

Master These 6 Coaching Skills to Lead Your Team Where They've Never Dared Go

Good leaders coach people to correct problems. Great leaders can coach them to correct problems and take on new challenges.

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I travel all over the world training, speaking and consulting. The majority of my business is facilitating leadership development programs and coaching executives.

Here is a compelling lesson that I have learned from all the great clients and companies I have worked with over the years: Most people in leadership roles do not coach or develop their employees -- ever.

I still struggle with why this is the case, and why more leaders don't do it. Here are six solid skills to help you be a better coach.

1. Explain why you are coaching.

When you commit to coaching your team members, take the time to explain why you are coaching that person. Tell them that you are making a commitment to developing everyone on the team and that you are going to be coaching them on a regular basis. The reason behind this is to help them get where they want to go and to help them grow and achieve their goals.

2. Coaching is for everyone.

Everyone should be given the opportunity to be coached. I have had people say to me in my leadership programs, "Well what about the receptionist? Are you saying I should coach him?" The answer is yes! Everyone on the team should get the chance to grow, to develop, to be better at what they do. They all have potential. They need someone to believe in them.

3. Coaching should be tied to their goals.

The first step in coaching should be to ask people about their goals short-term, mid-term and long-term. Don't be surprised if people tell you they don't know what they want to do "when

they grow up.” Having a goals discussion and helping a team member define their goals can be a compelling discussion. It also shows you genuinely care about them and not just about their functional role at work, but what their dreams and aspirations are and how you can help them get there.

4. There are two types of coaching -- don't do just one.

Based on my experience, there are two types of coaching, corrective and developmental. Let's define corrective first. Corrective coaching is usually trying to coach someone on something that needs to change or is a problem. For example, if someone is habitually late, they need coaching on how to correct that problem.

Developmental coaching is when you coach someone to achieve their goals, help them grow and develop new skills, knowledge, tools or techniques. Sadly, most leaders never do developmental coaching.

5. Coaching must happen.

I know this sounds a bit odd, but coaching must happen. I once worked with a manager for two years. Every week my manager would say, “I really should work with you and give you some coaching.” Of course I would say, “That would be great.” I was looking forward to it, and I was excited about it. But it never happened! I always say you have to “prioritize and calendar-ize.” It's a made-up word but means this; if you don't make it a priority or put it on your calendar, we all know it never happens.

6. Understand the psychology of coaching.

When you are coaching, don't forget you are coaching a human being, and they come to the table with insecurities, ideas, feelings and history. That history leads them to have certain perceptions about coaching.