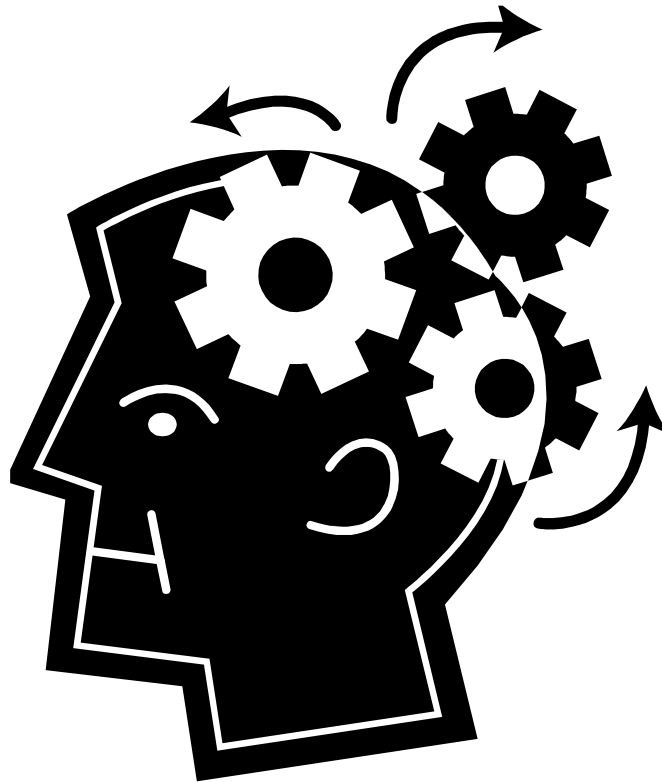


THE BRAIN AT WORK: COLLABORATIVE CONVERSATIONS THAT DRIVE POSITIVE CHANGE



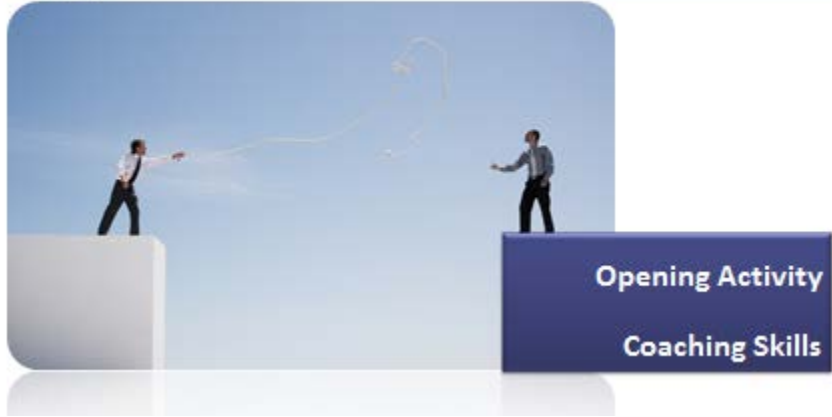
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Participant Supplement

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Introduction



Based on your experience, identify the competencies of an effective coach or someone who helped you succeed and record them below. Then share these with people at your table.

EFFECTIVE COACHING COMPETENCIES

TOPIC 1: EFFECTIVE COACHING

“While no single conversation is guaranteed to change the trajectory of a career, a company, relationship, or a life, any single conversation can.”
– Susan Scott

Effective Coaching Qualities:

1. High level of integrity: *do what you say, say what you do, live by example.*
2. Confident: *focus on what is possible, not what can go wrong. Courageous enough to say what needs to be said.*
3. Mindful communicator: *direct simple language, words chosen for maximum impact.*
4. Committed to other people: *aware of your own judgments, show each employee belief in their potential and that you are not threatened by their success.*
5. Insightful: *listen at all levels, listen to your own intuition and express it to employees, challenge yourself to think creatively.*
6. Coachable: *assess your own coaching skills honestly, look for the next level, ask employee for feedback on your performance and listen to it. Continually developing your coaching skills.*

Effective Coaches Have the Ability to:

1. Determine needs: *look at the current reality.*
2. Listen for potential: *seek to understand from the other’s view.*
3. Asks questions that promote insights: *questions that help the employee think and see better.*
4. Clarify for meaning: *express the core essence of what is said.*
5. Speak with intent: *provide succinct, specific, generous information best for employee.*
6. Set goals: *determine the actions needed for change.*
7. Gain accountability: *create conditions where employees choose to follow through.*

TOPIC 2: FOUNDATIONAL SKILLS – LISTEN FOR POTENTIAL

Being a great listener is essential to being a great coach. It underlies being insightful, mindful and committed to others. Listening for potential is focusing on *a person's strengths, goals, possibilities and potential*. People naturally listen for problems or gaps. Conversely, listening for potential involves listening generously, at all levels, for what people mean and without judgment.

- 1) **Listen generously** – requires the manager's full attention, involves trying to view the situation from the employee's perspective; listening without interrupting and reacting, while allowing the employee to develop their own conclusions and insights.
- 2) **Listen for what people mean** – it is estimated that 20-50% of the time, we don't actually hear what people mean, especially what they precisely mean. This requires listening without assumptions and not filtering the data from our view, where we can distort or delete vital information the employee is trying to convey.
- 3) **Listen at all levels** – listen to the words, listen for emotion, listen for body language. All of these will help you understand the meaning of what your employee is saying.
- 4) **Listen without judgment** – You may react to things your employee is sharing. You need to realize that you are no longer listening when reacting emotionally to something your staff says. Be aware of your judgments and willing to put them aside while seeking to understand.

Clarity of Distance

In order to listen from the others' perspective without interrupting or reacting and passing judgment, we need to have "Clarity of Distance." Clarity of Distance is when we put our own biases aside so we can help others see things more clearly from a different vantage point. In order to maintain this distance we must be aware of our *filters, hot spots, details, and agendas*.

Filters – our unconscious mental frames through which we perceive the world. Our frames have been hardwired for years and they determine the tone of everything we see. Ask yourself if there are different ways to view the situation. Investigate multiple realities.

Hot spots – are areas of personal difficulty, areas of life where we feel uncomfortable or out of control, which bring out our own emotional charge. Notice your emotions and mentally set them aside.

Detail – happens when we are too close to a situation to see patterns or possibilities. We are lost in the trees and can't see the forest. Focus on the bigger purpose of helping the employee succeed.

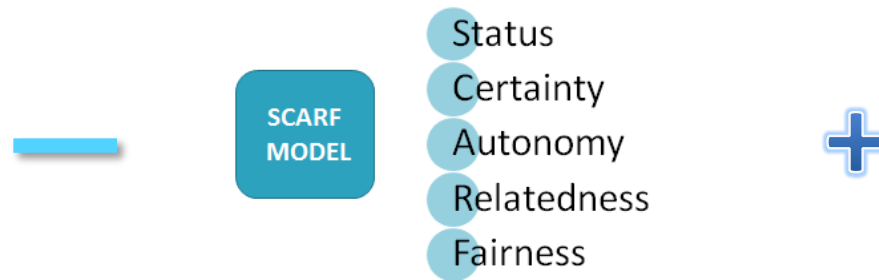
Agenda – represents a pronounced filter which stops our ability to see things clearly for what they are. A collaborative conversation is about finding a mutually developed solution, not your personal agenda.

TOPIC 3: BRAIN SCIENCE

Brain Facts (Read on your own and record your thoughts at the bottom of the page.)

- 1 The brain is a connection machine – the brain makes millions of connections each second. The brain wants to connect, and when we are unable to make a connection we have an impasse. Coaching helps people resolve impasses that they have not been able to solve.
 - 2 No two brains are alike – everyone has a unique set of connections for how they think about things. How you solve a problem is just how you would solve a problem, but other people are likely to use different mental pathways.
 - 3 The brain hardwires everything it can – new ideas or behaviors use working memory, a very limited resource in the brain. Therefore, any behavior, thought or activity that is repeated becomes hardwired so we don't have to pay attention to it. Coaching involves getting people out of automatic thinking and into a more conscious view. This takes significant effort.
 - 4 Hardwiring drives automatic perception – our perceptions are driven by deeper hardwired circuits and old habits, much more than by receiving data fresh from the world. As a result, people perceive according to their beliefs and attitudes, rather than seeing things as they are or could be.
 - 5 It's practically impossible to deconstruct our wiring – attention itself creates change in the brain. So trying to get rid of circuits is often ineffective and ends up deepening them instead. This explains why focusing on problems creates more awareness of problems, whereas focusing on solutions creates more solutions.
 - 6 It's easy to create new wiring – the brain creates new connections all the time. The key, if we want to create a long-term circuit, new belief and new habit, is to pay lots of attention. Attention, in the form of quality and quantity of focus, is what changes the brain over time.
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- ◆ **Status:** When people realize that they may compare unfavorably to someone else, the threat response kicks in, causing some of the same effects as sleep deprivation and anxiety. Giving a person unsolicited advice threatens status because it implies to their brain that the person giving the advice is superior. *Status can be elevated by praise or when people master a new skill. Status can also be elevated when a manager recognizes an employee's development efforts. Seeking permission to have the conversation and on which direction to go in the conversation puts people on equal status.*
- ◆ **Certainty:** The minute the brain registers ambiguity or confusion, it reacts with a threat response. Working memory is diminished and tension is present. The perception of uncertainty frequently undercuts focus and performance. *Placement helps you and your employees know where you are and where you are going in a conversation. This increases certainty for the employee.*
- ◆ **Autonomy:** Studies show that the degree of control available during stressful situations determines whether the stressor will undermine the ability to perform. As long as people feel they can execute their own decisions without much oversight, stress remains under control. A perception of reduced autonomy can easily generate a threat response. By contrast, the perception of greater autonomy increases the feeling of certainty and reduces stress. *Permission facilitates autonomy with your employees as does involving them in identifying the problem, solution and plan for success.*

- ◆ **Relatedness:** Fruitful collaboration depends on healthy relationships which require trust and empathy. In the brain, the ability to feel trust and empathy is shaped by people perceiving they are part of the same social group. *Leaders who strive for inclusion and minimize situations in which people feel rejected create an environment that supports maximum performance. Sharing how you feel about your employee's performance, being generous, helps you relate to your staff and builds trust.*
- ◆ **Fairness:** The perception that an event has been unfair generates a strong response (fight or flight), stirring hostility and undermining trust. As with status, people perceive fairness in relative terms. In organizations, the perception of unfairness creates an environment in which trust and collaboration cannot flourish. Like certainty, fairness is served by transparency. *Leaders, who share information in a timely manner keep employees engaged, motivated and demonstrate fairness. Being succinct, specific and generous promotes transparency and also promotes trust and fairness.*

NOTES

TOPIC 4: RESULTS COACHING-THE DANCE OF INSIGHT

- 1. Permission** – Getting permission is a way to reduce the likelihood and impact of the threat response, and makes the coachee’s thinking more effective. When the coach asks for permission, the coachee is given the power of the choosing where a coaching conversation will go. Having permission puts you on equal status in regard to the direction of the conversation and can make you both feel more comfortable.
- 2. Placement** – It is letting someone know exactly where you are in a conversation, what is about to happen, and what you are trying to achieve. Placement puts two people at the same point in a conversation, so you are both able to focus on the issue together. It creates certainty for the coachee, which reduces the threat response. *Placement in the conversation also ensures that both people have equal status.*
- 3. Thinking Questions** – The essence of being a facilitative coach is to ask thinking questions that lead an coachee to think about his/her dilemma and make new connections by themselves. This can lead to positive change through improved thinking and new habits. Simply put, thinking questions involve focusing on the coachee’s thinking.
- 4. Clarifying** – Once we listen for potential, we clarify. Clarifying involves repeating a statement in a way that makes the core essence of the statement clearer. Clarifying creates pivotal moments in the conversation. It focuses the conversation on the valuable elements, highlights them, and then allows the conversation to move forward with greater depth and clarity.

The Dance of Insight Examples

Improving Performance (Initiated by Manager)

The Dance of Insight helps managers and employees succeed through employees finding their own ideas and developing solutions. It uses *Permission, Placement, Thinking Questions, and Clarifying*

Permission

“I need to talk with you about a problem. When would be an open time for you?”

“I have a suggestion on how you can improve. Are you interested in hearing it?”

Placement

“I would like to talk about the problem you are having with completing the project. It should take about 30 minutes.”

“Now that we have examined some alternative solutions, let’s set some goals on how to solve this problem.”

Thinking Questions

“What do you think you need in order to perform better at this?”

“How can you improve your performance?”

“What do you think is your next step?”

Clarifying

“So you feel you do not understand what is expected of you?”

“You don’t seem to be motivated to tackle this problem?”

Facilitating Great Performance (Initiated by Employee and May be Manager Initiated)

Permission

“Is there something you would like to talk about now?”

“Would you like to brainstorm some ideas on how to solve this problem?”

Placement

“Since we have determined the nature of your dilemma, let’s explore some possible solutions.”

“Let’s now create an action plan.”

Thinking Questions

“How long have you been thinking about this problem?”

“On a scale of 1-10 how satisfied are you in your thinking?”

Clarifying

“Essentially you feel stuck between helping the customer and meeting your other goals?”

“Basically you’re concerned about being considered for a promotion?”

Additional Communication and Coaching Tools

CRAFT brings the employees insights into reality by setting actions. We **CRAFT** actions that are:

Clear – Both parties must understand exactly what the action entails. If there is ambiguity you may find the action doesn't get done or not in the way that was planned.

Realistic – It is important that the actions set are challenging, realistic, actionable and achievable.

Accurate – To ensure that the coachee does the action, it can be useful to include precise numbers in the wording of the actions. Be accurate with details. The coachee is much more likely to complete the action, or know their progress if metrics are defined.

Focused – When creating actions, make sure the action is relevant to the coachee's objective, strategy, goal or insight.

Timely – When setting actions, make sure both parties are clear about the timing of the action. In other words, be clear about the deadline for completion of the action.

Including all elements of CRAFT creates certainty for the coachee and encourages follow through.

Mindfulness is paying attention to one's own thinking process in the present. This helps managers be fully attentive and aids their brain development to know themselves better. Thus managers are able to better support employees in becoming more self-aware and self- appreciative.

Name it and Tame it is a mindful technique that involves acknowledging your emotions or thoughts that are occurring and agreeing to put them aside. This allows one to be fully present.

Reframe is choosing to take a different look at a situation, one's thinking, or emotions, or beliefs in order to see more sides and opportunities.

Solution Focus versus Problem Focus is choosing to view a situation from the perspective of identifying the solutions and not the problems. It is about saying "What needs to happen to move forward?" instead of "Why did this happen?" It causes less threat response in a conversation and provides more options to find solutions.