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# What do I do now, Coach?

Tried and true methods for coaching others

By Monica Wofford, CSP



**D**o you remember your favorite professor? What did he do that made you think of him as your favorite?

Chances are he was a good coach, even if you didn't call him that at the time.

Coaching others is a gift and if done in good will, it is a gift you give others — yet receive much more from in return. Anyone can be a coach. Certifications and special expertise aside, coaching does follow some simple steps and guidelines that will enhance the relationship and results from both the coach and the client, protégé, or mentee.

How many of these best practices do you use when coaching staff members in your office?

## Act as a sounding board

Coaching is often merely letting people talk out their issues and choices until they can reasonably decide which choice makes sense or which way to go. In this case, you as a coach, serve as a sounding board and not someone able or willing to fix the entire problem.

A good coach helps a person learn how to make good decisions going forward. Teaching a person to fish will last longer than getting a fish for him to eat now. Listening to what they want will help you help them.

## Keep them accountable

People usually know what they need to do to get at least part of the way toward what they want.

*For example:* You know you must drink water, eat less sugar, and exercise in order to maintain a healthy and fit figure. Okay, so you know that, but how many times do you not do what you know because something more urgent or important creeps into your schedule.

How often have you not done what you know you should do because the office was too busy or patients came first? It happens, and a coach can serve as a gentle reminder of what you said you would do or are committed to.

When coaching others, make a list of things someone told you they would do, and be sure to ask about them at a later date.

## Tough love

A good friend won't always tell you the real deal — he or she will usually tell you what you want to hear and what is easiest for them. It isn't out of being malicious, but more out of wanting to be liked and helpful.

A coach on the other hand has enough confidence to tell you like it is, tell you when an idea is not a good one, or tell you when your attitude is really the issue. You don't always get to tell people what they want to hear as a coach, but you are often the one who shares what they need to hear the most.

## Check expectations

If your position is more formalized and structured, then you may wish to establish measurable results and objectives that you expect to accomplish in the time you are working with your client.

If this "client" is an employee, you may still be well served by setting up a time frame by which certain milestones should be attained.

Saying that results will be achieved "soon" or "some day" does

not give you or your mentee a sense of urgency or motivation to get things done.

It merely puts you both on an unclear path with an unknown destination for an unknown period of time.

## Check in regularly

Individuals, though well-intentioned, if left to their own devices will let one thing lead to another, one habit envelope another,

and become completely mediocre in a hurry. Even if they are somewhat driven, those individuals who say they want big things and have big dreams can easily turn into master justifiers.

Those same people wake up one day later in life to wonder what they did with all that time that seemed to be so consistently busy.

Check in with those you are coaching regularly to make sure they have not lost sight of their own goals and desired results.

## Remember who it's about


This one seems rather obvious, but when you are coaching others, it is important to remember that you are a guide on the side, not a sage on a stage.

The relationship is not about you as the coach or you taking credit for doing such a great job coaching. It is about you helping the person being coached to shine, grow, develop, blossom, reach, and succeed.

Coaching others can be immensely rewarding, and it can also be a great deal of work.

The hours are many, but the rewards are great. Watching others grow and learn new skills, develop new habits or behaviors, and achieve success in the business or more enjoyment out of their life is a feeling like none other.

As a leader, you have some duty to coach.

As a coach, you have a joy to do and to give, not a job, but a gift. 



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