Coaching

A Handbook for Managers

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Preface

       This handbook was underwritten by the Colorado Foundation for Public Health and Environment. I am deeply indebted to Dr. Kathy Kennedy, director of the Regional Institute for Health and Environmental Leadership, and Diane White, president of the Colorado Foundation for Public Health and Environment, for providing me the opportunity to prepare this handbook.

       For the purpose of good communication, it is important to me to be unbiased in my writing. For this reason, as you read through the manual, you will notice that the genders of the managers, leaders, and direct-reports change to strive for fairness in gender.

       The purpose of this handbook is to establish definitions, guidelines and standards for the practice of coaching. The intended audience comprises leaders in public health, environmental health and health care throughout the Rocky Mountain region. Although the book's primary purpose is to help public and environmental health leaders and managers take a "coach approach" to managing staff, the book is also useful for practitioners who coach and mentor recent entrants to the public and environmental health fields.

       This handbook is organized in five chapters. Chapter 1 defines coaching and the coach approach to managing. Chapter 2 offers a model of coaching and discusses the three primary coaching skills: the practice of dialogue, the development of individuals, and the effective use of feedback. Chapter 2 also suggests several specific, in-depth skills that support the three primary coaching skills. Chapter 3 reviews the eight-step coaching conversation, with many examples of effective questions and statements. Chapter 4 offers a self-assessment to help managers identify their unique coaching style. Chapter 5 provides suggestions for developing coaching skills. The appendix lists resources for further study.

       Some say that all practice begins with imitation. Consciously or unconsciously, we begin by imitating and appropriating the approaches of those who influence us, such as parents, teachers, role models and mentors. The seeds of my methods of practice can be found in my doctoral studies in human communication at the University of Denver. I was inspired to work in the field of executive coaching by the work of, and my association with, Dr. Carl Larson, who is a renowned author, theorist, researcher and practitioner in the area of collaborative leadership. Allow me to express my deep appreciation to Carl for being my coach and mentor and for modeling the way.

       The first edition of this handbook was a working draft that was released at the annual meeting of the Regional Institute for Health and Environmental Leadership on September 20, 2002. The current edition is subject to revision based on candid feedback. If any Institute participants wish to offer feedback or suggestions for improvement, please contact me. I welcome your telephone call or e-mail, and I would enjoy talking with you further over a cup of coffee.

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Chapter 1
Introduction to Coaching

Coaching is an essential skill for a successful manager. It is an ongoing partnership designed to produce learning, discovery and higher levels of competence and performance. It also serves to improve working relationships within organizations and leads to greater employee satisfaction and better retention of top performers.

Coaching takes place between manager and employee or between a more experienced health or environmental professional and a more junior practitioner. Coaching is about "interacting with people in a way that teaches them to produce spectacular results" (Hargrove 1995). Managers who take a coach approach serve as strategic thinking partners. They are respectful yet truthful listeners who support individuals in jointly identifying, developing and reaching performance goals.

Many top-level executives have coaches. Many business leaders, such as Bill Gates of Microsoft, Bob Galvin of Motorola, and Ken Blanchard of Blanchard Training and Development Corporation, have benefited from coaching. They know what every great athlete knows: No matter how good you are, no matter how great you were last season, you need a coach to play your best. A coach will help you sharpen your skills, deepen your understanding, refresh and renew, strategically think through and plan your next actions and prepare yourself for the coming season.

The use of coaching as a management tool began to gain widespread attention during the mid 1990s with the publication of a variety of books and articles and the development of training programs designed to teach managers how to coach their employees. During the past decade, the function of the manager has begun to shift from one of command-and-control to one of developer of people. Today, managers are expected to focus more on guiding than on directing, with the intent of developing the strengths of employees and empowering individuals to take better, smarter actions on their own. These are the techniques and goals of coaching. Throughout this handbook, we refer to managers who coach as *coach-managers*.

What is Coaching?

Coaching is an ongoing partnership or a sustained alliance between a manager and an employee designed to enhance learning, growth and organizational effectiveness. It is a one-to-one relationship in which the focus is on developing the individual, challenging and supporting her to become more effective, and allowing her to reach her own highest levels of competence and ability. Coaching is about unlocking a person's potential in order to reach new levels of performance. It's about helping people learn, rather than teaching them.

It is important to note that coaches don't develop people *per se*; rather, they guide individuals to develop themselves. Coaches serve as a catalyst for development.

One of the basic philosophical underpinnings of coaching is that individuals are creative, resourceful and whole. They don't need fixing. In fact, more often than not, they have the answers to the challenges they face within them. A good coach can help individuals evoke those answers and become aware of possibilities, working alongside them to set goals and craft action plans. Coaching is a collaborative effort that expands a person's capacity to take effective action.

Myths and Misperceptions of Coaching

Coaching is about giving advice. Giving advice is a part of coaching; however, one of the fundamental concepts of coaching is that the individuals being coached already have answers that will work, given their unique circumstances. The coach-manager's primary job is to *evoke* and help refine those answers, rather than to give advice. The coach-manager does this by asking generative questions that stimulate new thinking, by jointly exploring a variety of possible alternatives, and by challenging the individual to take new action. Coaching is about increasing individuals' ability to learn, acquire new insights, and develop new strategies for themselves.

Coaching is about fixing problem performers. Just the opposite is true. In many organizations today, coaching is provided to the "up-and-comers," that is, individuals who are identified as having high potential. In fact, in some organizations, having a coach is a badge of honor. Though coaching can be used to help individuals who are experiencing difficulty, its value is far greater. Coach-managers who focus only on problem performers may miss potential opportunities to develop other staff. The goal of coaching is to tap into individuals' potential. All players—rookies, all-stars, and those with specific problems—can benefit from coaching.

Coaching takes too long. Coaching does require that the coach-manager and the individual being coached invest time in the process. The question is: Does the coach-manager have the time to fix problems that may result from the lack of coaching, that is, employees who do not have enough information, who do not think through a strategy or course of action, or who lack the necessary tools, skills or proper attitude? Although coaching entails one-on-one personal attention, coach-managers also leverage other resources for teaching and instruction. The goal is to develop staff.

Coaching is someone else's job. Some managers think that responsibility for developing staff rests with human resources, the training department or a consultant. While these resources are available to the coach-manager and employee, they cannot answer all of an employee's development needs. Often, in fact, improved performance relies on the manager's involvement, such as clarifying expectations and providing information about departmental goals, policies or procedures. Coaching and training serve different functions. Coach-managers must thoroughly assess the developmental needs of their direct reports before sending them to training programs.

Coaching is a quick fix, a one-time event. Coach-managers generally meet with the individuals they coach about twice each month to brainstorm options, help develop action plans and generally keep things moving forward. As an ongoing developmental process, coaching fosters a culture of continuous improvement. It creates opportunities by continually setting new and higher standards of performance. Over time, the sustained process of coaching strengthens working relationships, generates greater levels of autonomy and initiative, and increases each individual's sense of ownership.

Coaching is just another management fad. Actually, the concepts and principles of coaching have been in use for centuries. Socrates was one of the first to use methods of inquiry to evoke answers from his pupils. Whether helping people identify new approaches, adapt to change or learn new skills, coaching is a powerful leadership tool that has been proven over time.

Comparison of Old-Style Manager and Manager-as-Coach

Over the past 25 years, the Gallup Organization has conducted extensive research on what the most talented employees need in the workplace. Through interviews conducted with 2 million employees in 700 companies, the Gallup Organization found, not surprisingly, that

talented employees need talented managers. In fact, the research indicates a high correlation between talented managers and high levels of both employee retention and productivity.

Conversely, the number-one reason people leave an organization or become "disengaged" from their work is their immediate supervisor. The study concluded that "people join companies and leave managers." Clearly, the ability to work with people is the core of successful management.

The Gallup research refers to disengaged employees as ROAD (Retired on Active Duty) Warriors. There are many of them. In small companies (fewer than 50 people), only 33 percent of employees reported that they felt fully engaged. The number drops to 22 percent in medium-sized companies. In large companies (more than 5,000 employees), *only 19 percent of employees felt fully engaged.*

The ROAD Warrior phenomenon has significant implications for an organization's bottom line. Gallup found that organizations in which employees have above-average attitudes toward their work, that is, greater employee satisfaction, reap many benefits, including:

- 38 percent higher customer satisfaction scores,
- 22 percent higher productivity, and
- 27 percent higher profits!

Marcus Buckingham, author of the Gallup study wrote, "disengaged employees cost hundreds of millions in lost workdays." And the key driver of this lack of engagement and employee dissatisfaction? The immediate supervisor. According to the study, the top things people want in their jobs are:

1. to know what is expected of them at work,
2. to have the equipment and materials needed to do their work,
3. to have the opportunity to do their best every day,
4. to be recognized, acknowledged and praised for good work,
5. to know that their supervisor, or someone at work, cares about them,
6. to have someone at work encourage their development,
7. to have their opinions count and be heard,
8. to know their work is important and supports the mission/purpose of the organization,
9. to know their co-workers are committed to doing quality work,
10. to have a "best friend" at work,
11. to have someone at work take an interest in, and talk with them about, their progress at least once every six months, and
12. to have the opportunity to learn and grow on the job.

(Buckingham and Coffman 1999, p. 28)

So what *do* people want at work? They want:

- to make a contribution,
- to have the freedom to exercise their natural curiosity,
- to receive support for taking risks and making mistakes without fear of reprisal,
- to have support for learning new things on the job,
- to be valued and respected,
- to have opportunities for career advancement,
- to make their own decisions and judgment calls, rather than be told what to do,
- to have a supportive, collaborative, friendly and affirming work environment,

- to work with competent colleagues they can trust and respect, and
- to know how they fit into, and can participate in developing, the organization's vision and strategy.

Clearly, all of these factors are linked to the immediate supervisor. What people want in an immediate supervisor is a coach, not an old-style manager. Figure 1.1 compares the two approaches.

The Benefits of Coaching

Effective coaching has a great many benefits for both the coach-manager and the organization. The following list outlines just some of the advantages; at the end of the list are some blanks for you to fill in additional benefits that could accrue to your organization.

1. Makes the manager's job easier as employees build skills and confidence.
2. Managers who coach build stronger teams.
3. Reduces turnover and the costs associated with recruiting, hiring and bringing new employees up to speed.
4. Increases productivity and improves work quality as employees understand more clearly what is expected and develop concrete plans to achieve goals.
5. Helps managers identify performance and/or behavioral problems and initiate action to correct them.
6. Aligns individual goals with team, division, and organization goals.
7. Fosters more productive working relationships and greater trust.
8. Builds the manager's reputation as a people developer, which allows her to attract top-rate talent.
9. Fosters collaborative decision making and shared leadership responsibilities, thus increasing morale.
10. Provides opportunities for conveying appreciation, recognition and feedback, which increase employee motivation, initiative and responsibility.
11. Promotes just-in-time learning.
12. Encourages people to stretch, to reach for greater goals.
13. Increases creativity and innovation as employees feel safe to take risks.
14. Prevents surprises and defensiveness in performance appraisals.
15. Recognizes and respects human potential for growth.
16. Places attention and focus on employee, on how manager can support and benefit employee.
17. Clarifies the manager's expectations of employees.

18.

19.

20.

Figure 1.1   Management Characteristics and Techniques

Old Style Manager	**Manager-as-Coach**
Directs, dictates, talks a lot	Guides, empowers, listens a lot
Presumes, assumes	Explores, discovers
Competes	Cooperates, collaborates
Abhors risk-taking	Encourages risk-taking
Assigns blame	Takes responsibility
Manages only for results	Manages the development of employees
Controls employees actions	Brainstorms potential actions with employees, and supports their decisions
Solves all the problems in isolation	Helps others solve problems (and prevent them!) in a collaborative effort
Focuses solely on the bottom line	Focuses more on the people
Keeps a distance from employees	Creates partnerships and powerful alliances with employees
Maintains the status quo	Leads change; promotes continuous improvement
Plans, directs, controls and plays the entire game	Let's the players play the game

How Does Coaching Differ from Therapy? Consulting? Training?

Although the techniques are time-honored, coaching is a new profession and a new approach to management. Distinguishing between coaching and other fields is essential to thoroughly understanding coaching.

Therapy

Coaching and therapy are quite different in their goals and methods. Managers who are asked to coach may be concerned that they will be asked to provide counseling or therapy. This is not the case and, as a matter of fact, is to be avoided. Coaching and therapy are similar in that both emphasize behavior change that will improve personal effectiveness, and both are facilitated by skilled practitioners who establish strong alliances based on trust. Also, in coaching, as in therapy, confidentiality is paramount.

However, coaching differs from psychological counseling or therapy in several ways. First, the goal of the coach-manager is to improve a person's effectiveness in the workplace. Although this may be one aspect of psychological counseling in certain situations, therapists focus primarily on an individual's life outside of work. The process of therapy often involves an in-depth exploration of an individual's early childhood and family relationships. Coaches and coach-managers do not delve into employees' early family history.

Second, the focus of therapy is healing from the past. The focus of coaching is taking action in the present and proactively planning for the future. The emphasis in coaching is on helping the individual develop new skills and strategies within the context of the workplace. Finally, therapy approaches individuals through a medical model, providing diagnosis and treatment for possible disease or pathology. One of the core assumptions of coaching is that people are creative, resourceful and whole, and that the vast majority of people in the workplace are mentally healthy and stable.

Consulting

Coaching is a form of consulting, but the two differ in subtle and significant ways in the scope of work, goals and method. The primary difference is that consultants are engaged to provide advice and answers. Although coaches occasionally give advice, their primary focus is on helping individuals develop their own answers.

Consultants provide specialized content expertise. Coaches' expertise lies not in content but technique: in their ability to ask generative questions, listen respectfully and help individuals develop their own performance-related skills, knowledge and strategies to resolve workplace challenges. Coaches challenge individuals to develop their own competence, rather than to rely on consultants.

Consultants are typically engaged to research a problem, gather data, analyze and make recommendations (often in a report). Often, their engagement ends here. Coaches, in contrast, work alongside individuals, asking tough, probing questions as the individuals do the research, gather the data, analyze it and brainstorm potential strategies for problem resolution. Coaches develop the capacity inherent in all individuals to learn, grow and develop their own solutions to workplace challenges. The coaching relationship is more focused on the individual than the organization, and it involves regular, intense, frequent meetings with that individual.

Consultants often conclude their work by submitting a report or making recommendations. They are sometimes involved in implementing their recommendations, but this is not always the case. For coaches, on the other hand, the action plan is only the beginning. Coaches continue to work with individuals, providing ongoing feedback, as they learn to apply the new skills, procedures and other changes required to enact their action plans. The coaching relationship fosters an accountability that is not necessarily present in consulting engagements.

Finally, although confidentiality is paramount for both consultants and coaches, coaching's focus on individuals and their issues creates a unique obligation to maintain confidentiality.

Training

Training and coaching are similar in that both are concerned with the development of individuals. However, the emphasis in training is on a defined body of knowledge established by the organization and designed to benefit the organization and its members. The content of training is not necessarily driven by individual inquiry. Coaching, on the other hand, is tailored to the specific needs of the individual. In coaching, the content and agenda are set by the individual in recognition of the individual's specific learning needs (and in recognition of organizational needs).

Training and coaching also differ in the ways in which they are delivered and the resulting effects on learning. Training generally takes place in groups. As a result, it emphasizes group dynamics and interaction over individual relationships. Although group coaching is a growing trend, coach-managers generally work with individual employees one-on-one, with the content being driven by each individual's specific needs.

Training also tends to be a one-time event, though it may last for several days, a week or longer. Coaching, on the other hand, is an ongoing, sustained relationship.

Table 1.1 compares coaching, counseling/therapy, consulting and training.

Designing the Coaching Partnership

Establishing the coaching relationship is critically important to the coaching process. Without a solid foundation of mutual trust and respect, coaching cannot occur.

A coaching partnership is a collaboration between the person being coached and the coach-manager. The relationship is jointly developed and based on mutual agreement of goals, tasks, methods of learning and development, and the nature of interpersonal connection.

In coaching someone who is a direct report, the coach-manager avoids taking the tone of "the boss." At the same time, this coaching relationship is not "buddy-buddy." The coach-manager strives for caring interaction that communicates she has the employee's interests at heart. The idea is to create a supportive, nonjudgmental environment that focuses on both business results and personal development. The relationship is truly one of partnership, in which the coach-manager treats employees as partners in the pursuit of organizational and team goals.

Whether the coach-manager has an established relationship with an employee or is initiating a new relationship, certain fundamentals must be established to create the conditions for effective coaching. The coach-manager must:
- build a bond of trust,
- tune into the individual's worldview,
- generate awareness,
- focus on priorities,
- inspire commitment, and
- contract the logistics.

Designing the coaching partnership entails an initial "contracting" conversation that establishes mutual understanding of what is to come and the processes that will be used. Often, this conversation leads directly into coaching. The following sections examine each step in detail.

Table 1.1   Distinctions Between Coaching and Related Fields

Coaching	Counseling/Therapy	Consulting	Training
Ongoing, sustained for a mutually agreed period of time	Ongoing, sustained for mutually agreed period of time	Ongoing for a period agreed by parties	One-time
Knowledge, understanding, resources mutually explored for benefit of individual and organization	Knowledge, understanding mutually explored for benefit of individual	Defined body of knowledge owned by consultant, imparted to organization	Defined body of knowledge designed for benefit of organization; not necessarily driven by individual inquiry
Agenda set by individual in recognition of organizational needs	Agenda set by individual	Agenda set mutually	Agenda set by organization
Mostly individual, occasionally groups	Primarily individuals	Varies	Groups
Strong emphasis on individual relationship	Strong emphasis on individual relationship	Strong emphasis on relationship	Emphasis is not on individual relationships
Future and action based	Emphasis on resolving past issues	Future and action based	Present and future based
Allows client to find own answers through a pattern of questions	Allows client to find own answers through pattern of questions	Provides answers	Gives you answers that may not be trainee's
Asks what, how and why not	Asks "why"	Asks questions, but mostly provides answers	Doesn't ask
Focus is on creating the present and the future	Focus is on healing from the past	Focus is on creating a better present and future	Focus is on creating a better present and future
Accountability is a feature of coaching	Accountability not necessarily a feature	Participants not always held accountable for learning	Participants not always held accountable for learning
Seeks to build on areas of individual strength and to facilitate personal developmental	Seeks to build strength	Seeks to build strength	Seeks to overcome weaknesses of organization
More equal, less power differential	Great power differential	Power differential	Power differential
Focus is health. Client is considered creative, resourceful, whole. Focus is on problem solving for the individual *and* the organization.	Focus is on disease (medical model) and analysis.	Focus is on organizational problem solving.	Focus is on new learning and some problem solving.
Confidentiality is hallmark and paramount	Confidentiality is paramount	Confidentiality is less of an issue	Confidentiality not an issue

Building a Bond of Trust

Unfortunately, trust is a rare commodity in many organizations. Without mutual trust, however, coaching cannot occur. Trust is not established in a single conversation; it takes time to develop. Depending on the history of the relationship and the culture of the organization, it may take more time in some situations than in others. However, the process of building trust begins with a conversation in which the coach-manager communicates genuine interest, concern and caring for the individual being coached.

In the longer term, trust results from a manager's credibility, openness and reliability. It involves a continuous demonstration of personal integrity, honesty and sincerity; clear agreements; and kept promises. It also involves respect for the employee's opinions, perceptions, goals and learning style.

Trust means no hidden agendas, no defensiveness or blaming, no protecting turf or putting self-interest above the interests of the individual or team. It means being open with information, sharing the why and how of decisions, and following through on commitments.

During the initial conversation, trust is built by tuning in to the other person's view of the world, listening deeply, asking questions, and communicating support and caring.

Tuning in to the Other's Worldview

Employees will be skeptical of the coaching partnership if the manager relies on a "just trust me" approach. The coach-manager takes a genuine interest in how employees view the world: what motivates them, their goals, challenges, values, needs and self-image. Effective coach-managers ask the following questions:

- Why did you come to work here, and what keeps you here?
- Where do you want to be in 3-5 years? What are your goals?
- What do you enjoy most about your work here? What excites you?
- What are your skills and strengths? What do you do best?
- What would you like to do more of? What skills would you like to use more often?
- What skills do you feel you are lacking or could improve? How can I support you in acquiring or developing those skills?
- How confident do you feel about your ability to change? How do you feel about taking risks?
- What is the best way for you to learn new things?
- Are you a person who will tell me how you feel, or will I need to ask? Do I ask you often enough how things are going for you?
- What do you want to accomplish in the next six months?
- From where you sit, what do you think are the highest priority items you need to be working on?
- What are your greatest challenges?
- Are there any barriers to your accomplishing what you need to accomplish? What are they?
- Are there any resources you need to reach your goals? Do you need my help in securing those resources?
- What do you value in the working relationship? What type of person do you like to work with (or team with) and why?
- What do you expect from me in our working relationship?

- Do you prefer a working relationship where you are given a specific plan or set of directions, or do you prefer to create a plan yourself?
- When you are successful, who do you want to know about it, and what is the best way to give you the recognition or acknowledgement you deserve? (Do you like to be recognized in front of others or privately?)
- What are the most important rewards to you?
- What motivates you? (Listen for any of the following: working independently, being part of the team, new challenges, learning new things, being the best, making a contribution, supporting the growth and development of others.)

Throughout this conversation, the coach-manager listens carefully to the employee's answers and verifies that he or she understands what is being said. It is important for the coach-manager to go with her natural curiosity and ask additional questions to gain a deeper appreciation and understanding of the individual. The questions above are not intended to be used as an interrogation. The intent is to stimulate an open and honest conversation about the employee's goals, challenges, motivations, values, needs and learning style. Every so often, the coach-manager should pause to summarize what she believes she has heard: the individual's plans, intentions, needs and feelings. The coach-manager should also know that she cannot thoroughly understand her employee through this initial conversation. She should commit to listening deeply during all subsequent coaching conversations.

Generating Awareness

Some individuals have a well-developed and realistic sense of who they are, in both their personal and professional lives, as well as a realistic sense of and how they work with others. Some individuals have given relatively little thought to who they are and how they affect others.

Self-awareness and social awareness are key components of emotional intelligence. Self-awareness involves an awareness of one's emotions and how they affect performance. Self-awareness also requires the ability to accurately and candidly assess personal strengths and limits, knowing what areas need improvement and knowing how to learn, grow and develop. Social awareness is the ability to understand others, sense their feelings and perspectives, and take an active interest in their concerns. These skills are important for both the coach-manager and the person being coached.

In addition to helping direct reports develop self- and social awareness, the coach-manager must help each direct report become aware of—and accurately evaluate, interpret, and integrate—various sources of information about how others in the organization see him and how he affects them.

Generating awareness requires tuning in to the other person's worldview, that is, how she sees herself and the environment in which she operates and how she identifies and articulates her concerns. It involves helping her to see disparities between her perceptions and others' perceptions. Generating awareness helps her discover for herself new ways to approach a problem, new thoughts, new beliefs and new actions. It leads her to develop broader perspectives, to see things in new and different ways, and to gain new insights into the challenges confronting her.

Focusing on Priorities

With new insights and greater awareness, the coach-manager works with the individual being coached to determine the three or four highest priorities for development. It is strongly

recommended that the individual being coached take on no more than five priorities. Three or four is realistic. More than five can result in becoming overwhelmed and disillusioned. These can include personal priorities or organizational priorities, skill development or project management, forging new or strengthened relationships, or developing new products. In coaching, it is the individual being coached, *not the coach-manager,* who sets the agenda for development. It should be noted, however, that the individual's development priorities should align with organizational priorities.

As the individual establishes priorities, the coach-manager sets the stage for accountability. It is not unusual for the coach-manager and the individual to commit to these priorities and goals in writing. Figure 1.2 is a form to use in this process.

Inspiring Commitment

Agreeing to priorities for development is all well and good, but without commitment to change, there will be no development. If the coach-manager has established a strong and trusting relationship with her direct report, and if that direct report is a self-starter, this step may be skipped. Most professionals want to grow, develop, achieve and become the best they can be. These individuals are already inspired and committed to pursuing their development priorities.

Other employees may need help in order to see how a change will benefit them personally or professionally. People generally have an innate desire to learn, grow and achieve, particularly when they are dissatisfied with the current situation. People do things when they see a personal payoff. The coach-manager can help his direct reports see both the benefits of growth and development and the consequences of maintaining the status quo. He can appeal to enlightened self-interest or the "what's-in-it-for-me" factor.

Asking questions often helps to inspire commitment by ensuring that the individual (1) understands what is the first step to take, (2) has the information she needs to make informed choices, (3) has a clear vision of a better future, and (4) understands that she will be supported throughout the coaching process. Some questions to inspire commitment include:

- What legacy do you want to leave? What do you want people to say about you after you've left your current role?
- What's standing in your way? What's stopping you?
- What personal benefits will you realize as a result of making these changes?
- If you do nothing, what will happen? What regrets might you have?
- What's your first step?
- Is there any other information you need as you go forward?
- How will you ask for help or support? To whom can you turn? Let's identify those individuals to whom you can go for assistance.
- How do you feel about the current situation?
- How will you feel when you get on top of this?

Inspiring commitment shouldn't be an issue as long as the development objectives are driven by the person's own goals. As mentioned previously, these should align with organizational priorities.

Contracting the Logistics

Compared with the other aspects of designing the coaching partnership, contracting the logistics should be relatively easy. This step has to do with planning the frequency of meetings, their location and duration, and how the agenda for coaching sessions will be established.

Figure 1.2   Focusing on Priorities

Focusing on Priorities

Identify up to five priorities for development during the coaching relationship. For each priority, make a simple statement and provide a description of a measurable result. For example:

Practice more effective time management.
 I will prioritize my work tasks, use a time planner more effectively (scheduling time to complete those priority tasks), clear the clutter from my desk/office so I can work more efficiently, delegate more and set aside uninterrupted time to complete large projects.

1. _____

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2. _____

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3. _____

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4. _____

_____

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5. _____

_____

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_____   _____
Signature   **Coach's Signature**

Meeting frequency and duration. Coach-managers and the individuals they coach should meet regularly at least twice each month. Meetings can be as short as 15–20 minutes or as long as an hour. Both partners should plan the meetings so that the coaching session will be uninterrupted. Schedule at least two meetings in advance to ensure continuity (and because calendars fill quickly).

Meeting location. A private office, either the coach-manager's or the employee's, ensures that the discussion will be confidential and uninterrupted. Alternatively, the coaching sessions can take place off-site at an informal, neutral location, such as a restaurant. Coaching off-site can encourage a more relaxed, open discussion.

Coaching by telephone. As an alternative to meeting in person, more and more coaching is being done by telephone. While this is not recommended between a coach-manager and direct report who are co-located, it may be a workable alternative for virtual teams or for individuals who travel frequently.

Setting the agenda. The agenda is established by the individual being coached. Some coach-managers formalize the agenda-setting process by requesting the individual to prepare a "coach session prep form" (see Figure 1.3).

"Field coaching." These spontaneous coaching sessions are held "in the field" as issues arise. Coach-managers should be open and flexible to opportunities for spontaneous coaching when questions, complaints or problems come up. The coach-manager should be clear at the outset how much time he has ("I have to be in a meeting in 20 minutes") and should ask the person being coached how much time she has or needs. It's a good idea to book a time and place for additional time for further discussion or to review the outcome of actions taken as a result of the field coaching session.

Confidentiality and Other Ethical Considerations

Confidentiality is the bedrock of the coaching relationship. Learning, growth and development entail vulnerability. It is the coach-manager's responsibility to create a safe environment for individuals to explore new possibilities and speak more freely than they may ordinarily do. In the one-on-one coaching relationship, coach-managers may discuss their direct reports' dreams for the future, career challenges, their strengths and weaknesses, difficult relationships and more. During coaching sessions, people may speak to issues that raise passionate or painful feelings. Because these conversations may entail a degree of emotion not usually encountered in other business conversations, the coaching relationship must be grounded in trust and maintained as completely confidential.

I never cease to be amazed at the power of the coaching process to draw out the skills or talent that were previously hidden within an individual, and its ability to help the individual find a way to solve a problem previously thought unsolvable.

John Russell, Manager Director
Harley Davidson Europe, Ltd

Figure 1.3   Coaching Session Prep Form

Coaching Session Prep Form

To get the most out of our coaching sessions, I request that you prepare for them. Please respond to each of the questions on this form and bring it with you to our coaching session (or you may give it to me in advance). Please use this as a master and work from copies for each session. Don't feel limited to one page; please feel free to include as much information as you need to provide. This is optional, but strongly recommended as a way to get the most from our time together.

Name: _____   Date: _____

Accomplishments since our last session:

Challenges and problems you currently face:

Opportunities available to you right now:

What would you like to focus on during our session? What's urgent? What's important?

How can I best support the actions you wish to take?

Anything else you wish to add?

Coaching works only if the person being coached feels free to divulge sensitive information about himself and his coworkers. The coach-manager and direct report should mutually agree that what is discussed during coaching sessions remains within the coaching relationship and is not discussed with others unless both parties agree to such external discussion.

In addition, as in the physician-patient relationship, the coach-manager should "do no harm." At times the coach-manager will be required to provide candid feedback and tell the individual being coached some difficult truths. This feedback and these truths should be presented in a manner that preserves the dignity of the individual being coached. The well-being of the individual being coached is the central focus of the coaching relationship.

Finally, during the course of coaching, as new ideas are generated by the person being coached, the coach-manager should ethically acknowledge the ideas, the work and the subsequent contributions of the individual who originated those ideas.

These are just a few of the ethical considerations involved in the coaching relationship. Use the space below to note your ideas about other ethical considerations.

Chapter 2
Coaching Skills

One of the best ways to understand coaching is to become familiar with the fundamental skills used in the process. These skills are not special or unique to coaching; rather, they are the skills of everyday life and everyday interpersonal interaction taken to new levels.

At its core, coaching is communication. Because coaching takes place through dialogue between coach-manager and employee, the dialogue skills of inquiry, listening and candid communication are critical throughout the coaching process. The practice of dialogue is not the coaching process itself, but it is essential to developing the coaching relationship and to the ongoing process of coaching. Figure 2.1 depicts a coaching model. In this model, the practice of dialogue forms the foundation.

Facilitating others' development is the primary purpose of coaching. Coach-managers develop their direct reports by working collaboratively with them to identify developmental needs and to bolster their ability to perform. The second section of this chapter discusses ten skills associated with developing others. They are depicted as the ten pillars in Figure 2.1.

Everyone needs feedback in order to improve performance. In some organizations, unfortunately, honest, objective, constructive feedback is rarely provided. Managers may be reluctant to provide feedback because they feel that they lack the ability, confidence and time to do it correctly.

Feedback must be tailored to the skill and knowledge level of the employee, as well as her emotional capacity to receive the feedback. It is critically important to preserve the self-esteem of the individual receiving the feedback. It is also important to remember to watch for positive behaviors and to frequently praise individuals for work well done. The skills associated with providing feedback are the subject of the third section of this chapter. These skills include: observing and analyzing as well as providing positive or constructive (corrective) feedback. These skills are depicted as the dome in Figure 2.1.

> Nature never repeats herself, and the possibilities of one human soul will never be found in another.
>
> Elizabeth Cady Stanton

Figure 2.1   A Model of Coaching

Pinnacle or Dome "Feedback"

Providing Feedback

Observation & Analysis

Ten Pillars "Developing Others"

- Clarifying Expectations
- Brainstorming & Strategizing
- Planning & Goal Setting
- Advising
- Empowering
- Challenging & Requesting
- Reframing
- Supporting Sustained Action
- Accountability
- Acknowledgement & Recognition

Direct Communication

Respectful Listening

Foundation "Dialogue"

Generative Inquiry

Suspending Assumptions

The Foundation of Coaching: The Practice of Dialogue

William Isaacs, in his book *Dialogue*, defines dialogue as "shared inquiry, a way of thinking and reflecting together" (1999). He points out that dialogue is not something a manager does *to* another person, but something she does *with* another person—in the case of the coach-manager, with her direct reports.

Dialogue is highly creative and generative. It is a type of conversation in which the outcome is something that neither the coach-manager nor the employee could have imagined before they began. It promotes shared meaning and thus shared results. Dialogue is based on the assumption that people are more aware, more creative and better able to take smart actions when they explore ideas together than when they do so alone.

The word *dialogue* comes from the Greek words *dia* and *logos*. *Dia* means "through"; *logos* translates as "word" or "meaning." So a dialogue is the "flow of meaning." Isaacs points out that dialogue is this and much more. In its most ancient meaning, *logos* meant "to gather together." So dialogue is the gathering together of people and the gathering together of meaning. Dialogue is a way of evoking new insights, reordering knowledge and abandoning assumptions.

At the least, dialogue requires four primary skills: suspending assumptions, generative inquiry, respectful listening and direct communication. At the core of dialogue is an attitude of respect. It is said that in our culture, people form opinions of one another within the first 30 seconds of their initial meeting. The word *respect* comes from the Latin *respecere*, which means "to look again." In dialogue, one suspends instantaneous judgments and looks again to see what the first glance might have missed. Respect involves seeing the potential in people and respecting who they are and where they are, that is, honoring their worldview. Isaacs states, "Respect involves looking for what is highest and best in a person and treating them as a mystery that you can never fully comprehend."

In the United States, when people meet, it is customary to shake hands and say, "Hello, how are you?" This is a rather perfunctory greeting with little meaning. In Tibet, the customary greeting is to place the palms of the hands together in front of the chest, fingertips up, bow the head slightly, and say "*Tashi deley*," which means "I honor the greatness in you." It represents a fundamental mindset of respect for the other person, a way of turning to that person and tuning into her, in full appreciation of who she is as a human being. The foundation of dialogue is this type of deep respect.

Practice is something done repeatedly to hone skills, like practicing the scales on the piano or practicing a golf swing at the driving range. This book refers to the development of the respectful mindset and the four skills of dialogue as "the practice of dialogue" because it may take several months—or more—to fully develop these competencies. Mastery may take a lifetime.

Suspending Assumptions

One of the greatest challenges for those engaged in dialogue, and the one requiring a large measure of self-awareness and self-monitoring, is the skill of suspending assumptions. Suspending assumptions means setting aside one's agenda, refraining from imposing one's views on others, and foregoing the inclination to suppress the other person's thoughts and ideas.

Suspending means observing and acknowledging thoughts and feelings as they arise but not acting on them, not offering opinions or advice, and not allowing the mind to work double-time looking for evidence to bolster one's views and discount the views of the other person. The

opposite of suspending is certainty and rigidity. While some ideas and concepts carry absolute certainty, many do not. People who are certain about everything cannot engage in dialogue.

Peter Senge refers to this notion of holding and maintaining assumptions as *mental models*, or "the images, assumptions, and stories which we carry in our minds of ourselves, other people, institutions, and every aspect of the world" (1994). He points out that mental models determine each person's view of the world. Mental models are useful in that they can orient and ground individuals in the world; however, many people go through life with a set of beliefs and a mental model that is largely untested. These people observe daily activity, add meaning based on a limited view of the world, make assumptions and draw conclusions that guide their future actions—all without testing their underlying assumptions, or mental model.

Chris Argyris refers to this process of making assumptions and forming beliefs and conclusions based on those assumptions as climbing "the ladder of inference" (1990; 1982). Figure 2.2 illustrates the ladder of inference. At the bottom rung, individuals observe data and experiences. Moving up the ladder, individuals choose the data that they prefer or that fits within their mental model. Subsequent steps involve adding meaning, making assumptions, drawing conclusions, adopting beliefs about other persons and taking action—all based on the mental model. Consider this scenario:

Observable data: A senior vice president of finance, who is sitting in on an executive team meeting, observes a new executive as she joins the meeting. Melissa was brought into the organization to launch a promising new product line. The senior vice president had seen the memo that announced her hire.

He selects data. She is five minutes late to the meeting. She appears distracted as she shuffles through papers and phone message slips to find the documents she needs for this meeting.

He adds meaning. People who come late to meetings are passive aggressive.

He makes assumptions. She is unreliable and is obviously unprepared for this meeting.

He draws conclusions. She's probably incompetent and not qualified to handle the job. Human Resources blew it again bringing on yet another incompetent.

He adopts beliefs. She probably won't last long in this organization. I won't invest much time in her.

He takes action based on those beliefs. The senior vice president either ignores the ideas she brings up in the meeting or shoots them down as having no merit. As time goes on, he withholds important information and attempts to shut her out of the inner workings of the executive team.

The senior vice president has climbed the ladder of inference in a matter of seconds. He has made assumptions that remain untested, and from those assumptions he has formed beliefs, drawn conclusions, adopted behaviors and taken action that dramatically influence the working relationship.

In reality, Melissa was very experienced and highly competent in launching new products. She had been recruited heavily and was considered a real "find" both by human resources and her own vice president. The product being launched turned out to be very popular, and from Day One she was caught up in never ending rounds of meetings with suppliers, manufacturing, marketing, advertising, sales, delivery and transportation, and customers themselves (hence the stack of phone slips).

Her office was in a different building from the vice president's, and in her zeal to provide first-rate customer service, she erred on the side of taking one more phone call before heading to

the meeting that day. That phone call, coupled with the fact that she underestimated the time it would take to walk to the other building, caused her to be late.

In the long run, the product launch went very well, with product sales far exceeding the company's expectations and customer satisfaction ratings the highest the company had ever seen.

As far as her working relationship with the senior vice president of finance, she sensed his distance. On several occasions she was caught off-guard when she didn't have the financial information she needed—though others seemed to have it. Throughout the three years she worked for the organization, before she was recruited away to a higher-level position, she never figured out what had caused the two of them to get off on the wrong foot.

Assumptions can damage working relationships. The ability to suspend assumptions is critically important for managers taking a coach approach to management. How can a coach-manager do this?

- Be aware of your assumptions and of new assumptions *in the moment* they arise.
- Voice those assumptions and ask for clarification or input from others.
- Do not have all your thoughts worked out in advance of a dialogue or coaching session. Be open to new ideas and new ways of viewing the world.
- Be willing to be influenced by the conversation.
- Ask questions for which you do not have answers, and be open to the responses.
- Make room for people to say what they think and to brainstorm with you.
- Suspend your certainty. Ask yourself, Why am I so sure about this? Why am I holding onto my way, my view, so intensely? What will happen if I let it go? What is the risk?
- Suspend judgments and criticism. Be aware of thoughts and feelings as they come up, and hold onto them for possible use later. See and allow yourself to be aware of what is happening as it happens.
- Allow your perspective to broaden and expand. Be open to new possibilities.
- Avoid stating your opinions and your positions.
- Try to see the person you are coaching in a new or different light.
- Externalize your thoughts; voice what comes up for you. (See the section of this chapter on direct communication.)
- Ask many questions that generate mutual exploration, such as, What are we missing? What are we not paying sufficient attention to?

Generative Inquiry

Asking questions is a powerful way to evoke creative thinking; it is essential to coaching and to developing others. The ability to ask powerful questions is called *generative inquiry* because the focus is on generating new, expanded thinking, clarity and action. Generative inquiry promotes the discovery of new possibilities, helps clear up fuzzy thinking and helps individuals create a wider range of options.

Most managers live in a world where it is not safe to say, "I don't know." Managers are supposed to have the answers. Coach-managers foster a climate in which they and their direct reports can explore, experiment and jointly craft new solutions. In this environment the coach-manager doesn't have to have all the answers. It is a climate of genuine inquiry, mutual learning and fresh perspectives.

Figure 2.2   The Ladder of Inference

I take actions based on my beliefs

I adopt beliefs

I draw conclusions

I make assumptions

I add meaning

I select "data"

Observable data

William Isaacs (1999) estimates that 40 percent of all questions people ask are really statements in disguise (Can you believe we're going through another reorganization?). Another 40 percent are really judgments in disguise (Do you really think she deserved that promotion?). Isaacs maintains that only a small percentage of inquiries are genuine questions. He observes that "real questions are often notable for the silence that follows their utterance." Effective questions are:

- *Open-ended*. Managers who ask yes-or-no questions don't generate possibilities, expand thinking or invite exploration.
- *Brief*. Some managers make speeches leading up to questions. (Often, these speeches bias the answers because the speech or the question is a veiled attempt to state a position or opinion).

- *Neutral*. Neutral questions do not create bias. They respect the other person in that they indicate a genuine interest in his opinion. Here are a few examples of questions. The first implies that yes is the proper answer, the second implies that no is the proper answer, and the third is neutral.
  - Do you think we should improve quality by creating a control department and process? (Any thinking person would be in favor of improved quality.)
  - Given the current stock price, do you think we should spend the money to establish a quality control department? (Astute people know we shouldn't spend money in today's economy.)
  - What should we do about quality control? (A neutral question)
- *Constructive*. When it comes to solving problems, questions that are framed to accentuate the positive are more effective than negatively framed questions. A question framed to create a positive image of the future can change present behavior to bring about that positive future. For solving problems, expressing a positive future is more effective than doing a root-cause analysis of failure. The following questions are framed negatively and positively (or constructively) respectively:
  - How can we eliminate racial bias in this department? (This question is negative; it carries the emotional baggage of racial inequality and power inequities.)
  - How can our department become the model of diversity for this entire organization? (This question is constructive; it encourages people to think positively and expansively about the possibilities.)
- *Evoke possibilities and forward movement*. Good questions are thought provoking; they encourage people to take action. Two questions that move people forward are:
  - What other possibilities should we consider?
  - What action do we need to take?

Generative inquiry is a learned skill comprising many techniques and practices that can be learned over time, through practice. To engage in generative inquiry:
- Break the habit of making too many statements. Questions should comprise almost half of your utterances in a coaching conversation.
- Carefully formulate questions that invite exploration and discovery, generate possibilities, and stimulate new thinking and acting.
- Frame questions in a way that evokes images of a better, more productive future.
- Ask brief, open-ended, neutral questions.
- Develop a list of good questions. (A starter list appears in the discussion of the coaching conversation in chapter 3.)
- Practice, practice, practice.

As mentioned previously, phrasing strongly influences how individuals respond to a question. Some examples of good phrasing include:
- What do you want to have happen?
- If you had free rein on this project, what would you do?
- If you had it to do over again, what would you do?
- What are the possible solutions?
- What options can we create?
- What information do you need to help you decide?

- Are there other possibilities we aren't considering?
- If we took a completely fresh approach, what would that be?

> A person doesn't learn much if they are just told to do something or just listened to. They learn more if you ask questions to make them think.
>
> John Cleece, Video Arts, *The Helping Hand* video

Respectful Listening

It may seem that listening respectfully is a concept so simple to grasp and so easy to do that readers may be tempted to skip this section. Please don't.

Listening is a fundamental coaching skill, one of the most important and powerful skills used in coaching. Everything in coaching hinges on listening. Isaacs states, "The heart of dialogue is a simple but profound capacity to listen."

Gerard Egan, in his book *The Skilled Helper* (1998), identifies four aspects of complete listening:

- listening to and understanding *verbal* messages;
- listening to and observing the other person's *nonverbal* behavior (posture, facial expressions and tone of voice);
- listening to the *context* within which the other person is operating: her needs, anxieties, assumptions, goals and challenges; and
- listening to the "sour notes," or those things the person is saying that eventually may have to be challenged.

Coach-managers listen respectfully; they listen for the best in people and they listen without judgment. They quiet the chatter in their own minds and listen exactingly to what the individual being coached says. They put aside their own agendas, drop everything and turn their full attention to being with the individual they are coaching.

Respectful listening is a great gift. It is human nature to project opinions and ideas, biases and prejudices, backgrounds and experiences, inclinations and impulses on others. However, this tendency prevents respectful listening. One begins to listen by setting aside opinions and personal thoughts and by developing an inner silence. Think about those occasions when you have experienced genuine listening. Has it happened often or rarely? Did you think, "Wow, what a great conversation we had! He really seemed to understand where I was coming from."

In addition to listening carefully to verbal messages, coach-managers listen for contextual clues that indicate how the other person experiences the world (that is, her worldview and mental models). For example, coach-managers listen to learn what motivates her and what inner resources she has. They listen for her emotions, her passions, her aspirations and her values.

Coach managers are also keen observers of nonverbal signals, such as:

- body language, such as posture (Is she slumping?) and gestures (Are they animated or lethargic, as compared to the usual?)
- facial expressions (frowns, smiles, rolling eyes)
- voice quality (did her voice falter?)

- vocal patterns (Is the tone of voice angry, sad, excited, indifferent? Is there an unusual vocal intensity or emphasis? Are certain words or phrases repeated?)
- general appearance, such as grooming and dress.

Finally, as noted above, good coach-managers practice what Egan calls "tough-minded listening." Effective coach-managers listen for the spin or slant that employees put on their stories. Although a person's perception of the world is real, and it must be understood and respected, that perception occasionally may be distorted. For example, if a person sees himself as above average in handling customers when, in fact, he is not, this reality cannot be ignored. When another person's worldview holds that all problems stem from her peers, coworkers and direct reports, and she fails to see or own her responsibility for a problem, the coach-manager must respectfully challenge her perception.

Tough-minded listening means detecting gaps, distortions, dissonance and mismatches between what is said and what is real as perceived by the coach-manager. This does not mean the coach-manager should immediately challenge his direct report as soon as he hears any distortion. However, the coach-manager should take note of gaps and distortions and discuss them with the employee at an appropriate time. (This topic is discussed further in the following section on direct communication.)

How to listen:
- Set aside your own agenda; let go of your inner clamoring.
- Listen for what is said and what is not said.
- As you listen to the other person, listen also for your own reactions (see Figure 2.3).
- Listen for context (see the checklist in Figure 2.4).
- Be prepared. (Just 5 minutes spent scanning a person's financial projections or report can make the difference between a useful coaching session and a mutual waste of time. It also shows you care.)
- Suspend judgment. (Even when listening attentively, the mind tends to race with evaluations about what the other person is saying: whether it is good or bad, right or wrong, acceptable or unacceptable. Suspend these judgments.)
- Notice what you have heard. Take note of gaps and distortions.
- Hear it all before you respond. (Never say, "I know what you're going to say." You don't. Saying so is annoying and insulting, and it shuts down communication.)
- Acknowledge feelings. (You seem pretty upset. This isn't just about sales, is it?)
- Pay attention to your intentions. Ask yourself, Am I willing to let myself be influenced here?
- Ask for clarification if the person's thinking appears unclear.
- Don't interrupt and don't finish the other person's sentences.
- To verify what you heard, say it. Use active listening techniques, such as paraphrasing, reflecting and mirroring back what you have heard.
- Be aware, in the moment, of your assumptions and raise them. (Walk back down the ladder of inference.)
- Avoid thinking about what you will say in response. Quiet your inner voice.
- Allow silence.
- Synthesize your understanding. (Voice what you think you heard and why you voiced what you did.)
- No matter how poorly the individual communicates, the coach-manager must take 100 percent of the responsibility for understanding. Keep asking and seeking clarity.

As with questioning, the way in which you frame your responses to the person you are coaching will influence how your message is received. Some examples of phrasing that indicate respectful listening include:

- Hmmm. Sounds like you're feeling …
- Tell me if I'm hearing you right … this is what I heard.
- Help me understand what you mean by …
- When you said … I assumed you meant … Is that right?
- Am I correct that you mean …
- It sounds like you're really passionate about this.
- It seems you have set a pretty large goal for yourself.

> Top executives listen more than they talk, and when they listen, they really listen. They know that the only way to have effective dialogue with someone is to listen effectively.
>
> Deborah Benton, *Lions Don't Need to Roar*

Direct Communication

In the process of dialogue, after listening and asking generative questions, the time comes for the coach-manager to speak, to be direct and candid. William Isaacs says, "Speaking your voice has to do with revealing what is true for you regardless of other influences that might be brought to bear" (1999).

Direct communication reveals the coach-manager's inner thoughts and perceptions. It provides her perspective on reality and her view of what she has observed during inquiry and listening. During the direct communication phase of dialogue, the coach-manager may challenge the employee about distortions, gaps and mismatches between what is said and actual behavior. The coach-manager candidly identifies mismatches between what a person says and does, what a person may be missing or unwilling to admit, and what may be blind spots.

Direct communication involves truthful messages that are relevant, timely and succinct. In providing direct communication, the coach-manager delivers frank, objective and truthful information, often challenging the person being coached to step up to a higher level of awareness and performance.

This is not an opportunity to be so brutally honest in giving information that the other person is hurt or injured. It is important for the coach-manager to examine his motives in delivering the message. Is the intent to make the other person wrong or put her down? Or is the intent to advance her pursuit of her goals? The coach-manager must be sensitive to the potential emotional impact of the message and frame the message in a way that will be heard by the person being coached. At the same time, the coach-manager who fails to deliver truthful messages does a disservice to his direct reports.

Figure 2.3   Self-test for Listening Potential

Self-Test for Listening Potential

How do you rate your listening ability? Surveys show that one of the most important factors that motivates employees to stay with a company is that they feel heard and listened to by their managers. Many top executives believe that listening is the most important management function. Take this short test to assess your listening skills. Please be honest with yourself. You will not be asked to share your results with anyone.

Check yes or no beside each of the following statements:

Yes	No		
❑	❑	1.	When someone begins speaking, do you immediately begin to formulate your response?
❑	❑	2.	Do you have difficulty with silence?
❑	❑	3.	Do you sometimes think that listening to someone is a waste of time?
❑	❑	4.	Do you typically think of other things while you appear to be listening?
❑	❑	5.	Do you quickly jump to conclusions and interrupt with suggestions?
❑	❑	6.	Do you assume you know what someone will say and finish statements for them?
❑	❑	7.	Is it difficult to focus on what others are saying when you have something on your mind?
❑	❑	8.	Do you often say to others, "Listen to me"?
❑	❑	9.	Do you sometimes seem to miss what others are saying and the context they intended?
❑	❑	10.	Do people tell you that you are not a good listener?

If you answered "yes" to more than eight of the questions, your natural tendencies are inhibiting your ability to listen. If you answered "no" to five or more of the questions, you are a pretty good listener.

Figure 2.4   Listening for Context: A Checklist

Listening for Context: A Checklist

Instructions: Check the appropriate box.

		Yes	No
1.	**What does this person need?**		
	▪ to be respected	❑	❑
	▪ to be challenged	❑	❑
	▪ to be acknowledged	❑	❑
	▪ to be cared for	❑	❑
	▪ to be told she's right	❑	❑
	▪ to have certainty	❑	❑
	▪ to be in control	❑	❑
	▪ to be needed	❑	❑
	▪ to be cautious	❑	❑
	▪ to be helpful	❑	❑
	▪ to be part of the team	❑	❑
	▪ to be liked	❑	❑
	▪ to have information	❑	❑
	▪ to be recognized	❑	❑
	▪ to have greater independence	❑	❑
	▪ to have more structure	❑	❑
2.	**What motivates this person?**		
	▪ Money	❑	❑
	▪ Achievement	❑	❑
	▪ Success	❑	❑
	▪ Making a contribution	❑	❑
	▪ Being part of the team	❑	❑
	▪ Prestige	❑	❑
	▪ Challenge	❑	❑
	▪ Recognition	❑	❑
	▪ Power	❑	❑
	▪ Control	❑	❑
3.	**What does this person value?**		
	▪ Time off	❑	❑
	▪ Travel (or staying home)	❑	❑
	▪ Opportunities to learn new things	❑	❑
	▪ Opportunities to develop others	❑	❑
	▪ Adventure	❑	❑
	▪ Fun	❑	❑
	▪ Making a difference	❑	❑
	▪ Service	❑	❑

Figure 2.4   Listening for Context: A Checklist (continued)

	Yes	No
▪ Leaving a legacy	❑	❑
▪ Partnering, collaboration, connectedness	❑	❑
▪ Harmony	❑	❑
▪ Excellence	❑	❑
▪ Freedom to choose, independence	❑	❑
▪ Community	❑	❑
▪ Orderliness	❑	❑
▪ Honesty, directness	❑	❑
▪ Tradition	❑	❑
▪ Risk taking	❑	❑
▪ Creativity, innovation	❑	❑

4. What is this person's ability to set and achieve goals?
- ❑ Has significant goals and the knowledge and skills to achieve them.
- ❑ Has significant goals but needs help in achieving them. (What kind of help is needed, for example, help in breaking down the goals into more manageable segments?)
- ❑ Has moderate goals.
- ❑ Has minimal goals.
- ❑ Lacks clear understanding of goals.

5. What is this person's energy level?

	Yes	No
▪ Passionate	❑	❑
▪ Enthusiastic	❑	❑
▪ Open to change	❑	❑
▪ Committed	❑	❑
▪ Resistant	❑	❑
▪ Drained, burned out, lethargic, bored	❑	❑

6. What are this person's strengths?

	Yes	No
▪ Technical	❑	❑
▪ Interpersonal/communication	❑	❑
▪ Mathematical/statistical	❑	❑
▪ Intellectual	❑	❑
▪ Visionary, oriented to the big picture	❑	❑
▪ Oriented to details and completing tasks	❑	❑
▪ Good judgment	❑	❑
▪ Experience and track record with the organization	❑	❑
▪ Focus on results	❑	❑
▪ Focused on people	❑	❑
▪ Focused on the process	❑	❑

Figure 2.4   Listening for Context: A Checklist (continued)

	Yes	No
▪ Courage	❑	❑
▪ Determination, perseverance	❑	❑
▪ Willingness	❑	❑
▪ Perspective	❑	❑
▪ Inexperience	❑	❑
▪ Goals are too ambitious	❑	❑
▪ Lack of ethical behavior	❑	❑
▪ Procrastination	❑	❑
▪ Bad habits	❑	❑
▪ Biases, prejudice	❑	❑
▪ Negative past experiences	❑	❑
▪ Inability to set boundaries	❑	❑
▪ Inability to take action during conflict	❑	❑
▪ Inability to share information	❑	❑
▪ Inability to follow through (irresponsible)	❑	❑
▪ Need for perfection	❑	❑
▪ Need for domination and/or control	❑	❑

7. What's missing?

	Yes	No
▪ Confidence	❑	❑
▪ Specific skills	❑	❑
▪ Knowledge	❑	❑
▪ A plan	❑	❑
▪ Commitment	❑	❑
▪ Experience	❑	❑
▪ Structure or a process	❑	❑
▪ Strategies	❑	❑
▪ Goals	❑	❑
▪ Monetary resources	❑	❑
▪ Human resources to help	❑	❑

8. What is this person's communication style? (See chapter 4.)
   - ❑ Direct: fast paced, focused on the bottom line, outcome oriented, opinionated, decisive, risk taking.
   - ❑ Outgoing: highly social, not detail-oriented, innovative, persuasive, spontaneous, big-picture thinker, charming, energetic, good communicator.
   - ❑ Supportive: friendly, caring, methodical, trustworthy, empathic, cooperative, peacemaking, pleasant, positive, harmonizing, avoids conflict, more reserved, concerned for others.
   - ❑ Analytical: intellectual, goes by the rules, private, diplomatic, systematic, holds self and others to high standards, considers all options before acting, organized, resists change.

Warning. Remember, direct communication works two ways. Coach-managers who speak honestly must be willing to hear honest feedback. If someone in power responds poorly to negative feedback, it will shut down future communication. Many times, coach-managers encourage direct reports to tell the truth. They insist that they enjoy "mixing it up" and debating issues. If you encourage people to tell the truth as they see it, be prepared to hear it.

How to use the skill of direct communication:

- Develop trust. A solid, trusting relationship is a prerequisite to direct communication.
- Ask yourself, What needs to be expressed now?
- Listen to your internal feelings, thoughts, impulses, reactions and emotions.
- Listen for mismatches between what is said and what is done, as well as for gaps, distortions, biases and lack of ownership of the problem.
- Trust yourself. Be still. Be quiet. Listen to what comes up for you. Refrain from speaking immediately. Not everything that comes into your mind needs to be spoken, only the important things need be said.
- Consciously select from the thoughts that arose during inquiry and listening, frame them as diplomatically as possible, and speak your truth.
- Be open and authentic. Genuinely express your thoughts and concerns in a way that does not injure the other person. Come from a place of genuine caring and respect.
- Speak your truth quietly and clearly, in an unemotional and nonjudgmental manner. Consider asking permission to speak freely.
- Invite the person being coached to examine her behavior and the effect it has on others.
- Tell her what no one else is willing to mention; use specific examples.
- Use your voice to create an image of what is possible, what is right.
- Avoid censoring your thoughts and your voice. Don't withhold your thoughts for fear they will upset others. Ask yourself, What is at risk if I don't bring this out? What opportunity will be missed?
- Make your thinking process visible. Speak in the moment. Direct communication is not planned speech. We all know how to plan what we'll say and speak from memory. Direct communication is about thinking and speaking the truth in the moment.
- Don't be afraid of silence.

As with questioning and listening, direct communication relies, in part, on the way you phrase your comments. Some examples for direct communication are:

- May I offer my thoughts on this and trust that you will receive them as they are intended, as a way to help you overcome this hurdle?
- Kathy, I hear you say the morale of your team is your highest priority, but do you realize that by refusing to deal with a nonperformer, you are hurting morale?
- Roger, here's what I think and here's how I got there. Do you see any flaws in my reasoning?
- Would it be okay for me to tell you something that might be useful but might make you feel a little uncomfortable?
- Let me give you an example of what I'm talking about.
- Your service to the Board of Directors is commendable, Diane. Your patients need the same treatment.

- I'd like to give you some information based on my observations. I ask that you don't react immediately, but take some time to reflect on it before we discuss it. Are you willing? I've received communication from others in the organization that your behavior borders on bullying …
- Mary, I see you saying you are a team player, but at the same time you have not fulfilled your obligations to this team project in a timely manner. How does your lack of follow-through affect the rest of the team?
- John, what part of this problem is yours?
- I'm having difficulty seeing it the way you're seeing it. Here's what I'm seeing …
- Here's where we agree … But I must disagree with you on …
- We seem to be starting from two very different sets of assumptions here.
- May I give you my reaction to what you have said so far?

> Courageous speech has always held us in awe.
>
> David Whyte, *The Heart Aroused*

Facilitating Personal Development: The Ten Pillars

Developing others is the heart of coaching. This set of skills is about helping employees think rigorously, creatively and strategically. It's about supporting them as they "deepen the learning" and challenging them to perform at the highest levels of their competence and ability. By encouraging direct reports to strive for more responsibility and by offering assignments that challenge and foster their skills, the coach-manager helps individuals prepare for future assignments and positions. In effect, she helps them transcend themselves.

An open, trusting relationship is required for developing others. The skills of generative inquiry, respectful listening and direct communication are the foundation of developing others. The pages that follow describe ten other skills or techniques for developing others.

> The greatest good you can do another is not just share your riches, but to reveal him his own.
>
> Benjamin Franklin

Pillar 1: Clarifying Expectations

Of twelve primary factors related to employee satisfaction and productivity, a clear understanding of expectations ranked in the top five, according to the Gallup survey (Buckingham and Coffman 1999). In order for employees to grow and develop, they must know what is expected of them. It is the coach-manager's responsibility to set clear and accurate performance expectations. This is more than goal setting. It requires the coach-manager and

direct reports to focus on performance *today* and, at the same time, jointly plan for the future. The coach-manager must be absolutely clear in specifying his expectations for conformity, that is, in which aspects of a job he expects conformity and in which aspects a direct report may exercise her own style. In those areas where she can be more creative, the outcome must be clearly defined. While the outcome may be specified by the coach-manager, the means to achieve that outcome may be jointly determined by the coach-manager and the direct report.

The coach-manager must think through exactly what needs to be done and when it needs to be done, and then say so, clearly and specifically. He must also ensure that the direct report has a clear understanding of the coach-manager's expectations, including time frame and how to pursue the goal. Finally, the coach-manager should ensure that both he and the direct report understand all of the expectations and requirements.

Phrasing suggestions:
- Susan, I need the hepatitis strategy plan completed by next Friday, with a full report on my desk by noon. (Note the specific reference to time.)
- As you know, the report will require sections on data collection and analysis, a budget and cost analysis, an implementation plan, and recommendations and conclusion. (Note the specific instruction as to content.)
- Can we talk about your thinking regarding how you will approach getting this done? (Note that the outcome is specific, but the coach-manager is open to ideas about for accomplishing the task.)
- I know you have several other things going, but this has to take precedence. If you need to have Ron come in and help on the prenatal care initiative, let me know. (Note that the coach-manager wants to be sure his expectations are reasonable. This is the direct report's opportunity to seek clarification about the coach-manager's priorities for completing the myriad projects she has before her.)
- Okay, let's be sure we both understand how we're going to do this. Can you tell me your understanding of what we've just decided? (Note that the coach-manager understands that for expectations to be perfectly clear, there must be mutual understanding. He knows what he has in his mind, but wants to know how the direct report sees it.)

Pillar 2: Brainstorming/Strategizing

In brainstorming and strategizing, the coach-manager is a strategic thinking partner. Brainstorming is about expanding or enlarging the possibilities and helping the person being coached to create more ideas than he can create on his own. The coach-manager and the person being coached jointly participate in brainstorming. The purpose is to generate new ideas, new ways of solving problems, new alternatives and new choices. Often, it is a creative and fun experience for both the coach-manager and her direct report.

Strategizing is about helping an individual select the best course of action and develop a plan for reaching his goals. It provides focus and priorities for action. Having a plan and a clear course of action instills confidence. Some suggested phrasing for this step of development include:
- Can we brainstorm some options?
- Great! What's another option?
- What are your highest priorities?

- Where should you focus first?
- What's the best strategy for achieving that goal?

Pillar 3: Planning and Goal Setting

In this process, the coach-manager works with his direct report to: define the problem or opportunity; jointly establish the goal(s), identifying precisely and specifically the desired result(s), that is, to set SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, timed) goals; generate and evaluate options (perhaps through brainstorming); select the best option and plan the action to reach the goal, including a time line; and craft a plan to measure and monitor progress. Questions to encourage planning and goal setting include:

- Let's get clear on the problem. Would it make sense to write out a problem statement?
- What is the outcome you're seeking?
- What are the criteria you plan to use to evaluate the options?
- Step-by-step, how will you accomplish your goal?
- What is your time frame?
- What resources do you need?
- What are the potential barriers, and how can you get beyond them?
- How will you monitor your progress and measure your success?

Pillar 4: Advising

Though the primary goal of coaching is to evoke answers from the individual being coached, from time to time coach-managers also give advice. Most managers are in a position to offer an opinion based on their experience, training or body of knowledge. Advising can take the form of giving direct answers to an employee who asks questions, offering an opinion about a course of action, or offering some perspective about where an employee is and where he needs to be. It may entail drawing a model on a piece of paper or even telling the employee what to do.

Used sparingly, advising is one helpful tool in the coach-manager's toolbox. The operative word is *sparingly*. Coaching is built on the concept of self-responsibility; the coach-manager's function is to help individuals develop the ability to find their own answers. This suggests that advising be kept to a minimum.

Some phrases that are straightforward without being too directive are:
- Let me tell you what I know, and you can tell me if it's something you can use.
- Here's what I've seen work around here.
- Let me draw a model to see if that helps put this in a little better perspective.
- Would you mind if I offered a little advice?
- It seems to me, if your goal is …, your first step might be …

Pillar 5: Empowering

Empowering is the process of investing another with power. Effective coach-managers realize that empowering means helping employees find, access and use their internal sources of power. Coach-managers do this by pointing out employees' strengths and helping them break down goals into manageable steps. Coach-managers encourage direct reports to take action, which builds confidence. Finally, coach-managers recognize and reward employees as they grow and create results.

Phrasing suggestions:

- One of your greatest strengths is your ability to communicate in a way that inspires the team. I encourage you to speak your truth.
- This is a huge project. Let's look at its component parts. Then it will seem more manageable.
- You'll be amazed at how you build momentum once you get into action.
- You know, the work you did on the air quality project really got the attention of the town council. You did a great job with that, and they are looking forward to more of your contributions.

Pillar 6: Challenging and Requesting

Challenging and requesting are very powerful developing skills. In challenging a direct report, a coach-manager asks him to stretch himself beyond his self-imposed limit. One responsibility of the coach-manager is to have a greater sense of direct reports' potential than they themselves have and to articulate her confidence in a way that encourages them to achieve more than they would otherwise attempt to achieve. A few well-placed challenges may be sufficient to motivate a direct report to perform at a level that exceeds his own expectations for himself. Once challenged, he is likely to do all he can to rise to that challenge.

The most effective coach-managers create challenges that play to their employees' strengths. One way to challenge a direct report is to point out the assets and resources he possesses but is failing to use. In challenging direct reports, a coach-manager clearly, positively and specifically lays out her expectations.

Another way to challenge is to make direct requests for larger goals and greater results. Requesting involves asking the employee to take a specific action, an action he would not take without the coach-manager's request. The coach-manager may feel free to ask for much more than the employee would ask of himself. The request should be difficult enough to spur the employee to think about new and far greater possibilities.

Following are some phrases that challenge employees to perform at peak levels:
- I'd like to ask you to step up and take a calculated risk on this project. Here's what I'm thinking …
- You have some strengths in the area of proposal writing that you are not leveraging. I request you double your efforts on these proposals to NIH and the foundations and bring in the biggest grant the organization has ever seen.
- These are my specific expectations of your team … Can they handle it?
- "You don't need to have all the answers before you begin this project. Although we originally scheduled two weeks for phase one, I request you complete it by the end of this week. We need to accelerate this project.
- Will you commit to 25 new community contacts this week?
- Sally, I have a request. I request you design the prenatal workshop before our next one-on-one. Do you feel you can do that?
- Joe, we've talked several times about your need to create a partnership with the hospital's midwifery practice. I'd like to make a request. I request you meet with the director of Midwifery sometime between now and the end of the month to open a dialogue on how we can better support their efforts.
- Jane, we both know that upper management needs to know how capable you are and recognize your contributions to the organization. I'm going to challenge you to complete this IT project in half the time.

Pillar 7: Reframing

From time to time everyone becomes stuck in looking at situations in certain ways. Being stuck in one perspective limits growth and can be disabling. Reframing involves encouraging an individual to see things from various perspectives. It requires the coach-manager and direct report to look at the original data, situation or set of circumstances with a different mindset, often from the perspective of others. Reframing can open new pathways and opportunities.

To encourage reframing, a coach-manager might ask:

- How can we look at this problem differently?
- Let's look at this negotiation from their perspective. What are their highest priorities?
- How do you think this immunization plan will affect our postnatal care program?
- What are the implications of this change on the clinic's clients as a whole?
- That's one possible interpretation. What's another?
- What would this problem look like if you felt powerful?

Pillar 8: Supporting Sustained Action

The old adage "use it or lose it" is true of new perspectives and new skills. An effective coach-manager encourages direct reports to sustain newly acquired skills. The coach-manager can do this in a variety of ways. He supports skill acquisition and learning by suggesting or providing new and expanded opportunities for direct reports to continue to practice and sharpen new skills. He provides support and encouragement when an individual hits a plateau. He finds ways to stretch her capabilities, and he empowers her to take risks. He keeps her focused, rekindles her spirit and helps to bolster her enthusiasm. He rewards her progress, not just the results. He gives her permission to fail. He identifies appropriate challenges and gradually raises the bar. He keeps her engaged.

Some statements that support sustained action are:

- Now that you've made that nutrition presentation to our local health departments, Sarah, I'd like you to represent us at the national committee meeting.
- I know you're being pulled in a lot of directions right now, but I'd like to ask you to stay focused on the ultimate goal: ensuring quality prenatal care for our Medicaid patients.
- I know time off is important to you, so as a way of saying thanks for helping us get through this first phase of the project, I'd like you to offer you a few extra days off, perhaps a long weekend later this month? (This rewards progress, not just the final results.)
- You know, Don, every one of us in this organization has taken a risk from time to time, and sometimes it just didn't go well. You're not alone. It's part of life and how we learn. I have a lot of confidence in you and your ability to get on top of this computer recycling problem.

Pillar 9: Fostering Accountability

By its nature, coaching creates accountability. Regular meetings and commitments to action provide the focus and discipline that keep individuals on track. The authors of *Co-Active Coaching* point out that accountability is "a measuring tool of action and a means to report on learning" (Whitworth, Kimsey-House and Sandahl 1998). They state that accountability does not mean assigning blame, scolding, punishing or judging. In their words, "to be accountable means simply that: to give an account. What worked? What didn't work? What happened? What would

you do differently next time?" Accountability results from a mutual understanding between the coach-manager and the employee regarding three things: What will you do? When will you do it? How will I know?

Following are some phrases that can be used to foster accountability:
- What will you do? When will you do it? How will I know?
- So, let's see how you're progressing so far.
- What worked? What didn't? What will you do differently next time?

Pillar 10: Acknowledging/Recognizing

The best acknowledgement addresses who the employee *is* (that is, his inner character) and how he followed through on his values and commitments. Praise and compliments are appreciated by employees, but genuine acknowledgement and recognition of work well done is felt in the heart.

Recognition is key to retention, according to a Gallup survey (Buckingham and Coffman 1999). Yet managers don't acknowledge direct reports often enough. What can coach-managers do? Make the acknowledgement specific to the person and his accomplishment, and make it genuine, never patronizing. Determine whether he likes to be recognized publicly or privately, and honor his preferences. Determine how he likes to be rewarded: Some people appreciate a bonus; some prefer a plum assignment or promotion; some would like to see their name in the company newsletter; and some enjoy small gifts, such as flowers, balloons or a couple of tickets to the movies.

Phrasing examples:
- Great job on the Health Fair, Cindy. (Praise.)
- Rick, you said you wanted to further your education. You persevered these past two years, going to school nights and weekends, and you're to be congratulated on earning your MPH. This is a tremendous accomplishment. (Very specific acknowledgement of who the person is, that is, one who values education and perseveres.)
- You've come a long way, Susan, in setting boundaries about work. You're going home regularly by 5:30 now, you're taking your lunch hour to go exercise, and you're on track to use all you vacation this year! I know it hasn't been easy to make these changes, but you're doing what's right for you. You've stood up for yourself, and you're a stronger person for it.
- You've done incredible work on the new clinic, Josh. The County Commissioners would like to host a grand opening celebration with you as the guest of honor. Can you check your calendar and get back with me as to possible dates so I can make the arrangements?

The Pinnacle of Coaching: Providing Effective Feedback

After engaging in dialogue and using a variety of skills to facilitate personal development, the next step in coaching is to observe employees' performance and provide feedback.

Feedback is perhaps the most critical component of any working relationship. People hunger for it, yet many managers seem to lack the confidence or skill to provide it. Some managers may equate feedback with criticism. This is not the case. Feedback is simply

"information about past behavior, delivered in the present, which may influence future behavior" (Seashore and Seashore 1992).

Feedback takes two forms: positive and constructive (for performance improvement). Taken together, these two forms of feedback comprise a powerful tool to guide individuals in behavior change and performance improvement. Feedback informs employees about how they are doing and fosters growth by helping them learn what is and what is not productive. Such knowledge motivates people to continue to do what works and to change what does not work. In this way feedback strengthens relationships and builds trust.

Both positive and constructive feedback allow coach-managers to show appreciation for employees. Praising strong performance can be done publicly or through personal notes. Telling people when they failed to meet expectations (in private, of course) is equally important. Feedback allows the coach-manager and the employee to catch problems before they grow to unmanageable proportions.

Coach-managers who fail to evaluate performance honestly do a grave disservice to direct reports. Individuals who are motivated by their desire to make a contribution need praise and positive reinforcement. Individuals motivated by opportunities for advancement will grow and learn as a result of both positive and constructive feedback.

Feedback motivates people and infuses them with self-confidence. Lack of feedback not only deprives employees of information they need to grow and develop, but it leads to diminished morale, confusion about work expectations, lowered performance, and delayed decisions or action. Daniel Goleman, in *Working with Emotional Intelligence* (1998), reports on a study of the effects of performance feedback on self-confidence:

> MBA students were either praised, were criticized or received no feedback on their performance in a simulation of creative problem solving. They had been told that their efforts would be compared with how well hundreds of others had done on the same task. Those who heard nothing about how well they did suffered as great a blow to their self-confidence as those who were criticized. The report cautions that "when organizations deprive employees of specific job-related information, they may unknowingly inhibit their performance" (p. 149).

Feedback can be delivered formally in structured sessions or in writing, or it can be delivered informally in a casual setting. Delivering feedback annually is ineffective; feedback must be regular and it must be timely. The following paragraphs examine the steps involved in providing feedback.

Observing and Analyzing

In the course of developing people, the function of the coach-manager is to allow individuals to step up to the challenges to which both parties have agreed. The coach-manager steps back and begins to observe and analyze how things are going.

To observe, the coach-manager must manage by walking around so that she can notice and record specific activity. This does not mean micromanagement. To prevent employees from feeling spied upon, the coach-manager may set the stage by informing employees that she does this occasionally.

Quantitative data and specific examples of action support the validity of feedback. This data can be used to evaluate how well an employee is performing as compared to specific actions

and outcomes jointly agreed upon by the coach-manager and employee. Whenever the coach-manager hears something about an employee that is positive or that suggests improvement is needed, she should jot it down. She should keep track of both good work and needed improvements. Details are critically important. Index cards or business cards can be helpful in jotting notes during these "walkabouts."

The following examples illustrate the difference between feedback that is too general and feedback that is helpful:

- The proposal you prepared is not specific enough. You need to work on it some more. (Too general.)
- The proposal you prepared did not give the reader a clear sense of our proposed approach. We need to include the specific action steps we discussed at the meeting last Thursday. We also need to include a more clear definition statement of the problem. In addition, this Board in particular likes to see a line-item budget. Finally, we need to match each of our people and their skills with the specific requests of the Board. Do you want to discuss the details of how we need to write this differently? (Note that the coach-manager offers specific examples for improvement. The feedback is not critical or judgmental, and it is timely. At the end, the coach-manager provides the direct report to spend more time clarifying the task.)

To gather data and examples to support feedback, coach-managers can observe and analyze a variety of activities, including:

- report preparation (timeliness, accuracy, quality);
- administrative tasks (timeliness, accuracy, quality);
- interpersonal interactions (how conflict was managed, how direct reports were managed, written and verbal communication, meeting management, presentations, attitude);
- customer interactions (constituent or citizen meetings, call center measures, patient satisfaction measures, handling phone calls, customer service counter, etc.); and
- planning activities (timeliness, accuracy, quality).

Providing Positive and Constructive Feedback

Feedback is more than saying "thanks" or "nice job." Vaguely worded feedback has little value. Here are a few more tips for providing effective feedback:

- Be specific. Identify specific actions and describe why they were (or were not) effective. Be sincere and genuine with positive feedback; clearly explain which actions should be repeated and why. Be specific with constructive feedback as well, and use the information you collected during the observation and analysis phase. Compare performance to the goals and expectations that were jointly established so direct reports can see what adjustments they need to make.
- Be descriptive, not judgmental. Describe the behavior or performance that went well or that needs improvement. Focus on the person's behavior or actions, not the person. Don't judge.
- Be timely. Provide feedback when things are fresh. The facts will be current and people will be better able to recall details.
- Offer suggestions for alternative behavior. This helps direct reports know what to do with the feedback. Help them develop plans to improve performance.

- Be courageous yet compassionate. Don't dance around. Get to the point. State why you are having the conversation. Describe what you know. Be honest. At the same time, do no harm. Be aware of your intentions and never give feedback to hurt or injure the other person (or to "take him down a peg or two"). Your intentions should be to remind people of their potential and to improve their performance. Frame your feedback so that it affirms their talents and who they are. At the same time, create a vision of what's possible in order to stretch them to new heights. Ask yourself, What's in this for them?
- Be sincere and honest. Speak your truth in a way that is genuine for you. Empty praise is obvious, demeaning and insulting. Be yourself.
- Provide a balance between positive feedback and constructive feedback. If possible, try to tip the scale more to positive feedback. This will be perceived as sincere if it is balanced with suggestions for improvement.
- Don't guess at motives. First, don't base your feedback on assumptions or guesses. Second, don't make excuses for people. This weakens your feedback and sounds as if you are timid or don't believe what you're saying. Talk about actions, behaviors and performance, not motives.
- Avoid using words like *always* and *never*. These absolutes demoralize people. They may make people angry and defensive and thus unable to hear the feedback. It's probably not true that they "always" or "never" do something.
- Prepare. Think about what needs to be said and how you will say it.
- Provide choices and suggestions for improvement. As you conclude your feedback, let people know that they have some options and that they can use this as an opportunity to improve performance. Provide suggestions for different alternatives.
- Make it ongoing. Feedback is a process of offering useful information for continuous improvement. By its very nature it requires regularity.

Clearly, the way you phrase feedback affects how it will be received and understood. Following are some examples of positive and constructive feedback:
- "Your presentation to the sales managers this morning was excellent, Tom. You were very explicit on the price points and volume figures, just what they needed to know. (Specific.)
- "I'm concerned about the water quality figures I'm seeing coming out of the lab, Linda. As you know, the Water Quality Control Commission wants our discharge of ammonia to be less than x units per gallon, and the reports I've reviewed this week suggest that we are getting dangerously close. What actions are you taking to be sure we don't violate our permit? (Specific and timely, no judgment.)
- I care about you, Jane, and I don't like the fact that you tolerate the CFO ripping into you and your team in public meetings like that. You owe it to your team to be their champion, and you owe it to yourself to stand up to him and be more assertive. You make too much of a contribution to this organization for me to lose you to his abuse. Now, I know a four-step process of dealing with bullying behavior in the workplace. Would you like to look at some ways you might address this problem? (Courageous and compassionate. The coach provides specific suggestions, acknowledges the talent Jane brings to the organization and offers to spend some time working through the specific behavior Jane needs to change. The feedback is nonjudgmental, sincere and honest, with no dancing around the issue.)

Chapter 3
The Coaching Conversation _____

      The coaching conversation is a unique form of conversation that focuses on possibilities and expands thinking. It leads individuals to discover and implement new ways of accomplishing higher or larger goals.

      Figure 3.1 illustrates the eight-step coaching conversation. You need not follow each step in every coaching conversation. The intent is to avoid rigidity and to outline an intuitive process that is easy to use. As you become practiced and comfortable with the process, it will become second nature. Each step is discussed in detail in this chapter, with sample questions that the coach-manager might use to initiate or develop discussion.

Figure 3.1   The Coaching Conversation
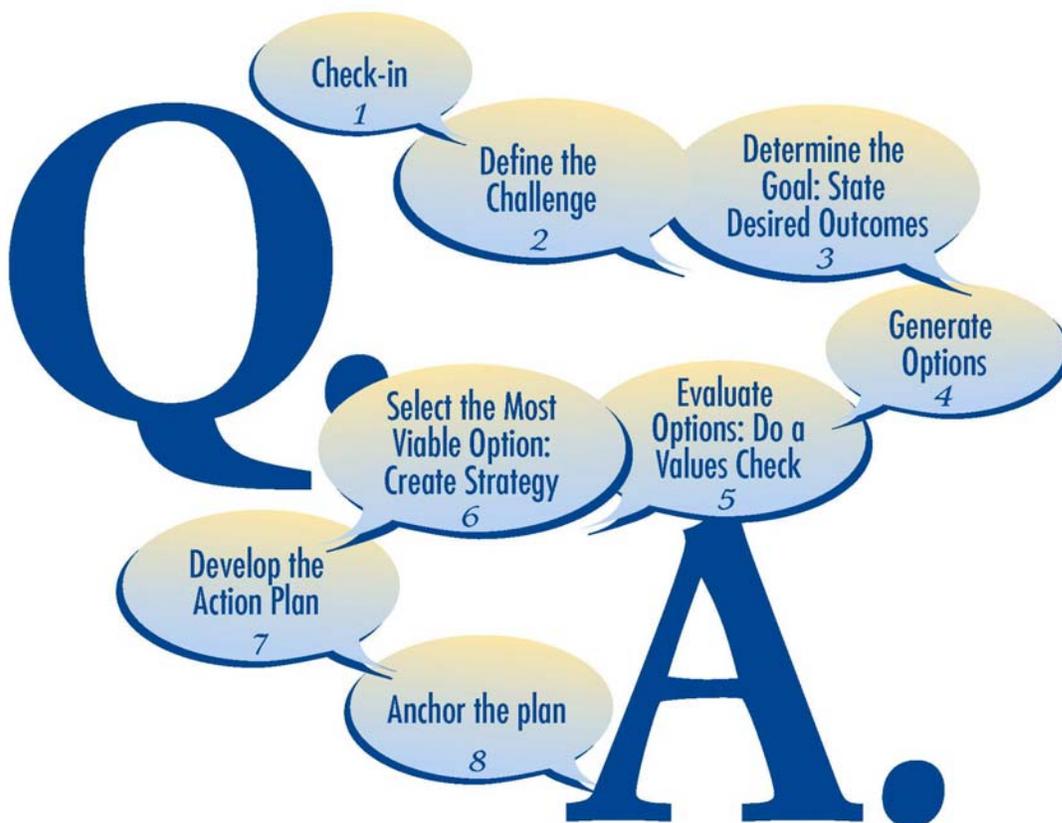
Step 1: The Check-in

It has been some time since the last coaching session. The coach-manager and direct report haven't spoken beyond the usual "Hi, how are things?" The check-in sets the stage and creates the opportunity for both parties to focus on what the employee has been experiencing since the last session, what she has accomplished, what she feels good and not-so-good about, what challenges she is facing, and what feedback she has received from any sources. The check-in grounds the conversation and both participants in mutual respect and readies them for their work together. Questions to initiate this step include

- How have things been going since we last talked?
- What's been working for you? What hasn't?
- What's challenging you right now?
- Are there some opportunities here we can explore?
- What's on your agenda for today? How would you like to use our time together?

Step 2: Define the Challenge

How the coach-manager and the direct report jointly define the problem or challenge sets the stage for how—and how successfully—it will be solved. Coach-managers are often tempted to prematurely move the conversation to problem solving before the challenge is clearly defined. Effective action results when both the coach-manager and the direct report have a clear understanding of the nature of the problem before they begin to generate options for solving it. Some questions that define the challenge are:

- Is this problem rooted in the solid waste management programs or in recycling?
- Would you say our problem is in water quality or water quantity?
- If we were to craft a written problem statement that would allow us to anticipate the impacts of this decision on all parts of the organization, what would it look like?
- Is our challenge more related to analyzing the cultural differences in these two merging departments so we can help them blend, or is our challenge to simply identify ways to integrate the smaller one into the larger one, given that the larger one is more cumbersome to change? Or are there aspects of the larger department which should, ideally, be changed anyway?

Step 3: Determine the Goal: State Desired Outcomes

Step 2 focuses on the negative, that is, what's wrong. Step 3 focuses on the positive, on what success will look like. In this step the coach manager and individual look at where they are and where they want to be. Then they "communicate the gap." This points them in the right direction. Potential questions include:

- What is your ideal outcome?
- How do you see this problem in three months? Six months? One year?
- Where are we now? Where do we need to be? By when?
- In an ideal world, what would make this the leading health department in the nation?

Step 4: Generate Options

This is a highly creative and extremely critical phase. Chances are, any decision the coach-manager and direct report make will be scrutinized by people at all levels of the organization. It is unwise to select an idea before thoroughly exploring all of the options. This

step helps prevent that mistake. As in brainstorming, the coach-manager and direct report do not immediately evaluate options but merely "put them out there." Also as in brainstorming, what comes up may be surprising. Some questions to prompt this step of the conversation include:

- Okay, what are some of the more obvious solutions?
- Now, let's think of some new and different ways to tackle this.
- If we were to involve some other people (departments) in this, what options might that open up?
- How have you done this in the past?
- If money were no object, what would you do?
- What has worked in other organizations?
- What are we missing? What other options are there?

Step 5: Evaluate Options and Do a Values Check

This step requires that the coach-manager and direct report first identify the criteria by which they will evaluate the options. Then they select the options that best meet their criteria. Depending on the nature of the challenge, it may be a good idea to examine the ethics of various options during this process. A review of the organization's mission and vision can also provide guidance. Some questions to use in this step include:

- What are the criteria against which you should evaluate these options?
- Which of these options best meets those criteria?
- Are there any ethical implications associated with any of these options?
- If we review the vision of this organization, how might that influence your decision?

Step 6: Select the Most Viable Option and Create a Strategy

Steps 3 and 4 expand thinking. Steps 5 and 6 narrow the focus and zero in on the best solution. After the coach-manager and the direct report select the most viable option, they develop a strategy for achieving it. Strategy setting requires broader thinking than does action planning. (Planning, which is tactical, follows strategy.). In crafting strategy, the coach-manager and direct report take a systems perspective, identifying the effect of the most viable option on other parts of the organization and identifying who else in the organization might need to be involved. Some questions to be asked include:

- So, what would work the best?
- Who else needs to be involved?
- Who else needs to know what you have decided?
- What additional information do you need?
- What would be the best way to implement this option?

Step 7: Develop the Action Plan

This step is more tactical than step 6. Developing the action plan entails putting into place a list of things to do in the order in which they will be done, a description of who will do each step and when, and a list of resources needed to carry out the plan (see Figure 3.2). Equally important, developing an action plan involves identifying potential barriers and ways to remove or work around them. Finally, the plan includes some method to monitor progress; the coach-manager encourages direct reports to think about how they will do this. Helpful questions include:

- What needs to happen first?
- What steps do we need to take?
- Who will do what? By when?
- What are our deadlines? Are those deadlines realistic? What if they're not?
- Is it realistic to expect that the people you have in mind for this are available? What if they're not?
- Are there any potential barriers to moving forward with this plan? How can you get around them? Who can we tap to help you?
- What resources will you need? How can you secure them? Do you need help? Can I help?
- How will you monitor progress?
- What results do you expect? What criteria will you use to measure success?

Step 8: Anchor the Plan, Secure Commitment, Agree to Next Steps

In this step, the coach-manager asks the individual to recap the plan and commit to carrying out the plan and its evaluation. The coach-manager may also need to commit to certain actions, such as breaking through some potential barriers or securing needed resources. At the conclusion of this step, both parties make sure that the next coaching session is scheduled. Some questions the coach-manager may ask in working through this step include:

- So, if I could ask you to recap what you've decided to do?
- How do you see this unfolding over the next few days (weeks)?
- As we wrap this up, are there any other questions that have come up for you?
- Let me understand exactly what you are/I am committing to.
- What else do you have going during this time frame?
- So, shall we look at scheduling our next meeting? Same time, two weeks from now?

Figure 3.2   Action Plan Form

Action Plan

Department/Team _____

Manager/Leader _____ **Date** _____

Issue/Problem Summary _____

Goals _____

_____

_____

	Proposed Action	**Responsible Party**	**Time Frame**	**Tracking Procedure**
1.	_____			_____
	_____			_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
2.	_____			_____
	_____			_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
3.	_____			_____
	_____			_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
4.	_____			_____
	_____			_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
5.	_____			_____
	_____			_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
6.	_____			_____
	_____			_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
7.	_____			_____
	_____			_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____
8.	_____			_____
	_____			_____
	_____	_____	_____	_____

Approved/Agreed to by: _____

_____

Chapter 4
Understanding Your Coaching
and Communication Style_____

Recognizing your communication style and the communication styles preferred by others can dramatically improve your coaching skills and your effectiveness in working with people. In our fast-paced world, it is crucial to quickly establish rapport and connect with others. Stronger, more strategic outcomes result. This chapter provides an exercise that will help you understand your communication style and the communication styles of others.[1]

Introduction

In a fast-paced and crowded world, one can no longer afford to connect with people on a hit-or-miss basis. Mastering the skills of knowledgeable and responsive communication is critical to bringing about desired results, both personally and professionally. Whether you are self-employed or are working in a large organization, a small entrepreneurial business, a nonprofit or a government agency, understanding your communication and coaching style and the styles of others will serve you well.

The Direct Communication Style

Positives. If your communication style is direct, you're a high-energy, action-oriented person. Assertive and outspoken, straightforward and direct, willing and eager to make decisions, you take responsibility to do whatever is necessary to reach your objectives. You are a possibility thinker. You are driven to control and achieve. You eagerly take on new, sometimes risky, challenges and are quick to set goals and to work long and hard to achieve them. In fact, no one wants to be standing between you and your goal. Though you can be intimidating, you are an honest person, a visionary and an excellent negotiator.

Maintaining control is important to the direct communicator. Direct coaches and communicators are often selected as leaders; often, they don't care for rules laid down by others, preferring instead to blaze their own trail. They are comfortable with being in charge of people and situations. They want to accomplish things—now—so they focus on no-nonsense approaches to bottom-line results. Direct communicators can see strategic advantages and orchestrate actions to beat the competition. They are good leaders.

As a direct communicator, you tend to work long, hard hours. You have a lot of drive, you are assertive and outspoken, and you are a good leader.

Potential negatives. As a direct communicator, you prefer to work alone. You often leave others behind if they move too slowly. You can be judgmental. Your need for control causes much frustration and stress. In addition, your tendency to be abrupt and domineering puts unnecessary stress on personal relationships.

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[1] These materials were adapted from Tony Allesandra's *Platinum Rule* (1996) and Eric F. Douglas's *Straight Talk* (1998).

Strengths:

- Thinks quickly
- Focuses on action/results
- Does what is necessary to succeed
- Easy to know where he or she stands on issues
- Can make decisions quickly
- Takes responsibility
- A natural leader
- Superior negotiator
- High level of integrity
- Visionary, big-picture person
- Highly creative

Liabilities:

- Impatient with those who work more slowly
- Lone Ranger
- Difficulty trusting others with work
- Poor listener, prefers only bottom line
- Can be judgmental
- Need to be in control causes frustration
- Bottom-line approach cuts people off
- Tendency to dominate others
- Relationships with direct communicator may be stressful

How to Coach Persons with a Direct Communication Style

Pace. Get to the point quickly. Focus on results rather than on building a persuasive case. Help them make thoughtful decisions.

Creative. Expect them to be visionary about the future. They love brainstorming.

Controlling. They like to be right but will accept additional information beyond their knowledge.

Endorsement. Direct communicators like being endorsed and acknowledged but have difficulty giving that to others.

Goal-directed. Direct communicators may overlook practical considerations in driving toward goals. They need help appreciating the present as much as the future. They are time-sensitive, so never waste their time. Be organized, get to the point, give them bottom-line information. Be efficient and competent.

Life balance. Because of their focus on goals and work, direct communicators may need coaching help to make living a balanced life a priority or goal.

Relationships. Relationships may be difficult for direct communicators. Help them slow down and become more open to the human side of things. Help them see that controlling does not win friends.

Focus. Add to their knowledge. Teach them to build better relationships.

People I work with who are direct communicators:

Things I can do to more effectively communicate with and coach direct communicators:

1.

2.

3.

Communication and Coaching Tips for the Direct Communicator

Pace. Temper your speed to respect the pace of the person with whom you are communicating. Practice patience.

Creative. Lead others to develop options, don't provide all the options for them. Brainstorm with them and help them discover options they don't currently see. Be ready to accept that they have responsibility for choosing an option that best fits them.

Controlling. Tone down this aspect of your communication and coaching style. Your need to be in control is probably the biggest contributor to strained personal and professional relationships. Empower others. Turn controlling into supporting. You naturally feel comfortable with almost all constituencies; however, they may not feel the same way about you. Your tendency to dominate, combined with your sometimes hurried or abrupt manner, can put people off. Lighten up. Just because others do things differently doesn't mean they are any less capable or competent than you are.

Endorsement. Because you appreciate acknowledgment, you have to expect that others do, too. Make it a sincere art form.

Goal- directed. You are very helpful in helping others set goals. Be willing to accept that others may not embrace goals as much as you do. Keep a lid on your frustrations.

Life balance. It is important for you to learn to model this for others. Be a real leader by living a balanced life.

Relationships. Your demanding schedule leaves little room for others. Be willing to pay attention to people as human beings. This approach requires trusting relationships. Often you are the leader, but try to lead from the sidelines. Cheer them on. Help them stretch. Coach them. Support them. Give time and energy to others in your life. Stop to acknowledge people for a job well done before rushing headlong to the next project or goal.

Communication. Encourage differing opinions. People want your thoughts, not your domination. Don't quash dissonance. Focus on influence, not control. Do more asking and less telling. Be patient. The ability to be open and vulnerable at times is a trait that distinguishes great leaders. Share your feelings. Ask for help. Be open. Self-disclosure is the best way to get others to open up. A simple statement like, "I'm probably harboring some limiting beliefs about our business/customers/products/service …" is all it would take to fully engage your team. Openness works wonders for relationships.

Envisioning. Direct communicators sometimes feel they'd rather do it themselves. When it comes to envisioning, remember that a vision is best supported when it's shared. Foster participation by others in the vision setting process.

Clarifying values. Be open in sharing your personal values with others, and encourage them to share their values with you. One of your challenges is a tendency to undervalue the human side of the enterprise. One of the biggest areas of your leadership development lies in expanding your ability to balance the technical and human sides of the business. Keep in mind that you need the balance that other team members can supply in setting values for the organization.

Aligning. Your "full-steam-ahead" attitude means you will sometimes miss the signs that alignment is needed. Your domineering manner can create "yes people," but their voiced agreement doesn't necessarily mean they are aligned with where you are going. Respect and encourage honest differences of opinion. Don't quash dissent. Don't be judgmental, as this will

shut down discussion. Give people enough time for dialogue. Don't run meetings like a conductor runs a train. Give the process enough time. Alignment will occur. You will arrive at a decision and unified, decisive action.

Managing breakdowns. Because you tend to be demanding with regard to performance and results, employees and colleagues may be reluctant to bring problems to your attention. Your tendency to be judgmental only adds to the dilemma. Logically, you know that problems are a fact of life. By surfacing them, you and your team can figure out what isn't working, which leads to greater efficiency and effectiveness. Show appreciation to people who surface problems, and focus on the problem rather than finding fault. This way, problems will surface early, while they are still relatively small and more easily managed.

Things I could do differently:

1.

2.

3.

The Outgoing Communication Style

Positives: You are always on the move. Exciting and enthusiastic, you like to put a bit of fun into everything you do. You're an excellent communicator. In addition to being friendly and sociable, you can be very persuasive. Though you have strong opinions, you are generally open-minded and flexible. Your natural intuitive ability and compassion allow you to connect with people very quickly, often on a deep level. You are the proverbial stranger in whom everyone confides. People are drawn to you because of your intuitive connections.

Outgoing communicators know everyone who is important. They love to talk to anyone about anything, at any time. They are animated, energetic and spontaneous. They appear to others to be very successful. They like variety; they are curious and sometimes impulsive. They don't like to be tied down to one thing and quickly lose interest in projects after start-up. Outgoing communicators are comfortable when they are the center of attention. They thrive on admiration, acknowledgement and compliments. Their primary strengths are enthusiasm, charm, persuasiveness and warmth. They are idea people who excel at generating excitement about their vision. They are eternal optimists.

Potential negatives: Although you are good at creating new programs and initiatives, you often lose interest after the start-up. This lack of follow-up often sends mixed messages to those trying to implement programs. Easily bored and sometimes undisciplined, you can rush from one thing to the next. You often find yourself overcommitted. In meetings, your natural tendency to take over and dominate can hurt others' feelings. At times it can cut you off from valuable feedback from colleagues.

Strengths:
- Knows how to have fun
- Always up, energetic
- Communicates easily
- Motivates others
- An idea factory
- Enjoys and prefers new projects
- Promoting is a gift
- Thrives socially, is open to others
- Is flexible, not rigid
- Is very intuitive, empathic with people

Liabilities:
- May not always be taken seriously
- Poor operational follow-through
- Doesn't like to solve problems
- Becomes bored easily
- May overpromise and underdeliver
- Likes to be appreciated
- Would rather talk than listen
- May try to dominate team meetings
- Does not manage time well
- May not manage finances well

How to Coach Persons with an Outgoing Communication Style

Pace: Outgoing communicators are strong starters with the potential to fizzle. They are attracted to trends. Coach them about follow-through.

Creativity: Outgoing communicators thrive on creativity, which makes it difficult for them to stay on task or on focus. Help them narrow their focus and delegate the follow-through.

Control: Although they don't necessarily want to control situations, outgoing communicators like to be the center of attention. Help them use their charm and charisma to influence people and build alliances.

Endorsement: Because they are always on stage, they love to acknowledge others and to be acknowledged.

Goal-directed: Communicate goals. Help them develop focused goals and maintain that focus.

Life balance: Work must be fun for outgoing communicators. Typically, their lives are varied, but they may find it difficult to devote sufficient time and energy to each area of their lives. Communicate with them about keeping things in balance.

Relationships: Because they don't always complete their tasks, it may be difficult to work with outgoing communicators. However, people love outgoing communicators, and outgoing communicators love people. People can be strongly influenced by outgoing communicators. Communicate boundaries and expectations. Clarify expectations.

Focus: Outgoing communicators need support in adding depth to their ideas. Help them state their commitments.

People I work with who are outgoing communicators:

Things I can do to more effectively communicate with and coach outgoing communicators:

1.

2.

3.

Communication and Coaching Tips for the Outgoing Communicator

Pace: Hold back a little. Allow others to establish the pace of meetings. Honor their need for a less frenetic pace.

Creative: You have many ideas, but remember to allow others to raise their ideas. Promote discovery. Avoid discovering ideas *for* others.

Control: You have a tendency to dominate conversations. Practice listening fully and contextually.

Endorsement: You are very good at this. Make sure your acknowledgement is authentic.

Goal-directed: Learn to meet your own goals by staying focused. Follow through on commitments.

Life balance: As a fun-loving individual, you can shine in this area. Allow others equal time to share the fun highlights of their lives. In addition, don't overcommit yourself. You're good at starting things, and you can easily find yourself running short on time and energy. Focus your organizational energy and resources; don't fragment and disperse them.

Relationships: Others enjoy the close, trusting relationships you foster. They feel they can confide anything in you. Develop further trust with people by following through.

Communication: Make sure your messages are authentic. Listen more, talk less. Temper your tendency to take over during meetings and discussions. When others are speaking, listen to them; don't use the time to plan what you are going to say next. Beware of overusing your persuasive skills. Your tendency to dominate meetings and sell others on your viewpoints has the potential to stifle others' ideas and input. Your energy, enthusiasm and excellent speaking ability make you an effective spokesperson. Beware of relying on your charisma too much, however.

Before presenting your ideas or viewpoints, spend sufficient time to prepare. Others with whom you communicate will want background information, facts and figures, statistics, and information that indicates how you reached your conclusions.

Envisioning: You are good at envisioning. Often, you are the first to see the need for a vision, and you lead your team's effort to develop a vision. Resist rushing forward with your vision. Allow others to participate fully in the process of developing the vision. Use your persuasive powers with colleagues to plant the seeds, and let them bring up ideas. If you are leading the visioning process, be careful: Because you are comfortable operating with little or no structure, the envisioning process can become a free-for-all. This style may be uncomfortable for some colleagues. Develop a solid structure and process for the visioning process. Keep in mind that the visioning initiative is not complete after the vision is communicated to the organization. At that point the process is just beginning. Hold yourself and others accountable for tracking progress. Design, implement and manage a process that translates the vision into concrete action (for example, build in monthly operations reviews).

Clarifying values: Be careful not to allow your own values to dominate; remember to listen carefully for others' values. In meeting with your management team to clarify values, don't rely on an unstructured process, and guard against dominating the discussions. Provide less outgoing colleagues with opportunities to speak their truths. Bring in a skilled facilitator to assist in the process, if necessary. Finally, be sure to follow through to ensure that the team's collective values are reflected in organizational policies, systems and practices. You may consider working with policies and procedures to be somewhat tedious, but it is important work that reinforces and maintains desired organizational behaviors.

Aligning: Your naturally persuasive style helps you facilitate alignment. However, your tendency to persuade and dominate discussions can get in the way if you aren't careful. Monitor yourself. Exercise self-discipline and self-control. Make sure everyone participates in alignment discussions. Use your strong interpersonal skills. Your flexibility and open mind make you particularly adept at fostering alignment within the organization. Once again, follow-up is critical.

Managing breakdowns: This is no fun for you at all. Outgoing individuals would much rather have someone else handle this coaching function. Nevertheless, when problems surface, don't delegate. Your lack of personal involvement with problem-solving efforts could undermine your credibility. A lighthearted approach to serious business problems, while emotionally healthy, could be interpreted as a lack of business savvy. For outgoing communicators, managing breakdowns is about following through on your vision and values. *Do* more, don't just *say* more. Perseverance and follow-through are essential in this arena.

Things I could do differently:

1.

2.

3.

The Supportive Communication Style

Positives: As a supportive coach-manager and communicator, you often lead from behind the scenes. You are warm, likable, personable and unselfish—a kinder and gentler leader. Known as a team player, you are understanding, willing and eager to listen. For that reason, you are an excellent coach. You nurture and care about people. During a conflict, you usually are the peacemaker. Your ability to stay calm in a crisis, along with your open and honest manner, makes you can excellent facilitator.

Supportive coaches are the most people-oriented of the four styles. They are excellent listeners and devoted friends. Their relaxed and warm disposition makes them very approachable. They develop strong networks of people who are willing to be mutually supportive and reliable. Supportive communicators become experts in their fields, and, because of their expertise, others seek their advice. They are extremely helpful and can be caring to a fault. They make everyone in a group feel comfortable. Though they like people, they generally are reserved in the way they communicate. They don't care to be in the limelight; outgoing colleagues often consider them uninspiring. Supportive coaches instill trust in those who work with them. Patient, thorough and tolerant of other people, supportive communicators can move mountains—one piece at a time!

Potential negatives: Your nonassertive nature, though helpful, can cause you to sublimate your own needs. You tend to give the highest priority to people issues, sometimes ignoring pressing business needs. In difficult situations, or when corrective action is called for, you are sometimes slow to act. You tend to work to maintain harmony, occasionally at great cost to yourself or your team. This may prompt you to avoid risk and maintain the status quo, tendencies leaders can't afford.

Strengths:
- Interaction style is subtle, gentle, indirect and inclusive
- Great listener
- Grounded in expertise
- Everyone loves coach/mediator
- Champions others
- Predictably open and honest
- Encourages others
- Coaches and mentors employees
- Creative, with lots of good ideas
- Good sense of humor

Liabilities:
- Difficult to get to know, likes privacy
- Focuses on people over business
- Does not like risk taking or surprises
- May slow progress for the sake of harmony
- May be sidelined by emphasis on fulfilling a supporting role
- Prefers routine over spontaneity
- Overly sensitive to criticism
- May avoid center stage
- Can see both sides of an issue, so decisions may not come easily

How to Coach Persons with a Supportive Communication Style

Pace: Supportive communicators keep a steady pace, though they sometimes become sidetracked in their efforts to please others. Communicate with them in a way that helps them stay focused on *all* of the issues at hand.

Creativity: Good creativity. They are encouraged if you acknowledge it.

Control: Supportive individuals do not covet control, and by the same token, they do not like to be controlled.

Endorsement: They hesitate to ask for help. They appreciate being recognized and valued.

Goal-directed: Supportive individuals are idealistic and may need help in assigning action steps to their vision and goals.

Life balance: They may focus more on people issues than on business issues. Communicate the importance of a balanced perspective.

Relationships: Everyone likes supportive communicators. They are excellent listeners, though they don't share much about themselves. Communicate to them that it's okay to ask for what they need or want.

Focus: Because they are often engaged in taking care of others, supportive individuals may need to be coached about ensuring that their own needs are met. Also, they may need to be encouraged to make decisions more quickly.

People I work with who are supportive communicators:

Things I can do to more effectively communicate with and coach a supportive communicator:

1.

2.

3.

Communication and Coaching Tips for the Supportive Communicator

Pace: You intuitively and naturally pick up others' styles and generally match their pace.

Creativity: You are creative and you enjoy exercising your creativity. Continue to have fun with it.

Control: You are comfortable in allowing colleagues to advance at their own pace. Be aware that you may need to communicate in a more directive manner at times.

Endorsement: You have a natural ability to acknowledge the accomplishments of others. Accept their compliments in return.

Goal-directed: Sometimes you need to give people more than a gentle nudge. Don't let people off the hook quite so easily. Be tough in setting deadlines and insisting that people honor them. Insist on commitments and follow-through.

Life balance: Beware of sacrificing your own needs for another's sake.

Relationships: Many people come to you for help. Walk the line between caring and caretaking; avoid taking care of people. As a leader, you will inevitably receive criticism. Don't be overly sensitive to it; put it in perspective. Criticism and feedback are someone's assessment, not the objective truth. Your unique insights and ideas are needed; don't hold back out of fear of criticism or conflict.

Communication: Be willing to communicate openly and directly with people who are not willing to be responsible for their parts of projects. Don't back off from conflict. Your aversion to conflict doesn't make it go away. If it is not dealt with, conflict will appear later, perhaps more intensely, or it will eat you up inside. Find ways to deal with conflict directly and manage it constructively. Learn and practice conflict-management techniques.

Envisioning: As a supportive individual, the question What do *you* think the vision should be? is on your lips at the start of any visioning process. Allowing everyone to participate comes naturally to you. Be sure to formulate your own vision and speak about it. As you move through a visioning process, you may encounter conflict and disagreement. Some disagreement is healthy. Be ready and willing to manage the conflict. The process doesn't end with communicating that the vision is a team effort. Ask for commitment and follow-through as part of the process. As a result of your tendency to make allowances for colleagues who fail to fulfill their obligations, you could end up doing most of the implementation. Design a tough but fair progress-tracking process that links your team's action plans to the ultimate accomplishment of the vision. Ensure that the process will promote and maintain accountability. Don't be quick to accept excuses if team members miss interim objectives.

Clarifying values: Supportive individuals intuitively understand and appreciate the value of clarifying values; you are aware of your own values and are willing to discuss them. Remember that others may feel less comfortable discussing their values; help them deal with their reticence. Some individuals' values may focus on task-related issues or operational values. Help the group strike a balance between operational values and people-oriented values.

Aligning: You easily understand and appreciate the concept of alignment but find it difficult to master. Your natural ability to facilitate discussions that include everyone makes the aligning initiative appealing to you. However, alignment is different from *consensus*, your preferred method of operation. Alignment means involving people in decision making, acknowledging that decisions may need to be adjusted along the way, and moving into action. Make the tough decisions and put in place an action plan with specific milestones and checkpoints for follow-through.

Managing breakdowns: As a supportive communicator, managing breakdowns is one your greatest challenges—not because you lack the ability to do so, but because you tend to avoid conflict. In addition, you are particularly sensitive to personal attacks. Accept the fact that when you make changes, even those designed to improve cooperation, you will hear criticism. Develop a new attitude about problems. As a natural peacemaker, you have an appreciation for teamwork. Articulate the organization's agreed-upon values, balance human issues and business issues, and maintain accountability.

Things I could do differently:

1.

2.

3.

The Analytical Communication Style

Positives: The calm, methodical diplomat comes to mind when describing your style. Extremely perceptive, you gather all of the facts before making a decision, and you are an expert at analyzing data and information. You are fair and unbiased—a clear, accurate communicator. No one has to guess what you mean when you speak. You say exactly what you mean, in a well-structured way. Indeed, everything you do is structured.

Analytical communicators are strong thinkers; persistent, systematic people who enjoy problem solving. Analytical individuals are detail-oriented, which makes them more concerned with content than with style. They are task-oriented; they enjoy perfecting processes and working toward tangible results. They are always in control of their emotions and may become uncomfortable around people who are very outgoing. Analytical coaches are thorough, painstaking, hardworking tacticians. They tend to follow the rules and think things through slowly and carefully, questioning and evaluating nearly everything and everyone. Analytical individuals hate to be wrong and they hate to make mistakes. With a tendency toward perfectionism, analytical individuals leave no stone unturned. They are tuned into the operation; they are task-oriented and always follow-through on each project. They don't give up until the job is complete.

Potential negatives: Taken to extreme, your thoroughness may become perfectionism. Because you hate to make mistakes, you may take too much time to make decisions. This could cause you to appear indecisive. You will take calculated risks, but only after a great deal of analysis. Analytical individuals often don't like change; reluctance to adjust can lead to an inability to make timely decisions.

Strengths:	**Liabilities:**
▪ Likes people, but not large groups	▪ Tends toward perfectionism
▪ Confident, if in possession of the facts	▪ Fear of mistakes makes completing tasks time-consuming; inhibits timely decisions
▪ Likes to give advice	
▪ Very thorough	
▪ Fair and unbiased; clear communicator	▪ Takes risks only after knowing all information
▪ Takes *calculated* risks	
▪ Enjoys structure	▪ Tends to be critical
▪ Likes to think things through	▪ May overfocus on task
▪ Takes others' input seriously	▪ Worries, slow to action
▪ Careful decision maker	▪ Does not easily let go of past procedures to embrace the new; avoids change
▪ Good on follow-up and follow-through	
	▪ Leisure must have a purpose

How to Coach a Person with an Analytical Communication Style

Pace: Analytical communicators may appear slow-paced, but actually, they are gathering all of the facts. Allow plenty of time for data collection and analysis.

Creativity: Although they may not be particularly creative, they are certainly a wealth of information. They may tend to rely on standard procedures rather than innovation. Encourage them to talk in detail about how they can expand on their own and others' ideas. Be patient. Give them time to work independently.

Control: They control themselves and hold fast to the status quo. They dislike change. Help them analyze the positives of proposed change.

Endorsement: They tend to overlook opportunities to compliment others, focusing instead on getting the job done. Help them understand that acknowledging colleagues yields results—that is, getting the job done.

Goal-directed: Analytical individuals are competent. They may become sidetracked by details. Help them set overall goals. Give them data. Be systematic, logical, well-prepared and exact. Give them time to make decisions.

Life balance: Analytical individuals may need help in justifying efforts to develop interests or pursue activities that are not related to work.

Relationships: They tend to build secure, stable relationships but may stay in poor relationships out of a sense of duty.

Focus: To balance their tendency to focus on task and details, help them see the people issues and the bigger picture—and how both the people issues and the details fit in the bigger picture.

People I work with who are analytical communicators:

Things I can do to more effectively communicate with an analytical communicator:

1.

2.

3.

Communication and Coaching Tips for the Analytical Communicator

Pace: If you are an analytical type, strive to take action. You will never be 100 percent sure that your decision is "the right one," and you will probably never stop worrying, so take action when you are 90 percent—or even 80 percent—sure. Decisions are seldom completely wrong or completely right. If you miss the mark, you can make adjustments along the way. Remember, there's a cost to inaction.

Creative: Be willing to brainstorm creative new options with others; don't get bogged down in details and logistics.

Control: Be open to innovative approaches. Learn new things from others.

Endorsement: Practice the art of endorsement; others need that from you.

Goal-directed: Allow yourself and others to dream. Be willing to adjust your time line to others' needs.

Life balance: Create room in your life for activities that are not related to work.

Relationships: Avoid being distant and preoccupied with logistics. Share yourself as well as your information. Work with others; almost any group of people will benefit from your objective observations and ideas. Balance your feedback; be less critical. Your ability to see what's missing is a gift, but people need to hear what's working, too. When you have concerns and reactions, don't make them personal. Present your feedback as a member of the team, not as someone standing on the outside looking in.

Communication: You have a high level of integrity but may become "rule-bound." Break away from old techniques. Be open to innovation. Ask others to reflect on how they arrived at their conclusions or decisions, and invite people to meet with you privately to discuss their issues. Beware of assuming that your way is the best way. Because you like to be prepared for open-ended, public Q&A sessions, ask staff to prepare a complete list of possible questions,

along with well-researched answers. Be prepared for the unexpected; it will always happen. Smile!

Envisioning: Your tendency to think things through can result in a lengthy visioning process. Beware that lengthy visioning and decision making can be interpreted as a lack of resolve or commitment. You work best in small groups. Ask others to submit written drafts of their own vision for the organization. Work collectively to pull all of the ideas into a clear, concise vision statement. Have fun with it.

Clarifying values: With a propensity for structure and rules, you are among the first in the organization to understand the need for clarifying values, but you must guard against a tendency to hold fast to existing values. Though an organization's fundamental values may remain essentially the same, operational values may need to change. Be open to change.

Aligning: Decision making tends to be an agonizing process for you. Your tendency to perfectionism can wreak havoc with your business and your team. Aligning may provide one avenue through which you can more quickly make decisions and move your team to action. Aligning facilitates better, faster decision making. Exploring all options appeals to you. While aligning involves more people than you might prefer, the process does facilitate a thoroughness that you value.

Managing breakdowns: When you commit to accomplishing a business goal, you can be daunting. Your highly tuned perceptive abilities allow you to be among the first to see problems on the horizon. Don't hesitate to point them out. If you are concerned that your observations will be perceived as throwing cold water on the effort, learn to express your concerns in a way that clearly shows you are committed to making things work. As problems pile up, your worrisome nature can get the better of you. Take action and don't allow them to pile up. Your powers of analysis are a great asset in managing breakdowns because you are able almost intuitively to find the root cause of problems.

Things I could do differently:

1.

2.

3.

Exercise: Guess Your Colleagues' Communication Styles

This exercise will help to familiarize you with the four basic styles of communication. Using the information from the preceding descriptions, guess the styles of your colleagues, including your supervisor, peers, and direct reports. This is just a guess; perhaps you will have the opportunity later to confirm their styles with them.

Instructions

Read the descriptions in the four squares. First, put your initials in the square the represents your primary style. Then, write the initials of each of your colleagues in the square that you think best describes him or her.

The Direct Communication Style Talks in action verbs Cares about the bottom line Always on the go Speaks crisply Talks about goals May seem insensitive	**The Outgoing Communication Style** Speaks rapidly Uses animated gestures Entertaining Thinks out loud Talks about ideas May be imprecise
The Supportive Communication Style Concerned about people Sensitive to others Avoids conflict Dedicated and loyal Speaks softly May overcommit	**The Analytical Communication Style** Talks about details Inquiring Often makes lists Speaks carefully Wants things done "right" May appear to procrastinate

Please identify the specific things will you do differently to communicate more effectively with each colleague. You may wish to refer to the previous pages for ideas.

Chapter 5
Developing Your Coaching Skills _____

To become truly effective at coaching, you should experience coaching first-hand. You might consider studying with, and being coached by, an experienced executive coach.

Walk your talk by developing yourself. Read books and articles about coaching (see the resource list in Appendix A) and attend seminars and workshops. Make your self-development visible, and ask for feedback along the way.

In your organization or your professional association, create a local learning cluster devoted to coaching.

Make it safe for people to take risks. Allow people to learn from their mistakes. As Samuel Smiles said, "We all learn wisdom from failure much more than from success; we often discover what will do, by finding out what will not do; and probably he who never made a mistake never made a discovery." Allow mistakes. Enable learning.

Start a journal in which you record your insights and learnings about coaching. Record your brilliant generative questions, your successes in providing feedback (and things you would change), and your insights into developing others. Assess your progress after each coaching session. Record what worked well and how you might approach things differently in the future.

The payoffs for this effort are huge: strengthened workplace relationships; happier, more empowered and more loyal employees; retention of top performers; greater productivity; and faster, more enduring business results.

Tashi deley.

> A leader is one who … has more faith in people than they do, and … who holds opportunities open long enough for their competence to emerge.
>
> Margaret Wheatley

- What three key concepts will I take away from this handbook?

- What one thing can I do immediately to improve my communication skills?

- What do I commit to doing to become an effective coach-manager?

- I will use this information 7 times in the next 21 days. I will choose the days and treat it as a commitment to myself:

Date   **I will do:**

1. _____   _____

2. _____   _____

3. _____   _____

4. _____   _____

5. _____   _____

6. _____   _____

7. _____   _____

Appendix A
Resources and Suggested Reading _____

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Coaching: A Handbook for Managers