

Coaching as a Catalyst



By Gail Ostrishko

Everyone's a Coach according to Ken Blanchard and Don Shula, in the book they co authored by the same title, highlighting parallels between the worlds of business and sports. I completely concur!

Coaching is a catalyst for helping people help themselves. It is an approach to interaction that is both unique and universal. Each of us coaches everyday, sometimes consciously and often in a more indirect and intuitive manner.

Athletes, executives and sports teams have coaches, why shouldn't you? We all need wise guides on the journey of life, and we all serve as guides for many people we meet along the way. Whether filling the role of parent, friend, confidant or coach, your words, gestures and actions impact others in ways you may never be aware of.

Effective coaching is rooted in personal relationships. People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care.

People need to feel connected, committed and valued in order to embrace and engage excellence in themselves and in others. People are committed to relationships and experiences that hold value for them. Values are the core connectors in relationships.



Involvement is the foundation of all relationships, and sets the stage for making connections. We connect first on a sensory level, simply as a result of shared proximity or activities. These interactions offer opportunities for sharing individual and collective knowledge and experience. Long term relationships connect at the deepest level of shared values. Whether building a strong family, crafting a conscious career, cultivating a collaborative corporation, or winning a significant sports event, coaching connects people and processes that lead to effective outcomes.

Wise organizations are increasingly committed to helping people understand themselves in order to be more conscious contributors. Effective leaders and managers realize their role goes beyond directing to detecting strengths, abilities, values and goals as the foundation for helping people help themselves.

Self awareness is crucial, and coaches can identify characteristics that individuals may not see in themselves. Coaching is not limited to one person, but is done collectively in the context of building strong relationships.

Early in my career as a family counselor, I went from being a big sponge, absorbing issues and feeling responsible for finding solutions, to reflecting the patterns and trends I observed in interactions. Simple semantics reveal underlying beliefs and values crucial to personalizing the coaching process. Patterns of words, ideas and behaviors form the foundation for future actions. Coaching clients are often 'too close to the forest to see the trees,' preventing them from embracing a realistic perspective of themselves and their situation.



Curious questions are powerful coaching tools. Asking people about themselves and their situations allows them to take both responsibility and credit for identifying personalized solutions. When people are offered opportunities to self evaluate, they are often surprised and enlightened by their own internal wisdom.

Challenging individuals to begin within in their search for answers fosters self sufficiency.

People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care



Many people have a natural desire to help people succeed and excel. Our individual approach to this endeavor has a major impact on our effectiveness. According to Dean Smith, the legendary leader of the University of North Carolina Tar Heels, coaching is a philosophy, not a system. Success is not based on wins and losses, but on effort and improvement.

Most people have some degree of direction, they just don't always harness it productively. Connecting on a personal level, and reflecting what we see and hear offers a foundation for determining appropriate direction. Attempts to control and criticize often negate our ability to influence. Though these strategies may get short term compliance in some situations, they are not a long term solution to yielding winning results.

Accountability is a significant element of coaching, and the reason many seek an outside source for guidance. People like and need to be held responsible for their decisions and reminded of their commitment to action. I find that many of my career coaching clients value being held accountable as much or more than any other aspect of our professional relationship.

People need to feel acknowledged for their efforts, and encouraged to do the same for themselves. Recognizing and celebrating success is just as important in a job search as it is in a Super Bowl. Engaging excellence is a shared responsibility and takes team effort.

*Give a man a fish, he eats for a day
Teach him to fish, he eats for a lifetime*

Effective coaches connect, reflect and direct in a manner that empowers others to do the same for themselves and others. Everyone is a coach, including YOU! Be conscious in your quest to support others in acknowledging and embracing excellence in all arenas. Consider the coaches you encounter, formally and informally. What characteristics qualify them to guide you toward setting and reaching goals? Who looks to you for guidance and what is your game plan for helping them help themselves? *'Give a man a fish, he eats for a day, teach him to fish, he eats for a lifetime'*. Coaching is a catalyst for teaching folks to 'fish'.



Gail Ostrishko is a creative catalyst for building relationships and organizations from the inside out. Consistently noted for her high energy and infectious enthusiasm, Gail works with individuals and organizations to get the right people in the right roles by identifying and maximizing individual and collective strengths and creative capacity. A proud two time graduate of East Carolina University, Gail is a Licensed Professional Counselor and faculty member of the William Glasser Institute. She has over two decades of experience as a facilitator, speaker, author and coach, consistently learning as much, from her clients as they learn from her. Gail enjoys being outdoors, especially at the beach with her faithful canine companion, along with working out at the YMCA, and volunteering as a speaker and wish granter for The Make a Wish Foundation of Eastern North Carolina.

Gail is a Licensed Affiliate of The Highlands Company and a member of the National Speakers Association.

She utilizes the Highlands Ability Battery and Programs as a powerful tool for coaching individuals and organizations.

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Call Gail for a Complimentary Career Coaching session!

