

The Coach Approach

Coaching Skills for Enhancing Conversations and Relationships

With Dr. Tim Kincaid





Agenda

What Coaching is (and isn't)

Core Coaching skills – Listening, Questions

Communication theory and Hacks

Short test drive

Wrap-Up & Take Aways



Introduction

About Me. . .

UNT since 2012 – Aviation Logistics in College of Business

Encore Career – Kincaid Coaching and Consulting (+ Teaching)

Certified Professional Coach – leadership/executive, career/life planning

Consultant – change management communications, team development training

Prior Life – 25 years in corporate life

Corporate PR, mostly in aviation

Retired from American Airlines at 50 to reinvent into my encore career



Introduction

The Coach Approach

Coaching skills are super useful in many contexts

Corporations, organizations, education, personal interactions

A different approach (also a different way of being!)

Goals for Today:

Familiarize you with basic coaching skills you can use immediately

Test drive, have some fun

Provide resources if you want to know more

Homework if you're up for it



Introduction

Sharing My Coach's Toolbox





Agreements and Norms

Coaches Role: “Create and Hold Space”

What will make this time together feel safest, most supportive?

- Reduce distractions – phones on silent, technology put away
- *Las Vegas Rule* – anything personal shared here, stays here
- Coach’s Mindset – curiosity, learner, open, unattached
- Engage – participate
- Anything else that will make you feel more comfortable?



What Coaching is . . .

The International Coaching Federation (ICF) defines Coaching as:

Partnering with Clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential.



What Coaching is (and isn't). . .



Coaching vs. Mentoring vs. Therapy vs. Training

Coaching

Future-focused growth

Client generates insight

Thought partner

Client owns agenda

Mentoring

Career guidance

Mentor shares advice

Role model

Mentor/shared

Therapy

Healing & mental health

Therapist diagnoses & treats

Clinician

Therapist owns

Training

Skill & knowledge transfer

Trainer teaches content

Subject-matter expert

Trainer owns



Arc of a Typical Coaching Conversation

G.R.O.W. Model





GROW Model: A Simple Coaching Framework

GOAL

What do I want?

REALITY

Where am I now?

OPTIONS

What could I do?

WILL / WAY FORWARD

What will I do?

*The coach facilitates the client's thinking throughout — helping them clarify, explore, and commit.
The insights and actions come from the client.*



Core Coaching Skills

#1 Questions

Types + words we use

#2 Listening

Types + Levels



Coaching Skill #1 Questions



The Power of Words



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Hzgzim5m7oU&t=4s>



“Words Create Worlds”

- The words we use make a difference – they matter
 - Potential misalignment of intent and words
- Being conscious of the words we use can make a big impact
 - On relationships
 - Understanding
 - Outcomes



Language *Conceals* & Language *Reveals*

- What worlds are we creating by word choices?
 - Scarcity *or* Abundance
 - Hopeful *or* Fearful
 - Limiting *or* Powerful
 - Inclusive *or* Excluding



Small Shifts = Big Difference



Less Autonomy

Greater Autonomy

More Limiting / Absolutes	More Open / Hopeful
<i>Can't</i>	<i>Won't</i>
<i>Have to / Need to</i>	<i>Want to / Get to</i>
<i>Must</i>	<i>Can</i>
<i>Never</i>	<i>Not often</i>
<i>Always</i>	<i>Usually</i>



Your brain doesn't "know". . .

- **If a threat is verbal or physical**
 - Brain scans show same regions of brain light up
- **If brain interprets something as threatening**
 - Sarcasm, criticism, or actual threats of violence
 - Fight/Flight/Freeze triggered
- **If brain senses limiting words**
 - It believes constraints, powerlessness are real
- **Word Create Worlds!**



What words are you using?

Personal Challenge (extra credit homework!):

During the few days, notice the words you use:

- Are you using *limiting language* or *more powerful language*?
 - “I have to” or “I want to” or “I get to”
- Are you limiting with absolutes or allowing for possibilities?
 - “It always happens” or “It happens often” or “Up until now, that happened”
- How can you shift to more open, hopeful words?
- Notice the words others use – how do they land, what impact do they make?
- Help one another – “do you have to or want to?”
 - This is highly nuanced
 - Just get curious, no judgement, not wrong – just notice

COMMUNICATIONS THEORY



*“The meaning of your communication
is the response you get”*

Neurolinguistic Programming Supposition #2



COMMUNICATIONS THEORY

Intention

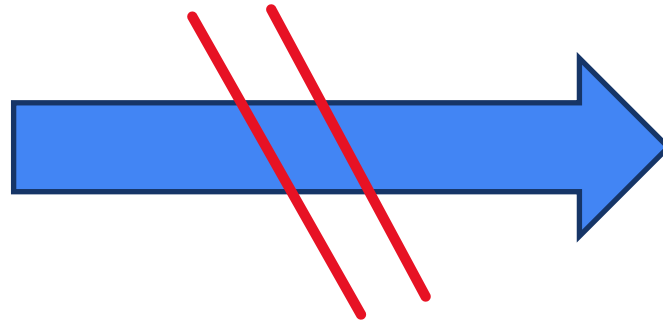


Impact



COMMUNICATIONS THEORY

Intention



Impact

7 Words, 7 Meanings. . .

“I never said your idea was bad”

I never said your idea was bad

I never said your idea was bad

I never said your idea was bad

I never said your idea was bad

I never said your idea was bad

I never said your idea was bad

I never said your idea was bad

Second City Leadership workshop - UNT



The Kinds of Questions We Ask

Building on *Words Create Worlds* theme



What Kinds of Questions Do You Ask?

- **Closed-Ended**
 - Elicit a one-word reply (yes or no)
 - Yields less detail or context
 - More superficial
 - Transactional
- **Open-Ended (aka Evocative/Powerful Questions)**
 - Invites longer reply
 - Yields greater detail, context, nuance
 - Goes deeper, make stronger connection, discovery
 - Can be transformational



How to Make Questions More Evocative/Powerful

Shift from efficiency → insight

- Why → *What / How*
- Advice → *Curiosity*
- Fixing → *Exploring*

Examples

- Why didn't that work? → *What made this challenging?*
- Have you tried...? → *What have you already considered?*
- What should I do? → *What matters most as I think about next steps?*

Experiment: Ask open questions, notice differences in responses



Yes, and. . .



- Cornerstone of Improv
- Keep “story” going, energy up
- Unlock creativity
- Generative
- No win/lose
- Objective is to make your partner look good
 - Not to win or to compete
- “Yes, and” energetically different from “No” or “Yes, but”

Coaching Skill #2

Listening





Pop Quiz!

Do you generally . . .

Listen to Respond?

or

Listen to Understand?



3 Levels of Listening

Level 1: **Internal** - Focused on your own thoughts and reactions rather than the speaker.

Level 2: **Focused** - Giving full attention to the speaker but still processing your own thoughts.

Level 3: **Global** - Fully engaged, sensing emotions, tone, body language, and what's **not** being said.

Which one(s) are Listen to Respond? Listen to Understand?



Level I - Internal

- Listening to Respond
- My ideas, my opinions
- Waiting my chance to speak
- “How does what you are saying relate to me?”
- WIIFM (“what’s in it for me?”)
- Not present



Level 2-Focused & Level 3-Global

- Sharp Focus on Other
- Listening to Understand
- Listening for:
 - What is important to the other person? (Core Values)
 - What words do they use?
 - What are their ideas?
 - Your attention is mostly ‘over there’
 - What’s not being said?
 - Not worried about responding



Your Turn!

Breakout Listening Experiment: *“Tell Me More”*

- Pair-up, Turn to a neighbor
- Decide who is “A” and who is “B”
 - Partner A: Share a short (2 minute) story about a personal experience or challenge.
 - Partner B: Your sole role is to listen, make eye contact, nod, and *say only “Tell me more”*
- I will keep time. At 2 minutes, switch for another 2 minutes
- Come back and Debrief



Quick Debrief on Breakout Listening Experiment

- What was that like?
- How did it feel to be truly listened to?
- What was challenging about just listening?



The Ladder of Inference

*Theory by
Dr. Chris Argyris*



The Ladder of Inference



Actions

Act on inference. Or test assumptions for accuracy.

Beliefs

Pat holds grudges – Not a team player

Conclusions

Pat is mad and avoiding me

Added Meaning (Cultural, Personal)

It's because Pat is upset with me

Assumption

It's because my comment yesterday in a meeting

Observable Data and Experience

Pat walks past in the hallway without saying hello

*Theory by
Dr. Chris Argyris*



Keep off the Ladder!

- Notice when you are triggered by something or someone
- Before drawing solely on observable data and jumping into runaway inference/assumption mode . . .
 - Ask “What else might be true here?”
 - Assume good intentions
 - It might not be about you
- Instead of seething silently or growing resentful:
 - Check assumptions – ask
 - Keep breathing!



‘Behind every behavior is a positive intention’

Neurolinguistic Programming Supposition #5

Summary



- Coaching vs mentoring, etc
- Word use
- Open ended vs Closed ended Questions
- *Yes, and. . .*
- Listening Levels 1, 2 & 3
- Listen to *Respond* vs Listen to *Understand*
- Ladder of inference

Take Aways?

- Actions you will take?

Examples:

Words use (“have to” or “want to”)

Open-ended questions

Level 2/3 listening (to Understand)

Do the Values exercise handout



In Closing. . . .



- Questions?
- Observations?



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