

ATD Training Basics Series

2nd Edition

Coaching BASICS

Lisa Haneberg

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2nd Edition

Coaching BASICS

Lisa Haneberg

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About the Training Basics Series

ATD's Training Basics series recognizes and, in some ways, celebrates the fast-paced, ever-changing reality of organizations today. Jobs, roles, and expectations change quickly. One day you might be a network administrator or a process-line manager, and the next day you might be asked to train 50 employees in basic computer skills or to instruct line workers in quality processes.

Where do you turn for help? The ATD Training Basics series is designed to be your one-stop solution. The series takes a minimalist approach to your learning curve dilemma and presents only the information you need to be successful. Each book in the series guides you through key aspects of training: giving presentations, making the transition to the role of trainer, designing and delivering training, and evaluating training. The books in the series also include some advanced skills, such as performance and basic business proficiencies.

The ATD Training Basics series is the perfect tool for training and performance professionals looking for easy-to-understand materials that will prepare nontrainers to take on a training role. In addition, this series is the consummate reference tool for any trainer's bookshelf and a quick way to hone your existing skills.

Preface

Great coaching can make a world of difference. It helps people move mountains of self-imposed resistance, empowers them to shift boulder-size barriers that get in the way of actions and results, and simplifies wading through heaps of details, ideas, action items, and possibilities. Yielding long-term and short-term payoffs, coaching is a core skill for trainers, managers, organization development practitioners, and human resources professionals. Helping others achieve their goals boosts results today and builds the organization's skills for tomorrow. Coaching is one of the quickest and most effective ways for you to affect the success of your organization.

Unfortunately, coaching is an underused and poorly understood tool. Take the word coaching—it means many things to people and is used to describe:

- any conversation that helps
- any conversation between a supervisor and an employee, regardless of the content
- encouragement or advice
- weekly addresses by email or phone
- corrective counseling.

This second edition of *Coaching Basics* presents a concept of coaching that is focused on helping performers move their goals forward. But it is important to remember that much of what we think of as “coaching” really isn't. Although all coaching conversations are helpful, not all helpful conversations are coaching. While coaching conversations often occur between a supervisor and an employee, most of their conversations do not constitute coaching. Coaches do encourage their performers, but the encouragement itself is not usually coaching. Advice is rarely coaching because it focuses on the advice giver's perspective, rather than the performer's. General speeches or communication can be informative, and some are even catalytic, but without the active involvement of the

performer they are not coaching. Corrective counseling focuses on what the supervisor wants, not necessarily on the goals of the performer, and is, therefore, not coaching.

Coaching is a service-oriented practice that is squarely focused on the goals, desires, and intentions of the performer. It is often catalytic in nature, meaning that coaching sparks new thought and action and speeds up results. It is rewarding to provide performers with the coaching that enables them to move goals forward. Knowing what to say, when to say it, and how to say it is part of the challenge of developing your coaching craft.

A Note About the Term *Performer*

You will notice that I use the term *performer* to indicate the person receiving the coaching. This is a deliberate choice and emphasizes where ownership exists. Coaches are enablers but they never become performers; they never assume ownership of a task or of the success of the performer's efforts. We may feel invested in the performer's success and care deeply about it, but we should never forget that our role is to help, not do. Using the term *performer* helps punctuate our roles.

What's New in This Edition?

I was pleased to re-read the first edition of the book and find that most of the content is still highly relevant. The basics that underlie great coaching have not changed. What has changed is that we have more and different ways we can apply coaching fundamentals to help performers succeed. Throughout this second edition I have updated examples, added additional resources and application exercises, and provided new suggestions for helping build influencing skills. I also included a new chapter dedicated to using microcoaching to support your overall coaching efforts.

Who Should Read This Book?

Coaching Basics covers the basic skills and principles needed to provide effective coaching, and will serve several audiences:

- trainers who want to do more coaching
- managers who want to improve their coaching skills
- organization development professionals at the beginning of their careers
- human resources professionals who want to build coaching skills.

Coaching Basics offers the theories, techniques, examples, and exercises needed to create a thorough understanding of basic coaching. You can use the suggestions in this book to begin coaching immediately.

How This Book Is Organized

Chapter 1, “What Is Coaching,” explores and offers a working definition of coaching and distinguishes it from other business conversations. The chapter covers recommended measures of success for coaches and the skills great coaches need to develop and use.

Chapter 2, “A Coaching Model,” offers a nonprescriptive model that coaches can use to offer coaching, enter a coaching relationship, and enable performer success. This chapter shares ways that coaches can be proactive in offering coaching while preserving performer ownership and accountability for their outcomes.

Chapter 3, “Concepts Important to Coaching,” reviews several theories and underlying constructs about individual change, adult learning, and the role of mindsets to help you apply the coaching approach in this book.

Chapter 4, “How to Create Great Coaching Dialogue,” shares several techniques coaches can use to improve the conversations they have with performers. This chapter emphasizes conversation characteristics that enhance whether and how much performers pull into or engage in the coaching.

Chapter 5, “Coachability,” explains coachability and why it is important. This chapter offers coaches several practical ways to improve performer coachability.

Chapter 6, “Building Performer Self-Awareness,” presents how the goals for coaching are enabled when performers improve self-awareness through the coaching process. The chapter covers methods coaches can use to improve self-awareness and how emotional intelligence affects it.

Chapter 7, “Helping Performers Get Unstuck,” explores the triggers and reasons performers experience setbacks or a stall in progress toward achieving their goals and offers suggestions for ways coaches can help performers resume or speed up progress.

Chapter 8, “Facilitating Breakthroughs,” shares a model for generating breakthroughs and offers techniques coaches can use to catalyze them. Recommendations include ways to recognize barriers to breakthroughs and habits that increase the likelihood that a breakthrough will occur.

Chapter 9, “Microcoaching,” covers a definition of microcoaching and how using it can support an effective coaching practice. This chapter reviews when and where coaches should consider using microcoaching.

Chapter 10, “Beyond the Basics,” presents topics you can explore to expand your coaching knowledge and skills. This chapter shares information about coaching certification programs, technology that supports coaching practices, and team and executive coaching.

Chapter 11, “Conclusion,” presents ways to build on the information and ideas presented in the previous chapters. It synthesizes the ideas to show you how to get started and find success as a coach.

Each chapter opens with a quick access guide—What’s Inside This Chapter—to introduce you to the contents of the chapter. Use this section to identify the information it contains and, if you wish, skip ahead to the material most useful to you.

The final section of each chapter—Getting It Done—offers you a chance to practice some of the concepts discussed in the chapter and provides closing tips and pointers to help you apply what you have learned.

This book strives to make it as easy as possible for you to understand and apply its lessons. Icons throughout the book help you identify key points that can mean the difference between a coaching success or failure.



Basic Rules

These rules cut to the chase. They are unequivocal and important concepts for coaches.



Noted

This icon is used to give you more detail or explanation about a concept or a principle. It is also occasionally used for a short but productive tangent.



Think About This

These are helpful tips to help you prepare for future coaching conversations with performers.

Acknowledgments

This book represents a culmination of my 30-year (and counting) practice of coaching. I have benefited from some great coaching myself and would like to thank the following people for being catalysts for me. Thanks to Dave Borden, Jim Booth, Bob Drinane, Ralph Stayer, Charlie Jacobs, Laurie Ford, Jeffrey Ford, Jerre Fuqua, Timo Shaw, Linda O’Toole, Marshall Goldsmith, Gary Hamel, Dan Pink, and the many others who have helped shape and expand my coaching practice. I would also like to thank the dozens of professional coaches who have contributed ideas and best practices throughout the book.

1

What Is Coaching?



What's Inside This Chapter

This chapter explores and offers a working definition of coaching and distinguishes it from other business conversations. You'll learn:

- the focus of coaching
- the purpose of coaching
- how coaches measure success
- a set of coaching values.

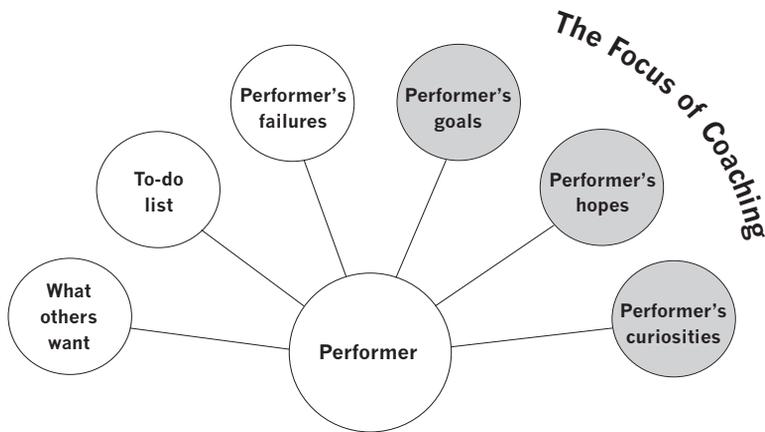
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What Is Coaching?

The Focus of Coaching

Coaching is performer focused and goal focused and is often held during one-on-one conversations. It can be used as a catchall phrase for any conversation between two people where the intent is to help. However, coaching is a conversation focused on helping other people (the performers) move forward relative to their goals. Figure 1-1 depicts what you should and shouldn't focus on while coaching.

Figure 1-1. The Focus of Coaching



Noted

The term *performer* means anyone receiving coaching and can include managers, peers, employees, or others. Coaching is a conversation that exists to help performers reach their goals.

Coaching should focus on the performer's goals, hopes, and curiosities—goals are unmet accomplishments, while hopes and curiosities are the rough material of future goals. Coaching is for the benefit of the performer. In other words, a successful coach concentrates on helping the performer move forward with a desire or ties in to something the performer wants to accomplish. The coach should not be focused on what others want, to-do lists, and the performer's failures. However, topics may be represented in more than one place; for example, a to-do list item may also be one of the performer's goals. If it's a goal, then coaching about this topic can be worthwhile.

Many people confuse coaching with advice and other business conversations. If coaching were that broad, this would need to be a much bigger book called *How to Communicate*. When you give advice, it may not be welcome, especially if the conversation centers on your opinion or perspective. When you provide coaching, the focus should be on the other person and the goals that person wants to discuss. The phrase, "Can I give you some coaching?" is often followed with advice and rarely results in coaching.

Coaching is also different from preaching, counseling, and persuading because these types of conversations come from your point of view and serve your goals, not the performer's. Coaching is the exact opposite. A great coach talks little, listens a lot, and facilitates the performer's thinking process. The difference between a coaching conversation and a general business conversation is the focus: A conversation can be about anything. Coaching focuses on performers and the goals they are trying to accomplish.



Basic Rule 1

Coaching should focus on the performer's goals, hopes, and curiosities.

The Purpose of Coaching

Because there's no one right way to coach, it's always good to get the perspectives of other experts in the field. Throughout this book, you'll find responses from a survey of 40 experienced external and internal coaches on several aspects of coaching. As you'll see from the following responses to the question "What is the purpose of coaching?" their thoughts can be eye-opening.

- "To help people connect with themselves so they can be better suited to make better decisions about what and how they want to move forward in their lives."
—Stewart Berman
- "To help individuals discover their potential and achieve that—whatever *that* is."
—Bonnie S. Turner
- "To lead students to their full potential." —Laurence Haughton

- “Coaching creates space to work on a business by taking time away from working in it. It is an opportunity to rise above the day-to-day and work with a trained facilitator to develop new ways of viewing, analyzing, and taking action on opportunities. Coaching provides witness and external accountability.” —Barry Goldberg
- “Enhance and develop skills—life, business, relationship—so that people are happier, more productive, and able to achieve their life goals in a balanced way.” —Dave Pughe-Parry
- “To allow others to learn self-coaching through multiple perspectives and challenging assumptions.” —Stan Herman
- “To make good things happen sooner.” —Barry Zweibel
- “To keep performers focused on their visions and move them to action.” —Paul Lemberg
- “To help successful leaders achieve positive, long-term changes in behavior—for themselves, their people, and their teams.” —Marshall Goldsmith
- “To create a partnership that supports profound change and growth through the creation of goals and specific action plans.” —Christina Madrid
- “To help people see themselves—and their situations—more objectively and learn to deal with reality, instead of their fantasies.” —Adrian Savage
- “Helping people to maximize their strengths and manage around their weaknesses.” —Rosa Say
- “To help people be the best that they can be. To help them get really clear about their intentions and wants. And then to catalyze them into action.” —Lora Adrianse
- “To enable and support others in the process of focusing on goals, developing plans, and achieving results.” —Kathleen Ream
- “To help us clear away the muck and muddle so we can see the path ahead, be aware of the obstacles and possible ways around them, and believe that we really have what it takes to make the journey and understand how.” —Curt Rosengren

These are all positive reasons to coach! Most of the survey responses highlight the service-oriented nature of coaching. It’s all about the performers—their needs, their goals, their potential, and their barriers to success. Great coaches feel satisfied and fulfilled when they help others succeed. The survey responses cluster into six purposes of coaching:

- Coaching should improve performer coachability.
- Coaching should help the performer get unstuck.

- Coaching should enhance performer self-awareness.
- Coaching should facilitate performer breakthroughs.
- Coaching should uncover potential and build performer skills.
- Coaching should help create and implement performer plans for action.

Coaching Basics covers each of these six purposes. Coaching, often done one-on-one, is a labor- and time-intensive practice. Therefore, it ought to provide substantial benefits, right? Each time you coach a performer, one or more of these purposes should be met. Great coaching sessions will satisfy two, three, or more purposes.



What do you want from coaching? Think about the best coaching you have ever received. What did it look like? How did the coach behave? Now think about the worst coaching you've ever had. What made it so ineffective? By thinking about your experiences and the needs that have been met by past coaching conversations, you can find examples to serve your own coaching practice.

How Should Coaches Measure Success?

An important part of building any craft and practice is determining what success looks like. How you measure success affects your focus, beliefs, and actions. When coaching a performer, it can be difficult to assess success. Is it when the performer is happy with the coaching? Is it when the performer listens to and acts on your suggestions? Is it when your coaching proves to be helpful? Are you successful when performers are promoted? Are you a failure if they lose their jobs?

None of these measures alone will tell you if your coaching efforts have been a success. Here's what the experts said when asked, "How do you measure your success as a coach?":

- "Mini surveys designed to determine degree of progress against goals over a 12- or 18-month period." —Mark Sobol
- "If the people being coached feel that they are taking a path that is right for them, then I have been successful." —Bonnie S. Turner
- "In how much the student can achieve without me." —Laurence Haughton
- "Before I begin working with performers, we look at how they are measured. Assuming there is nothing off in their performance management system, then their success is how mine is measured." —Barry Goldberg

- “If my performers express that they see something new or receive value—that’s awesome. If change is actually occurring—even if it’s simply a change in awareness—that is huge. If the goals that performers set are being achieved or consciously changed.” —Kathy Bass
- “I only get paid if my performers achieve positive, long-term, measurable change in leadership behavior—as determined by preselected, key stakeholders.”
—Marshall Goldsmith



Basic Rule 2

The six purposes of coaching are to improve performer coachability, help the performer get unstuck, enhance performer self-awareness, facilitate performer breakthroughs, uncover potential and build performer skills, and help create and implement performer plans for action.

These and the other survey responses share a few common themes: Coaching is successful when the performer is successful, when it builds the performer’s capability for future endeavors, and when the performer returns for more coaching or refers others to that coach. Although the ultimate success of coaching should be judged by the results of the performer, there are also several smaller, day-to-day coaching successes:

- creating an aha moment that leads to a beneficial shift in thinking
- conversing that helps the performer clarify goals
- influencing, in a positive way, the coachability of the performer.

There are many ways to measure the success of coaching but the best approaches include some account of the impact you’ve made on the performer’s success. This is not always easy because the impact can be indirect or found in changes of behavior, but it is still important to try and define success factors early on in the coaching relationship. For example, you might say:

- Jessica, you said you want to build stronger influencing skills with your peers during regular meetings. Think about what things will look like when you achieve this goal. What’s different? (You can then measure your success by whether the desired state is achieved.)
- Sam, you shared that you feel stuck and unsure about how to get the project back on track, and that this is where you’d like our coaching to focus. Tell me what “on track” means to you, so I can use this as the success criteria for our discussions.

Successful coaches make a significant difference to the productivity and success of their performers. They enable change and transformation and facilitate forward movement toward goals.

Success is best measured and defined from the viewpoints of the performers. This means that performers define your success as a coach. Sometimes, their peers and managers will also notice the positive change and provide an objective perspective about the difference the coaching has made. Depending on the situation, that performer's manager may also be a performer if he has requested and arranged the coaching. Under these situations, it is important to have a clear agreement about the goals, as well as contracting conditions with both parties upfront. Even when requested by their managers, the coaching must always serve the needs of performers.



Basic Rule 3

Coaching is successful when performers are successful in attaining their goals.



Noted

According to *Coach U's Essential Coaching Tools*, the things people want most are to make and keep more money, get more done in less time, communicate more effectively, feel better physically and emotionally, increase their quality of life, become closer with others, eliminate hassles, and get on a path toward meeting a goal.

Important Coaching Skills

Given the focus and purposes of coaching, what are the most important skills for great coaches to possess? The list of beneficial skills would be endless, but it is helpful to know which skills are critical to the role of a coach. Table 1-1 summarizes the most important skills the surveyed experts thought were needed to be a great coach.

Notice that the largest category of skills is communication. Coaches need to be effective communicators. Survey participants mentioned listening as the most important skill 81 percent of the time. And not just listening; these experienced coaches noted that deep, active listening is required. Their top five skills were listening, asking the right questions, being curious, improving motivation for change or action, putting aside your personal agenda.

Table 1-1. Most Important Skills Needed to Be a Great Coach

Category	Skill
Communication	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen • Be direct • Provide feedback • Be empathetic • Ask the right questions • Be quiet • Relate experiences • Provide encouragement • Generate alternatives • Connect information • Engender trust
Performer Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve motivation for change or action • Facilitate change or transition • Believe in the performer's ability • Improve coachability
Self-Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be curious • Be nonjudgmental • Have humility • Put aside any personal agenda • Be self-aware • Be fully present
Technical Skill	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop theories of motivation • Implement coaching practices and tools • Increase knowledge of the business • Develop strategies and plans • Contract

In general, the ability to create great dialogue and be a catalytic force is essential. You will learn more about these areas throughout the rest of this book.

So, what gets in the way of great coaching? Most coaches are intelligent and well meaning, but not all are effective. An over-reliance on process and protocol can get in the way of the coaching experience and results. If the coach seems more interested in following a specific method or is reluctant to skip steps, the performer might lose interest or patience. Problems can also occur when the coach is unavailable for ad hoc coaching. It is important not to overschedule your time, because that will reduce the opportunities you have to coach. Good chemistry is also a plus. An effective coach-performer relationship is critical for a successful coaching outcome. Poor chemistry can increase the odds that the performer will lose interest or become uncoachable.

Learning the craft of coaching is a lifelong journey. Along with your successes, you will also make mistakes and learn a few lessons the hard way. Here are some of the lessons that survey participants learned the hard way:

- “I learned a lesson about confidentiality very early in my career. I was coaching a team of executives whose company was being acquired. They were in secret negotiations. One of them mentioned to me that this was occurring. Later that week, I asked one of the other executives about the progress of the negotiations. I had just put the first person in a difficult position because he had not been given permission to share this information with outside persons. The result was that two of us were very embarrassed. The experience taught me the true meaning of the phrase *strictest confidence*.”
—Mark Sobol
- “Over time I’ve had enough ineffective coaching experiences (both as a coach and as a performer) that I’ve come to realize how important an other-focused outlook is for a coach. When coaches care more about their successes than the performers’ successes, things often don’t work out quite right.” —Brendon Connelly
- “Coaching is more about questions than answers. One of my performers was struggling with a business challenge that I had a lot of experience solving, and I let myself slip into being a consultant. One cannot coach and consult at the same time.”
—Barry Goldberg
- “I didn’t listen properly and didn’t do a thorough assessment. We were so far apart that we missed each other—we weren’t even running parallel!” —Dave Pughe-Parry
- “I saw the solution to an issue and gave advice. The advice was partially implemented and failed. I was at fault in the performer’s eyes.” —Stan Herman
- “In my work, I don’t get paid if my performers don’t achieve positive, measurable change in behavior. I have learned (the hard way) not to work with performers who don’t really want to change, whose issues are not connected with my area of expertise (such as strategy and technical knowledge), and whose companies or co-workers won’t really give them a chance.” —Marshall Goldsmith
- “People can be manipulative, especially if they want you to confirm their stories about what’s been going on. Unless you listen extremely carefully, you can find yourself being led along a fool’s path.” —Adrian Savage
- “If the issue is about lack of integrity, coaching is not the answer.” —Carlos Marin

Many of these lessons learned involved the skill of being performer focused versus self focused. Several survey participants also mentioned that they learned how important it is to not simply give performers the answers. It is very tempting to share opinions, ideas, and suggestions.

After all, you want to be as helpful as possible. Even so, it is more helpful to listen, ask great questions, and facilitate the performer's self-discovery.



Think About This

It can be tough to break the habit of giving answers to performers too quickly (versus allowing them to explore the options), because performers often ask for their coaches' opinions about what they should do. If performers ask for your opinion, say, "I will share my thoughts, but let's first explore all the options and get input from a few other people." Often, the conversation will become lively and active, and you may not need to offer your opinion at all.

Values Important for Coaching

Values are at the core of your thoughts, actions, and results. They support the skills you need to fulfill the six purposes of coaching. To be most successful as a coach, you should share the values listed in Table 1-2.

By focusing on what the performer wants to achieve, you can provide coaching that makes a difference. Great coaches are bold and courageous in one moment and reflective and playful in the next. They adapt their dialogues to be most helpful in moving the performer forward.



Basic Rule 4

Performers seek coaching because it works for them and is a great use of their precious time.

Getting It Done

Table 1-3 (on page 12) summarizes the points made in this chapter about the nature of great coaching. Review this chart before each of your meetings and coaching conversations. Using this tool as a reminder is a great way to internalize the basic foundation of effective coaching. You can also use Table 1-3 to assess your skills and experiences and create a personal development plan.

Table 1-2. Coaching Values

Value	Explanation
Acceptance	Coaches should not try to change the performer's goals or otherwise manipulate the conversations. To be a great coach, you need to accept the performer's goals, intentions, and desires as being worthy and valid.
Adventure	Coaching can be very adventurous when your mind is open and willing to explore diverse avenues and perspectives. Having an adventurous spirit will help your performers move beyond their comfort zones.
Authenticity	Open and authentic communication between coaches and performers is critical to the quality of business solutions and relationships. Systems that promote and reinforce authenticity enable quick problem identification and resolution.
Courage	Sometimes a coach needs to have the courage to ask a difficult question or share a tough observation. Your performers deserve open and candid dialogues presented in a caring manner.
Detachment	A coach is a partner, but is also separate from the performers and their goals. A certain amount of detachment is positive and appropriate. Coaches who get too involved or wrapped up in what their performers are doing will find it more difficult to be objective and helpful.
Effectiveness	Great coaches value being effective by helping their performers move their goals forward.
Fostering Learning	A learning environment improves self-discovery and awareness. Employees and teams ought to be able to discuss strengths and weaknesses and feel support while developing new skills.
Partnership	Building strong and trusting partnerships is critical in the coaching relationship. Coaching requires trust and open dialogue.
Respect	Each member of the organization adds to its value, including coaches. Work and decisions should demonstrate respect and appreciation for individuals and teams.
Service Oriented	Coaching is a service-oriented activity. The more service oriented you are when coaching, the more likely you are to notice the small details and nuances that will make a difference for your performers.

Table 1-3. The Nature of Great Coaching

The Focus of Coaching	
The performer's goals, hopes, and curiosities.	
How Coaching Success Is Measured	
Coaching is successful when the performer is successful in attaining the goals for the coaching. Smaller successes include helping to broaden the performer's perspective and develop skills.	
The Purposes of Coaching	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching should improve performer coachability. • Coaching should enhance performer self-awareness. • Coaching should uncover potential and build performer skills. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coaching should help the performer get unstuck. • Coaching should facilitate performer breakthroughs. • Coaching should help create and implement performer plans for action.
Important Coaching Skills	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listen • Provide feedback • Ask the right questions • Relate experiences • Generate alternatives • Engender trust • Facilitate change and transition • Improve coachability • Be curious • Put aside any personal agenda • Be fully present • Implement coaching practices and tools • Develop strategies and plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be direct • Be empathetic • Be quiet • Provide encouragement • Connect information • Improve motivation for change or action • Believe in the performer's ability • Be nonjudgmental • Have humility • Be self-aware • Develop theories of motivation • Increase knowledge of the business • Contract
Values Important to Coaching	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Acceptance • Authenticity • Detachment • Fostering learning • Respect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adventure • Courage • Effectiveness • Partnership • Service oriented