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ACTIVATING THE COACHEE

A lot of people seem to have a misconception about coaching. They think coaching is about **supervision**. They think coaches **must have authority before they can begin coaching**. They think coaching is about **telling and sharing stories**, so that the person listening in will get nuggets of inspiration and options on how to move forward. Well, I can tell you this. Coaching, is in fact, a **contact sport**. What do we mean by that? It means that for you to be able to coach effectively, **you must build trust and rapport first** before even thinking about effectively coaching someone.

If you are merely relying on your authority, your experience, your wisdom; you are coaching wrongly. Because, **if the perspective solely relies on you** and what you know, then you are **not coaching**. Perhaps we can call that mentoring. The true nature of

coaching is when you no longer become the subject matter expert. You no longer need to be the person who knows everything and no longer need to be the person who needs to provide, prescribe or even share experiences, guidance or opinions. True coaching involves **activating the person in front of you and believing that they already have the answers that they need**.

However, **your role as a coach is to trigger them, help them, nudge them, and assure them that they can voice their opinions, which may in turn become the solution that they need**. You see, when you are truly coaching, you are the process owner. Your coachee, on the other hand, is the content owner. So your job is not to provide the answers but merely **become a catalyst so that the answers can come out from your coachee's mouth**.

Now, let me give you a specific example. Let's say, your coachee is coming to you and is asking you, "Dear coach. How do I execute this project successfully?". Now, **a typical supervisor or a project manager will say**, "Well, this is step one, step two and step three. You first have to do step one, so that you can get this result. And from this result, then you can move forward to step two and step three. This is how you do it and this is when you need to get it done. If you need any help, come back and check with me." Now, how many of you find that very familiar. Well, if you think you have been coaching when you did that, you have not. In fact, you were supervising.

What is coaching? **What does coaching sound like?** It sounds like this;

"Dear boss, dear coach. I have a project. How should I execute it?" **And as a coach, you will ask**, "Let me hear your thoughts on this particular project. **What are your initial ideas on how to move forward** for this project? What are some of the information or background that you have already gathered for this project? From that information and perspective, if you were me, **how would you like to move forward with this project** and why would you actually take that first, second and third step? And if you take that first, second and third step, **what would be the potential outcome** that we may get from you being able to

execute those steps? **What are the kinds of resources and support** that you will need?"

Now isn't that significantly different from becoming a project manager? You will notice what comes out of your mouth are **questions that are designed to activate your team** to give their point of view and when you do it right, they will come up with all the answers and directions and they will be the one who holds the responsibility to execute, as per discussed. If everybody can come to you and all you need to do is to nudge them towards that, wouldn't that be more effective? Wouldn't it be more desirable for you?

So, coaching is a contact sport. You need to be up close and personal and build that trust with your team, that you're not merely passing the buck to them. **You must build that trust and rapport where they understand that you are their support to enable them to execute the task that they need to execute.** They merely come to you for assurance, some form of motivation and sometimes some wisdom from you, which is fine. So, ask yourself; What is the benefit of activating your people? Do you think it will build more trust and rapport when you empower your people? If you think so, then **I welcome you to coach more and create better relationships and trust with your team.**

SAMPLE MANAGER - SUPERVISOR VS COACH QUESTIONS

No.	Manager - Supervisor	Coach
1	What's the Problem?	How's the progress so far?
2	Have you completed the task?	What have you accomplished at this moment?
3	When can you finish it?	When should I follow up with you?
4	What's the worst case scenario?	What is our best hope?
5	Why are you not prioritizing?	What do you wish to prioritize?
6	Why are you not completing it?	What would you need to complete it?
7	Why is the progress so slow?	How can we improve the progress?

