

COACHING HABIT REVIEW NOTES

By: Marshall Martin

When people make coaching an everyday way of working, they create more focus, more courage and more resilience. They help others (and themselves) work less hard and have more impact.

Coaching can increase focus and capacity, reduce overwhelm and dependency, and drive engagement and impact. Today's busy managers find themselves defaulting to old school tell them rather than ask them, solve it for them rather than help them figure it out. We need to help managers change where coaching becomes a regular and useful part of their management repertoire.

MOST MANAGERS

- Carry too much baggage
- Possess too much certainty, thinking they already know the destination without asking
- Wander off path too quickly
- Work too hard to get back on path
- Are exhausted at the end, having gotten less down the path than they hoped

Fifteen years ago, Daniel Goleman (author who popularized the concept of emotional intelligence) posted the article, "Leadership Gets Results," in the *Harvard Business Journal*, which suggested six leadership styles – coaching was one of them. Coaching was said to have a "markedly positive impact" on performance, climate (culture) and the bottom line. He also said it was the least used leadership style because ***"many leaders told us they don't have time in this high pressure economy for the slow and tedious work of teaching people and helping them grow."*** You're probably **not getting** very effective coaching, and you're probably **not delivering** very effective coaching.

The coaching habit will help you build a habit of curiosity, slowing down, asking more questions, listening better, teaching, and transferring ownership to others to help them grow and prosper.

The essence of coaching lies in helping others and unlocking their potential. But how does it help **you**?

Three Vicious Circles

You can break out of **three vicious circles** that plague our workplaces.

CREATING OVERDEPENDENCE

- Trained people to become excessively reliant on you
- You have now become a bottleneck
- Everyone loses momentum and motivation

GETTING OVERWHELMED

- Leads to loss of focus
- The more loss of focus, the more overwhelmed

BECOMING DISCONNECTED



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- Not focusing on the more meaningful and purposeful work that matters
- Help people do more of the work that has more impact and meaning

There are Seven Essential Core Questions that change leadership habits and how we lead and support.

- More effective support to your employees and co-workers
- You may become the ultimate coach yourself
- Harder to ask a question rather than give up advice or provide an answer
- Let them find their own way and make their own mistakes

3 REASONS COACHING DIDN'T STICK

1. The initial coaching training was too theoretical, too complicated, a little boring, and separated from the reality of work
2. You didn't translate how to go from theory into changing your habits
3. The simple behavior of giving a little less advice and asking a few more questions is difficult. You've spent years giving advice and getting praise and promotion for it. Also, this keeps you in control vs. the act of empowering, which makes you feel like you have lost control of the conversation.

In fact...*coaching is simple*. You can coach someone in 10 minutes or less. It should be a daily, informal act and natural, not formal. And you can **build a coaching habit**.

7 ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS TO DEVELOPING A COACHING HABIT

Works with:

- Direct reports
- Customers
- Suppliers
- Colleagues
- Bosses
- Spouses
- Teenage children

They can transform:

- 1:1's
- Team meetings
- Sales meetings
- Non-meeting moments

The Seven Questions

1. Kickstart Question: ***"What's on your Mind?"*** – starts conversation
2. Awe Question: ***"And What Else?"*** – best coaching question in the world, to boost others
3. Focus Question: ***"What's the Real Challenge for You?"*** – heart of the challenge
4. Foundation Question: ***"What Do You Really Want?"***
5. Lazy Question: ***"How Can I Help?"*** – saves you hours
6. Strategic Question: ***"If you are saying yes to this, what are you saying no to?"*** – save hours



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7. Learning Question: ***“What Was Most Useful for You?”*** – pairs to the kickstart to produce coaching bookends

The Habit Change – more asking questions and less telling what to do

45% of our waking behavior is habitual. It is not easy to change.

To change the habit

- Start somewhere easy – pick someone who’s up for it and will give you some slack
- Start small – one piece of the book at a time
- Buddy up – get your own coach, mastermind group, friend, colleague
- You will get pushback, but keep pushing
- Ask one question at a time
- Know your triggers so you know when/ how to change

1. The Kickstart Question – “What’s On Your Mind?”

This is the opener. Most managers don’t know where to start.

DON’T DO

- **Small Talk Tango** – don’t get tied up and chew up time
- **The Ossified Agenda** – static agenda that never changes
- **Default Diagnosis** – just dive in assuming you know what the conversation is about

INSTEAD DO

- Show trust and autonomy so they choose what to talk about
- Let’s talk about the thing that matters most
- Use the 3P model to take conversation further

IMPORTANT – Know the Difference

Coaching for performance vs. coaching for development

- **Performance** – addressing and fixing a specific problem or challenge. Everyday stuff, important and necessary.
- **Development** – turning the focus from the issue to the person managing the issue. Better to teach learning, improvement and growth.

USE THE 3P MODEL (PROJECTS, PEOPLE, PATTERNS)

- Create focus
- More robust conversation
- Shift focus to the more powerful level of coaching for development

“Call them forward to learn, improve, and grow rather than just sorting something out.”

PROJECTS



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- Easiest place to go and most familiar
- The art is being able to take it from here to further development

PEOPLE

- Not about them
- Talking about a relationship and about your role in this relationship
- May be less than ideal

PATTERNS

- Patterns of behaviors and ways of working you would like to change
- Where coaching for development opportunities emerge
- Personal and challenging, where people's self-knowledge and potential can grow

2. The AWE Question – “And What Else?”

This is the best coaching question in the world. It creates *more* – more wisdom, more insights, more self-awareness, more possibilities. More options lead to better decisions – you rein yourself in, you buy yourself time. ***When more options were introduced the failure rate went down significantly.***

TAME THE ADVICE MONSTER

- Don't get into the habit of slipping into the advice giver/ expert/ answer it/ solve it/ fix it mode
- Even if it is the wrong advice, we still feel more comfortable giving it as opposed to asking a question
- Advice monster hijacks the conversation

“And what else?” breaks this cycle and buys you time.

4 TIPS FOR ASKING “WHAT ELSE?”

1. Stay curious, stay genuine – practice listening to answers
2. Ask it one more time, still asked too few times – typically 3, rarely more than 5
3. Recognize success – when they say nothing else
4. Move on when it's time – losing energy

It's not about endless possibilities, the brain seems to be good with 4 or 5 and not more.

Stop offering up advice with a question mark attached.

3. The Focus Question – “What's the Real Challenge for You?”

How to stop spending so much time and effort on the wrong problem.

Post-It Notes and Viagra were both invented while solving for the wrong problem.

High-performing companies are usually quick at jumping to get to a resolution quickly by culture. When this happens:

- You work on the wrong problem



- You do the work the team should be doing
- The work doesn't get done

Focus on the **REAL** problem, not the **FIRST** problem.

Without a good question, a good answer has no place to go.

3 STRATEGIES TO MAKE THIS QUESTION WORK

1. Trust that you are being useful – moving from giving advice to asking questions will feel anxious. Let the room fill the silence – “What was most useful here for you?”
2. Remember there is a place for your advice
3. Remember the second question: “and what else?”

Start with questions starting with “what,” not “why,” to keep you from wanting to solve the problem or putting your employee on the defense.

4. The Foundation Question – “What Do You Want?”

The illusion that both parties in the conversation know what the other party wants is pervasive, and it sets the stage for plenty of frustrating exchanges. Until we can get what each other “really wants,” we can't have a great adult conversation.

5x per second, your brain is scanning the environment to determine whether it is safe here or not. If it feels safe, it will operate at a more sophisticated level. If not, it will suppress conversations. Are you creating a safe environment?

Four drivers as to how a brain reads a situation – TERA quotient for risk/ openness factor of dialogue

TERA

- **Tribe** – “Are you with me or against me?”
- **Expectation** – “Do I know the future or don't I?”
- **Rank** – “Are you more important or less important than I am?”
- **Autonomy** – “Do I get a say or don't I?”

Action is to drive the TERA quotient higher. Silence is often a measure of success.

5. The Lazy Question – “How Can I Help?” “What Do You Want from Me?”

The question that will make you more useful to those you manage while working less hard and you decide that being lazy is a good thing after all.

SEVEN DWARFS AND THE KARPMAN DRAMA TRIANGLE

- Victim – poor me
- Persecutor – I'm surrounded by fools or people less good than me
- Rescuer – let me jump in and fix it



We all have a favorite role we go to, often that of the rescuer:

- Leaping in to solve problems
- Offer advice
- Taking over responsibilities
- Just trying to add value as managers
- You get exhausted, they get irritated
- You are limiting opportunities for growth

You will live the drama triangle your entire life, but you will get better at identifying this and how to get out of it.

The minute we think we have all the answers, we forget the questions.

The Lazy Question – **“How can I help?”** More bluntly – **“What do you want from me?”** Soften by adding, “out of curiosity,” “just so you know,” “to help me understand,” or “to make sure I am clear.”

People struggle to ask this for fear of what the answer will be. Just avoid jumping in and wanting to rescue.

The best thing you can do when asking, “How can I help?” is to actually listen to the answer.

6. The Strategic Question – “If You Are Saying Yes To This, What Are You Saying No To?”

This gets us from the good work to the great work (more meaningful). A yes is nothing without the no that gives it boundaries and form.

PROJECTS

- What projects need to be postponed?
- What meetings do you no longer need to attend?
- What resources do you need to say yes?

PEOPLE

- What expectations do you need to manage?
- From what drama triangle dynamics do you need to extract yourself?
- What relationships will you let wither?

PATTERNS

- What habits need to be broken?
- What old stories or ambitions do you need to update?
- What beliefs about yourself do you need to let go?

WHEN SAYING NO, KEEP ASKING THE FOLLOWING:

- Why are you asking me?
- Whom else have you asked?



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- When you say this is urgent, what do you mean?
- According to what standard does this need to be completed?
- If I could only do a part, what part could I help?
- What do you want me to take off my plate to do that?

4 RESPONSES LIKELY WILL COME AS A RESULT:

1. The person tells you to stop the annoying questions and to just get on with the task
2. They have good answers to all your questions
3. Doesn't have answers but willing to find them
4. "You are too much like hard work, I'm going to find someone who says yes more"

5 OTHER STRATEGY QUESTIONS FROM AG LAFLEY'S "PLAYING TO WIN"

1. What is our winning aspiration? Rules out mediocrity. What game are you playing and with who? What impact will you have on the world?
2. Where will we play? FOCUS – "sandbox"
3. How will we win? What the defensible difference that will open the gap between you and others?
4. What capabilities must be in place? How can they be a strength?
5. What management systems are required?

2 DECISION-MAKING PROCESSES

1. Fast, gut feeling
2. Slower, more rational thinking

Strategic questions can help us avoid the following biases:

- Planning Fallacy – we are terrible about estimating time to complete something
- Prospect Theory – loss and gain are not measured equally. Losing \$100 feels worse than gaining \$100 feels good.

Acknowledge answers before you move on.

7. The Learning Question – "What Was Most Useful For You?"

This is what it is all about. Transfer knowledge and ownership where they can function and grown alone. Create space as a manager for learning moments. Loop back around after fixing the problem to learn from it.

- Assumes conversation was useful
- Asks people the big thing that was most helpful
- Makes conversation personal
- It's learning, not judgement
- Reminds people how useful you are to them
- Closes up "what's on your mind"

They don't learn when you tell them something. They don't learn when they do something. ***They learn when they have a change to recall and reflect on what just happened.***



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AGES

- Attention
- Generation
- Emotion
- Spacing

Try the coaching questions the next time you get an email. Avoid the 'Advice Monster' and pick a question.

- What's the real challenge?
- What do you want from me?
- What's the real challenge here for you?



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