process re-engineering have taught us that improving processes enhances performance. Process holds the key; coaching can help make that connection crystal clear.



*The people, led by wise leadership, will come to the realization,  
"We did it ourselves."*

**Lao-Tsu**



*Every man must decide whether he will walk in the light of  
creative altruism or the darkness of destructive selfishness.*

*This is the judgment.*

*Life's most persistent and urgent question is,  
What are you doing for others?*

MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR.



# Coaching Is a Journey

*You Will Never Arrive*

The process of becoming a coach is not a destination. It is a journey—a path without an end. You will never arrive. I have not. My experience has been that the more coaching I do, the more proficient I become, the more people I touch, the more I realize that there is more to be done and more to learn.

Coaching requires the very best from all aspects of our humanity. It is not a path for the weak-hearted or for people who are afraid to grow. It is a path for the courageous and for people who are committed to making a difference in the lives of those they touch through coaching.

In many ways, Transformational Coaching is about treating others the way you want to be treated. The message is simple, profound, and expressed in all of the major religions of the world. It seems universally important to display the compassion that permits rapport and connection to others.<sup>20</sup>

**Christianity:** Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

**Hinduism:** Do naught to others which, if done to thee, would cause thee pain; this is the sum of duty.

<sup>20</sup> Chop Wood, Carry Water by Rick Fields (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher, 1984).

**Buddhism:** A clansman [should] minister to his friends and familiars...by treating them as he treats himself.

**Confucianism:** The Master replied: "...what you do not want done to yourself, do not do unto others."

**Taoism:** To those who are good to me, I am good; and to those who are not good to me, I am also good. And thus all get to be good.

**Zorastrianism:** Whatever thou dost not approve for thyself, do not approve for anyone else. When thou hast acted in this manner, thou art righteous.

**Judaism:** Take heed to thyself, my child, in all thy works; and be discreet in all thy behavior. And what thou thyself hatest, do to no man.

**Greek Philosophy:** Do not do to others what you would not wish to suffer yourself; treat your friends as you would want them to treat you.

There is probably nothing in this book that you have not heard before. *The Heart of Coaching* is, I hope, full of common-sense teachings that are familiar to us all. The power we all possess is not in dreaming or envisioning wondrous, exciting new things to think and to say in order to impress others. Rather, it is more like the monk who was asked what his life was like *before* he became enlightened. He replied, "I chopped wood and carried water." When asked what it was like *after* enlightenment, he responded, "I chop wood and carry water." It is not *what* we do that changes, it is *how* we do it and *the fact that* we do it.

Self-empowerment is taking action on what you already know; it is feeling the fear and doing it anyway; it is not waiting for permission to do what you know in your heart is the right thing to do. You are already a coach. Otherwise you would not have read this book.

Now, go do what you know needs to be done.



*People are unreasonable, illogical, self-centered.*

**Love them anyway.**

*If you do good, people will accuse you of selfish, ulterior motives.*

**Do good anyway.**

*If you are successful, you will win false friends and true enemies.*

**Try to be successful anyway.**

*The good you do today will be forgotten tomorrow.*

**Do it anyway.**

*Honesty and frankness make you vulnerable.*

**Be honest and frank anyway.**

*What you spend years building may be destroyed overnight.*

**Build anyway.**

*People really need help, but they may attack you if you help them.*

**Help them anyway.**

*Give the world the best you have, and you'll get kicked in the teeth.*

**Give the world the best you have anyway.**

**Karl Menninger**

A P P E N D I X O N E

*Transformational Coaching Session Worksheet*

Coachee: \_\_\_\_\_ Date & Time: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

**YOUR PREPARATION**

Thoughts and feelings about your observations? \_\_\_\_\_

How will you become present? \_\_\_\_\_

**THE LEARNING LOOP CONVERSATION**

Connection/rapport step: \_\_\_\_\_

Purpose: \_\_\_\_\_

Positive Intentions are to: \_\_\_\_\_

Behaviors Observed—Skill, Style, Habits, Actions, Practices (Done/Not Done): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Performance ROI—Dollars, Timing, Quality, Satisfaction (Example/Data):

(+): \_\_\_\_\_

(-): \_\_\_\_\_

Relationships ROI—Trust, Respect, Rapport, Connection (Self/Others):

(+): \_\_\_\_\_

(-): \_\_\_\_\_

Beliefs to Explore—Awareness, Perceptions, Interpretations, Assumptions, Judgments: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Expectations to Clarify—Goals, Roles, Resources, Accountabilities, Timeframe, Empowerment: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**FORWARDING THE ACTION**

Options/Possibilities to Suggest: \_\_\_\_\_

Specific Behaviors/Performance Requests (including consequences): \_\_\_\_\_

Coachee's Action and Follow-up Plans: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

## About the Author

Thomas G. Crane is a consultant, facilitator, and coach who specializes in coaching leaders to build high-performance teams. He works with leaders and leadership teams to enhance individual leadership effectiveness so that people can better lead their organizations toward performance objectives.

For over a decade, he has refined his techniques as a consultant and engagement leader navigating strategic change and cultural alignment in large and small organizations. Organizations with whom he has worked include:

AEP Corporation	Florida Power & Light	San Diego State University
AES Corporation	GPU Nuclear	Shell Oil Company
Agilent Technologies	Helen Woodward Animal Center	Southern California Gas
Amgen	Hilton Grand Vacations	Southern Natural Gas
Anadarko Petroleum Corporation	Home Savings of America	Teledyne Ryan Aeronautical
A.T. Kearney	Host—Marriott	Times-Mirror
B.P.	Josephthal & Co., Inc.	Transco Energy
Bell Atlantic	KFC	United Airlines
California State University	KPMG Peat Marwick	University of Dayton
CALTRANS	Los Alamos Laboratory	US Dept. of Agriculture—Forest Service
CBS	NY Life	Vastar Resources (ARCO)
Columbia University	Nth Generation Computing	Verizon
Continental Airlines	NYNEX	VISA, U.S.A.
Crowne Plaza Hotels	Micron PC	Von's Grocery Company
Duty Free International	Oppenheimer Companies, Inc.	Westrend Electric, Inc.
Dynegy, Inc.	Qualcomm	Woodgrain Millwork

His company, Crane Consulting, focuses on working with leaders to create the feedback-rich, team-based, high-performance organizations described in this book by providing:

- Leadership Development
- The Heart of Coaching Workshops
- High-Performance Teambuilding
- Group Facilitation—Strategic Change Initiatives
- Vision and Values-based Culture Change
- 360° Feedback Processes and Team Performance Assessments
- Train-the-Facilitator Process for The Heart of Coaching Workshop with Facilitator Guide, CD-ROM presentation, and Participant Workbook. Contact Crane Consulting for additional information. These products may be purchased separately.

## Crane Consulting's The Heart of Coaching Workshops

The 7 C's of Transformational Coaching is a competency-based 360° feedback model that serves as the basis for custom-designed workshops for leaders, managers, and supervisors. It is one of the first 360's to focus exclusively on the specific coaching competencies required for people to effectively lead today's workforce.

The 7 C's are:

### Clear

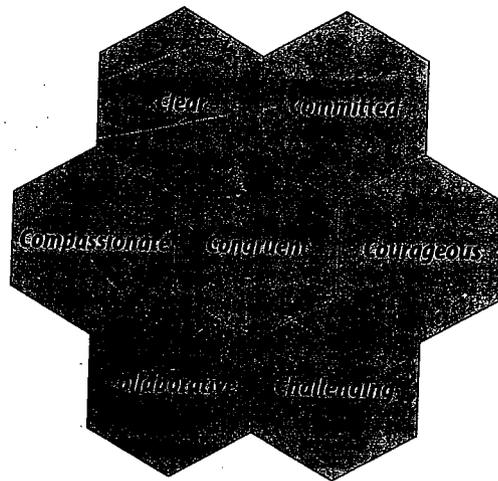
It is essential that the communication process through which the coaching is delivered is effective at creating a shared understanding. The Transformational Coach consciously eliminates ambiguity and mixed messages. The coach pays attention to how the message is interpreted by the coachee and uses active listening skills to insure understanding.

### Committed

The Transformational Coach's commitment to the coachee's success is the foundation for trust and rapport in the relationship. This helps the coachee to build personal confidence in the security of the coaching relationship and creates a safe environment for risk taking.

### Courageous

The Transformational Coach must act with courage in the face of interpersonal or



organizational challenges. Being open and vulnerable is part of what it takes to establish and maintain trust. Coaching requires the skillful confrontation of issues that may be uncomfortable to address. Facing issues head-on is an accountable behavior that moves people and the organization forward.

### Challenging

A Transformational Coach's purpose is to bring out the best in people. This is accomplished by looking for positive ways to stretch and develop others. The coach encourages people to develop new skills outside of their personal zone of comfort by constructively challenging the coachee's thinking, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors.

**Collaborative**

The Transformational Coach works to create a partnership that "levels the playing field" with the coachee. Though the coach and coachee have different roles in the organization, the coach nurtures an egalitarian, high-trust, partnering relationship that transforms the way they work together. This sets the condition for dramatic performance improvements.

**Compassionate**

Fear inhibits people from performing up to their potential. As the Transformational

Coach brings acceptance and forgiveness, while allowing a reasonable freedom to fail, a safe environment is created that supports learning, appropriate experimentation, and growth in people.

**Congruent**

People pay more attention to what others do—and less to what they say. If there is perceived disparity, trust is lost. The Transformational Coach must be aligned in thoughts, words, and actions to be a positive model of the attitudes and behaviors valued by the organization.

Clients have found these workshops and this 360° feedback process to be a powerful way of developing leadership effectiveness across their organizations.

Please call to discuss how we might integrate this workshop into your portfolio of leadership and management development programs.

Prior to founding Crane Consulting, Tom was a vice president of Senn-Delaney Leadership Consulting Group. In addition, he has worked in financial planning and project management roles with Solar Turbines, a division of Caterpillar. He currently is a member of the San Diego chapters of the Organization Development Network, the American Society for Training and Development, and the Society for Human Resource Management.

Tom lives in San Diego with his wife, Maggie, who is a partner in the business and a professional speaker on coaching, leadership, stress management, and other life effectiveness skills. They can be reached at:



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# Ordering Information



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# Transformational Coaching

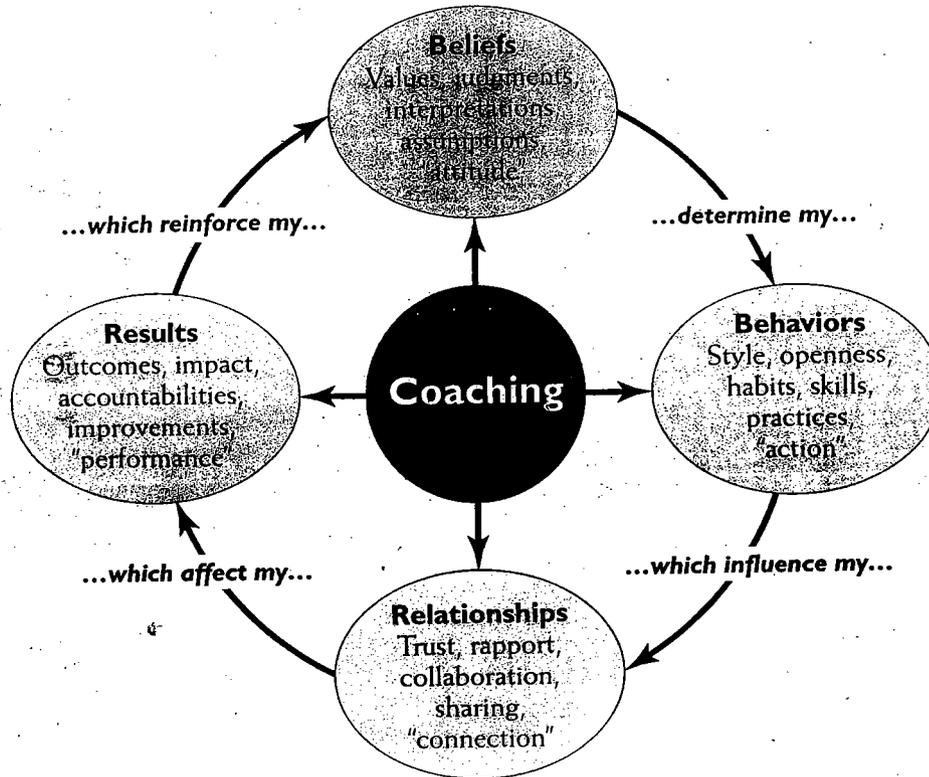


## The “Learning” Coaching Questions

- What are your objectives? What is working well? Where are you stuck?
- How do you see things? What assumptions are you making?
- What are your options/possibilities? What are your next steps?
- What resources do you need? How can I support you?
- How are we doing in our coaching relationship? Is my feedback helping?

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## The Results Cycle



## The 7 Qualities of Effective Feedback

- Be **intended to help**, not control or manipulate
- Understood as **subjective perception**—"I" language
- Be **delivered in the moment**—or soon thereafter
- **Presume innocence**—without attributing negative motives
- Describe **observed behaviors and impacts**, not evaluate or judge
- Be **authentic**—candid, yet **compassionate**, to build **trust and respect**
- Stimulate **mutual learning and inspired action**