

great and he motivated me to make an effort to leave more and more notes for others. If a nine-year-old can take such initiative to praise, grown leaders can certainly do the same.

Final Words

No successful leader has achieved their goals without the assistance of others. It doesn't matter how knowledgeable, qualified or experienced you are, without the assistance of others, you will most likely not excel. Networking can create a spider web effect by connecting you to opportunities. To lead effectively, you will need to stretch outside your immediate comfort zone to seek different ideas and discover a world of potential opportunities for yourself and your organization.

It doesn't matter how much leadership experience you have or what your leadership qualifications are, if you aren't focusing on creating quality, mutually beneficial relationships, others may not be receptive to your ideas.

Mastering the art of networking will enhance your leadership abilities and opportunities.

CHAPTER SUMMARY

- Being an effective leader requires expanding the quality of your contacts.
- You often never know the value of an initial interaction.
- It takes intentional thought to be an effective networker.
- Your first impression will determine how many additional interactions follow, but not always.
- There are five strategies that will enhance your abilities to become a master networker.

On Leaving a Legacy

The Voice of Charles Luke Latour, OP

A man found an eagle's egg and put it in the nest of a barnyard hen. The eaglet hatched with the brood of chicks and grew up with them—happy to be a chicken. All throughout his life the eagle did what the barnyard chickens did, thinking he was indeed a barnyard chicken. He scratched the earth for worms and insects. He clucked and cackled. And he would thrash his wings and fly a few feet into the air.

Years passed and the eagle grew very old. One day he saw a magnificent bird above him in the cloudless sky. It glided in graceful majesty among the powerful wind currents, with scarcely a beat of its strong golden wings.

The old eagle looked up in awe. "Who's that?" he asked.

"That's the eagle, the king of the birds," said his neighbor. "He belongs to the sky. We belong to the earth—we're chickens." So the eagle lived and died a chicken, for that's what he thought he was.

*— Anthony S.J. DeMello in *Awakening**

The story is simple, yet its poignancy lies in how it parallels reality. Like the misguided eagle, far too many people fall short of their potential. Self-examination and introspection do not come easily.

It's hard work. We all need someone to help us discover our strengths, stretch us farther than we thought possible and challenge us to accomplish more. Leadership begins and ends with your commitment to this task.

The Importance of Leaving a Legacy

You and I know that visionary leaders, productive teams and vibrant organizations aren't born in and of themselves. On the contrary, they rely on the power of *legacy* to ensure the constant discovery and training of people and organizations. Legacies are created when leaders, like you, take the time and energy to help others develop their potential. Through encouragement, challenge and mentoring, you become the catalyst in their personal development. Your legacy will ensure the ongoing growth and success of your organization by creating future leaders through these challenges and developmental opportunities.

You have a responsibility to your organization and its members to assist in the development of their potential. Avoiding this responsibility has equally serious consequences. The key to accomplishing this depends on your interactions with your team members. You're called not just to lead, but to coach your organization's membership. The very essence of coaching is the one-to-one relationship between the coach and the coachee. Through this relationship the coach pushes, prods, challenges, teaches and encourages the individual in their discovery of hidden talent. The end-result not only affects the individual, but your entire team.

This chapter describes an exciting new paradigm for developing your organization and its membership—personal coaching. It focuses on how you assume this coaching role, and provides some outside resources for you to continue developing this new skill.

Coaching – It's Not Just for Jocks Anymore

Over the last few years, personal coaching has assumed a prominent and respected place within our culture. It provides a simple, yet highly

effective process for facilitating individual growth and development. Mastering the required coaching skill-set not only benefits the individual being coached, but adds to your ability to effectively communicate. At its very heart, personal coaching focuses on the power and innate potential of the individual.

Coaching is designed to empower each individual to understand their potential and identify how they can maximize it. Through the development of a trust-based relationship with the coachee, the coach knows when to support and when to stretch, when to challenge and when to guide. The coach and coachee collaborate to set and achieve key development objectives, taking into account the needs of the organization as well as the skills and abilities of the individual. Through coaching, goals are developed and then broken down into manageable, measurable steps.

*A coach is not a counselor, therapist,
consultant or personal guru.*

The Philosophy of Coaching

Unlike other more conventional forms of counseling or advising, coaching avoids, at all costs, any scenario in which the coach assumes too prominent a role in the relationship. Your objective in the coaching process is to assist in the *transformation and evolution* of the individual. Your advice and wisdom play an important role, but always realizing that the focus remains on the coachee and his/her development.

What's in it for me? Integrating personal coaching into your leadership strategy will take more time and require more planning, more thought, and more dialogue on your part. There will be times, believe me, when you will question whether this is all worth the hassle. Then, why do it?

Ultimately, you do it because you care about the individual members of your organization *and* because you realize your organization is only as effective as its least effective member. Effective organizations are more productive and successful because:

- Goals are not only met, but surpassed.
- Team members want to stay on the team—less time recruiting and training new members.
- Your team constantly attracts individuals wanting to join—you get the best and the most talented.
- Your leadership abilities are recognized and rewarded.

Strong, empowered and motivated teams create an energy and enthusiasm that permeate the organization. They naturally produce new and innovative ideas. Your legacy of leadership consistently produces effective and satisfied members. All this just because you took a slightly different approach. Worth it? I think so.

Developing Your Coaching Skills

You have it in you to become a great personal coach. It's that simple. Don't get me wrong, to truly become an *exceptional* and *professional* coach you need proper training, experience and working with a coach of your own. But for you to begin coaching your team members, all you really need is the desire and the basic skill-set. An assortment of books and resources are available to help you continue developing your coaching skills.

Each coach is unique in their approach and style, but most strong coaches share some common traits:

- Enthusiasm
- Respect
- Caring
- Knowledge

These personal attributes create the foundation for a strong and successful coaching relationship. Let's take a moment and briefly examine specifically how these elements play such an important role in creating the coaching relationship.

Enthusiasm: Attitude, attitude, attitude! The outlook and attitude you convey about the coaching experience will directly impact the outcome. Whether you realize it or not, your team members often look to you to set the initial tone toward a project. So if you get excited, the individual being coached will catch the wave.

Respect: No one has completely reached their potential. Each of us is on a journey toward this goal; some more directly than others. As a coach, you are entering into a very vulnerable place with the coachee. Avoid using judgmental language. Don't allow your personal issues to cloud your responses.

Knowledge: Too much or too little of this will prove deadly. You're not a consultant. Your job is *not* to tell the coachee what to do. However, your wisdom and experience in a particular area is an important element in the relationship.

Care: Perhaps the most important, yet all too easily forgotten element. A genuine desire for the coachee's development and evolution should be the primary motivating factor in your desire to coach. You run into trouble when you begin to see each individual in a strictly clinical or utilitarian manner.

- Utilitarian centered: "I've got to get him more organized so he'll be able to meet the new team sales goals!" (*You get what you need*)
- Caring centered: "If we can figure out what motivates her, she'll be happier at work. If this fits into our team goals, she'll have greater motivation to meet the sales goals." (*The process begins and continues focusing on what's best for the individual.*)

As you can see, much of your coaching relationship relies upon these elements. Together they form the founding principles underlying a strong coaching relationship:

1. Trust between the coach and the coachee.
2. Mutual respect based on trust and built by a genuine sense of commitment to the process.

3. A desire to maximize potential.
4. Commitment (time and energy).

First and foremost of these principles is trust—a trait of leadership mentioned throughout this book. *Trust is the heart of the coaching relationship.* The earlier you understand the primacy of trust in the coaching relationship, the sooner you will begin to see tangible results from the coaching experience. Without trust he/she will constantly filter or hedge his/her responses. This veiled honesty ultimately affects your ability to question, challenge and move the individual forward.

Trust cannot be forced. It needs to spring naturally from the relationship. The coachee will look to your past and present attitude, outlook, and actions in determining their level of trust. They must find in you a real desire for their general and professional fulfillment.

Try some of these suggestions to help the trust process get off to a good start:

- Set the ground rules in the first few meetings. How often will you meet? How long? What, if any, are the parameters regarding topics?
- Let the coachee know you value their privacy and that anything discussed during your coaching session will remain confidential.
- Let the coachee know you are there to help them discover greater satisfaction from the team.

THE COACHING SKILL-SET

Getting Down to Business

Evolving as an effective leader requires you to develop a toolbox of skills. Like many tools, these skills serve many purposes and can be used in a variety of circumstances. The five basic skills you need to master in order to develop as a truly effective coach are:

- Listening
- Discovery
- Challenging
- Visioning
- Assigning

Most of these skills are foundational for any leader. The fact that you are reading this book indicates you probably are well beyond an introductory stage of leadership and thus understand the basic concepts underlying each of these skills. In the discussion that follows I will explain the use of each skill without repeating much of the information you already know—or that has already been discussed in previous chapters. Although you may have some understanding of these skills, their uses in coaching require a much greater proficiency. I cannot encourage you strongly enough to continue training in the use of these skills.

Listening:

Some people believe the art of *listening* has gone the way of acid washed jeans and Farrah Fawcett hairstyles. Your coaching relationship begins with your ability to listen attentively and actively to what the coachee is *really* saying. This requires practice and *intentionality* on your part. There are five key elements to effective listening. Use these to help you develop this skill:

1. *Stay in the present:* Focus on what the coachee is saying here and now. Avoid letting your mind wander to other things. This requires you to listen actively and follow-up with appropriate questions.
2. *Clarify when you don't understand:* Don't be afraid to request clarification when you don't fully understand what the coachee is attempting to convey. Ask for clarification.
3. *Trust your gut:* Active listening requires you to trust your inner intuition. Listen to what it's telling you. Often we

don't consciously catch the body language and subtle messages people send. Our intuition is often the response to those subtle messages.

4. *Utilize quiet moments sparingly:* Quiet moments are often good times for the coachee and the coach to digest portions of a challenging conversation. However, feel free to encourage the coachee to talk when you feel the silence is disruptive or an escape.
5. *Keep eye contact:* One of the most important ways to let someone know you're listening is to keep eye contact with them. This does not mean staring intently into their eyes. Rather, keep your eyes casually focused on the bridge above their eyes.

Discovery:

Discovery provides context to what you hear. Learning to develop questions that require the coachee to reflect and examine is one of the most important coaching skills. The questions are like a mirror, constantly forcing the coachee to examine their perspectives and outlooks. They are pivotal to the self-examination process.

Formulating intuitive questions takes time, training and practice. Remember, the goal of discovery is to get the coachee to open up about themselves. Listed below are some tips to help you begin mastering this skill:

1. *Use open-ended questions:* Open-ended questions allow for discussion. They cannot be answered in a one word response. Their purpose is to elicit deeper discussion and clarity to a situation/discussion. E.g., "What are some specific examples of how Bob has dropped the ball on this project?"
2. *Know when to use "how" and "why" questions:* "How" questions usually involve seeking information about doing something. "Why" questions usually involve seeking

information about something that was already done. E.g., "How could you have handled the situation so your team could have accomplished their goals?"

3. *Have the coachee begin by describing specific moments:* One great way to get conversation moving and the coachee relaxed is to ask them to describe a time in their life when they succeeded at something. Have them describe the moment and the feeling. See if they can translate the event to the current situation.

Challenging:

There will be times when you'll want to *challenge* the coachee. Challenging takes many forms, each with a specific end in mind. Basically, challenging is a request or question you ask the coachee that requires them to push themselves farther and deeper than ever before. As a coach, you should be constantly looking for ways in which you can "raise the bar" of expectations. You do this so the coachee needs to dig deep to find those hidden abilities otherwise left undiscovered and unused.

It should be noted, however, that the purpose and use of the challenging process must always focus on building the coachee's confidence and self-awareness. Never set the coachee up for failure through the use of a challenge.

Challenges can take any number of forms. Some examples of challenges include:

- Assign the coachee some form of "fieldwork" to be completed before the next coaching session to help reinforce or develop a needed skill.
- Ask a question that cuts to the heart of the matter.
- Constantly "raise the bar" of expectations—realize that many of us don't push ourselves hard enough. As a result, we never know how truly great we can be.

- Keep your coachee accountable to what they say and do. Keep demanding a high level of integrity and commitment.
- Require that the coachee verbalize their accomplishments with you. Make sure they celebrate as much as they complain when they don't meet their expectations.
- Don't just moan failure. Dig into the reasons why with the coachee. Then have them list five things they learned from the situation.

Visioning:

There are times in our lives when we all lose perspective. We get so caught up in the moment that we lose sight of the bigger picture and our place in it. Some of what the coach does with the coachee revolves around helping him/her see the forest in spite of the trees. This requires the coach to keep his or her own perspective and not get caught up in the coachee's issues. Some level of detachment is both healthy and necessary if you are to really assist the coachee in discovering their distinct skills and abilities.

Ways to help the coachee in the vision development process:

- Ask them to list their strengths (personal, professional and academic).
- Take on the role of being their fan when they need assistance with appreciating what they do well.
- Help them set goals. Stack them at three levels—(1) Attainable, (2) Needs some work, but can be done, (3) A stretch, but with some major work coachee can reach it.
- Have them assess their current life from all angles—personal, professional, social, religious/spiritual, educational, family, goals. Rank each from one to ten. Have them choose one area and list the specific steps needed to improve that area by two points. Chart their efforts so they can see their progress.

Assigning:

“Fieldwork” is usually the first and the final topic you and the coachee discuss each coaching session. Think of fieldwork as a homework assignment you give the coachee to help them strengthen a particular area, develop a particular skill or put into action something you had discussed earlier. Fieldwork should be challenging and ample enough to keep the coachee focused on a particular area. Caution should be taken so you don't over assign fieldwork. This only leads to the coachee spending an inadequate amount of time on the fieldwork or not doing it at all.

Creating fieldwork that both challenges the coachee and incorporates the issues discussed during the coaching session requires quite a bit of practice and finesse. Some examples of fieldwork are listed below. Feel free to use them as a template for your own coaching fieldwork.

- Find at least ten separate situations over the next few weeks where you are asked to do something. Say “No!” Record how it feels? Does it get any easier?
- Practice a mock office conflict situation with someone you know well. Use a situation that actually happened. Try out three different approaches based on the conflict resolution models we discussed.
- List the ten things you would continue doing even if you had won the lottery and working was no longer necessary. Next to the jobs you listed—write “yes” if pursuing it would be feasible at this time. Consider income and education. Choose the top five. Then, the top three. What obstacles keep you from pursuing these jobs? Create a long-range plan for securing one of these jobs.

There you have them; the five basic coaching skills. A professional coach has a toolbox loaded with other more precise skills-sets. These come with training and practice. However, with these basic

five under your belt, you can immediately begin utilizing coaching as a part of your leadership strategy.

*“There is something that is much more scarce,
something rarer than ability.*

It is the ability to recognize ability.”

– Robert Half

The Coaching Session

Creating the environment for a good coaching session requires some mental pre-planning, but the difference it makes cannot be underscored. The coaching session requires five basic keys:

- Decide on a purpose for the coaching.
- Speak plainly and clearly.
- Stay on task and avoid discussions that lead to nowhere.
- Realize the discussion may take turns you had not planned.
- Avoid making assumptions.

These keys should provide you with a context from which you can plan your coaching sessions. However, it's been my experience that some of those new to coaching need some help in organizing the basic structure of the coaching session. So, very briefly the structural framework for a one-hour coaching session is as follows:

1. Welcome and pleasantries.
2. Review what was discussed last time you met.
3. Discuss any fieldwork assigned.
4. Review areas of accomplishment and failure since the last session.
5. Discuss the pre-determined issue(s) for this particular session.
6. Assign fieldwork.
7. Closing.

Each session will be different, based on the coachee's individual needs. In general, your duties as a coach include, listening to where the coachee is at, asking questions to clarify or evoke further information, give feedback, brainstorm ideas and challenge the coachee, offering encouragement, helping them in finding the lesson in failures and mistakes, and helping the coachee see the big picture.

This probably looks pretty daunting, but it actually comes quite naturally once you get used to it. The key is to go over the session a few times in your mind before your first few meetings. Make sure you've reviewed their coaching preparation form and relax. You have gotten this far by luck. Trust yourself.

The Opportunity Before You

Let's take a moment and revisit the story at the beginning of this chapter. By just adding these lines in the middle of the story, the eagle's life changes fundamentally.

One day, after his first year, the leader of the chicken community approached the eagle and said, “You seem to be having some trouble flapping your wings and laying the eggs. Yet, I see so much more potential in you. You have a lot to give this community. Why don't we meet and talk about it tomorrow.”

The eagle's life would never have been the same again. Rather than living his life never realizing his true potential, the eagle would have known the freedom of flight and power he possessed by right of his birth.

The power of legacy relies on the commitment of individual leaders like you to make a difference. Successful leaders have always focused on more than the finish line. They instinctively knew the source of an organization's success lies in the continuity and quality of its leadership. Coaching provides you with the means to achieve both.