Performance
Coaching

The Handbook for Managers,
H.R. Professionals and Coaches

Angus McLeod, PhD

Performance Coaching

The Handbook for Managers, H. R. Professionals and Coaches

Angus I McLeod, PhD

Contents

Chapter One

Introduction

This book is accessible to managers wanting a resource where they may learn and access information easily. Human-resources (HR) professionals will find information helpful in deciding whether to establish a coaching or mentoring function, whether to insource, outsource, or use support strategies that could include e-mentoring (using an intranet or extranet). The book should appeal to both the novice coach trying to get a practical handle on coaching skills and to the more experienced coach wanting to widen their knowledge and to refresh the use of tools that have become rusty.

In trying to achieve an accessible book for all managers, I hope that I have provided an adequate structure, a functional contents list, and a detailed index to satisfy all but the most demanding and methodical expert. I apologize now for the word "coachee". Although I dislike this word, I have been unable to find something well regarded and more acceptable without introducing a new term. The word "client" will not do, since, in the corporate context, the client is always the party that pays.

Where a newly introduced tool or idea is mentioned in the text it is **shown in bold**, and this signifies that a box containing related information is nearby. This allows any reader who needs more information to access it while allowing other readers to continue reading, without having to break their concentration. I hope this also allows more expert readers with specific skill sets to skip sections (when they are already familiar with specific tools).

Other emboldened text, ***but italicized***, is there to highlight linguistic tips that appear in the text. Linguistic tips are referred to in their own index for ease of reference.

Necessarily, many of the issues given as examples are incomplete: they are there merely to illustrate ways of approaching an issue

and are not a complete transcript of all interventions. As a consequence, not all the issues raised in a given example are complete.

Many of the tools that are illustrated in the examples can be used in different contexts. It's hoped that, by reading through examples, you will become familiar with the tools and language of coaching and will build on your successes to use the tools fluidly. The choice of which tool to use in any given situation becomes more obvious with familiarity and practice.

Following these introductory sections, Chapters Two and Three are set out to be highly accessible to managers and novice coaches wanting easy access to practical coaching. Examples reflect typical issues seen in coaching practice. These offer a readable way of introducing the language and tools of coaching. Chapter Two looks at the most typical issues in coaching and Chapter Three follows this format to highlight typical drivers for change.

HR professionals with coaching experience may like to go directly to Chapter Four to gain insights into how coaching is applied in organizations.

In Chapter Five we look at a selection of methods taken from bigger developmental models that either are, or can be, applied to coaching. I have been highly selective in choosing those that I use or have seen to be highly effective. This is necessarily an individualistic offering. I also introduce my own **STEPPPA** coaching model ("STEPPPA" is an acronym whose meaning we will discuss later).

Chapter Six looks primarily at the development of the coach, drawing upon a number of philosophies and methods that underpin the practice of executive coaching.

Chapter Seven is unapologetically a place where I have put other background information that has not appeared elsewhere. This includes some additional information about questioning methods, and methods that are not invariably part of the coach's resource, such as storytelling, totems, and archetypes.

Chapter Eight considers some of the pitfalls of coaching and problems that may arise in coaching practice, including psychological projection and sexual attraction.

Chapter Nine is a brief resource about mentoring, and particularly e-mentoring, taken mainly from my experiences with Ask Max, our Internet-based mentoring service. I also mention telephone mentoring as an adjunct to coaching.

The appendices contain valuable information about the mechanics of setting up the coaching space, relationships between coach and coachee and between mentor and mentee, feedback sheet, code of ethics, and a brief history of coaching and mentoring, as well as a resource for additional reading and Web-based information, including some of the courses offered by institutions. Unless stated, I do not endorse any Web-based resource or any training course in this work.

Some of my readers will find issues that are close to something that they face themselves. The solutions to those issues were specific to the individuals concerned and not likely to be the best solution for anyone else. Coaching, as opposed to giving advice, encourages the development of coachee-specific solutions that are motivating *and appropriate* for them. This also highlights the separation between coaching and mentoring: coaching inspires internally motivated solutions; mentoring invariably offers externally derived solutions. In this book, I offer a variant on mentoring that I think offers the best of both worlds, and integrates them.

My books are designed to be picked up and read from any page, so the indexes are constructed to make the reader's life easier. If the structure of the book does not delight you, then do please look at the contents list and indexes! I hope you will enjoy reading this book.

Sources of inspiration

I was drawn into coaching from counseling. For years previously, I was a sound ear to many; on numerous occasions hearing the life-stories and traumas of people I had not previously spoken to.

Chapter Three

Drivers for Change

Here we look at areas of change work and many of the techniques that help to stimulate sustained change. The use of these techniques, or tools, is illustrated by examples. We will see that many of the interventions of change and some of the motivators for change involve very personal material, even though the goals may be business ones. Such issues preoccupy the minds of executives and reduce their ability to perform. Coaching them to deal with such issues specifically and generically is a huge contribution to performance. I have chosen examples that are based on business goals (rather than life goals) but many of them involve motivations that come from outside the arena of work.

Wealth, living standards, and life expectancy are now radically higher in commercial nations. Executives are able to make lifestyle changes earlier. It becomes increasingly important, therefore, for organizations to help link business goals with personal targets. Almost all this work is being done outside of the work environment by numerous "life coaches". It will not be long before companies will offer employees life-target coaching at work. This will not be entirely altruistic: if companies will help harness the passions of their staff to develop both their work goals *and* their longer-term personal plans in one cohesive strategy, they can expect to gain commitment and dedication to work at more productive levels. Strategies involving life plans may necessarily involve an optional exit strategy from the company, including succession planning that involves the outgoing executive. Commitments at this level work both ways. How many organizations are brave enough to enter into dialogue with their executives about their plans for leaving, and to discuss, and involve them in, succession plans?

Internal dialogue and self-judgments

Many people experience a life saturated with internal conversation in their heads. Sometimes this dialogue may spill out into conversation with self-depreciating comments, "I'm not sure I should be doing this"; "I'm not good at that" and so on. If the level of stress associated with the negative dialogue is high, the individual may be motivated to avoid potential failure. This may manifest in inactivity or focus on secondary matters. High-achievers who exhibit limited abilities in certain areas sometimes have their inner dialogue to blame for their inconsistency. They are either striving or avoiding and find it hard to find a balance.

Inner dialogue can also reduce listening skills and prevent a good understanding of other people (and those people's motivations). When one's mind is busy on internal issues, it is not available for other work. At the most dysfunctional levels, people can become out of touch socially, even though they may exhibit exceptionally high (or low) skill sets in specific areas.

For those of us who aspire to be coaches, the busy head is not helpful. The most important feature of the coach is an ability to give the most exquisite attention to the coachee. Self-doubts, worrying about silence, being anxious about which question or coaching tool to use all get in the way of best attention. These quotations (Luke 4, Matthew 7) are advisory:

- "Physician, heal thyself"
- "Judge not, that ye be not judged. For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged: and with what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again. And why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?"

Where inner dialogue is manifested by the coachee or seems a likely component of a limiting pattern, then the coach should act. We have already looked at the pattern breaker. In the example given there, the coachee was trying to stop a repeated behavior. If a coachee experiences a repetitive negative inner dialogue, then the pattern breaker can be used for this dialogue too. To summarize,

each time the phrase comes up, the coachee will say to themselves, something like, "That's not me. I don't need that any more." Pinching oneself at the moment the phrase comes up may enhance the effect. This will help break state and prevent the mindset that can flow from the negative internal dialogue and pattern.

Another method is to look at the submodalities of the experience and to change them. Yet another is to look for a metaphor that may represent the inner dialogue and then play with evolving or replacing the metaphor with another. Let's look at examples.

Negative voices when my sales report is due

Theo was stressed at the time of his written, monthly reports to the senior directors. It was his immediate boss, Matthew, whom he was most stressed about. Theo was getting no positive feedback from Matthew, only new targets, new directions, and off-the-cuff ideas about forecasts that were much higher than Theo imagined realistic. Theo's negative feelings about writing reports caused stress during the month but especially at the end, not just because the results were never acknowledged (even if above target) but because he dreaded discussing it with his boss. At this time, Theo would hear an internal voice. There were several typical sentences:

- You are not going to make it this month.
- You will not get the report done on time.
- You're failing. You'll be out.

It is quite common for the voices to be in the second person ("You are" rather than "I am") and may not have the person's own voice. I invited Theo to recall a recent episode and to enter as well as he could into that scenario, in the present. He said he was achieving a nine (out of ten) score.

ANGUS: *Where does the voice seem to be coming from?*

THEO: It's here behind my right shoulder. That's weird, I never thought of that before.

Thinking preferences: filters on our world

Earlier, I introduced the idea of meta-programs (from NLP) as a collection of mental filters with which we view and react to the world.

One of the negative aspects of these filters is that they also lead to prejudice and errors of judgment. As a coach, when I make assumptions about my coachee, I am working from my own filters and will make errors. Invariably, many of our filters are different from those of the people we meet. That is why I have put emphasis on coaching methods that, from the linguistic standpoint, are relatively "clean". I may still have an assumption or "intuition", but, instead of donating this observation to my coachee, I ask a more general question to find out what their perception is around my observation. Using these methods, the true coach will not easily fall into many of the traps that await the uninitiated.

I would refer those who wish to gain a deeper insight into these issues to my book, *Me, Myself, My Team* (see bibliography), and to the other references provided. Here is a brief synopsis that may whet the appetite of those readers not already completely familiar with this subject. There are a myriad disciplines that have produced constructs that can help understand how we, and our coachees, are preferentially predisposed to sorting information by filtering and deleting subconsciously. NLP provides much of the background to what follows (representation systems and meta-programs) but the seven intelligences determined by accelerated learning, Belbin, and the Jungian-based Myers–Briggs Type Indicator all offer alternatives that are worth understanding.

Remember, too, that all models always fail some of the people some of the time. They have nothing to do with truth, but serve as temporary realities. The good coach will check perceived reality with the coachee in nondirective terms—not to seek the truth but to help them to extend and improve their conscious perception and reach motivated targets. I hope those listed will provide a starting point for making informed interventions.

Visual preference

"Visual preference", "visual representation", and "visual intelligence" are some of the names given to the intelligent storage, processing, and recall of visual images. People who have highly developed visual preference may be in jobs that use their skills. The language used is likely to include phrases like:

- I see
- I can picture what you are saying
- This looks good
- There's light at the end of the tunnel
- I'll keep my eye on the situation

In coaching, these clues may help determine whether to choose highly visual interventions (SWISH pattern for example). In the absence of such visual information, a visual instrument will not be ideal. Remember also the intervention, "How do you experience that?" This does not presume any particular preference and the coachee will consciously recognize something that is inherent to their own preferences. This will be much more impactful than using the coach's preference.

Auditory preference

A smaller proportion of people exhibit an auditory preference over their visual. Their language may include phrases like:

- I hear what you say
- Sounds good to me
- That went with a bang
- I'd say that-…

Kinesthetic preference

The physical and feeling dimensions are important for those who have kinesthetic preference above visual or auditory. Their actions

are very likely to be motivated by feelings rather than logic. They may use phrases like:

- I'm going with my gut on this one
- My sense is that we are onto something
- I feel out of touch with this project
- Let's hammer this out finally
- I can taste success
- I'll sniff out the competition

Linguistic preference

Where linguistic preference is highly developed, the individual may sometimes tend to prefer reading and writing to talking. Note that those with photographic memory will have a highly developed visual preference. The meanings of words may be very precise.

Interpersonal preference

The archetypical salesperson can be expected to exhibit this preference. They will be highly skilled in developing communication with many different people.

Creative preference

Creative people are stimulated by new ideas and innovation. They also tend to be bored by procedures, systems, and directories of facts. They often need to have options to be content.

Away-from and toward preferences

People exhibit both preferences but in the work context, for example, some individuals will be disposed one way or the other. Sometimes this is very marked. You will find people whose motivation is invariably to move away from pain. George Forman, the former world heavyweight boxing champion, says (2003),

Performance Coaching

Until now, coaching was a confusion of single-model approaches, so finding the right model to get the best results was never assured. In *Performance Coaching*, Dr Angus McLeod draws together the best of all the existing coaching models and builds on them.

Unlike many coaching books already on the market, this book is for coaches, not clients. Fast, accessible and clearly written, *Performance Coaching* is comprehensive and rich in real examples of real executives achieving real success in real-life situations. Even experienced coaches can find key tips and tools that will enhance their performance.

"A practical book with wonderful tips, ideas and perspectives. Angus McLeod's experience oozes out of every page. Ideal for newly qualified coaches serious about their profession."

Kriss Akabusi MBE MA

"With this book Angus McLeod sets a high standard of teaching. His examples of coaching dialogues serve so well to illustrate how to skilfully handle many coaching situations. The layout and sub-headings make them accessible to those who want to dip in and out of the book as required. I enjoyed it and learned from it."

Sir John Whitmore, author of *Coaching for Performance*

Angus McLeod, PhD is a well-known and respected coach through his work with individuals, teams and professional coaches. He is widely published in the United States and Europe on coaching and team development issues. Angus continues to influence the coaching profession through his on-line mentoring service 'Ask Max' and leadership of The Coaching Foundation, an organization that offers career development opportunities to professional coaches.
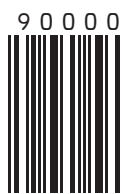
9 781904 424055