

THE PATH TO MASTERY



IF YOU CAN'T COACH, YOU CAN'T LEAD!:

40 *INSIGHTS*

100 *QUESTIONS*

18 *HOLES*



*"To coach is to challenge the motivated,
not motivate the challenged."*

John O. Burdett

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Introduction

What makes a great organization? The right strategy is clearly an imperative. As is a culture that supports and nurtures a winning value proposition. You can't get far, of course, without leadership. And even being "better than most of the rest" is an impossible dream without talent at **every** level of the organization.

All of this implies hiring the right people, setting the bar high, giving them the opportunity to do what others say cannot be done, and supporting ongoing growth. Here lies the heart of the issue. In a changing world, developing and growing talent isn't just the right thing to do – it's a fundamental and essential building block in creating and maintaining best-in-class performance.

Training programs, residential leadership development, self-paced software, AI-based scenarios and a litany of other interventions are all aimed at developing the organization's talent. Here, however, one important fact looms large: 80% of all meaningful growth happens on-the-job. Enter, stage left, coaching. It's an entrance that throws a bright light on today's reality – if you can't coach, you can't lead!

That's what this small book is all about. It succinctly sets out what you need to know and what you can work on to take your own coaching capability to the next level. The material focuses on three simple but powerful levers of coaching success. The first: 40 key insights that will move you along the path to coaching mastery. The second: 100 questions that will put additional arrows in your coaching quiver. The third: the opportunity for reflection. One can add here that without reflection there is no learning!

The first two elements are presented in, what can be best described as, an "executive summary." Easy to read and to the point. The third part challenges you to 18 holes of golf. It's a very tough course and only "professionals" will score par or less. Good luck!

You can work through the material on a one-hour flight. Implementing the ideas will take longer – but doing so will take your coaching to the next level. Don't do it for yourself – do it for your team. They, and your organization, need (not merely want) you to be a great coach. Tomorrow will be different – will you?



40

THINGS

EVERY MANAGER

SHOULD KNOW ABOUT

COACHING

How do I get to Carnegie Hall?

The text that follows started life as an article I wrote a number of years ago: *40 Things Every Manager Should Know About Coaching* - Journal of Management Development, Vol. 17, Issue 2/3, p 142. I have looked at the article anew because over the years it has received a considerable amount of attention. Quoted in at least sixty-one journals, it has been referenced in numerous Masters and Ph.D. theses. Google references, in 2011, ran to over ten full pages. In 2010, a group of graduating students at Texas Tech found it interesting enough to make it one of the two sources they believed would provide the greatest value to them in the decade after graduation.¹

As an indication of how things change, my intended 2020 “update” ended up being a rewrite. Although a number of the themes stay the same, what has been added is the power of context, the need to encompass team coaching, the value of a coaching template, the role that inspiration plays and the critical need for measurement. I have come to recognize that at the top of the house, without measurement, you have little traction.

In limiting the new work to only “40 things,” there are a number of suggestions that I would have liked to have added but didn’t. Included in the latter would have been a deeper dive into leadership-of-self, the value of resilience, the role of coaching in orchestrating organization culture change, ways in which the informal organization and social media shape attitudes and the opportunity technology now affords in building collaborative relationships. Omitted, also, was the compelling connection between coaching and collaborative selling.

The original article was written primarily to help those new to coaching better understand the landscape to be crossed. Subsequent feedback has suggested that it has also helped seasoned coaches know where, and perhaps even how, to sharpen their saw. I can only hope that this revisited offering delivers more of the same. Note: in mirroring the need for a coach to develop “comfort with ambiguity,” the *40 Things Every Manager Should Know About Coaching* are deliberately laid out in a random order.



¹ *Hindsight Learning in the Present*, Capstone and Hoover (2010). The graduating students selected *40 Things Every Manager Should Know About Coaching*, John O. Burdett; and *The Future of Management*, (2007) by Gary Hamel and Bill Breen.

1. **Why coaching?** Today's organization doesn't need better leaders, it needs more leadership. It needs more employees, at every level, who are willing to act. To coach is to nurture, develop and expand capability. It's a central pillar in any successful talent management process. It's a means whereby the untried are tested, the seasoned stretched, and the organization's stars moved into a new orbit. Indeed, it is the one tried and true way to ensure that the leader leaves behind a better team than the one he/she started with. After all, isn't that what leadership is really all about?²
2. **More than a conversation.** When people think about coaching, the image they conjure up is two people sitting across from each other where the dialogue focuses on what one of them can do differently. It's far more than that. It's more than a set of skills. It's more than a conversation. It's more than a periodic or sometime activity. It's a chosen way to be! It's deliberate. It's a deep-rooted, systemic leadership philosophy. In "also ran" businesses, coaching is a corporate training program. In best-in-class organizations, it's embedded into the organization's psyche. Nor should coaching be thought of as a series of stand-alone, independent discussions. Although the immediate focus may well be on individual and/or team performance, its real value lies in leaders working in concert to collectively "coach the organization."³ That does not mean that every conversation should be a coaching conversation. To coach is to recognize and respond to "the coaching moment." And the way to find time to coach is - to coach!⁴
3. **Enhanced performance.** Although quality of work life and job satisfaction are important, from the organization's perspective coaching success is ultimately defined by a process that leads to enhanced performance. For middle-of-the-road performers it's about taking their contribution to the next level. For extraordinary performers it's about challenging them to change the world around them. Performance, be it incremental or transformational, will always remain front and center if the coach keeps one simple question in mind: In what ways will the coaching outcome being described benefit tomorrow's customer? Time is nature's way of preventing everything from happening at once. By inviting the coachee to step back and think about what's really happening, coaching is a leader's way of breaking unproductive habits.
4. **Uncovering potential.** From the employee's perspective, coaching success is about uncovering and then building on potential. To coach is to challenge the employee to live a life that has a purpose. It is to enable the employee to surface his/her own path to mastery. None of this is likely, of course, unless the coach is connected to his/her own story. When we are not living our own story, we are, by default, living someone else's. In that he/she is a role model, to coach is thus to be authentic. Coaching is also about deliberately changing established patterns of behaviour. Same old language, same old behaviour. At

² Not to have a successor is to put the organization at risk.

³ See also #8 - the role coaching plays in "creating tomorrow's culture, today."

⁴ The other sure way for leaders to find time to coach is to affirm and reward those who display coaching mastery.

meetings do people always sit in the same place? In that it carries a symbolic message,⁵ next time you have a coaching opportunity invite the coachee to join you on a walk.

5. **Taking the long view.** Like every other aspect of talent management – recruitment, succession, mentoring, career planning – coaching that dwells exclusively on tactical success (today's performance) is likely to lead to unintended (invariably problematical) consequences. Culture, performance, leadership competencies and issues drawn out of the team, while focusing on today, must also be flexed with tomorrow in mind. Meanwhile, management without measurement is momentum without meaning. In addition to the organization's strategic priorities, this speaks to: (1) A means to measure the "roots" and "wings" of culture: the culture we have today ... and the culture we must have to succeed in a turbulent tomorrow;⁶ (2) A process that surfaces tomorrow's leadership competencies. In our case this means a library of 60 leadership competencies – behaviours that we revise every five years; and (3) A robust measure of team behaviour. You can't manage what you don't measure! Coaching that relies on "a best guess" regarding "tomorrow's success" is a breach of the leader's fiduciary responsibility. The more senior the coachee, the more measurement matters. Not just in terms of gaining buy-in with the executive being coached ... but with regards to the overall organizational impact.

5 Partners on a journey moving forward together. A walk also conveys a collaborative intimacy that sitting in an office rarely suggests.

6 For more on culture measurement see: *The A-Z of Organization Culture* (2017). John O. Burdett.

6. **Challenge the motivated, not motivate the challenged.** Coaching, at its best, builds on the qualities and strengths the coachee brings to the role. Remedial coaching can be very effective but should not be how coaching is defined within the organization. Coaching is often confused with counseling and/or mentoring. When the employee displays dysfunctional behaviour and where the roots of that behaviour lie outside of the workplace, counseling is appropriate. Mentoring is a seasoned performer (regardless of age) sharing his/her story with a less seasoned performer, the outcome of which is that the latter is accelerated through the learning curve.

7. **No one can literally "be coached."** To coach is to know that motivation is always intrinsic. To be a successful coach is to change the conversation the coachee has with him/herself. Paradoxically, a manager or team leader cannot NOT coach. Running a meeting is coaching. Giving feedback is coaching. Asking a new question is coaching. Not making a decision is coaching. "Doing" is not the same as "being," however. That "unconscious" coaching is commonplace does not mean that it necessarily influences the employee's self-talk in a positive way. To lead is to realize that good intent is a fickle companion and that what a manager⁷ does is always more important than anything he/she might say!

8. **Context is everything.** The coaching conversation must reflect a full appreciation of the business context. "Context" describes: (1) The way things

7 In my work, the terms "manager" and "leader" are interchangeable. That is to say, managers lead and leaders manage.

get done today; and (2) The organization culture we need to create around here. In an uncertain world, organizations need both a strong and an agile culture (StrAgility). At the very heart of what is being described as "culture" lies the organization's story. Culture is story and story is culture! Surfacing and building commitment to the organization's story draws on five central questions: (1) Why do we do what we do? (2) Where are we heading as an organization (strategy)?⁸ (3) What do we believe in (values, beliefs)? (4) What makes us special (Why does the customer choose us)? and (5) How does what we do make a difference in people's lives (meaning)? When shaped by a common and engaging story, coaching is a powerful (essential) force in creating, as we must, tomorrow's organization, today. Movement with confidence is difficult when the lighting is dim. Coaching with integrity is problematical when the organization's story remains untold.

9. **A coaching culture.** "Context" also embraces the reality that coaching success is strongly influenced by the overall support for coaching within the organization. A "coaching culture" is enacted when top managers consistently display coaching skills; the performance management process gives equal weight to the results (what) and performance (how); and coaching capability is factored into compensation, selection, promotion and succession decisions. "Don't hire someone who can't coach!" Important as that statement was a decade ago, with

millennials in the majority and iGen employees in the ascendancy, what was merely desirable is now an imperative.

10. **Trapped by what went before.** What holds people back isn't lack of desire or the need for a dream. What makes the ordinary inevitable is being trapped by past success; by continuing to do what we have always done; by taking the safe option. The coachee is given permission to take the path less travelled when: (1) The manager or team leader makes challenging the status quo ... the status quo; (2) When he/she encourages and affirms the first hesitant new steps the coachee takes; (3) When he/she shares stories and introduces examples into the team that transcend the way things have always been; and (4) When he/she makes change an everyday event - not an aberration. The opportunity to bring ongoing "change" to the team is found in how meetings are conducted, the way learning is enacted, the extent to which candour thrives, the vehicles through which the customer's voice is heard, how celebration unfolds - and who gets hired. Striving to be more (or not) is influenced by the enduring messages that bubble up from the informal organization! Only those who believe they can, will. Only those who believe in themselves, do. Only those who embrace change - ride the waves of possibility. To coach is to encourage others to be all they can be. It is to reinforce the need to be bold. In an environment where the only thing that is certain is that tomorrow will be different, to coach is to enable the coachee to uncover his/her own will to sustain.⁹

⁸ In the majority of organizations the way strategy is presented often does little to engage/inspire those - especially middle managers - who have to enact it. The future lies in strategy delivered as a story.

⁹ In Finland this quality is referred to as, "sisu." Sisu is about perseverance - the will to sustain - a life lived that draws on strength, courage and spirit.

11. Tomorrow will be different. The roots of modern business practice and theory lie in scientific discovery. As a result, organizations in both Europe and North America have historically emphasized analytical thinking, a well laid out plan that follows a series of sequential steps and the ability to solve problems. Tomorrow's success will, of necessity, give equal weight to an ability to interpret emerging patterns, creatively challenging the status quo, innovation, and the role of design. In a turbulent world, masterful coaching connects the science of management with the art of leadership. It weaves knowledge and intuition into a rich and vibrant tapestry. And when the facts, flair and feel are factored into the facilitation, it forges a holistic relationship between the left and right brain. Whole brain thinking is found in leaders who are comfortable with being uncomfortable, who display leadership reach (move easily across different cultures), who recognize the transformative nature of a great question and who understand that to be a team leader means to work **for** the team.

12. Four forms of coaching. There are four forms of coaching: (1) Performance coaching (success in the current role); (2) Developmental coaching (success in a bigger or different role); (3) Coaching in how to coach; and (4) In-the-moment coaching. Performance coaching is exclusively the prerogative of the manager or team leader.¹⁰ Developmental coaching, on the other hand, often benefits from involving an

external coach.¹¹ The best opportunities for in-the-moment coaching invariably happen by accident. "In-the-moment coaching" is brought to life by an attitude that is far more about reinforcing what is already working than it is about seeking to continuously point out where, and in what ways, the employee has stumbled. To coach is to be optimistic. It's to catch people doing it right. Cheering works!

13. To coach is to care.¹² Any meaningful coaching process has five acts: (1) A positive example by the team leader (the quality of direction); (2) Managing expectations (the script) (3) The degree and nature of support from the rest of the team (the supporting cast); (4) Monitoring performance (the play unfolds); and (5) Providing ongoing feedback (at its best, direction that allows the actor to monitor his/her own performance). Coaching amounts to little more than good intentions, however, unless a common purpose, trust, humility, listening, mutual respect, integrity, openness, honesty and caring describes the emotional wellspring that all of the cast can draw on. Meanwhile, issues of personal conflict and business disagreement must be resolved before any meaningful "production" can take place.

14. The 4-Ds of leadership. The silent hand that guides every coaching interaction is the sure knowledge that, to succeed, every employee needs (not merely wants)

¹⁰ Exceptions include an executive moving into the organization from the outside, a situation where the immediate manager-one-level-up resides in a different country to the coachee, or where the coachee is the CEO.

¹¹ The "external" coach must complement the leadership initiatives of the immediate manager and/or team leader. That does not mean that the confidentiality needed for trust to be established (between coach and coachee) should be set aside.

¹² For more on leadership and caring see: *Tomorrow Will Be Different – Will You?* (2019/2020). John O. Burdett.

four things: (1) Direction (where are we heading?); (2) The Discipline of Delivery (clarity regarding the role, unambiguous goals, ongoing feedback); (3) Development (personal growth leading to currency in the job market); and that (4) The day-to-day Dialogue is underscored by fairness, authenticity and caring. In that they are part of the same, integrated performance framework, to be found wanting in any of these is to be short changed in them all.¹³

15. Passion. Mastery in coaching is to turn good workers into great employees and high performers into those who will leave a legacy. The magic elixir that brings this about is "passion." Passion is to PASS Inspiration ON. Leaders inspire when they: (1) Make "tomorrow" come alive in the room today; (2) Project the belief that the coachee will (not might or could) exceed their own expectations; (3) Display a compelling drive to learn; and (4) Overtly model the change they want to bring about. To coach is to know that to inspire others we ourselves have to be inspired.

16. Clarity around roles and outcomes. Unless the responsibilities, authority and outcomes for the coachee's role are clear, confusion is the best that can be hoped for. Defining success in the role is best realized by building a scorecard. A robust scorecard is defined, initially, by the agreed financial goals for the role.

¹³ To read more on the 4-Ds of performance success see: *My Homework Ate The Dog: Leadership In An Upside Down World*, John O. Burdett (2011). In an earlier work, *New Role, New Reality!* John O. Burdett (2000), the 4-Ds were framed as the Head, the Hand, the Heart, and the Spirit. The Head, the Hand, the Heart and the Spirit still remain at the core of my own work.

Ideally,¹⁴ four elements of value creation roll up to deliver those financial goals: (1) Outward looking aspects of the role, e.g., the customer and/or the marketplace; (2) Inward looking activities, e.g., productivity, process improvement, cost savings; (3) The people dimension, e.g., team and individual development, talent acquisition, succession; and (4) Social contribution, e.g., sustainability, the environment, building bridges to the local community.¹⁵

17. Organizational values. Values, both personal and organizational, are the unspoken subtext that bleed into every coaching conversation. In times of uncertainty the organization's values determine what has primacy. When opportunity beckons, those same values give people permission to act. When the coachee displays or suggests behaviour that contradicts or works against the organization's values, the coach must speak up. Not to confront such suggested behaviour is to give permission. If the coach's own behaviour is not congruent with the espoused values, coaching becomes an act of manipulation. Nothing kills trust faster than a sense of being finessed or maneuvered. Coaching is a bias-free zone.

18. Who to coach? The highly lauded GE performance grid provides a useful framework in answering the question, Who to coach? Those who live the organization's values and consistently deliver performance, benefit by being

¹⁴ The term "ideally" is used because traditional notions of a scorecard often overlook the social contribution from the role.

¹⁵ An important coaching contribution is to ask the coachee to describe how his/her role creates value. It's surprising how many senior managers can't fully answer that question.

truly stretched and *Challenged*. Those who live the organization's values, but do not always consistently deliver results, represent an untapped resource that, at least initially, should be *Coached*. Those who consistently deliver results but do not live the values must be *Confronted*. And those who neither live the values nor deliver results have to be *Changed*.

19. High performers. Three facts of life come to the fore when coaching high performers: (1) If you don't coach your best people they will find a way to work for someone who does; (2) High contributors are turned on by working with other high contributors - and turned off by those who don't pull their weight; and (3) The best way to create extraordinary performance is to expect extraordinary performance. As a coach you know when you're connecting with your high performers - they ask to be coached.

20. Listening. To coach is to listen in the way you have always wanted to be listened to. It's to care. It's to find the silence within. It's to be a full partner in the dance. It's to listen for and not simply listen to. It's to be aware of what isn't said, as much as what is. It's to listen for intent and in doing so extract the underlying meaning. It's to interpret and decode the signals that remain unspoken. It's to listen not just with the ears but with the whole body. When the coach is listening, really listening, rapport is a natural outcome. Only when we listen to others can we start to part the layer of anxiety that prevents us from listening to ourselves. Coaching is a fear-free zone.

21. It's not about the coach. Coaching is servant leadership personified. That is to

say, the performance opportunity for the employee must always take precedence over the emotional needs of the coach. Insofar as coaching is concerned, three terms capture the essence of servant leadership. The first being *empathy*: striving to see the world through the coachee's eyes. The second is straight from Jobs' early playbook: *impute*. The signals the coach throws off (image, comfort with self, professionalism, and perceived agenda) strongly influence the coachee's willingness to adapt. "Packaging" and "ease of use out of the box" matter! The third term is *simplicity*. To be simple is to strip away everything that is unnecessary. And herein lies "the rub," because something is simple does not necessarily mean it is easy. To be a coach is to know that complexity is a safe harbour for those who lack a deep understanding of the topic.

22. A coaching template. In building on the belief that the coaching conversation follows a series of predetermined, sequential steps, many of the coaching models that are out there are somewhat misleading. That said, there is genuine value in being able to mentally access a template that allows the coach, in real time, to navigate the coaching conversation with elegance and simplicity. My own experience is that there are six building blocks to a successful coaching conversation.¹⁶ Pieces of the puzzle that, like a jigsaw, can be put down in any order. All of the pieces need to be played, however, before the picture fully emerges. In a purely logical sequence, the six building blocks are as follows: (1)

¹⁶ For more on coaching template see: *Leaders Must Lead!* John O. Burdett (2003). See also, *New Role, New Reality!* John O. Burdett (2000).

What is the issue or challenge (the first issue that comes up is often not the real issue)? (2) What does tomorrow's success look like (mental rehearsal, imagine, be there, play the video)? (3) What is happening today (validate reality and understand how we got here.¹⁷ Whose support is needed? What's working today – if anything – that we can do more of)? (4) What is the one thing that, were we to work on it, would make the greatest difference (focus)? (5) Agree on goals, the resources needed and future outcomes (forging and validating commitment). and (6) Specifically, when and how will progress towards the agreed upon goals be reviewed (accountability)? To coach is to know that, like much else in life, we go faster ... when we go slower.

- 23. How the coach turns up.** The first few minutes of any coaching conversation are pivotally important. It is when trust takes its first formative steps. A successful coach is thus always "tuned-in" to how he/she "turns-up": prepared, relaxed, attentive, non-judgmental, ready to listen, and committed to be a full partner in the conversation. To coach is to develop a beginner's mind. It is to be open to be surprised. It is to purge the thought process of all those "brilliant solutions" the coach absolutely knows will work. Most important of all, those first minutes reveal what the coach believes. And what the coach believes is what the employee perceives. What the coach communicates non-verbally determines, in no small measure, the

success of the coaching conversation. The foundation of that belief system is that the coach enter the conversation with a mindset that assumes the coachee is capable, complete, and committed. Anything less is to be part of the problem. Preparing for the conversation is helped when the coach follows one or two simple rituals: pre-determined routines that cue (prompt) the coach to be "in the moment." To coach is to know that a smile signals that you want to be there; a frown that you would rather be someplace else. Relax. Smile!

24. All relationships are about power.

There are a number of meaningful conversations that take place at work. "I want you to..." (tell and listen: *power over*). "I need you to ... because" (tell and sell: *empathetic, power over*). "Let's sit down and between us figure out the best way forward" (problem solving: *power with*). The three scenarios outlined are all perfectly legitimate and value adding conversations - but they are not coaching. To coach is to move beyond problem solving. It assumes ownership of the problem or opportunity lies with the employee (*power to*). To that end, advice or suggestion, no matter how well meant, limit growth, possibility and commitment. Coaching, especially with high performers, is an advice-free zone!

25. When mentoring enters the picture.

Coaching is anchored in the basic, underpinning belief that given the opportunity, the coachee will get it right. That does not mean the coach should never share his/her experience. Clearly, if the employee has explored all of the options available (as he/she sees it) and still doesn't have a clear idea about how to act, it would be foolish for the coach

¹⁷ Ideally, coaching should focus on the future. There are times, however, and especially in development coaching, when helping the coachee draw out and learn from the path that led to today is an invaluable coaching contribution.

to let the coachee, as it were, dangle in the wind. This is especially the case, if the coach is a seasoned performer with hands-on experience in the aspect of performance being discussed. Here we need to distinguish between advice and story. Providing advice inevitably shifts the power in the relationship back to the coach. However, if the coach shares his/her experience with the employee in a relevant and engaging story, the dynamic in the coaching relationship remains "power-to." To coach is to know that while negative stories may inform, only positive stories inspire.

26. Turning the vision into action. The coach and the coachee should ideally share their long-term vision of success as part of defining the role. This in no way negates the value of revisiting and/or reconfirming that vision as part of the coaching conversation. Coaching takes off when the coachee not only understands and buys into the vision, but when he/she knows how his/her contribution brings that vision to life. To coach is to connect the dream with the deadline.¹⁸

27. All learning starts with a question. Asking the right questions is far more important than "being right." There are five themes that define masterful enquiry: (1) A great question frames what the questioner wants - not what he/she doesn't want. "What are you going to do starting tomorrow to be at work on time?" Not, "Why were you late five times in the past month?" The former starts to build a positive outcome. The latter generates an unhelpful and

invariably frustrating conversation about being late. (2) A great question eschews the ordinary and connects the employee to a time when he/she was (or will be) in flow.¹⁹ "Tell me about a time you excelled when pursuing a similar goal?" "Consider the challenge we have been discussing. If you were working on that goal and you were at your very best, if time were to pass without you knowing it, what would you be doing?" (3) A great question brings clarity to today's reality. "If, in delighting ABC Company six months from now our performance were to be adjudged a '10,' how would you score, on the same 1 - 10 scale, our support to ABC Company over the past three months?" One of the most celebrated "reality" questions was when Steve Jobs asked John Skulley, "Do you want to sell sugared water for the rest of your life? Or do you want to come with me and change the world?" (4) A great question helps the coachee break the issues or opportunity down into smaller, more manageable chunks. "With the outcomes we have been discussing in mind, what do you believe can be achieved in the next ten days?" (5) A great question moves the coachee into action. "Think of someone you know and admire who is exceptionally talented in this area. What would he/she suggest you to do first?" The best questions are simple: open rather than closed (a closed question is one that can be answered with a "yes," or "no"); make the listener think about the issue in a

¹⁸ This follows a quote from Napoleon Hill: "A vision is a dream with a deadline."

¹⁹ "Flow" is a term coined by Hungarian psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi and refers to a time when each of us are performing at our very best; a peak experience; a time when concentration and self-absorption means we lose ourselves in our work. Csikszentmihalyi equates this feeling to one of being happy.

new way; and use language the coachee is comfortable with. "Why?" triggers a defensive response. Silence is often the best question of all. Question: "On a scale of 1 - 10, where '10' is a measure of excellence, how would those who report to you score your ongoing coaching of them? What will you be doing that you are not doing now when, a year from now, your team, individually and collectively, adjudges you to be a '10.' To achieve that aim, what specifically are you going to start to do differently on Monday?"

28. Candour. Input into the coaching conversation that draws on behaviour that is less than positive should be delivered with candour, honesty and sensitivity. It should also be based on "evidence" that is relevant, recent, and well-founded. When the truth remains hidden, lack of respect becomes a given. That does not mean that "truth" should be wielded like a scythe. When we take away hope we strip people of dignity. Describe the event and the outcome but never denigrate, diminish or belittle the individual.

29. Every conversation is different. The coach must approach every coaching conversation as if it were a new conversation. This is especially true when employees from different multigenerational cohorts are part of the mix. Attitudes, assumptions, needs, and style of communication differ between these groups. As an example, whereas the "boomer generation" still set a high need for security and stability, GenX employees invariably want to exercise greater control over their career. Meanwhile, their millennial counterparts, all-too-often, want more influence over lifestyle issues

... including the environment. The explosion of Gig employment is but one facet of this. Recognize also that different generational cohorts have an entirely different mindset about the use and accessibility of technology. By the same token, don't fall into the trap of thinking that executives in Asia will come to the coaching conversation with the same set of assumptions as their European or North American counterparts.

30. Coaching the CEO. Coaching at the top of the house is infused with its own challenge. CEOs, for example, respond to a process that reflects the complexity, strategic nature and "clock speed" of the role. For the coach this means an ability to think at a high level of abstraction,²⁰ mental agility, and the business maturity needed to penetrate the defensive veil that often goes with survival at the top. And if the role has an international mandate, a coach who sees the world through a purely domestic lens is of little value. To coach at the top is to be a "strategic thinking partner." To win; to be afforded ICE-time at this level is all about: Ideas - Challenge - Empathy.²¹

31. The "F" word. Focus. The outcome of the coaching conversation isn't simply a plan; it's to forge a mandate for action! It's conversation where the end product is a commitment to do something. Not think about it. Not try. Not explore new ways to act. Not reflect and then determine the next potential steps. To coach is to **focus** on and agree on

²⁰ Level of abstraction describes: (1) the capacity for over-the-horizon thinking; (2) the ability to unbundle complexity; and (3) the use of language rich in metaphor, imagery and story.

²¹ Ice-time is an ice hockey reference. The best players are given the most ice-time.

specifically what will be achieved and by when ... and orchestrate follow-up. Coaching without follow-up is a bridge to nowhere. Meanwhile, although both affirmation and celebrating successes are integral to ongoing coaching effectiveness, the time, place and rapport that underscores follow-up and feedback inevitably determine its impact. Finally, if the coaching has been carried out with purpose, honesty, empathy and focus, but the agreed upon change hasn't happened, it can be assumed the employee is either in the wrong role - or in the wrong organization. Leaders must lead!

- 32. Clarity.** Unless the behavioral change as agreed in the coaching conversation is: (1) Unambiguously defined; (2) A challenge the coachee is truly committed to and (3) Complemented by a tough-minded attitude on the part of the coach regarding the consequences of not changing - little can, or will, change. To coach is to be tough-minded.
- 33. Humility.** Before change can occur there must be a will to change, a capability to act in the way agreed, and the opportunity to practise the new behaviour. To coach is to keep in mind that without reflection there is no learning. As central to agreeing to the next steps, the coach should ask of him/herself, "What do I need to do differently?" Beginnings start with endings. Letting go is always the first step in adopting a new way to be. To coach is to be humble.
- 34. When the coachee is stuck.** If the employee appears unable to move forward, the coach must determine if the problem is "can't do" or "won't do." Interventions that enable the

coachee to get "unstuck" include: new knowledge, new skills, creating time for reflection, introducing a new metaphor,* and reframing the conversation by tapping into something the employee is passionate about. Where the employee still appears to be wedded to the status quo, to coach is to clearly outline the consequences of not changing. *Note: the term "metaphor" here moves beyond traditional uses of the word and includes robust, conceptual models; introducing best practice from elsewhere; and right brain language that forces the listener to "imagine." A metaphor is like shooting an image straight into the brain. The challenge: the mind can't negate - it can only run on the images we give it. When we say, "Let's get rid of the silos" what the listener thinks about is silos. What we are going to get more of is, more silos! By comparison, when we say, "We need to create a boundaryless organization" what the listener is compelled to think about is a world without silos. Daniel Pink, the best-selling US business author, reminds us that, although a picture may be worth a thousand words, the right metaphor is worth a thousand pictures.

- 35. Defensive routines.** An indication the employee lacks either the resources or the will to redefine possibility is found in the language that surfaces. To coach is thus to be especially cognizant of "defensive routines." The latter is manifest in comments such as, "It's not my job," "We have never done it that way," and/or "If only ..." Being drawn into defensive routines is to enter a black hole of negativity and mediocrity. To coach is to put the responsibility on the coachee to act. To that end, a great question to ask when faced with many

defensive routines is simply, "What are you going to do about it?"

36. Coaching isn't for everyone. Not all employees can be or want to be coached. Those who lack the capacity to openly examine and discuss their own performance are ill-equipped to coach others. Under no circumstances should an employee (regardless of level) who is not open to be coached, be promoted.

37. Moving to leadership of self. Coaching often works best when it moves from the known to the unknown; from that which is relatively safe to those areas which the coachee would often prefer to remain hidden. What this means in practice (and especially with senior executives) is that the coaching conversation moves from: (1) Issues that impact the broader organization - to (2) Leadership of others and opportunities and/or problems faced by the team - to (3) Leadership-of-self. It is unlikely that orchestrating this flow can be achieved within one conversation. The real coaching payoff, of course, lies in a conversation where leadership-of-self becomes the topic of discussion. Before any of us can become the hero/heroine in our own story, we have to first discover who we are!

38. The three arenas of success. Leadership-of-self invariably focuses on one, or more, of the following: (1) Rebalancing personal priorities, e.g., health, family, work; (2) Uncovering blind spots; and (3) Reworking the three arenas of success. The latter encompasses: (a) The arena of *influence* (with whom do I need to build strong, two-way relationships to deliver the agreed upon outcomes?); (b) The arena of *opportunity* (with whom do I need to build strong, two-way

relationships to move my performance to the next level?); and (c) The arena of *caution* (with whom do I need to build strong, two-way relationships to provide an early warning of potential pitfalls and emerging "political" realities?). One of the pitfalls of success is that the higher in the hierarchy, the greater one's actions are magnified. If you are a top executive, working the three arenas is thus also about getting a real sense of how your approach, style, and actions are perceived by middle managers. Many an executive has stumbled because he/she misread that all-so-important connection to the one group that can make the business strategy more than a plan. Naturally, the three arenas of success will include people both within, and external to, the organization.²²

39. Coaching the team. Individual coaching without reference to the team is the business equivalent of building the upper structure of the house without knowing anything about the foundations. Coaching the team builds on five principles: (1) The peer team is the group through which the coachee makes the greatest potential contribution; (2) Leadership in practice is, more-often-than-not, a simple expediency drawn out of the opportunity on hand; (3) Team effectiveness builds on two interwoven strands of DNA - one describing outcomes, the other defining how the team works together; (4) Collaboration is a noble aim that has little chance of being enacted without generosity of spirit; and (5) Great teams support each other while, at the same time, provide space

²² For more on building a constituency see: *Without Breaking Stride: Moving successfully into your new role.* John O. Burdett (2009).

for individual contribution. Step one in coaching the individual is to first coach the team. Performance success should never be viewed purely through the lens of the leader's personal performance. What really counts is the contribution, speed of action, idea generation, growth, and influence of the team. The building block of any great organization is the team. Thus, the first question the leader should ask when things are not as they should be is, "What do I need to do differently?" Regardless of the role, putting one's STAMP on the team is all about: Simplicity, Transparency, Action bias, Managing up, and Putting the needs of the team first. Team members coaching each other is often the most impactful form of coaching.

40. Team trust. Two forms of trust shape team performance: organizational trust and interpersonal trust. Of the two, the former is the more important. In building trust with other teams, there are five things those on the team must know: (1) The culture the wider organization is seeking to build; (2) Why customers choose us - and how that will change. (3) The building blocks of a winning mindset; (4) The speed of action moving forward - and how that will change; and (5) The strategy and agreed upon outcomes of both the team one-level-up and peer teams.²³ Organization trust is the gateway to a culture of innovation.

²³ For more on teams, teamwork and building organization trust see: *My Homework Ate The Dog: Leadership In An Upside Down World*. John O. Burdett (2011). See also *TEAM*, John O. Burdett (2015).

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COACHING QUESTIONS

Questions

A GREAT QUESTION



WHAT DO YOU WANT TO TAKE AWAY FROM THIS CONVERSATION?

1(a). What is the business issue or opportunity?

- 1 In terms of success in your current role, what opportunities do you sense are being overlooked?

- 2 If your business was held to be an example of sustained excellence, what would you be doing that you are not doing now?

- 3 What single goal represents your highest priority? What is the most critical thing you need to do to deliver on that goal?

- 4 What one thing would you like to change about your work situation?

- 5 In your field of endeavour, what are other organizations doing that you really admire? What would you have to do to bring those qualities and characteristics to your work?

- 6 In terms of goals, priorities and personal development, what did you take away from your most recent performance discussion?

- 7 In terms of goals, priorities and personal development, what did you take away from the most recent engagement survey?

- 8 What would it take to make your part of the business more customer-centric? What role can you play in bringing that about?

- 9 Ultimately, the only thing that differentiates one business from another is its culture. Moving forward, what culture do you need around here? What role can you play in making that happen?

- 10 In what part of your mandate has performance slippage been most likely? What will you do to avoid that possibility in the future?

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO TAKE AWAY
FROM THIS CONVERSATION?

1(b). What is the team issue or opportunity?

- 11** What concerns do you have about the team you currently manage?
-
- 12** Specifically, what are you doing to develop your successor? How are you testing his/her capability?
-
- 13** How can you better define the “direction” for the team?
-
- 14** How and in what ways could you bring additional emphasis to the “delivery of discipline” on the team?
-
- 15** What more do you need to do to develop the people on your team?
-
- 16** What one relationship inside the team, were it to be taken to a higher level, would have the greatest impact on the team’s performance?
-
- 17** What will make “the customer’s voice” better heard by the team?
-
- 18** Who on the team do you have to *challenge*? (stretch and develop); *coach*? (improve current performance); *confront*? (doesn’t live the values)? Who do you need to *change*?
-
- 19** Candour, openness and team spirit depend heavily on the leader’s willingness to be vulnerable. How could you be more vulnerable?
-
- 20** “Life style” is becoming ever-more important to younger employees. What are you personally doing to project work-life balance?
-

WHAT DO YOU WANT TO TAKE AWAY FROM THIS CONVERSATION?

1(c). What is the personal issue or opportunity?

21 What are your priorities? Are you living a life that is in line with those priorities? What changes are you going to make?

22 Describe the best boss you ever had. What made him/her special? What can you do to become the best boss *your* current team ever had?

23 Describe the two or three times when you stumbled or changed course. What did you learn from those events? How are you employing that learning?

24 Outstanding leaders leave a legacy. What do you want your legacy to be?

25 No one makes it on their own. Identify the 10 – 15 “must have” people in your personal network. Which of those relationships needs to be worked on?

26 Have you identified your target role inside the organization? Beyond what you are already doing, what can you do to make moving into that role a strong possibility?

27 People don’t care what you know until they know that you care. What more could you do to show that you care?

28 What is the one thing you know in your heart of hearts you need to let go of?

29 Those who don’t grow are going backwards. In what ways have you personally grown in the past six months? What more do you need to do?

30 Life without meaning is a life that is unfulfilled. What are you doing to give back?

2. What does future success look like?

- 31** If you could wave a magic wand and things were exactly as you would want them to be – what would be happening?
-
- 32** Move into the future. Be there! Create the video that captures the success you are seeking. Describe in as much detail as possible what's happening in the video.
-
- 33** Every compelling story has a hero and a heroine. Moving forward, other than yourself, who are the heroines and heroes in your story?
-
- 34** Describe the change you need to bring about through the eyes of a key customer. What would the customer see? What would future success look like to the customer?
-
- 35** Tomorrow is a canvas. If you paint the picture of tomorrow's success, what images and colours dominate? Who are the key characters? What role do each of them play?
-
- 36** The story of your success is already written: (1) Describe the context; (2) Outline the dilemma or opportunity; (3) What did you do to succeed? (4) Who else was involved? (5) What did you learn along the way?
-
- 37** Mindsets: What mindset dominates today? What overriding mindset is needed within the business to support success in the issue or opportunity outlined?
-
- 38** If you knew you couldn't fail; if you acted without fear – what would the future you are seeking to create look and sound like?
-
- 39** In delivering tomorrow's success, are any other parts of the business disadvantaged or set back? What, where, who and how?
-
- 40** How would the future unfold if you simply left things exactly the way they are; if you continued to do things the way you have always done them?
-

3. What's happening today?

41 What led to the current situation?

42 What would a knowledgeable observer say you have already done?

43 What part of the challenge is already being delivered at a level of excellence?

44 When you are at your very best, when you are in flow, when you lose yourself to the work – what are you doing?

45 In terms of the opportunity or challenge being described, what have you observed that worked for others?

46 Don't worry about what you can't do. Focus on what you can! What aspects of the challenge lie within your area of responsibility?

47 With the opportunity or dilemma in mind, who else on the team has a deep-seated, vested interest in your success?

48 Who can you count on for support? Who do you need to add to your network? How are you going to reinforce that network?

49 What are you truly proud of in your current role?

50 What will be the consequences for the rest of the team of not bringing about the change needed?

4. What is the one thing that, were the coachee to work on it, would make the greatest difference?

- 51** If tomorrow's success were a *ten*, on a scale of 1-10, how would you score today's situation? What can you build on? What do you need to do to turn a *five* into a *nine*?
-
- 52** If you were going to do only one thing, what action would make the greatest difference?
-
- 53** What options appear to be available?
-
- 54** What does your intuition tell you to do?
-
- 55** What outcome would give you the greatest satisfaction?
-
- 56** If you knew you couldn't fail, what would you do?
-
- 57** What are you doing when you feel you are really tapping into your core strengths? In moving ahead, how can you do more of that work?
-
- 58** It might not have been perfect but, faced with a similar challenge, what worked for you in the past?
-
- 59** If someone you really admire were to give you some advice on this topic, what would that advice be?
-
- 60** With regards to the issue being described, what's already working some of the time, in some places?
-

4. What is the one thing that, were the coachee to work on it, would make the greatest difference?

61 Who could you talk to who would be able to add to your understanding of the issue?

62 Stop, clear your mind. Count to ten. What image first pops into your mind? What does that image convey about the suggestions your non-conscious mind is giving you?

63 What resources and/or personal skills are you not fully utilizing?

64 Think of the best boss you have ever had; how would he/she move forward?

65 Congratulations, you have moved beyond or around the barriers that stand in the way of delivering against the challenge on hand. What did you do?

66 What will you do to bring the naysayers and cynics into the tent?

67 Assume your day-to-day behaviour is fully aligned with the actions you propose. What adjustments and/or shifts did you make?

68 Thinking back, what would you add to or change about the steps and approaches you have already tried with regard to this issue?

69 In what ways would the challenge you face be made easier if you were leading a world-class team?

70 What do you need to do to ensure the message carried on the “grapevine” is supportive of your success?

4. What is the one thing that, were the coachee to work on it, would make the greatest difference?

- 71** What (new) symbolism would help to ease the change path? How would you introduce that symbolism?
-
- 72** As you move into the future, what do you suggest would be the “tipping point?” That is to say, what key action is likely to be the difference that makes a difference?
-
- 73** What new language do you need to bring to the situation? For “language” read “a sense of optimism,” “appropriate metaphors,” and the use of “story.”
-
- 74** Taking others with you means that you have to be an inspiring presence. Specifically, how are you going to inspire those you need to buy-in to your agenda?
-
- 75** What have you learned from those who have worked towards a similar outcome?
-
- 76** How much support will you receive from the rest of the team? How can you build even greater support?
-
- 77** How would you describe to your best customer each of the key steps you are about to make?
-
- 78** In that they see with fresh eyes, what would the newest members of your team want you to do?
-
- 79** As you move forward, what organizational values do you have to be especially vigilant about?
-
- 80** What is your contingency plan should your biggest concerns come to pass?
-

5. Agree on goals and the resources needed

81 How will you know when you are successful?

82 What specifically are you going to do tomorrow to move towards achieving the agreed upon outcome?

83 What specifically will you have achieved a week from now, a month from now, three months from now?

84 Are you are totally committed to the outcome(s) we have agreed on? Convince me.

85 Are there any aspects of the challenge you face where new skills or new knowledge are needed? How are those going to be sourced?

86 What additional resources, if any, do you need to accomplish the agreed upon goal?

87 How important to you personally is success on this issue?

88 In redefining priorities, there is a tendency for other key objectives to be pushed to one side. How are you going to avoid that dilemma?

89 When are you going to let me have a succinct write-up of what we have agreed on?

90 Nowhere in the dictionary does it say “commitment” means doing your best! Describe the likely consequences of not delivering the agreed upon outcome?

6. Feedback, commitment and accountability

91 When are you going to get back to me and let me know how things are going?

92 When should we next meet?

93 What mechanism do you have in place such that you have an early warning if things go off track?

94 Define how the customer will benefit from the actions you plan to take?

95 What are you going to do to make sure that the early burst of energy needed to pull this off is maintained?

96 What are you going to do to keep the rest of the team in the loop?

97 Do you have any suggestions as to how you like to receive feedback?

98 How and in what ways can the customer be brought into the feedback loop?

99 How are you going to celebrate success?

100 What are you taking away from this conversation?



HOW GOOD A COACH ARE YOU?

18 uniquely challenging holes of golf



John O. Burdett

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Coaching: a leadership imperative

In a world where engagement and learning are central to competitiveness, those who do not or cannot coach are ill-equipped to wear the mantle of leadership. And it's not just individuals who benefit from coaching; extraordinary team performance is driven by extraordinary coaching, both from leaders and other team members.

The “golf course” gives you a benchmark against which to evaluate your own coaching capability. Play your round of golf and mark your score after each hole. Where you shoot par or under – congratulations. Where you fall foul of a hazard, or make a bad shot, there is work ahead.

The questions and ideas have been drawn out of discussion with, and observation of, outstanding (business) coaches from around the world. Each question represents a key element of effective business coaching. The questions are self-explanatory. The “score card comments” have been included to enable those playing the course to better understand the thinking behind the design of each hole and the underlying learning suggested. Focus on how you believe others see you, not on how you would like to act. Keep track of your score. We have a clear sky and the forecast is that the rain will hold off. It's a great day for a winning round of golf.

The scoring is simple. If you score par on a par four hole your score for that hole is four. One over par and your score is five ... and so on.



SCORE CARD COMMENTS #1

Coaching is not a cure all. It's about modifying behaviour, not about changing the person. It embraces understanding, caring, curiosity and listening, but should not be confused with counselling. Chronic absenteeism, anger management and/or personality problems lie within the realm of counselling.

This is not to marginalize the role of emotion in the coaching experience. There are two important qualifiers, however:

1. The coachee must be allowed to set the emotional agenda; the coach must learn how to follow; and
2. The emotions we are seeking to uncover are those that underscore possibility, self-confidence, pride, passion, determination and the will to win.



SUNNINGDALE
465 YARDS



STATEMENT

PAR 4

I clearly understand the difference between coaching and counselling.

SCORE

Always	<input type="checkbox"/>	Par	<div></div>
Mostly	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor lie <i>Bogey (1 over par)</i>	
Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sand trap <i>Double bogey (2 over par)</i>	
Hardly ever	<input type="checkbox"/>	In the rough <i>Triple bogey (3 over par)</i>	



WINGED FOOT
453 YARDS

STATEMENT

PAR 4

My whole approach to coaching is skewed heavily to uncovering where the employee excels and then putting into place an agenda that allows him/her to do more of what they are already good at.

SCORE

Always	<input type="checkbox"/>	Par	<div></div>
Mostly	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor lie <i>Bogey (1 over par)</i>	
Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sand trap <i>Double bogey (2 over par)</i>	
Hardly ever	<input type="checkbox"/>	In the water <i>Triple bogey (3 over par)</i>	

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #2

A winning coach creates value by tapping into the coachee's potential, by surfacing what he/she is passionate about and by inspiring the coachee to act. Coaching at its best is about uncovering and building on what's working – even if it happens only some of the time.

Focusing on what is missing is like colouring inside the lines; it hobbles the conversation and restricts what is possible. Mastery in coaching means accessing the whole canvas, moving beyond past practice and the status quo.

Coaching allows the employee to stand tall, and exploit his/her potential. Working to limit weakness is a great way to foster survival. Sadly, it does little to identify and nurture the capacity for excellence that lies within each of us.

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #3

The coach is faced with the reality that team behaviour, team norms, and team censure are powerful forces in shaping and reinforcing (or not) individual behaviour. Coaching at an individual level is significantly enriched where:

- The team's vision and strategy are clear;
- Psychological safety is a way of life;
- Each team member understands his/her own role; and the role of everyone else on the team;
- Speed of action and "stretch" are ever-present rallying cries;
- Trust underscores everything the team does;
- Team interaction is marked by respect, optimism, openness and candour;
- Self-serving agendas are challenged; and
- We measure team effectiveness.



ROYAL
COUNTY DOWN
473 YARDS



STATEMENT

PAR 4

I have a well-earned reputation for coaching the team.

SCORE

Always ☐ Par

Mostly ☐ Poor lie *Bogey (1 over par)*

Sometimes ☐ Bad swing *Double bogey (2 over par)*

Hardly ever ☐ Lost in the heather *Triple bogey (3 over par)*



CONGRESSIONAL
470 YARDS

STATEMENT

PAR 4

As a coach I change my approach to reflect the coachee's life stage, learning orientation and the organizational culture out of which he/she operates.

SCORE

Always ☐ Great putt *Birdie (1 under par)*

Mostly ☐ Poor lie *Bogey (1 over par)*

Sometimes ☐ Sand trap *Double bogey (2 over par)*

Hardly ever ☐ Two lost balls *Quadruple bogey (4 over par)*

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #4

Cultural reach means recognizing that the career stage, multigenerational differences, approach to learning, energy, work-family balance and resilience are important coaching considerations.

Cultural reach also embraces the various sub-cultures inside the same organization. In one part of the organization, hierarchy, strict controls and short-term results rule.

Elsewhere a significant degree of freedom to act and a culture where new ideas, rather than short-term results, dominate.

In a third part of the business speed, extensive strategic partnerships, innovation, collaboration and temporary teams are the order of the day.

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #5

It is helpful to think about the coaching conversation as benefiting from one of four quite different approaches.

1. Those who deliver results and live the organization's values. The need: development coaching. **Challenge!**
2. Those who live the values but don't consistently deliver results. The need: performance coaching. **Coach!**
3. Those who deliver results but don't always live the values. The need: honest and candid feedback. **Confront!**
4. Those who neither deliver results nor live the values. The need: the individual in question is either in the wrong role or the wrong organization. **Change!**



WHISTLING STRAITS
584 YARDS



STATEMENT

PAR 5

I know when to challenge, when to coach, when to confront and when to make a change.

SCORE

Always ☐ Par

Mostly ☐ Poor lie *Bogey (1 over par)*

Sometimes ☐ Sand trap *Double bogey (2 over par)*

Hardly ever ☐ In the water *Triple bogey (3 over par)*



OLYMPIC
437 YARDS

STATEMENT

PAR 4

As a coach I am highly attentive to my language. And knowing how imagery shapes behavior, I am especially attentive to the use of metaphor.

SCORE

Always ☐ Par

Mostly ☐ Poor lie *Bogey (1 over par)*

Sometimes ☐ Sand trap *Double bogey (2 over par)*

Hardly ever ☐ Wild slice *Triple bogey (3 over par)*

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #6

In a real sense no one can be coached. We can only coach ourselves. Thus, the role of the coach is to change the conversation the coachee is having with him/herself. A masterful coach influences this conversation by:

- Drawing out the emerging business context to show the coachee why change is needed;
- Bringing the voice of the customer to the table;
- Allowing the coachee to surface his/her own story;
- Encouraging the coachee to pay attention to his/her inner dialogue;
- Shaping a new lens through which the coachee can reframe his/her perceived reality, e.g., sharing best-practice, measuring the right things;
- Introducing enabling resources into the coaching conversation, e.g., appropriate imagery, language and new metaphors; and
- Asking breakthrough questions.

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #7

Everything the leader does is, in some respects, coaching. Attempts at coaching that are not rooted in authenticity become acts of manipulation.

The coach who emphasizes listening but who isn't working to become a better listener is unlikely to be successful.

The coach who talks about commitment and focus but who is him/herself highly disorganized is open to ridicule.

The coach who emphasizes the organization's vision and values but who him/herself doesn't live those values is part of the problem.

The coach who isn't him/herself open to being coached cannot grow as a coach.



ROYAL PORTRUSH
431 YARDS



STATEMENT

PAR 4

I often receive feedback that others find me authentic.

SCORE

Always ☐ Par

Mostly ☐ Poor drive *Bogey (1 over par)*

Sometimes ☐ Sand trap *Double bogey (2 over par)*

Hardly ever ☐ Out of bounds *Triple bogey (3 over par)*



BALLYBUNION
163 YARDS

STATEMENT

PAR 3

When I coach I go out of my way to express that I truly believe the coachee will deliver what is being suggested.

SCORE

Always ☐ Hole in one! *Eagle (2 under par)*

Mostly ☐ Scrambled to save *Par*

Sometimes ☐ Sand trap *Bogey (1 over par)*

Hardly ever ☐ Behind tree *Double bogey (2 over par)*

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #8

What the coach *believes* is what the employee literally *perceives*. No matter what the coach might say, if he/she doesn't *believe* that the coachee can and will move to the next level, the coach becomes part of the problem.

Conversely, when the coach *really believes* that the employee *will* succeed that, in and of itself, becomes a powerful and formative part of the coaching experience.

Masterful coaching cradles the conversation in self-fulfilling intention devoid of doubt. If you don't believe, you can't succeed as a coach.

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #9

There are six building blocks in a successful coaching conversation:

1. What is the issue/opportunity? (The issue first raised is often not the real issue.)
2. What does future success look like? (Make tomorrow come alive. Create the video. Be there!)
3. What is happening today? (Agree on today's reality. Wherever possible, build on what works.)
4. What is the one change that would make the greatest difference? (Explore the options but focus on one change at a time.)
5. What specific, time-bounded goals will lead to a move forward? (Push for action/commitment and allocate resources.)
6. Feedback. (Ongoing, authentic, catch 'em doing it right.)

Like a jigsaw puzzle, although you need all of the "pieces" (building blocks) to complete the picture, it matters not in what order the pieces go down.



PINEHURST
441 YARDS



STATEMENT

PAR 4

When I coach I use a robust coaching "template" that allows me to quickly evaluate and adjust where I am in the coaching conversation.

SCORE

Always ☐ Par

Mostly ☐ Poor lie *Bogey (1 over par)*

Sometimes ☐ Sand trap *Double bogey (2 over par)*

Hardly ever ☐ In the trees *Triple bogey (3 over par)*



SHINNECOCK HILLS
412 YARDS

STATEMENT

PAR 4

When I coach I feel that I am able to purge my mind of potential solutions.

SCORE

Always ☐ Par

Mostly ☐ Poor lie *Bogey (1 over par)*

Sometimes ☐ Sand trap *Double bogey (2 over par)*

Hardly ever ☐ Out of bounds *Triple bogey (3 over par)*
Lost ball

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #10

Sooner or later in the coaching conversation the underlying issue surfaces. This is when the experienced coach steps back and passes ownership to the coachee. It is also when a coach with less experience finds his/her mind flooded with ideas and suggestions that he/she absolutely knows will work.

The dilemma: When we already have the solution, we stop listening. When we are trying to figure out the best way to persuade the coachee what he/she needs to do, we are no longer present. When we already have the answer, we are saying "no" to engagement and learning. When we rely on yesterday's solution, we limit tomorrow's possibility.

Mastery in coaching means developing an ability to enter into the coaching conversation with a beginner's mind. It means being open to being surprised.

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #11

Unless the coachee feels a sense of ownership of the agreed upon coaching outcomes, deep-rooted commitment is unlikely. Ownership is made more likely when the coach brings clarity to the conversation by:

- *Drawing out the real issue.* The issue that comes up first is often not the real issue. The real issue surfaces when the coach creates the space through silence, stillness, listening, and asking simple questions (e.g., “tell me more,” “dig deeper”) for the coachee to self-discover the underlying problem/opportunity.
- *Bringing tomorrow’s success to life.* This happens when the coach encourages the coachee to step out of today and create, in as much detail as possible, a vivid picture of tomorrow’s success. A “video” that allows the coachee to experience what success looks and feels like.
- *Uncovering the coachee’s capacity to deliver leadership of self.*



MERION
471 YARDS



STATEMENT

PAR 4

As a coach I am skilled in helping the coachee create a vivid and detailed “video” of tomorrow’s success.

SCORE

Always	<input type="checkbox"/> Par	<div></div>
Mostly	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor lie Bogey (1 over par)	
Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> In the brook Double bogey (2 over par)	
Hardly ever	<input type="checkbox"/> Wild slice Triple bogey (3 over par)	



RIVIERA
479 YARDS

STATEMENT

PAR 4

I go out of my way to listen ... really listen.

SCORE

Always	<input type="checkbox"/> Par	<div></div>
Mostly	<input type="checkbox"/> Poor lie Bogey (1 over par)	
Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/> Hit “Bogey’s Tree” Double bogey (2 over par)	
Hardly ever	<input type="checkbox"/> Out of bounds Triple bogey (3 over par)	

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #12

One of the fundamental building blocks of coaching is the leader’s capacity to listen.

Listening is far from a passive activity. Really listening means entering into a behavioural dance where intonation, posture, pacing and presentation are at least as important as content. To listen is to be aware of what is not said.

To listen is to be able to interpret the meaning of what is being said by being able to see the world through the speaker’s eyes. To listen is to step outside of the communication loop and “observe” what is happening. To listen is to give the gift of being present. To listen is an act of generosity that says, “I care.” To be a successful coach is to care!

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #13

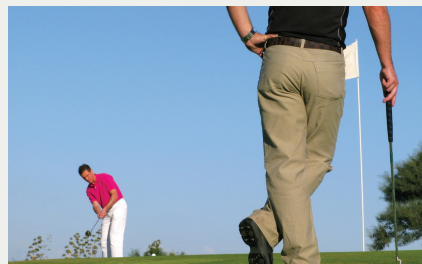
There are a number of legitimate and fruitful conversations that take place at work. The first is tell and listen: "I need you to do x by Friday." A second conversation is captured by the term tell and sell: "I need you to do x by Friday, because ..." A third conversation, problem solving, runs along the following lines: "I want you and I to sit down and discuss x so that between us we can figure out the best way forward."

Although meaningful, none of these three conversations is about coaching. Coaching is built on one very simple, but essential, principle ... the way forward lies with the employee. Put a different way, **coaching is an advice-free zone.**

As soon as the coach starts to give his/her suggestions ("Have you thought about..." "My suggestion is...") coaching is interrupted and problem solving has begun.



VALDERRAMA
368 YARDS



STATEMENT

PAR 4

When I coach I resist the temptation to slide into problem solving.

SCORE

Always ☐ Par

Mostly ☐ Poor lie *Bogey (1 over par)*

Sometimes ☐ Sand trap *Double bogey (2 over par)*

Hardly ever ☐ In the pond *Triple bogey (3 over par)*



AUGUSTA
440 YARDS

STATEMENT

PAR 4

When appropriate, I bring story and personal experience to the coaching discussion. I do so in such a way that the initiative remains with the coachee.

SCORE

Always ☐ Par

Mostly ☐ Poor drive *Bogey (1 over par)*

Sometimes ☐ Behind tree *Double bogey (2 over par)*

Hardly ever ☐ Lost ball *Triple bogey (3 over par)*

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #14

If the coachee is stuck, must the coach be limited to the role of a cheerleader/facilitator sitting on the sidelines? Is a wealth of experience to be set aside?

Enter story, and the role of the coach as mentor. When the coach offers input in the form of a story drawn from experience, the "advice" invariably lands in such a way that the initiative remains with the coachee.

What we are describing is a subtle shift from coaching to mentoring that allows the coach to put new ideas on the table (with discretion, and often as a last resort) without telegraphing a message to the coachee that says, "I am now taking control."

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #15

A successful coach displays mastery in asking great questions. A great question is one that changes the conversation the coachee is having with him/herself.

To coach is to know that language (e.g., a question) creates imagery and that imagery shapes our behaviour.

To coach is to also understand that the mind cannot negate. When we tell our eight-year-old not to spill the milk, what his/her mind conjures up is an image of the milk being spilt. The outcome: we increase the probability that the youngster will spill the milk.

To coach is to ask questions that seek (create imagery around) what we want.



ROYAL ST.
GEORGE'S
453 YARDS



STATEMENT

PAR 4

In coaching situations I ask great questions. In particular, I am skilled in posing questions that ask for what is desired rather than those that reinforce what we don't want.

SCORE

Always	<input type="checkbox"/>	Excellent drive Excellent putt	Birdie (1 under par)
Mostly	<input type="checkbox"/>	Poor lie	Par
Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sand trap	Bogey (1 over par)
Hardly ever	<input type="checkbox"/>	Great drive Terrible short game	Double bogey (2 over par)



CYPRESS POINT
231 YARDS

STATEMENT

PAR 3

I am highly attuned to, and quick to challenge, defensive routines.

SCORE

Always	<input type="checkbox"/>	40 ft. putt	Birdie (1 under par)
Mostly	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scrambled to save	Par
Sometimes	<input type="checkbox"/>	Sand trap	Bogey (1 over par)
Hardly ever	<input type="checkbox"/>	In ocean	Double bogey (2 over par)

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #16

Although stretch and agility are central to how an organization "wins," not all employees want to let go of the sense of security that the status quo (mistakenly) provides.

As a result, to coach is to be attentive to and challenge what can best be described as "defensive routines." These routines often surface as follows:

- *The real problem here is...* Response: "Let's focus on what **you** can do differently."
- *I will never be able to ...* Response: "What would be happening if you were able to ..."
- *Everyone knows that x simply doesn't work.* Response: "According to whom?"
- *We already have an excellent approach.* Response: "Compared to what or whom?"

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #17

Coaching isn't a fad or an occasional activity, it's how excellent leaders win through talent. Coaching is a discipline where:

- Optimism, affirmation and the spirit of "catching people doing it right" energize the coachee.
- Not every coaching conversation needs to deliver a home run. Successful coaching moves the employee in the right direction.
- To be a coach is to be tough-minded. When faced with a difficult conversation, having the facts, timing, candour, openness and a focus on the need to act become essential coaching capabilities.
- Not everyone is open to and/or wants to be coached. No matter how successful his/her performance is today, an individual who resists appropriate coaching is about to become a problem.



ST. ANDREWS
461 YARDS



STATEMENT

PAR 4

I balance going out of my way to "catch people doing it right" with, as demanded, being tough minded.

SCORE

Always ☐ Par

Mostly ☐ In the rough *Bogey (1 over par)*

Sometimes ☐ Road bunker *Double bogey (2 over par)*

Hardly ever ☐ Lost ball *Triple bogey (3 over par)*



PEBBLE BEACH
543 YARDS

STATEMENT

PAR 5

As a coach, I take the time to follow up. Indeed, I always follow up. If I have a strength as a coach it is how I follow up.

SCORE

Always ☐ Par

Mostly ☐ Poor lie *Bogey (1 over par)*

Sometimes ☐ Front bunker *Double bogey (2 over par)*

Hardly ever ☐ Out of bounds *Triple bogey (three over par)*

SCORE CARD COMMENTS #18

If the agreement coming out of the coaching conversation isn't written down, it won't happen.

The coachee must understand that anything agreed upon during the coaching conversation is far more than the pursuit of possibility.

The outcome of a successful coaching conversation is a hard commitment. There is no "try" or "I will do my best" implied.

Coaching is ultimately, however, about the work. If someone is in the wrong role and/or engaged in work that provides little stretch, all the coaching in the world will be for naught. Similarly, if the new behaviour agreed on during the coaching conversation cannot be applied shortly thereafter, little value is created.



Hole

Going over your scorecard

Learning restricted to new knowledge is incomplete. Even practice, important as it is, doesn't deliver new behaviour. Change demands insight, practice **and reflection**. As you relax after your round of golf it will be helpful to reflect on the following:

HOLE

YOUR SCORE

- | | | |
|-----|---|----------------------|
| 1. | Coaching and counselling should not be confused | <input type="text"/> |
| 2. | At its best, coaching builds on strengths | <input type="text"/> |
| 3. | Coaching the team | <input type="text"/> |
| 4. | A masterful coach delivers cultural reach | <input type="text"/> |
| 5. | The four conversation themes: Challenge, Coach, Confront, and Change | <input type="text"/> |
| 6. | To coach is to change the conversation the coachee has with him/herself | <input type="text"/> |
| 7. | To coach is to be authentic | <input type="text"/> |
| 8. | What the coach believes makes a huge difference to the coaching outcome | <input type="text"/> |
| 9. | Knowing where you are in the coaching conversation is essential | <input type="text"/> |
| 10. | A beginner's mind | <input type="text"/> |
| 11. | Helping the coachee create a vivid "video" of tomorrow's success | <input type="text"/> |
| 12. | A successful coach makes listening a key capability | <input type="text"/> |
| 13. | Successful coaching moves beyond problem solving | <input type="text"/> |
| 14. | Sharing your story (mentoring) | <input type="text"/> |
| 15. | A successful coach asks great questions | <input type="text"/> |
| 16. | To coach is to be attentive to defensive routines | <input type="text"/> |
| 17. | To coach is to "catch people doing it right" | <input type="text"/> |
| 18. | Follow up | <input type="text"/> |



Under 72 **World Class!** You can work on anyone's team.

72 – 74 You are a good coach. You operate as a professional. This does not mean, however, that you should stop working on your game.

75 – 77 Work harder. Your basic technique is, for the most part, sound.

78 – 85 You must work on your coaching skills if you are to progress and succeed as a leader.

Over 85 You are communicating to others that when it comes to people management you are a “good amateur.” Do not expect to seriously compete for a key leadership role with your current level of coaching competency.

Remember, the course has been scored with today's business context in mind. Increased competition, a changing environment and disruption generally will make the course far more difficult tomorrow. Even if you are at par today, continuous learning and improvement are essential. Read through all the questions and, in terms of your current situation and role, identify below the three areas where you must focus initially to improve your coaching skills. If you can't coach, you can't lead!

To improve my coaching skills I must focus on: (define the three most significant)

- 1** _____

- 2** _____

- 3** _____

John O. Burdett

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***Co-founder - Verity
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***Leadership advisor to the
Bedford Consulting Group.***

***Business partner to
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John has extensive international experience as a senior executive. As a consultant he has worked in more than 40 countries for organizations that are household names. He is best known for his work on: (1) organization culture with organizations that rank among the largest in the world; (2) breakthrough tools/processes to support talent management at the top of the organization. The latter are utilized by many hundreds of international businesses on five continents. John has also coached a number of prominent CEOs and C-suite executives in different parts of the world.

John has a doctorate in management development. A Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development, he has twice won international awards for his business articles. Other awards include being named by FINTRA as the international coach of the year and a teaching excellence award while teaching on the MBA program at the University of Toronto.

He has published twelve best-selling books on leadership and organization culture. *Attract, Select, Develop & Retain TALENT* came out in 2014. *TEAM* is the second in his talent trilogy (2015). The third - *The Empty Suit* – was added in early 2016. *The A-Z of Organization Culture* was published in 2017. *Tomorrow Will Be Different – Will You?* came out in 2019.

A number of John's books can be downloaded digitally from Amazon.com, eBooks, Kobo and/or Barnes and Noble.

The founder of Orxestra Inc., he is a leadership advisor to the Bedford Group and a strategic partner to TRANSEARCH International. He lives in Toronto.

