



LEADERSHIP
p r a x i s



COACHING CHRISTIAN LEADERS FOR PERSPECTIVE AND INSIGHT

Discover the Power of Personal Focus
and Congregational Alignment

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ABSTRACT

Turning vision into ministry action is the purview of effective spiritual leaders. But often making the shift from vision to action requires feedback from someone with the wisdom and love enough to interrogate the reasoning, question the methods, enrich the relationships and focus the core values of the leader as she or he relates to Christ. This is the job of a coach.

This training paper describes the outcomes, the process and the key questions effective coaches use to generate deep change in their clients in the affective (emotional), cognitive (mental) and spiritual (perceptual) arenas of human endeavor and relationship.

OUTCOMES OF COACHING

Effective coaching typically results in six crucial outcomes for the leader: an energized faith, enriched relationships, reclaimed time (refocused perspectives), renewed spiritual focus and new hope for the future.

Outcomes are identifiable and measurable. It is important for coaches to exercise an awareness of the evidence for each outcome in those they are working with whether it is mentees, staff or others who seek out a coaching relationship. Jesus described outcomes as fruit, the visible activity of internal attitudes, perspectives and commitments. It is the fruit of an individual's life that the coach uses as a source of insight and foundation for questions.

To the degree that the coach is attentive to the total feedback of the individual they are coaching the coach's ability to frame questions that leverage change is enhanced. The coach's ability to frame powerful questions begins with an awareness of the vital outcomes of coaching.

ENERGIZE FAITH AND COURAGE

Concentrate on what's truly important in your ministry, your relationships and your life. Define your core values and work from them with integrity. Rethink and re-image how you lead. Develop permission to be who God has made you. Refocus your assessment of the present in light of the future and God's promise. Put faith to work by learning to ask key questions and so reduce the chance of making damaging blunders. Open and walk through new doors of possibility.

ENRICH RELATIONSHIPS

Engage new listening and communication skills that enhance your confidence in relating to others. Learn how to build synergy with the spiritual gifts, skills and insights of others in your congregation. Tackle the tough challenges sooner than later. Probe the way you relate and delegate to others on your team. Augment your effectiveness through powerful encouragement and accountability.

RECLAIM TIME

Clarify, prioritize and manage immediately the most pressing issues and expose your best creative thinking thereby reducing the number of issues that subconsciously vie for your attention – less time taken for anxiety means more energy to meet the really important demands of ministry.

FOSTER SPIRITUALITY

Set up an environment of spiritual growth and awareness. Grow in the capacity needed to complete the core ministry activities that define your calling and destiny. Identify your passion and uniqueness in ministry to bring authenticity to all your conversations and relationships.

BUILD HOPE

Personal support makes hearing the truth an exercise in growth. People do amazing things when they have cheerleaders who can also help them see their pratfalls and change to avoid them. The most amazing thing we see occur is that hope is regained and strengthened. Ministry can be a hope impairing experience — renew your connection to the source of hope.

So what does a coaching process look like?

THE PROCESS

Coaches use questions to help clients draw on their own experience, values, knowledge and spiritual insights to see their context from a different perspective. Looking at the same situation, problem or context from a new point of view often yields great insights.

Can questions be that effective in helping individuals gain clarity? The answer, at least from the perspective of church history, is affirmative. The Quakers for example use questions as a means for helping each other with personally challenging situations while simultaneously protecting the sanctity of the soul. The Quaker practice was called a clearness committee. Clearness committees worked on a basic and nonnegotiable ground rule, participants are forbidden to speak except to ask the person requesting assistance an honest, open question. Advice, over-identification, and impatience with a learning process were thus avoided.¹ Thus time was given to allow adequate reflection and prayerful discernment in the framing of questions to avoid loading them with inferred agendas. The participant retained permission to pass on a question without diminishing the power of the process.

Coaching works in much the same way. Its focus is the context in which the leader works and lives. Coaching moves through five different steps that involve questions, feedback (if permission is granted for

¹ Parker J. Palmer. The Courage to Teach (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1998), 152-153.

such) and dialogue to clarify the actions that will result. It is a very personal some would say intimate, process that is somehow non-threatening and revolutionary. Leaders tend to feel deeply affirmed, even when the coach has said very little. Pastor Barry describes his experience with coaching this way;

... In my opinion a good coach is one who says, 'There is more to conquer in your field, keep stretching, don't rest in your comfort zone, and you can do it! Here are some tools, ideas, possibilities for you to diligently apply and then your likelihood of success is great.'²

Sam is a strong lay-leader in a church in Southern California, describes his experience this way;

[the Leadership Praxis coach had a] no nonsense approach to life and coaching is transparent and straight forward. I like the way he held me accountable for the part I play. He was always prepared for our meetings...the bottom line is that for people serious about finishing well and making a serious contribution during their life time [my coach] is a great resource to achieve that.³

In Barry's case the power of the coaching was in the encouragement he perceived. The coach primarily asked questions and exercised a skill called intruding i.e., the coach asked to give feedback about the patterns of response the coach observed in Barry's conversation. Intruding moves a step beyond active listening; it interrupts a client's response with the intention revealing a pattern of conversation that has consistently sidestepped uncomfortable subjects that appear to be related to unproductive patterns of behavior over time. Barry felt exposed even confronted by the reflective feedback of the coach.

The coach then formulated a series of questions to explore Barry's expressed emotion while affirming permission that the agenda was determined by Barry not the coach. The coach asked, "May we stop for a moment to consider how you are responding to this feedback?" After asking the question the coach utilized another coaching skill called leveraging silence. It took several moments for Barry to respond to the question. Unskilled coaches act too soon to fill the void of silence. Skilled coaches remain attentive but do not "rescue" a client from the growing discomfort that silence can generate.

The pattern of responses simply indicated a behavior that Barry discovered was a defense mechanism to intimacy and feedback from others. Like other very public leaders, Barry had felt attacked by the people he led. He had to learn how to hear feedback and ask his own set of clarifying questions of those who gave him the feedback. Barry's perception of the benefit of coaching indicates the value he received. The coach never explicitly said what Barry reported. However the process of using powerful questions to

² Barry (a pseudonym) is a Senior Pastor in a growing congregation in Southern California. October 2007.

³ Sam (a pseudonym) is a Project Manager for an Engineered Systems company in Southern California, January 2008.

interrogate the reality that Barry lived in helped Barry push past his own comfort zone and discover a new perception.

Sam's experience of coaching introduced a new awareness of accountability. The object of this accountability was Sam's development objectives – not the coach's.

One more experience stands out, this one from a CEO named Dan. Dan walked away from coaching with a stronger clarity in his vision for his organization. He writes;

[my Leadership Praxis coach] has personally assisted me in articulating my vision for the hospital and developing tools to assist in the processes to ensure our success. I recommend [my coach] as a highly skilled professional who brings many talents to assist organizations with their on-going growth and development.⁴

In Dan's case his openness to coaching occurred only after the Leadership Praxis consultant/coach had worked with the hospital's management team and directors. After Dan saw the impact coaching had on his staff he set appointments with the coach to clarify his own thinking.

THE COACHING PROCESS

Each of these individuals described above walked away from the coaching process with a unique benefit. Figure 1 illustrates what a coaching session looks like. It is the road map that shapes the hour the coach spends with the client. An hour may seem like a lot of time, but it goes by quickly. Each aspect of the coaching session has a unique ability to help the client shape their own thinking and walk away from the coaching session with actionable direction. In the explanation of Figure 1 below actual coaching questions are provided.

One of the most important skills a coach can possess is how to manage the coaching session. If the process is ignored and if the coach fails to utilize appropriate transition statements during the coaching session as a time management tool then the client may begin to question the usefulness of coaching because they become lost in their own thinking.

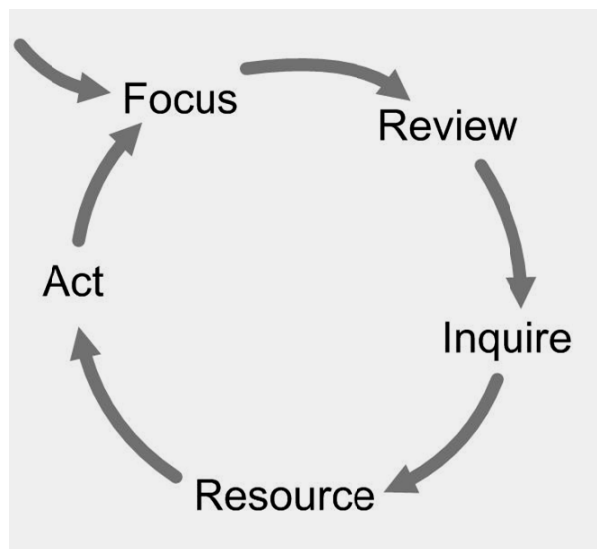
Two the benefits of coaching i.e., reclaiming time and building hope are grounded in part on the coach's ability to help the client reflect with a direction or discipline of process that engages complexity systematically and helps the client bring order and see the inter-relationships between variables in the complexity they manage.

⁴ Dan is a CEO of a Hospital in Southern California, January 2007.

For this reason Leadership Praxis coaches manage their coaching engagements in a way that provides the client with a clear road map to discovery and to action. Amazingly this map when used by a skillful coach is not overt to the process. It is only apparent in reflection on the part of the client. What is felt by the client in the coaching sessions is a sense of progress and relief. Relief is experienced because the act of listening and reflection on the part a coach allows the client to bring order to some of their chaos or complexity. Progress is measurable because the client does not leave a coaching session without specific activities that the coach holds them accountable to perform. Many times these activities are simple disciplines that give traction to critical thinking. The fact a coach exists helps the client engage critical and strategic thinking when without such input their own cognitive defenses may derail clarity in analysis.

As you read through the process imagine managing the process by utilizing the key questions and the transition statements that are noted. Try them out and see how they help you think toward new perspectives or greater clarity when coaching others.

FIGURE 1: THE COACHING PROCESS



FOCUS — COACHING IS CONTEXTUAL

Coaching works because it meets the client in the here and now. Coaching it enters the client’s situation with compassion and insight. Coaching occurs over the phone or in person. In the hour the coach spends with the client, the client’s story and situation is entered and reviewed. There are no interruptions. Coaching differs from other forms of interaction or teaching because it can engage a client in any industry, any level of leadership and any situation not by bringing subject matter expertise but by bringing a learning process expertise. The first part of a coaching conversation helps the client focus on what the session really needs to be about in light of their situation, opportunities, threats and challenges. Focus allows the client to celebrate accomplishment recognizing or appreciating their own successes and

failures, disappointments and wins to leverage the client's self awareness and self confidence. The client sets the agenda. So the questions effective coaches use include:

What can we celebrate together?

How would you describe how are you doing?

Where are you now?

What do you want to address?

How can we work together?

What's really important?

REVIEW — COACHING IDENTIFIES SELF IMPOSED BARRIERS

Internal obstacles to action are often more daunting than the external ones. Coaching advances a bi-focal vision of development seeing both the short-term and long-term issues that must be addressed to gain momentum in the direction the individual identifies as the path to experiencing life purpose, competency development and organizational goals. Coaching maximizes individual learning and identifies mid-course corrections. In the review stage the coach helps establish the supportive and encouraging environment needed to consider an exploration of self imposed or externally imposed barriers to action that the client experiences. The review stage is a critical component to helping a client assume a learning posture rather than a defensive posture. Review helps the client move past doing the same activities over and over with greater intensity even though the results never change.

How have you lived the dream God gave you?

Have you completed the actions you determined to do in our last conversation?

What do you believe is impossible to do, that if you were able to do it would completely change the game?

What are you pretending not to know?

What are you pretending not to see?

What are you pretending not to experience?

INQUIRE — COACHING HARNESSSES HOPE BY BEING AUTHENTIC AND SUPPORTIVE

Coaching provides a safe and supportive environment to expose fear that hinders action toward hope. It encourages a true discussion or conversation of an individual's passions, vision and desires. This is important because the coach often has to encourage their client past perceptions of social convention, cultural expectations and misperceptions of personal ability and talents. People who excel in their work and their personal relationships seem to have in common clarity of focus about who they are as individuals and clarity about their deepest dreams. The questions at this stage of the coaching process are designed to get at those dreams and sense of self that may be buried in how the client thinks they should act or be rather than who the client really is on the inside.

What do you want to accomplish?

What are the possible ways to get there?

Which path will you choose? What will you do?

What preparation is needed?

What skills do you possess to get there?

What skills do you need to develop to get there?

Who do you need to go with you?

How will you measure progress?

RESOURCE — COACHING IDENTIFIES TOOLS AND RESOURCES AVAILABLE NOW

Perhaps the strongest aspect of the coaching relationship is helping the client see the resources they already possess for success. Resourcing also helps the client see resources that are within their reach but may require some amount of rigor to access. The coach, at this point in the process, pays attention to the self discovery the client has already experienced.

What resources will you need?

What resources do you already have?

What resources are missing?

Where will you find resources?

What are you willing to endure to acquire the resources you need?

What is the most important thing you need from me at this point?

ACT — COACHING BRIDGES THE GAP BETWEEN EXPECTATION AND PERFORMANCE

Acting is the process in which an individual identifies and harnesses their motivation, giftedness, faith and goals to bridge the gap between hope and performance. Coaching helps a client initiate measurable and achievable actions. Coaching leads to the experience of celebrating measurable accomplishments. Identifying measurable actions and celebrating measurable accomplishments provide the critical feedback loop inherent in coaching. Acting leads right back to focus.

What's the next most potent step you need to take?

What will try to get in your way?

When will you take it?

Who needs to be a participant in the action?

Who needs to be in my communication loop?

How will I measure the action's effectiveness?

SKILLS COACHES UTILIZE

ACTIVE LISTENING

Coaching requires attentiveness to and engagement with the client. Coaches do not spend their listening time formulating a response to the client or thinking about their own situation. Coaches respond to the client's statements, insights, inquiries and perceptions. Questions used by coaches are always open ended that is they cannot be answered with a yes or no response. They are designed to help the client reflect openly about their thoughts, goals, fears, challenges and strategic perspective. Coaches listen for:

- Self-imposed barriers. Coaches help clients raise awareness of the impact of their action and take responsibility for the impacts of their actions.
- Hidden strengths. Coaches help clients discover strengths that they may not have seen previously. This self myopia is frequently the result of being too actively engaged with a problem, crisis or challenge to take time to reflect.

SITUATIONAL AWARENESS

As illustrated in Table 1 coaches need to exercise a situational awareness that helps the client explore the impacts of their behavior and decisions in light of those relationships that are impacted by the client and that impact the client. Helping the client raise their own situational awareness is a critical function of coaching that helps clients make better decisions and ask better strategic and tactical questions.

SUSPEND PERSONAL JUDGMENT – ENGAGE INQUIRY

Suspending personal judgment is imperative to create an environment in which the real issues faced by the client may be addressed. Perhaps the greatest biblical example of this approach is recorded in John 8:3-11. Consider the observations in Table 1.

TABLE 1: NON-JUDGMENTAL ENGAGEMENT ILLUSTRATED

John 8:3-11	Coaching Skill and Commentary
<p>The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery; and making her stand before all of them they said to him...</p>	<p>Situational Awareness. Coaches, like wise leaders have to exercise attentiveness to multiple constituencies, interests and agendas. Coaches exercise attentiveness to the web of relationships and behavioral impacts exhibited by their clients.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scribes and Pharisees – wanted to trap Jesus • The woman – a victim of a set up (where was the man?) What were her needs in this engagement? • The crowd – the audience who would provide popular opinion (i.e., water cooler talk) • The disciples who were observers – who would act on the behavior Jesus would model • Jesus – the target of the trap and the coach
<p>“Teacher, this woman was caught in the very act of committing adultery. Now in the law Moses commanded us to stone such a woman. Now what do you say?” They said this to test him, so that they might have some charge to bring against him.</p>	<p>Active Listening. John’s commentary reveals the agenda that active listening also reveals, the question is not about adultery – the question is about envy, power and position. Coaches listen for what is really being said.</p>
<p>Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground.</p>	<p>Leveraging Silence. Jesus made no response for some time. Using silence ripened the attentiveness of all the participants in this engagement. Using silence rather than filling the gap with more questions or commentary forces the client to reflect more deeply.</p>
<p>When they kept questioning him, he straightened up and said to them, “Let anyone who is without sin be the first to throw a stone at her.” And once again he bent down and wrote on the ground. When they heard it, they went away, one by one, beginning with the elders...</p>	<p>Intruding. Intruding is an action that interrupts or wakes a client up who is going on and on and who may be kidding themselves. Jesus invited the scribes and Pharisees to act on their assertion regarding the law but (1) to do it publicly and (2) with integrity. Note that Jesus once again leverages silence with his activity of writing in the dirt. He waits until the response is complete.</p>
<p>...and Jesus was left alone with the woman standing before him. Jesus straightened up and said to her, “Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?” She said, “No one, sir.” And Jesus said, “Neither do I condemn you. Go your way, and from now on do not sin again.”</p>	<p>Inquiry and Moral Reflection. Jesus did not condemn, this is the essence of a coach’s non-judgmental approach. It does not mean that moral reflection and inquiry are absent from the coaching engagement. It means that an environment devoid of snap judgments, condescension and criticalness are needed to help a client get at the real issues they face. As Jesus created a safe environment for the woman to engage a discussion about her behavior so coaches do the same.</p>

The facts of the woman’s experience were not in dispute, so it is with coaching clients. Coaches come with a relative awareness of the facts of their situation. I say relative awareness because there are times as previously noted that coaches have to help clients move beyond patterns of denial. Non-judgmental methods are not devoid of moral assessment (the foundation for ethical decisions) but are devoid of

disapproving or disparaging attitudes and commentary on the part of the coach toward the client. The objective is the creation of a safe environment where the client may explore his/her deep issues and questions in order to engage in self discovery and discovery of God. It is not infrequent that the coach him or herself is deeply impacted by being a participant in so intimate an activity. Coaches may expect deep growth to occur in themselves as well as their clients.

HOLDING THE CLIENT'S AGENDA

The coach does not bring her or his agenda into the coaching relationship. When a coach holds the client's agenda the coach becomes invisible – the coach does not have to provide the right answer but listens and responds to the client in support of facilitating the client's personal balance, clarity, critical thinking and process. The coach is not responsible to give solutions or tell the client what to do. This aspect of coaching is very specific and does not apply to all mentoring relationships which may serve different functions than coaching. The coach helps the client keep their own focus and helps redirect the client toward the outcomes the client said they wanted to reach.

POWERFUL QUESTIONS

Well framed questions, i.e., questions that arise out of really hearing the client, evoke focus, new inquiry, discovery, insight and commitment. Questions that are well framed become powerful tools in the coach's tool box of skills and are perhaps the most important skill a coach needs after holding the client's agenda and active listening. Well framed questions are open ended meaning that they cannot be answered with a yes or no response. They move a client toward powerful conversations that develop a path way to learning, clearer vision and transformational change.

CELEBRATION

Celebration is a skill used to help the client grow in appreciation of their wins and successes as well as the opportunities inherent in failures and disappointments. This is not cheesy cheer leading, it is a tool that helps the client see themselves as whole beings and assist the client in not taking themselves too seriously. Depression, self-loathing or stress destroys creativity. Lack of recognition and celebration damages morale and dampens commitment. The act of celebration helps the client focus on the process of growth and utilize rather than fight the ebb and flow of their own physical, emotional and spiritual energy.

BOTTOM LINE

Accelerating communication by helping the client move past long narratives to get to the point of their communication is called getting to the bottom line. It recognizes that long stories may serve as rationalizations or masking the true issues or emotions so that the story itself becomes the focus of the coaching session rather than the point of the story i.e., what transpired, how the client felt about it and what meaning the client assigns to the event that will determine their future response.

INSIGHT

Insight is the exercise of intuition. It is the process of listening to one's inner voice as a form of direct knowing that is admittedly nonlinear and non-rational. Sometimes the information received through this exercise of intuition does not make sense to the coach. However, such insights can be of extreme value to the client. Insight is delivered openly with a statement such as, "I have a gut feeling that..." "I wonder if..." Some traditions understand this kind of insight to be the operation of certain spiritual gifts. Insight can work in conjunction with intruding but the two do not necessarily work in tandem.

ASKING PERMISSION

Asking permission is a critical skill toward building trust and gaining access to the client's reasoning power by-passing the client's defensive or reactive responses. The skill bridges to issues that are intimate or impolite to address in casual conversation. It allows the coach to build on insights and offer feedback that may be difficult for the client to receive. Asking permission automatically engages and neutralizes the defense mechanisms of the client and may be introduced by asking; "May I tell you a hard truth?" or "Is it alright to coach you on this issue?" or "May I tell you what I see?"

METAPHOR –STORY TELLING

Two of the most effective means of stimulating a client's thinking occur in the coach's use of metaphor and story. This allows for insights to be generated on the part of the client in a way that frequently bypasses defensive reasoning. It is illustrated profoundly in the Prophet Nathan's approach to David King of Israel after he had an affair with the married Bathsheba and attempted to cover their affair by ensuring Uriah (Bathsheba's husband) would be killed in battle. The story is told in 2 Samuel 12: 1-15. The result of this powerful use of metaphor and story was that David recognized the duplicity and grievous violation of trust and integrity his actions had incurred. David admitted his error and moral lapse (cf. Psalm 51) and took responsibility for his actions. This kind of transparency modeled integrity and rejuvenated moral centeredness which are both characteristics sorely needed in today's leadership world.

PRESENCE

A coach must have the ability and the fortitude to remain in the moment with their client. The coach must be completely present holding their client's agenda, past conversations, patterns of behavior, insight while they follow the client's lead.

REFRAMING

Reframing is an exercise of perspective that involves interpreting the data seen by a client in a different way. Whitworth, Kimsey-House and Sandahl write;

A client has just been informed that she was selected as second choice for a high-powered position in a very competitive market. She is disappointed and is questioning

her professional competence. A reframe of the situation is: To be selected as second choice in such a competitive market indicates the high quality of your expertise and experience.⁵

INTRUDING

A coach must develop the ability to interrupt clients who are going on and on in a way that obfuscates the real issues faced by the client.⁶ Intruding is sometimes offering a hard truth such as, “You are kidding yourself.” Sometimes intruding is expressed in simple reflective listening by simply stating what is going on, such as, “You are skirting the issue.” Intruding is considered rude in many circles – an assessment that is often amplified in the church where overt kindness is seen to be a chief goal. Yet there are times when the misuse of kindness blinds individuals to the destructive impact of their behavior on others. Intruding allows the client to honestly assess and immediately deal with situations.

HOLDING FOCUS

Once a client has determined their focus the coach’s job is to help the client remain centered on that focus – to help them remain true to their course. The benefit a coach brings to keeping focus clear is critical as the client returns to the routine pressures and demands of their work where the tyranny of the urgent may well derail their intention or overwhelm their desire for change and cause them to revert to less than productive “knee-jerk” behavior founded on stress rather than balance. Helping a client hold their focus is the greatest leverage toward forwarding action. Holding focus also includes the aspect of clearing the client’s mind of distractions in the front part of the coaching session (the focus stage). When the client is preoccupied with a situation, crisis, problem or individual that impedes their ability to be truly present in the coaching engagement the coach can encourage the client to clear the situation long enough to be present in the session. Allow the client to vent or complain using bottom lining and active listening. When the client is ready to transition help them engage the session by requesting their engagement and focus.

BRAINSTORMING

Brainstorming is the skill of encouraging a client to creatively generate ideas without initial regard to feasibility, cost, logic or careful framing. The point of brainstorming is to engage the creative aspect of problem solving that is often lost in the act of evaluation and analysis. The client and the coach work together to generate as many possibilities as possible that may be available to the client. Once a full

⁵ Whitworth, Kimsey-House and Sandahl (1998:298)

⁶ Laura Whitworth, Henry Kimsey-House and Phil Sandahl. Co-Active Coaching: New Skills for Coaching People Toward Success in Work and Life (Palo Alto, CA: Davies-Black Publishing, 1998). The author’s discussion on intruding is worth the book since this skill is frequently overlooked by some other authors.

pallet of ideas has been generated then coach helps the client transition to an analysis of the options. Frequently the analysis stage generates the truly creative idea following brainstorming.

REQUESTING/CHALLENGING

Requesting is making a request of the client based on the client's agenda. It is used to forward the client's action and is typically utilized in the resource or acting stage of the coaching engagement. A request includes specific action, metrics by which the outcomes are measured and a date by which the action will be completed. Requesting helps the client move toward specific plans, goals, timeframes and outcomes. Part of requesting is challenging the client to stretch way beyond their self-imposed limits. Whitworth, Kimsey-House and Sandahl note that "Frequently, in the face of challenge, clients will respond with a counteroffer that is greater than they initially would have allowed themselves to make otherwise."⁷

SELF-MANAGEMENT

Coaches must develop a bi-focal skill in self-management. On the one hand the coach must manage their own ambitions, drive, vision, insight and values in a way that does not overshadow their client. Coaches must remain virtually invisible so that they do not become virally domineering. Coaching is designed to bring the client to focused responsibility and a new sense of self – to help them find their own voice and speak it with greater resonance in their leadership situation. On the other hand the coach helps the client manage their own harassing echoes. Harassing echoes are those "voices" or beliefs that consistently attempt to rob clients of their confidence and authority by belittling, doubting and accusing. These harassing echoes are the brick and mortar of an individual's self imposed barriers.

LEVERAGING SILENCE

Leveraging silence is a critical skill for coaches. Susan Scott is fond of reminding people that, "Silence makes us nervous, so do innovation, change and genius."⁸ Leveraging silence is a means of focusing by stilling one's voice long enough to gain a touch with one's real emotions, perceptions and situation. As such it is a tool used in the focusing stage of the coaching engagement to help a client unplug from distractions and move from talking at the coach to talking with the coach. Leveraging silence is also a reflective tool used when a powerful question elicits a quick response that is in reality a form of defensive reasoning. When the coach does not rescue a client from silence (sometime clients use silence as a smokescreen for avoiding a difficult question or insight) the client is far more available emotionally and cognitively to face a difficult or painful insight.

⁷ Whitworth, Kimsey-House and Sandahl (1998:254)

⁸ Susan Scott. *Fierce Conversations: Achieving Success at Work and in Life, One Conversation at a Time* (New York: Berkeley Publishing, 2004), 223.

STRUCTURES

Coaches provide devices that remind clients of their vision, goals, and values. Structures include worksheets, reminders, messages on voice mail, collages or e-mail reminders. Structures keep a client on track with the activities they realize they have to do now to get where they want to go. The coach's skill requires knowing what structure will best serve their client based on the client's learning style, style of communication and stress points.

ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability is part of the review process in the coaching engagement. It is asking your clients to account for what they said they were going to do. Accountability does not include blame or judgment, it is holding the client accountable to the client's vision and commitment and intention. Accountability is essential to forwarding the client's agenda.

FACTORS CRITICAL TO THE COACHING RELATIONSHIP

CONFIDENTIALITY

All information that a client shares with the coach is privileged and often deals with proprietary information in the company or organization. Confidentiality in the coaching relationship then needs to be a clearly defined expectation i.e., the information a client shares with a coach is never shared with anyone else without the client's express permission. Confidentiality creates safety and trust and is the basis of the powerful collaborative alliance that is created between the client and the coach.

TRUST

Trust is an assured reliance on the integrity (character, truth), ability (skill, awareness, resource) and benevolence (situational awareness, appreciation and attentiveness) of a person. Because of the unique nature of the coaching relationship trust is imperative to maintaining an environment that allows a client to discuss safely what they need to address to move their career, personal life, relationships and skills forward. Creating trust is a relational dance that is grounded on confidentiality being proven and is immediately affirmed by the demonstration of the coach's skill and dependability.

COLLABORATE ALLIANCE

Coaching is a process by which the client grants power to an alliance with a coach. It is imperative that the client take responsibility for his or her part in this alliance. Clients assume responsibility to design an alliance that will be most beneficial to and supportive of their goals and vision. This is accomplished as the client makes requests of the coach; the coach establishes appropriate expectations on their part of

the relationship and by the coach setting up the logistics with the client needed to facilitate client learning and action.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN COACHING AND CONSULTING?

Coaching provides a one-on-one conversation between a client and a coach. Typically personal and professional development areas are targeted in a coaching engagement. Consultation includes an organization's whole team and/or board or lay leaders and is designed to move a congregation or organization to a new level of ministry effectiveness. Leadership Praxis also provides consulting services.

HOW DO YOU REALLY HELP A CLIENT?

The benefit of coaching is best understood by looking at what typically initiates a coaching relationship. Coaching partnerships often begin when a leader is engaged in a dilemma or feels stymied. The essence of coaching is engaging in a collaborative relationship that helps leaders get "...unstuck from their dilemmas and assisting them in transferring their learning into results for the organization."⁹ Coaching is designed around a client's own goals and desired outcomes. As noted above coaches listen, ask powerful questions, give feedback, assess and help a client define their own objectives. A coach then designs a coaching engagement to move toward identification and execution of the client's vision and goals.

Leadership Praxis coaches also utilize a variety of assessments to help clients understand their strengths, perceive the impact of stress on their behaviors and understand how their actions impact others. We utilize a number of powerful assessment tools that help bring focus that are recommended based on the client's situation, budget and desired outcomes.

The Birkman[®] Method is an on-line self-report questionnaire administered over the internet. It elicits responses about perception of self, perception of social context (others), and perception of career opportunities. It is the perfect complement to coaching, leadership development and the ministry alignment of pastoral and administrative staff. Over 2 million people in over 5,000 organizations have contributed to the depth and strength of the assessment.

The Birkman 360[°] gathers information about individual performance as measured by the perspectives of self, peers, subordinates, and others. The Birkman 360[°] focuses on nine important leadership competencies that drive work, relationships, and ministry effectiveness.

⁹ Mary Beth O'Neill. *Executive Coaching with Backbone and Heart: A Systems Approach to Engaging Leaders with their Challenges* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2000), xiii.

The Leadership Praxis 360° gathers information about a client’s leadership skills as described by the perspectives of self, peers, subordinates, and others. The Leadership Praxis 360° focuses on the skills required for a leader to meet their objectives as evaluated from the perspective of skill sets, time management and critical values.

The DISC® Classic is a self-report instrument designed to help adults better understand how they perceive their environment and how they view themselves relative to the environment. Classic. The DISC® Classic is based on the research of William Moulton Marston who developed a two axis, four dimensional model of behavior.

LEADERSHIP PRAXIS RESOURCES

The appendix that follows provides an example of the kind of worksheet used to record coaching sessions by the coach. This is one of the many tools used by Leadership Praxis to provide a clear structure to coaching relationships in order to keep the focus on the client’s agenda and to leverage forward momentum in their development and follow through.

Other resources available from Leadership Praxis include:

- The Development Plan Worksheet \$2.50 + postage and tax
- The Conflict Resolution Worksheet \$2.50 + postage and tax
- Coaching Intake Form \$2.50 + postage and tax
- Sample Coaching Agreement \$5.00 + postage and tax

These resources are available in printed form and may be ordered in any amount. Allow 3 to 6 weeks for delivery.

- Electronic versions of any of these forms is available as a pdf file for \$50.00 + tax

Coaching engagement with Leadership Praxis coaches start at \$150 per hour for a minimum six month agreement.

Other coaching packages are available please see the services and product pages of our website at www.leadership-praxis.com.

APPENDIX 1: COACHING SESSION WORKSHEET

Name: _____ Organization: _____ Date: _____

1. Focus: How are you doing? How would your spouse or best friend say you are doing?

2. Review: What do you want to address in this coaching meeting? How can we work together? What can we celebrate?



3. Inquire: What is working or not working? What obstacles or challenges are you facing? If there was one question you do not want me to ask, what would it be?

4. Resource: What do you need to act on this issue? What comes to mind – e.g., an insight, question, or resource you had forgotten about?

5. Act: What do you believe needs to happen in order to make progress toward your goals? Think about this in light of: information or insight the last coaching session brought up, something you have read recently, or an idea intuition seems to consistently impress on you? Was there specific homework recommended?

What actions do you need to take? Describe them one sentence below – then ramify them for accountability.

Identify Barriers: If you had a completely safe environment at work what would you say to your supervisor about these areas?

Having listed what you believe needs to happen now think about in answering the questions below (i.e., bottom line, work processes and human relationships). You may not have all the answers but do some brainstorming and start a process of discovery.

Bottom Line <i>(What costs are involved to make this happen?)</i>	Work Processes <i>(What is the timeframe, quality level and support needed to make this happen?)</i>	Human Relationships <i>(Who are the key collaborators needed and what is their role to see this change stick?)</i>