

Coaching a Group or a Team:

What's the Difference?

Ircel Harrison, D.Min.



"If you want to go fast, go alone; if you want to go far, go with others."

African proverb

For most of us, coaching is a one-to-one relationship--one coach, one client. What if you could leverage your time and energy as a coach and apply the same skills you use with one person to working with several individuals at a time?

Consider the possibility of applying those skills you have developed in coaching individuals to a group of individuals. Just one word of caution. As individual clients differ, collections of individuals differ as well. As you consider coaching several people at a time, you must have a clear understanding of the purpose of this collection of people. In most cases, we can identify these people as being part either of a group or of a team. Although we use the terms group and team interchangeably, there is a difference between the two. As a coach, you should know the difference between a group and a team. I want you to consider a model for coaching either a group or a team, and identify skills to use in each setting.

What's the difference between a group and a team?

The primary focus of a group is personal growth and develop-

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ment. Although groups vary in their leadership style, purpose, content, commitment and process, they are places where individuals can practice self-discovery while learning from the experiences of others. People in groups provide support for each other as they pursue their individual goals. Some examples are accountability groups, Bible study groups, and support groups. Groups may be either formal or informal in structure.

Teams are primarily focused on task achievement. Teams go by many names--committee, staff, ministry team, work group, task force--but they tend to be task-oriented, focusing the resources of participants on a specific goal. Teams are often parts of a formal organizational structure with specific assignments or goals assigned to them. Individuals are on the team because it is part of their job, they believe in the work of the organization, or they want to work with others to accomplish something important to them.

What are things to consider in coaching a group or a team?

As you bring your coaching skills to bear in working with a group or a team, you should consider some of the characteristics of each.

Although participants can encourage and support one another in a group, the goal is usually individual development within a group context. The vision, values, and purposes are individual in nature, and there is a clear “I” focus--“What am I going to get out of this?” The relationships in a group are usually short term.

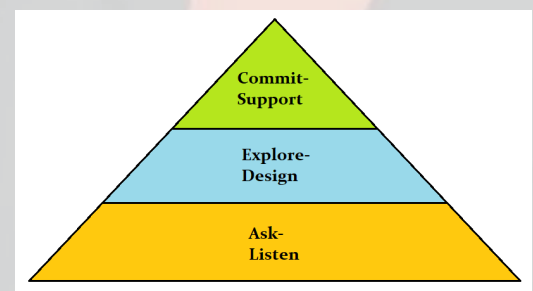
In working with teams, a coach should remember the opportunity for both team and individual development. The coach works with the team to articulate a shared vision and purpose, to identify common team values, and to develop a “We” focus based on on-going relationships. At the same time, the coach realizes that each member of the group is a unique individual. The challenge is to help the individual to bring the best he or she can offer to the success of the team.

A Model for Coaching Groups and Teams

There are many models for the coaching process or conversation. Pinnacle Leadership Associates has developed the Disciple Development Coaching© model (Mark Tidsworth and Ircel Harrison, *Disciple Development Coaching: Christian Formation for the 21st Century*) based on the following steps:

- Step One: ASK—“What would you like to gain from our conversation?”
- Step Two: LISTEN—Be attentive to words AND their meaning.
- Step Three: EXPLORE—Seek options.
- Step Four: DESIGN—Identify action steps that lead to accomplishing the goal(s).
- Step Five: COMMIT—“How ready are you to commit to this?”
- Step Six: SUPPORT—Build support base and provide accountability.

When applied to coaching groups and teams, the model might be structured in this way. We begin with the Ask and Listen steps to establish trust and to provide clarity through active listening and powerful questioning. In the Explore and Design phase, the coach uses the skills of creating awareness, design planning, and goal setting to help the group or team move forward. The Commit and Support level is where the skill of managing progress and accountability – based on ICF’s core competencies – is used.



Application to Coaching Groups

As the coach works with groups, the Ask and Listen stage provides the opportunity for community-building in the group.

Not only must the group members trust the coach in order to be successful, they must trust each other. As the group moves into the Explore and Design phase, they share and plan together with the encouragement of the coach. Finally, in the Commit and Support level, they try out new behaviors, practice new ideas, and report back to the group for debriefing.

Some **Ask and Listen** questions to build a sense of community in the group and bring fresh insights to members might be:

- “If your house were on fire and you could only save two things (assuming people and pets are safe), what would that be?”
- “If money were no problem, you had all the time you needed, and there were no health limitations or other obstacles, what would you do?”
- “When was a time when you felt really close to God?”

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Explore and Design Questions to go deeper with a group include:

- “What's your response to this challenge?”
- “What difference would practicing this behavior make in your life?”
- “What can you do this week to make this practice/truth/teaching a part of your life?”

Application is facilitated by these **Commit and Support** Questions:

- “Who can come alongside you to help you make this part of your life?”
- “Who do you need to share this with?”
- “How can we support you in this effort?”

Application to Coaching Teams

In coaching a team (no matter what the term used for the entity), the coach uses the Ask and Listen phase to clarify the purpose of the team: “Why does our team exist?” The Explore and Design step assists the team in considering options and planning to accomplish its task: “What will we do and how will we do it?” Finally, the Commit and Support state is the time of implementation, feedback, and accountability: “Who will do what and how will we support each other?”

Ask and Listen Questions that a coach might ask a team (or lead them to ask themselves) are:

- “What is our task?”
- “Who is involved?”
- “What does each of us offer to achieve the task?”

In the Explore and Design phase, these questions could be asked:

- “What are our resources?”
- “How will we do it?”
- “When will we do it?”
- “When will we know that we have succeeded?”

During the Commit and Support state, the coach encourages the team to ask these questions:

- “Who will be responsible?”
- “How can we best help each other?”
- “What are our milestones?”
- “How will we celebrate our accomplishments?”

Summary

In working with a client, a coach seeks to help the person become more than he or she has been. Through the coaching conversation, the client discovers untapped potential and finds new ways to apply this in his or her life.

The skills that make a coach successful in working with individual clients to become better persons can be used in working with groups and teams as well. In a group or team setting, a coach can help to leverage the synergy in the gathering. The whole becomes much more than its individual parts. When effectively facilitated, groups and teams can accomplish many things. Coaches can help make this happen.

Questions for reflection:

- What are the groups or teams of which you have been a part? What was your favorite group or team? Why?
- What has been your experience in leading or facilitating groups or teams? Have you used coaching skills in these responsibilities?
- Why are some teams and groups effective and others not? How could coaching make a difference?



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Successful Team Coaching

Julie Markese, ACC, CCLC



A few months ago, a pastor called me and asked if I would be willing to coach his pastoral staff. They were all passionate, gifted, and young (only one person besides the pastor was over forty), yet they were finding it difficult to work together as a team. Part of the issue stemmed from a change in the team dynamic. In the previous year, the team had experienced a lot of changes, including some staff leaving and new staff being hired. The pastor was concerned that they seemed unable to make progress in their staff meetings. They had taken an evaluation and wanted to know how the results could help them work better together. I told him I would be glad to coach his team, and arranged to meet twice over the next month.

Most of my work as a coach is with teams, and the dynamic is very different from one-on-one coaching. In one-on-one coaching, the coach and the client take time in the coaching session to craft the goals for the coaching hour. With team coaching, on the other hand, the goals of a coaching session are generally set by the pastor, the coach, or some other leader before the coaching session begins. This difference changes the initial focus from determining what the goals are, to how goals will be accomplished. In this case, there were six people sitting around the table with wildly different perspectives, ideas, and approaches to the agreed-upon goal. My job was to create a safe space for collaboration and consensus. This is what I love about coaching teams.

For this team to succeed, they had to move from talking about what needed to be done to acting on it. I approached this assignment by concentrating on:

1. discerning their culture
2. building trust
3. establishing accountability

Discern the culture

In simple language, culture consists of what is important to a group of people and how they normally get things done. The results of the evaluations the team took helped to pinpoint what was important to them, or their values. With some coaching, their individual identities began to emerge.

Values motivate behavior. I needed to coach them to an understanding of the impact their values had on how they got things done, and how a difference in values within the team could keep them from accomplishing their goals. For example, the administrator was very good at her job, but what she was really passionate about

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was her work with the junior high students. The team began to realize that she spent most of her time doing a job she didn't love, which resulted in her interactions with them as an administrator seeming perfunctory. She was unable to devote adequate time to what was really important to her, and it affected the team culture. Within minutes, the team came up with ways to free up more time for her to spend with her junior high students.

*For this team to succeed,
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to be done to acting on it.*

Throughout the coaching session, a picture of the team's culture began to emerge. We focused on the strengths each person brought to the team and how they could appreciate and accommodate each other's differences.

Build trust

A few weeks before I began working with this team, a friend had posted on her Facebook page an article about research Google had done on what made teams effective. In her blog post, "The five keys to a successful Google team," Julia Rozovsky listed "psychological safety" at the top; team members feel safe to take risks and be vulnerable in front of each other (2015, November 17. Retrieved from <https://rework.withgoogle.com/blog/five-keys-to-a-successful-google-team/>). I decided to use this research as a way to introduce the importance of trust in teams. I asked each member to contribute to the conversation by recounting an instance when they either felt they were heard or not heard by the rest of the team. No blame would be assigned. A few described instances when they felt misunderstood or ignored, leaving them feeling frustrated and unproductive. One member talked about his inability to share his feelings about a devastating family crisis. Everyone listened. No one interrupted. As each one listened and showed sensitivity to the others, trust was building. As trust began to develop, members began to contribute in more creative ways to the conversations we were having about accomplishing their goals. They began to feel safe enough to be themselves, and it inspired innovation and productivity. This team is impressive; each member is highly creative and exceptionally passionate. It was fun to see the team dynamic improve as they began to trust and respect each other.

Establish accountability

We addressed the idea of accountability at our second and final meeting. Everyone acknowledged that this element was missing in their culture and team dynamic. Work was assigned, but no one really knew how the work was accomplished or if it was done with excellence. The team wanted to get away from operating under a "tyranny of the urgent" mindset and plan to be more strategic in their use of time and resources.

We focused on establishing accountability by taking a closer look at work roles. The team decided to define work roles more clearly, taking into account how they wanted to accomplish their goals. The team as a whole agreed upon the new roles. Rather than adhering to a job description alone, they considered the strengths and passions of their members when giving new assignments. They discussed how evaluating each event or project after it concluded could become a norm in their team culture. We collaborated on what a simple written evaluation would look like, and how they might use the data it provided to improve and move forward toward a shared vision.

They talked about how they could help each other with larger projects. For instance, the worship leader was working on a new set for the platform, while the children's pastor needed to design a set for their upcoming Vacation Bible School. They decided to collaborate on a set that could be used for both. The team brainstormed ways to economize time and effort by combining events and outreaches.

Accountability provides structure and purpose. They seemed to welcome that. They could see themselves moving forward and accomplishing their goals. And, they did. With the help of more intentional accountability, this team was able to transition from a work group to a team.

My relationship with this team will continue. Throughout those initial six hours, I remained positive and optimistic about the team, their ability to achieve their goals, and my own ability to coach them. I believed in

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them, and now they are beginning to believe in themselves. They embraced the importance of knowing the team culture, and are taking steps to create new norms. I encouraged them to think differently, become problem-solvers, and take risks. I suggested simple evaluation tools that would hold them accountable to each other (I expect they will devise even better ones in the future). This newfound clarity has energized the team to work better together for the good of the whole. I was confident they would be successful in achieving their goals, and now they believe it, too.

Team coaching is all about achieving goals and moving forward together. This team is experiencing a new level of success because they better understand their culture, listen to one another respectfully, trust each other enough to be vulnerable, and welcome greater accountability. I look forward to our continued relationship. I know it's going to be fun.



Julie Markese specializes in leadership and team coaching and collaborative processes. Julie has lived all over the world, and believes coaching is a great way to appreciate, accept, and learn from others.

An ordained minister, Julie has developed a coach-based one-year guide to help congregations work through a process of self-awareness, evaluation, and strategic planning. Julie also has coached Not-for-Profit CEOs and leaders in transition. She holds a Masters in Organizational Leadership, ACC certification from ICF and is a Certified Leadership Coach and trainer with Coach Approach Ministries. She is a member coach for Exoteric, a new coaching platform designed for entrepreneurs and start-ups.

Widowed since 1999, Julie understands the challenges of "starting over" later in life. The two greatest lessons she has learned in discovering her true purpose is the power of hope and the courage to never give up.

Dynamics of Team Coaching

Cynthia Perkins



"No man is an island," said English poet John Donne, in 1624. The statement was true then, and nowhere is it more evident now than in the context of teams within organizations. God's design for humankind is for us to thrive in the context of community. God has created us to thrive in "one another" communities. We encourage one another, and build one another up. We hold one another accountable, and engage one another in deep relationship. As coaches, we often have opportunity to work with teams, as well as individuals. While there are many facets of this discipline, this paper will focus on the role story plays in the construct of the larger team. As we are all connected to one another, our stories collectively create the dynamics within the team at large, making team the place in which all members play a part in seeking the greater good.

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Building Trust – Adding Value

Most coaching literature would agree that trust is a vital component of a successful coaching relationship. Trust opens the door for honesty and vulnerability to occur. Without trust, there is no real sense of team, and participants become simply a grouping of people working in the same space. In order for us to trust others, we must believe they have our best interests at heart, and will stand with us in times of difficulty. As Scripture says, “In humility count others more significant than yourselves (Philippians, 2:3, ESV). We coach spiritual beings, even if they don’t know Christ. We must consciously attribute value to all people. Our coaching of those who belong to the family of God can ultimately have impact on their spiritual formation.

To trust, according to dictionary.com, is “to rely upon or place confidence in someone or something.” Trust is an active decision to place confidence in another. In order for us to put trust in another person, we must be convinced the other person is a man or woman of integrity and honesty. We learn these things about another person through relationship and observation. Coaching a team to trust one another ascribes value to each individual, and results in raised levels of employee/volunteer satisfaction, as well as, lowered rates of turnover within organizations. This aspect of team dynamics can be coached. Story is a critical component of the coaching. As the coach learns more about team members, a strong relationship of trust develops. Within a team, sharing stories strengthens peer relationships.

Activating Story

We all have a story. Some are more colorful than others, and some seemingly more successful than others. Our story is an indication of who we are. We all engage with others and experience many levels of learning throughout our lives. Leaders must realize the team is an interesting convergence of individual stories. Each person’s story (the part) contributes to the team (the whole). Many, however, do not know how to even share their story appropriately with others. Coaching team members through story preparation can be accomplished in a number of ways. As I have coached teams to health, I have used the following process of story integration:

- Assist each team member in understanding his or her own story.
 - ◊ Ask strategic questions to help participants identify moments and experiences that had significant impact in their lives and/or brought about transformational life change.
 - ◊ This process may take a few sessions as participants put together a cohesive story.
- Facilitate a time for the team to share one another’s stories.
 - ◊ When we are truly known, we are more likely to be open and vulnerable.
 - ◊ When we see others as real people, we are more prone to extend grace to them. C. S. Lewis reminds us that we never meet a mere mortal, but that we are all eternal beings.

In my current position, I have the privilege of training a group of leaders who coach and care for the next level of leaders in our department. The positive outcomes and growth within this group have confirmed that strong, authentic relationships produce strong teams. Those who are reluctant to be authentic often become very uncomfortable, and either open themselves to the group, or leave the group altogether. According to Patrick Lencioni, in *The Advantage*, a group becomes a team, not just a working group, when each member chooses to be vulnerable, thus building trust within the group.

Encouragement and Accountability

Encourage participants throughout the process. Teach participants how to encourage other team members. No matter what position a person holds, he or she needs a steady amount of encouragement. God knew this was a need for humans as He instructed, “But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called “Today,” so that none of you may be hardened by sin’s deceitfulness” (Hebrews 3:13, NIV). Remember that each member of the team is an individual with specific needs, and with needs common to man.

Along with encouragement, coaches provide a significant amount of accountability. In order to experience transformational growth in leadership skills, coaches must assist team members in completing a plan for moving forward. Most team members begin by taking incremental steps toward growth. As the coach, you provide guidance to help the individual move toward change. Inevitably, some team members will stall. Many individuals experience fear, or lack confidence to move from the status quo. At that point, you must provide an extra nudge.

Relationships

Dallas Willard, in *Renovation of the Heart*, states, “How rare to find a group that consistently functions well for the good it envisions.” He continues, “When successful, spiritual transformation (or, really, reformation) unites the divided heart and life of the individual. That person can then bring remarkable harmony into the groups where he or she participates.” As team members authentically interact with others, trust is built, and

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the team becomes stronger. Individuals identify as a part of something bigger than themselves. The greater good becomes the driving force for the team. Leaders can trust subordinates to complete assigned tasks. Likewise, subordinates can trust leaders to have their backs.

The team community dynamic fuels relationships, and relationships create stronger teams. That strength typically leads to a more significant bottom line. Team members intentionally align with the organizational values and goals. They realize others have value, and they develop a common set of goals.

Teach participants how to encourage other team members. No matter what position a person holds, he or she needs a steady amount of encouragement.

Many great tools are available to help organizations as they choose to build strong teams. Assessments such as DISC, Myers-Briggs Type Indicator, and Style of Influence provide great understanding for leaders and team members. *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*, by Patrick Lencioni, guides leaders into a greater understanding of the team dynamic. *Leadership and Self-Deception*, by The Arbinger Institute, encourages individual team members to think rightly when dealing with others within the organization.

Conclusion

We were created for community. Relationships are the basic currency of the world. Vulnerability and trusting relationships are the key component of strong teams. Relationships take time and effort on the part of all involved. As coaches, we seek to deepen relational connections, and help others to learn the softer skills of team dynamics. We learn about one another by spending time with each other, and by sharing our stories. The value of our uniqueness shines through our story. Our vulnerability to share with others draws them to us, and we then have opportunity to reciprocate. Honesty and integrity among team members create a winning team that is prepared to withstand any storm that comes their way. Through assessments, team-building exercises and retreats, and intentional leadership, individuals and teams become more effective.



Cindy serves as Spiritual Journey Pastor. She holds a B.S. in Christian Ministries, and is pursuing a Master's in Organizational Leadership, with a concentration in Leadership Coaching. Cindy writes curriculum for her church. Cindy is married to her high school sweetheart, Larry, has two grown kids, and loves helping others grow closer to Christ. Cindy can be reached at cindy_perkins@me.com.

Avoiding Team Leader Sabotage

Michele Dyer, ACC, CBC



It was 14 minutes into our session when it happened—my credibility had a near death experience—sabotaged by the Team Leader. As an external coach for this team, I'd been sanctioned by their leader to provide team development via coaching. Minutes into the session, the leader began signaling skepticism when I wouldn't provide my opinion about their discussion. The session spiraled from there. Rather than productively working toward the goals we'd set out to achieve, suddenly we were focused on the validity of the coaching process. We were derailed.

What went wrong? Very simply, I didn't frontload the process with education about coaching fundamentals.

Being new to Team Coaching, I'd succumbed to the temptation to jump into the

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coaching process without first discussing coaching basics with the Team Leader. I hadn't taken time to get his buy-in to the coaching process. Sure, we'd talked about objectives for our time together. We'd even discussed the issues he was having with certain team members. But I hadn't provided education about the guidelines and practice of team coaching.

As coaches, we value and practice these fundamentals daily. They become so much a part of our DNA that we forget how foreign the basics of coaching can be to those who have not had the benefit of formal coach training. It's the classic Knowledge Model conundrum—sometimes we just don't know what we don't know.

Here are three very important foundational principles about team coaching that must be explained to your Team Leader before you schedule your first team coaching session.

Coaching is not consulting. As a coach, my job is to ask great questions, not have profound answers. This is a puzzling truth if one doesn't understand the main premises of coaching. Make sure the Team Leader understands that his team has the expertise—your job as the coach is to help the team tap into it.

Team Leaders must be prepared to model vulnerability for their team-members. Volumes can be written about this principle, but team leaders will need to confront the fact that Team Coaching requires every member, at times, to be vulnerable. This includes admitting when you, as the fearless leader, don't know something, and you need your team to dialogue and figure it out together. It also involves the need for transparency among team members, even if it causes healthy conflict. Having the team leader be aware of this risk at the outset is crucial to the success of outcomes from team coaching.

Team Coaching is not a “one and done” solution. The effectiveness of coaching is much greater when a continuing relationship is forged between the coach and the team. Ideally, a coach will construct a formalized plan spanning several weeks, or even months, with a team to help them achieve their goals. As the team learns the rhythms of the coaching session, greater things can be achieved in shorter amounts of time as the coach/team relationship strengthens.

Defining proper expectations through team leader education will help lay the groundwork for successful team coaching. Doing so can mean the difference between maximized yield and session melt-down. Take the time to inform and prepare, and you'll find that you've set the stage for maximum productivity in your sessions.



Michele is a Temperament Specialist and Team Development Consultant with a passion for helping leaders maximize their potential, and effectively lead and develop their teams.

She is a Certified Behavioral Consultant and Team Development Specialist with expertise in using a wide array of temperament and aptitude assessments and measurements in leadership coaching and training. Michele has led teams as a Program Manager, and has diverse experience in non-profit, corporate and higher education program development, oversight and administration.



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Coaching Senior Leadership Teams to Unleash Their Spiritual Chemistry

Mark Deterding



Does your coaching methodology unleash chemistry? Chemistry is deeper than collaboration and teamwork; more potent than engagement.

Chemistry is people's souls connecting and rejoicing in the connection.

Do you know how to facilitate *that* level of camaraderie in the senior leadership teams you serve? If not, you can learn. And when you learn, you will experience deeper satisfaction, as a coach than you'd previously imagined was possible.

Here is the process that I have used with hundreds of leaders and teams to facilitate soul-deep connections, unleash spiritual chemistry, and then leverage that chemistry to accomplish what God put them together on this planet to do.

How to Unleash Spiritual Chemistry: Building the Foundation

The most enduring form of chemistry grows out of spiritual connection. Professional relationships provide fertile ground for this! People who spend the majority of their waking hours together at work are in fact aching to connect at this deeper level. They want and need to feel as though they are "in the trenches" with true kindred spirits.

Yet, spiritual closeness cannot grow absent spiritual vulnerability. How can you safely, appropriately, and effectively remove obstacles and invite senior leaders to be spiritually vulnerable with one another?

The most effective way I've found to forge spiritual vulnerability in a professional setting is to invite leaders into a shared process of discernment around their individual God-given purposes in life.

Why did God put each of you on this Earth?

Can you imagine asking a team of senior leaders this question, and then guiding them to support one another as they passionately discern their answers? In the following steps, this is exactly what you will learn to do.

Begin by inviting vulnerability from each individual.

Typically, leadership teams are comfortable exploring their *shared* purpose, since it's a natural outgrowth of their organization's mission and vision. People are usually less experienced in rolling up their sleeves and, in a group setting, going to work on their individual, God-given purposes in life.

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The unfortunate truth is, most people – even high achieving leaders -- go through life without actually living out what God put them on this Earth to do. It may *appear* that they're satisfied with their work and life. But, they're actually struggling to find deep meaning in it. Often, they don't even realize they're struggling. They only know that they feel a bit restless. They feel like something is "missing."

Your purpose as a coach is to help them find what they're looking for.

Each person's God-given purpose in life has three elements:

- *What* did God put me on this planet to do?
- *Why* am I called to do this?
- *Who* am I called to serve?

While some people may have a good idea of one or two of the elements, fewer truly know the answer to all three of those questions. Discerning God's overarching will for your life takes time and a significant amount of inner work.

Here are steps you can use to facilitate your leaders' discernment process:

- Guide them to pray for God's guidance. They are not here by accident!
- Teach them to document their personal strengths, skills, and talents. God has gifted them. Have them write down *how*.
- Ask, *What about you do you value highly and hold sacred?*
- Tell your leaders to prioritize these two lists. On one, they've listed how God has blessed them. On the other, they've highlighted what gives them the most joy.
- Coach leaders to write down what they want to be remembered for (their legacy).
- Considering these reflections, have each leader put together a *purpose statement* that illustrates who they are, what they value, what they are going to provide, and for what reason this will be done.
- The advantage of guiding your leaders to engage this intense inner work in a group setting is that everyone in the group is after the same thing: transcendent understanding of *why they exist*. As a result, they will encourage and support one another to dig *deeper* into uncharted territory.

When people become vulnerable with themselves in the presence of others, their spirits begin to shine through. Then, people begin to see one another for who they really are: children seeking God.

Unfamiliarity triggers spiritual vulnerability.

When people become vulnerable with themselves in the presence of others, their spirits begin to shine through. Then, people begin to see one another for who they really are: children seeking God. At that point, without fail, relationships get taken to the next level.

Guide leaders to identify their core values.

You've supported your leaders to discern what God put them each on this Earth to accomplish. The next step is to help them identify the core values that will support them to live this purpose out, every hour of every day in every situation they face.

We've all known people who said they were Christians but didn't act like it. They could recite Bible verses for any situation. They talked a good game, but the talk and the walk didn't match up.

If your leaders want to live a purpose-driven life facilitated by their values, they need to define the behaviors they can practice to embed their values into how they live, day in, day out, at work and at home. Knowing *how* to act will help them remain aware of how they *should* act in order to fulfill their God-given purpose.

Guide your leaders to define their key values with this three-step process:

Choose a few words that describe a key value.

Define the value in a sentence or two.

Describe the behaviors that support the value.

Through this entire coaching process, there are two forms of vulnerability that your leaders will feel. The first is *immediate* vulnerability. *Sharing this information will make me feel vulnerable right now.*

The second form of vulnerability is anticipated. *Sharing this information will make me feel vulnerable in the future, if I don't live up to the standard I just laid down for myself.*

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In the first step – discerning their purpose – people will experience immediate vulnerability. In this second step, they will experience anticipated vulnerability. You want and need them to feel both, in order to forge vulnerability and receptiveness to deeper relationships with one another.

Help leaders articulate their visions.

As Jesus walked beside the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the lake, for they were fishermen. “Come, follow me,” Jesus said, “and I will send you out to fish for people.” At once they left their nets and followed him.

~ Mark 1: 16–18 (NIV)

Before Jesus came along, Simon and Andrew probably had a fairly simple vision for their life. They were subsistence fishermen and that’s what they most likely expected to be for their rest of their lives. Jesus expanded their vision.

Jesus was a carpenter, but He didn’t call the brothers to be carpenters. Instead, He offered them a vision of the future in their own language. That vision was so powerful that ultimately both would be crucified for their faith. Before that, they would use their particular strengths to do something powerful and world changing. They would fish for people.

That’s what Jesus wants from us today. He doesn’t ask us to be “another Jesus.” Instead He asks Ron to use his gifts as the CEO of a company and Consuelo to use her gifts as a project manager and you and me to use our gifts in our lives to align with God’s calling and to have an impact on others.

Our challenge is to discern and sharpen a vision that grows from our purpose and aligns with God’s will for us. You can help your leaders understand their visions, through guiding them to understand their answers to the question:

What do you want to create in your finite time here on Earth? It’s a big question.

Yet, once they have articulated their desired contribution for the future, you can guide them to break down their vision into manageable parts. You will do this through helping them define their *Key Responsibility Areas (KRAs)*: the contribution channels they can lean into across their personal and professional lives.

Defining KRAs gives your leaders the opportunity to assess their entire lives and ensure they’re considering everything they want to achieve.

Different people come up with different lists of KRAs. Here is my list:

- Personal
- Family
- Career
- Community

Key Responsibility Areas (KRAs): the contribution channels they can lean into across their personal and professional lives.

There are no wrong answers.

After your leaders have defined their KRAs, they’ll need to prioritize them and set a vision and goals for each. Knowing one’s key responsibility areas is important, but it won’t help you take specific actions unless you have a vision of the preferred future, and then define goals for each KRA for the next year. Your goals define the specific way you want to make progress in every facet of your life.

When your leaders expand their visions beyond the professional and into the personal, they will invite deeper accountability from one another. With deeper accountability comes enhanced vulnerability.

Cultivate the chemistry that emerges.

The process of discernment I have just described is a huge part of how I coach teams. I have found that when people work through this process, frame up their findings about God’s will for their lives, and share those insights with one another, something magnificent transpires.

They develop compassion for one another. They feel as if they are supported and cared about as spiritual beings with spiritual needs; in other words, as *whole people*. They no longer feel as if they have anything to hide.

They shed the superficial and embrace true spiritual connection. When this happens, chemistry surges up. God surges up, having been let out of the box inside the team.

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Your purpose is to cultivate that chemistry, through acknowledging it, honoring it, and lining out the path the team needs to keep the positive change going.

Anticipate and circumvent the pitfall of this approach.

The only pitfall I have encountered with this process is that it can take a while for people to open up. And, they must open up for the process to cultivate vulnerability and unleash chemistry.

Yet, without fail, in seven years of using this coaching protocol, I have yet to encounter a leader who did not eventually let themselves be vulnerable. In fact, the leaders who have resisted the most have often been the leaders who have in the end gained the deepest level of spiritual closeness to and chemistry with their colleagues.

Your three secret coaching weapons to unleash spiritual chemistry in teams.

As a coach, you have a variety of tools at your disposal. But the three I have found to be most powerful are:

Encouragement

Your number one job as a leadership coach is to be your clients' biggest encourager. Lift them up. Empower them. Model for them what God-fueled encouragement looks and feels like. Help them see themselves as God sees them.

Strategic questioning

Use questioning to draw out uncertainty into the field of discovery:

What are you thinking about the possibilities?

What do your instincts tell you?

What if there isn't just one answer?

What would happen if you embraced the idea that your insight is what matters?

Silence

Cultivate your ability to *stay silent longer*. Do not formulate the next question until after the silence has been broken by *them*. Stay in coaching mode. You don't want to step into teaching/consulting when you are in coaching mode. Trust that the individual leader/team does have the answers.

Outcomes and Benefits

Leadership teams who have engaged in this coaching protocol have experienced stunning outcomes. On the business side, clients who have invested 4 -5 years in bringing the rest of their organization's employees through this same process have increased annual revenue by up to 75%.

But for me, the most satisfying transformation is on the personal side. When people can finally understand the calling God has placed on their lives, and begin working together with beautiful, energizing spiritual chemistry...

As a leadership coach, that's all the affirmation I need that I'm doing the work God called *me* to do.



Mark Deterding is the founder and principal of Triune Leadership Services, LLC. As an executive coach and servant leadership development consultant he specializes in working with high-performing professionals to develop their capabilities and achieve their objectives. Working with organizations, leadership teams, and executives one-on-one, he helps bring focus, clarity, and action to make things work.

Mark has authored two books — *Leading Jesus' Way*, and *A Model of Servant Leadership*. He serves on the Board of Directors for the Unity Foundation, for Mt. Carmel Ministries, and for NorthStar Christian Academy.

He and his wife, Kim, have two sons, two lovely daughters-in-law, and three wonderful grandchildren.



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Three Different Forms of Multi-Person Coaching

Michael Cheuk, M.Div., Ph.D., ACC

Many leadership and organizational coaches I know work with *individuals* to help them reach goals and further their success. That's certainly been true of my practice. But in the most common understanding of "coaching" – athletic coaching – we think of a coach working with a group of players.

Along those lines, recently, I've begun having coaching conversations with a number of individuals simultaneously. As I reflect on these conversations, I've found that there are different forms of multi-person coaching, each with its distinctive focus and purpose.

In this article, I want to highlight briefly the distinctive features of three forms of multi-person coaching and to share the lessons I'm learning in each.

Group Coaching

The first form of multi-person coaching is group coaching. In this form of coaching, individuals come together to be coached around a particular topic that is of interest to them. These individuals may or may not know one another. They usually do not work in the same workplace. They choose to join for individual development. They have different individual goals and outcomes they want to achieve as a result of the coaching conversation.

Example of Group Coaching

I host a monthly meeting with pastors focusing on leadership using concepts of Bowen Family Systems theory, such as the differentiation of self, triangles, nuclear family emotional process, emotional cut off, sibling position, etc. Often, one group member will bring a case study or a topic to explore and be coached around. As we listen, we agree to resist diagnosing and advice giving. Instead, we diagram the case and we jot down questions or short reflective statements. Once the case study is presented, I and other members follow up by asking coaching questions that lead to further exploration or confrontation of thinking and behavioral patterns. At the end of the conversation, all members turn in their written questions and statements to the presenter as a reminder and assurance of confidentiality.

What I've Learned from Coaching Groups

In my experience with this group, I've found that the most effective group coaching sessions occurred when I did not set myself up as the coach performing a coaching demonstration in front of other participants. Instead, the most effective sessions occurred when all the participants engaged in asking questions. When that happened, the engagement among all participants increased exponentially, and the questions they asked were sometimes better than my questions!

Furthermore, participants have told me that they leave each session with insights about their leadership in their own churches, whether they presented a case or not. Inevitably, they connect the underlying issues in the case studies to their own ministries, and they gain new self-awareness and insights about themselves and new options they have not been considering.

In order to cement and apply their learning, participants name one specific thing they will do differently in the coming month as a result of the session. We are prepared to share our experience at our next meeting. This practice encourages specific actions and mutual accountability.

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Team Coaching I: The Team as Coaching Unit

Another form of multi-person coaching is team coaching. In this form of coaching, the individuals come together to be coached because they need to work together as a team to enhance performance and achieve a common goal or outcome. The focus is not on individual development or goals, but on the cohesion and culture of the team, the alignment of roles among team members, and the collective pursuit of shared goals.

In team coaching, it is crucial not only to establish trust and intimacy among team members, but also to create awareness regarding the strengths and skills that each member brings to the table. Such awareness can be achieved using instruments such as the Myers-Brigg Type Inventory or the DISC Profile. Most importantly, highly effective teams have a clarity of their collective purpose, which in turn drives high performance. Coaches can help teams form a cohesive unit, to live into their stated values, to stay on track toward goals, to provide support for team leaders, and to co-create systems that hold all team members accountable for their actions.

Team Coaching II: The Team as Part of a Larger System

The third form of multi-person coaching is what Peter Hawkins calls “Systemic Team Coaching.” In this form (or level) of coaching, the coach sees the team as a part of larger systems. Just as John Donne reminded us that “no man is an island,” it is also true that “no team is an island.” Teams are connected and interdependent with other teams within an organization, as well as the governing board, stakeholders, partners, and even the surrounding community. The dynamic relations between the team and its wider systemic context are the center of focus in systemic team coaching.

The focus of systemic team coaching is not solely on the high performance of the team, but also on positive outcomes and value creation for the organization as a whole.

Systemic team coaching requires a mind shift from both the coach and the team regarding what success looks like. The focus of systemic team coaching is not solely on the high performance of the team, but also on positive outcomes and value creation for the organization as a whole.

Therefore, instead of seeing a high performance team achieve all its goals as the picture of success, a systemic team coach might ask these questions:

“How can the outcomes of our team create value for ALL stakeholders and not just our team?”

“In what ways might our team’s success extract unnecessary sacrifices from other teams and/or not serve the organization as a whole?”

These might not be the first questions a coach asks of a team at the beginning of a coaching relationship, but a systems perspective may be helpful to provide transformative results not just for the team, but for the organization as a whole.

Example of both Team and Systemic Team Coaching

Team coaching can be useful in churches when new groups are formed, such as a search committee or a vision task force. Similarly, a newly formed worship team might benefit from team coaching to help individual members of that team gain clarity regarding their unique roles, their styles of relating, and leveraging their strengths in order to achieve the purpose and goal of the team.

As that team gels and achieves success in leading worship, that team may desire more time, personnel, and resources from the church in order to maintain and accelerate its success. Sometimes, tension can build between this team and other teams within the church regarding scheduling, space and resource allocation, time commitment of members, etc. In this example, systemic team coaching might be needed to clarify the role of the team as part of the larger church system.

What I’ve Learned from Coaching Teams

I’ve found the biblical metaphor of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12 and Romans 12) to be helpful in team coaching and systemic team coaching.



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In team coaching, I've asked team members to see themselves as the digits in a hand. They are invited to clarify the role that they play in the functioning of the hand as a unit, as a team. Are they a thumb, an index finger, a pinkie? Members are coached around the purpose of the team, and how they can relate to other team members in such a way to achieve the purpose of the team.

While we celebrate the success of the hand in its functioning, I then invite them to see systemically that the hand is part of a larger body. Every part or member of the body is needed, and no part is more important than another. I encourage the team to imagine how their actions affect other parts of the body. I also ask them to consider what it would look like for Christ to be the head of the whole body, and for each team to follow Christ in their relationship with other teams. In systemic team coaching, my focus is on the well-being of the whole body, and how each team may need to recalibrate its own definition of success based on the success of the whole body. I've found that churches and organizations with teams that are able to come together both as a team *and* as part of a larger whole are the ones that experience greater vitality and success.

Conclusion

As I coach groups of people, I've found it helpful to be clear about whether I'm doing group coaching, team coaching, or systemic team coaching. As a coach, it is helpful to be aware which form of multi-person coaching is most appropriate given the needs and the goals of our clients. In many cases, it is helpful to agree ahead of time on the kind of coaching you are doing with your clients so that they are clear about your approach and focus. In the end, it is a privilege to walk alongside a group of people to help them reach their goals – as individuals, as a team, or as an organization as a whole.



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As a leadership coach working in Asia, I have seen how effective it can be to use group coaching to help others live out God's calling in their lives. Here are few of the comments I hear from leaders who have experienced the group coaching process.

"I know I'm not the only one that struggles with this, but hearing others talk through their challenges reminds me that I am not alone."

"Listening to others verbally process their goals gave me new insights that I had not considered before."

"I don't feel like I am in the hot seat all the time, and that I have more time to be reflective."

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My journey to becoming a group coach began ten years ago, and it started with a single sentence by Keith Webb:

“Coaching is an ongoing intentional conversation that empowers a person or group to fully live out God’s calling.”

This definition of coaching highlights that individuals and groups can benefit from coaching. I had been coaching individual ministry leaders in Southeast Asia for several years when I became curious about the group coaching aspect of this definition. I wanted to research the group coaching process and learn how it

My journey and transition to becoming a group coach has been an adventure of discovery.

differed from the work I was doing with my individual clients. The questions I had were, “What are the benefits of coaching a group versus coaching an individual?” “How is group coaching different to coaching a team?” “What are the skills needed to be a good group coach?” “How do I get started as a group coach?”

To find answers to these questions I read as many books on group and team coaching that I could find (and afford) and joined an online course for group coaching. My journey and transition to becoming a group coach has been an adventure of discovery.

Getting Started

With limited knowledge and zero experience, I decided I needed to take the plunge and start my first coaching group. The first step was to decide a theme for the group. Having a theme that brings group members together helps provide a focus and anchor point for group coaching and it also makes it easier to promote your groups. The initial themes I developed were: Effective Time Management as a Missionary; Balancing Leadership and Family Life; Raising Support to Thrive Overseas; and Living by Design, Not by Default. Once I had chosen the themes, I sent out an email and invited ministry leaders to join any group that interested them. The response was very positive and once I had six leaders signed up for each group we met via skype for six sessions every two weeks.

Lessons I Learned

When I first began coaching in groups, I found it overwhelming facilitating all of the conversations and I would get a little lost with everything I had to manage. With individual coaching I was very clear on my role and responsibilities, but as a group coach, I needed something to hold onto as I navigated through the new territory of a group.

So to help me through the group coaching process, I came up with a single sentence objective: “Individual awareness and action within a supportive group environment.” I wrote this down on a piece of paper while I coached six leaders via Skype. The one sentence statement helped me focus on what was important as I juggled all the other responsibilities of the group. With group coaching, I felt as though I was adding another layer on top of my individual coaching skills. I was using the C.O.A.C.H model as the operating system running in the background while I facilitated the group process. Using the ICF core competencies to keep me on track, I slowly began to practice how to facilitate “Individual awareness and action within a supportive group environment.”

What is Group Coaching?

I found several definitions of group coaching particularly helpful in the initial stages of my journey toward becoming a group coach. One that stands out is from Peter Hawkins, from his book *Leadership Team Coaching*:

Group coaching is the coaching of individuals within a group context, where the group members take turns to be the focal client, while the other group members become part of the coaching resource to that individual.

Implementing the first part of Peter Hawkins’ definition was fairly straightforward: “the coaching of individuals within a group context, where the group members take turns to be the focal client.” This required me to develop facilitation skills alongside my coaching skills. I quickly realized that I needed to be fully engaged as the coach of the group collectively and as the coach for each of the group members individually. I had to keep track of who was talking and who wasn’t. I had to draw out the quiet members of the group and help the verbose members of the group to practice “succinct speech.”

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Another discovery I made during my beta testing of group coaching was that the sixty minutes that I had used for individual coaching was not enough time for each member to share their outcome, generate insights and create action steps. Therefore I increased the coaching time to a minimum of ninety minutes when coaching four or more group members. For six to eight members, the group coaching time became two hours. The ICF states that groups must be 15 persons or less to be considered group coaching for the purposes of credentialing. My ideal group size for coaching is six members as it gives enough opportunity for each person to be a focal client and provides a diversity of perspectives.

The Real Power of Group Coaching

The second part of Peter Hawkins' definition, "the other group members become part of the coaching resource to that individual," was a new experience for me and it also required a shift in how I coached. Like a conductor of an orchestra, I began to direct group members to start asking questions of each other. "Who has a question for John?" or "Alex, as you listen to Susan, what questions are emerging for you?" I was pleasantly surprised how effective it was for group members to draw one another out and to ask each other questions from a place of mutual curiosity.

Coaching is a relationship. With group coaching the relationship between the group members is where the real power lies. Some of the most significant group coaching sessions have been when the clients have almost forgotten that I am present, they are so engaged with one another that I fade into the background. I discovered that an important contribution I was making was getting out of the way and allowing the knowledge, experience, and wisdom to be shared by the group members. The art of effective group facilitation is knowing when to step out of the way so that the group can learn from one another and knowing when to step back into guiding the group process. For example, when the energy of the conversation fades or if a member of the group dominates the conversation or takes the group off topic.

Positive Peer Pressure

Another important change that I had to make as a group coach was the shift from clients being accountable to me as a coach to then becoming accountable to the group. As Ginger Cockerham said in *Group Coaching: A Comprehensive Blueprint*: "Group coaching also offers group members the opportunity to have an accountability system around them that motivates them to achieve their goals."

Shortly after starting coaching groups, I began to hear these kinds of comments from my clients:

"I have been working to achieve this level of productivity for more than ten years, and after joining our coaching group, I was able to reach the goal in the first six months."

"I have been trying to break this habit for such a long time. The catalyst for sustainable change happened when I joined your group coaching group."

"Just knowing that others in the group are working on their action steps and moving forward with their goals inspired me to keep taking action."

Several shared with me that they had not been able to gain significant traction on their meaningful goals until they joined a coaching group. Having the support and accountability of others in the group became significant factors in helping them to sustain the long term change that they had been wanting in their lives. I discovered that there is a positive peer pressure in groups that is stronger than when a client meets with an individual coach.

Preventing Advice Giving

As coaches we know not to give advice, but the group members that join the groups are most likely not coaches and so they don't know to not give advice. To address this I sent out a list of group guidelines prior to the first group meeting. Each member of the group agrees to abide by the ten guidelines and signs a written agreement. The guidelines for group members include:

- Use "succinct speech". No need for long explanations and storytelling.
- Maintain confidentiality – only share outside the group what you said during the call, not what others said.
- Share your experience, but not your advice. Ask questions to help the group members discover their own answers.

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One of my roles as a group coach is to model active listening and ask powerful questions so that the group members learn how to follow my example with one another. Though the group members are not coaches, I have been amazed and impressed how quickly they learn how to ask questions of one another that create genuine insights.

Accelerated Learning

By facilitating acceptance, acknowledgement, and accountability between the group members, I noticed that the group environment accelerated awareness and action. It was exhilarating to see clients make significant progress on their goals and to watch the members of the group cheer one another towards success. Like individual coaching, the results of group coaching are highly transformative. Having a group of peers who are also working on similar goals is a huge encouragement and motivation for each member of the group. Once I saw the potential for empowering ministry leaders and missionaries who are isolated in remote locations, I began to expand my coaching groups and started to train others in the group coaching process. These experiences and discoveries have turned me into a passionate advocate for group coaching among ministry leaders working in difficult mission fields. I now have the privilege of coaching groups and teams in closed access nations in Asia and beyond.



Kevin Stebbings is an ICF credentialed coach (PCC), who coaches, mentors, and equips coaches globally. His book on leadership coaching will be released in January 2018. He can be contacted at kevin@kevinstebbing.com.



Some Ethical Considerations For Group and Team Coaching

Michael J. Marx

Beth always had something to say during the group coaching session. At first, I felt her exuberance was a great catalyst for discussion. However, after several months I began to wonder if she was thwarting the others with her dominance. What would be the ethical way to deal with such a situation?

Tom wanted to join the group, but found the fee a bit pricey. He asked me if he could get a 50% discount and promised he would not tell any of the other participants about it. Should I let him join and keep his secret?

Regardless of the setting – group coaching or team coaching – conflict is inevitable. The leader is responsible for generating a dynamic exchange of ideas and suggestions. When personalities loom large and emotions expand to fill the room with words and feelings, invariably someone will get his toes stepped on.

Here are some basic practices a good coach will set up at the beginning of the group meetings which will help ensure healthy and productive interaction. These practices are: Rules, Roles, and Relationships.

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Rules

One thing that I like to do during the first session is have the group brainstorm on some rules of engagement. In a face-to-face setting, I will write these on a poster and bring it back to each group meeting. In a virtual setting, I will re-post it each time in the chat box. A good set of rules should contain the following:

How and when to interrupt	How to respect the opinion of others
How to honor the time	How to keep the conversation moving
How to support learning and accountability	How to keep everything confidential

This last point is particularly important. If sensitive issues are to be discussed, each participant must have trust in the group's ability to maintain confidentiality. Without a high level of trust, the group will flounder about discussing facts and frivolous feedback. Deep conversation and heartfelt care will suffer if each member does not feel the freedom to express her opinions.

Roles

The initial meetings will define the roles each member takes. This can be done formally or informally. For example, I might assign Beth (from the previous example) to be the summarizer. Her role is to gather the others' opinions and formulate a conclusion. This not only affirms her need to always talk, it also holds her at bay until it is her turn. Other typical roles group/team members might assume are as follows:

The Scribe	The Encourager	The Historian
The Cross-Examiner	The Brainstormer	The Action Planner

Of course, the most essential role is that of the coach himself. Ultimately the group will flourish or fade due to the coach's ability to lead the group in such a way that it provides high value for each person. The coach will lead by example – a good one, or a bad one.

Relationships

The relationships formed during group and team coaching are at the core of effective interaction. Not surprisingly, the below list looks a lot like 1 Corinthians 13. I like to keep these words in front of the groups I coach regardless of whether they are Christians or not:

Love	Honor	Freedom
Respect	Openness	Trust

Here again, the importance of trust cannot be over emphasized. A breach of trust is quick way to destroy a group and potentially get the coach reviewed by an ethics committee. For these reasons, I would not let Tom keep a secret about getting a discount. If the group is okay with it, that's fine. All matters pertaining to the group should be discussed openly and honestly.

Good ethics is easy when everyone is determined to put the needs of the others ahead of their own agendas. This means that boundaries and expectations are defined up front and adjusted as needed. We should be sensitive to the cultural and experiential backgrounds of each other. Coaching should be a no-judgment zone.



Michael Marx is a sought-after subject matter expert on ethics. He often speaks and conducts workshops on trust building, coaching relationships, suicide intervention, evidenced-based coaching, and one-to-one (dyadic) learning. His hobbies include skiing and dog sledding. His greatest joy, however, comes from mentoring. Learn more about Michael at: www.BlazingNewTrailsCoaching.com

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Avoid 3 Common Mistakes of Group Coaching

John Ramstead



I believe that coaching is the most powerful force for change and Kingdom impact. Coaching has changed my life immeasurably. Your work matters and people's lives depend on it. Just like mine did four years ago.

I got my start in coaching after a life changing event. I had suffered an accident that should have been fatal. I spent five weeks in ICU and then twenty months at Craig Hospital with a Severe Traumatic Brain injury. My accident required twenty-five surgeries and procedures. At my accident, as I was laying crushed and in pain, Jesus came to me. My first thought was "I'm not worthy of someone loving me this much!". Imagine the God of the universe showing up to care for you, heal you, and lead you forward. The good news is that He cares for you just as much.

Jesus spoke to me and said that all things work for good for those that love the Lord and that He was going to heal me and use this for His glory.

As I spent the next two and a half years recovering my focus was understanding how God wired me and what he had wired me for. In the midst of seeking what was next for me, now that everything had changed, I hired Jeff Spadafora, a coach from the Halftime Institute. Jeff helped me get clear on my calling, put together an action plan, and together we shed beliefs that had been holding me back.

Today my marriage is amazing, my relationship with my three sons is the best and my coaching business has grown to work with the top leaders across industry, the U.S. military, and ministry as well as help other coaches build a great business.

Coaching is a powerful force for change and I believe that coaching can help anyone change anything. Your work as a Christian coach matters. Never forget that real people's lives change because of your help.

The power of group coaching

The challenge many coaches have is that as much as they want to make a positive impact they also need, and deserve, to make a great living as well. Unfortunately, in my time as a coach and in training coaches, this is where I have seen so many struggles.

You must be good at coaching as well as being a strong business person. Being a great coach doesn't mean you will develop a thriving practice. Doing that requires putting in the work and my biggest questions in the beginning was WHAT to do and HOW to do it well.

At the end of my first three months of meeting with people about how to help them achieve their goals I had just one client. Working with my coach, I kept pressing forward and at the end of six months had eight cli-

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ents. At the end of my first year I had fourteen clients and we now were making an income that was supporting my family but I was maxed out.

I could only work twenty-five hours a week and was still coming to grips with the new normal from complications from the accident. I knew that to continue to grow my business I had to find a way to work for an hour and be paid several times.

That is the power of group offerings such as group coaching, mastermind groups or facilitation.

Small group coaching is coach-centric. That is, the coach is typically the leader and the process typically includes discussions on predetermined topics. The groups are often formed around the coach's expertise, for example transition group coaching, relationships, small business growth, etc. There is often content delivered by the coach (can be a 10 min. talk or a 1 hour workshop) followed by group sharing and the coach working with individuals questions related to the topic.

Some coaches have a less structured approach, going where ever their intuition and the groups focus or needs lead. There can be value in that but many people feel more comfortable if there is a clearly defined structure and objective for the group.

Why Small Group Coaching Fails

Unclear Expectations

Many coaching structures fail simply because no one knows what the coach is supposed to do. Is the coach an administrator or record keeper? Is the coach a trainer? Is the coach a figurehead so we can say we have a coaching structure? What can your group members expect the coach to do?

These expectations need to be set at the beginning by the coach. In addition, there can be unclear expectations of the group member's commitments. What are the requirements of participants? If group members expect to show up and have the coach do all the work, the group is not going to be as strong as if each member takes accountability for doing the work, participation, and contribution.

A clear and strongly adhered to structure will also support the group with staying on track.

Lack of Accountability

Effective group coaching involves an element of accountability for action and results. What gets measured, gets treasured. None of us likes to make people uncomfortable, but if the coach is unwilling to 'call' people on their lack of participation or action then they are doing the members a great disservice. As a leader, who is empowering other leaders in their lives, we are being of greatest service when we support them in being 'in action' and accountable for results that move them forward.

It is important that the structure and the coach's 'grounding' does not put the coach in the position of a chastising parent, or a dis-empowering authority figure. We don't have to come down on group members, but there needs to be some element of tracking goals and commitments and consistently checking in on results in order to be able to coach them to greater success. Rather than asking "Have you completed your commitments?" we should hold members as competent, responsible people. The question could be, "What did you learn from completing (or not completing) your commitments?"

If they have not completed on something, clarify what is not done, the impact of being incomplete (without blame) on them and others, have them brainstorm and commit to a practical action that will support them in being complete in the future (e.g. putting a reminder in their calendar, having an accountability buddy check-in, etc.), then get a clear commitment to the new goal or intention with a deadline, and follow up on that new commitment.

Presuming the best about our members both honors and motivates them. Giving them accountability helps them keep their commitment to coaching and eliminates the guilt of not fulfilling their commitment.

Lack of Structure

Without a format and approach for how to conduct meetings, member intake and exit processes, and group tracking, it can be challenging for the coach to keep the group on track and effective. Not only at the meetings but also in terms of the business infrastructure. The coach needs an effective way to track billing, communication with each member, 'assignments' if there are any, commitments (of the members and the coach) and participation.

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If there is not a clear meeting agenda the group will quickly dissolve into a social gathering. That may be OK if that is the goal – but people will typically get less value from that and will pay less for that type of group.

Many coaching structures fail simply because no one knows what the coach is supposed to do.

The group should have a pre-set commitment time such as a year or six months. That commitment provides ongoing residual revenue for the Coach and ensures that people have the opportunity to see results from their participation.

The primary challenge with group coaching is that the coach is the generator. They manage the process, set the agenda's and provide the leadership. It does less to develop leadership in the members than mastermind groups do. It can also be tricky to avoid blurring the lines between coaching, group therapy (which it is NOT), and consulting. Coaches, and their group members, benefit greatly from taking training in group coaching techniques.

Why Small Group Coaching Rocks

We have all heard it before, "People do not care how much you know until they know how much you care." The reason we have all heard it with such frequency is because it is true. Effective coaches care about the members they work with and foster that environment within the group.

There are many benefits for members who participate in group coaching.

- It is a cost-effective way for people to receive the benefits of coaching at a reduced fee.
- There is a synergy and sense of belonging that is created when people are members of a close community or group.
- The members can learn from one another. Often observing another person's coaching can provide insights and may even bring up things we were not aware of.
- Networking – members can mutually support one another outside of the group as well.
- Expanded perspective. While the coaching is provided by the leader, there is tremendous value in shared experiences and wisdom.

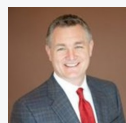
Access to specific expertise from the Coach at a fraction of the cost of consulting. If the Coach is providing this kind of directive input it needs to be clarified as mentorship or consulting vs. straight coaching. Coaching is about drawing out the knowledge and answers from the members, Mentorship or Consulting is about providing information or answers.

For the coaches, one of the main benefits is a leveraged and more cost – effective use of your time. For example, if your coaching rate is \$200 per hour and you charge \$75 per person per group coaching session – you would earn \$750 for a group of 10 people for the same time period as you would normally earn your \$200 fee.

Of course there is more administrative work that goes into managing the group, but once you have systems in place that time can be streamlined.

If you tie your group coaching into a 'program' then you can charge \$100 and up per month for member's participation. Bundling the group coaching with additional value offerings such as a monthly webinar on the topic, an additional group coaching call, information products that get distributed each month, community meetings, etc. turns your group coaching into a program that people will pay more to participate in.

Ultimately group coaching allows you to provide more people with support which is typically one of the key reasons most of us become coaches in the first place.



John Ramstead is a keynote speaker, former Navy fighter pilot, leadership coach, Inc. Magazines Top 12 Leaders Need to Listen To, and international podcast host of *Eternal Leadership*. John has a profound vision for how to live a life of significance. He has coached and mentored hundreds of individuals and companies at *Beyond Influence*, <http://www.beyondinfluence.com/>.

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Bill drives many of the coaching and training programs within Coach Approach Ministries and provides much of the day-to-day management of the ministry. Bill has received certification for the National Association of Church Business Administration as well as the Professional Certified Coach credential from the Internal Coach Federation, and frequently writes, speaks, and coaches around areas of business management for non-profits. He also provides coach training for churches, judicatories and various organizations. Bill lives in Daytona Beach, FL.

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