



I know, I know- nowadays everyone is a coach.

There's a reason you're seeing coaching everywhere these days:

1) It's a really powerful results-driven process when it's done correctly and 2) it's a relatively new profession and that's not really regulated at this point.

People are technically allowed to call themselves coaches, even if they have no training or background. That's a soapbox for another day.

I'm not trying to get you to become a coach certified or otherwise, but I am here to share with you the benefits of adopting a coaching mindset. This is going to be a great tool for you as a leader to further develop and support your team.

So what is coaching anyway?

This is the definition by the International Coach Federation which is who certified me. It is a collaborative process between client and coach- in your case between leader and staff- where you are trying to maximize their potential through creativity and a thought-provoking process.

Even though there's a natural hierarchy between supervisor and staff, we know that leading collaboratively is what is most impactful. This is no different.

It's a partnering mindset where you're not there as the hierarchical boss telling them what to do. You are partnering with them to help them maximize their potential.

Having a coaching mindset means that you believe people are creative, resourceful, and whole. This is the mantra of coaching. We've talked about this before- we're not here to fix what we think is broken in other people. That's not how people grow. It's collaborative and it treats the staff as the experts in their own lives, which of course they are no matter how well you get to know your staff. They know themselves best.

Instead of you as the leader trying to figure out what they're thinking, what their motivations are, what their goals are, they get to tell you themselves.

Coaching is not therapy or counseling.

It's not just venting.

It's not aimless.

In fact, it's very purposeful but it's not a cure-all. It works in some cases and it doesn't work in others.

The benefits of having a coaching mindset is that it helps build relationships on your team, and it fosters growth through empowerment and accountability because your staff



is taking control of the process.

It's not just you telling them what to do.

It's them deciding what they want to do and then taking control of how they want to get there.

A really important study by the International Coach Federation found that training of course has an increase in performance with training, but that increase skyrockets when you combine it with coaching. People learn and grow- you and your team and me and everybody- by having the opportunity to practice what they've learned and then having the opportunity to reflect and work with someone to coach them through that growth process.

That's exactly what we're doing here in the Circle. You get the information, you have the exercises to practice and implement and then we meet in the forum or on ZOOM for discussion and coaching.

It matters for all those reasons and your staff is begging for it, especially your Millennials. They know what coaching is and they are asking for it. In fact, it is the most important thing they are looking for in their supervisors. Of course, it's not just Millennials. All generations benefit from coaching even if that's not the label they attach to it.

The good news in adopting a coaching mindset is you are probably already doing most of these.

At the core of coaching, like all good conversations, is active listening. You have some of your active listening tools here where you are letting the other person know that you are fully focused on them and what they are saying. We have to be really conscious of the message we're sending. If we're busy doing other things- we call it multitasking- we're not paying attention. It is your responsibility that the other person feels heard, especially when you are their leader.

Watch your body language. I know sometimes yawns are inevitable but really try to be as physically present as well as you can. Not checking the time all the time. I know most people don't wear watches anymore. I wear a watch every day, but mine broke. I'm at a loss of what to do. I need to go get a new one.

Maybe, instead, it's checking the clock on your computer or the wall or whatever.

It might be the cell phone. The message we're sending when we say, 'oh, I'm listening. Go ahead. No, I got you'

That's not what's happening. You can say you're listening and giving them your full attention, but the message you're sending is that you're absolutely not.



The picture behind my head is a woman who has her hand on the door, like she's ready to get out of this conversation.

That's the message we send with that body language if we're shuffling papers on our desk. One of the biggest offenses is typing as somebody is talking to us.

We do this in person and over the phone, and if you think you're fooling anyone over the phone, I'm here to tell you you're not. We can hear you typing while you're telling us that you're listening.

When you're coaching somebody you are letting them take the lead. You as the leader can take a step back and embrace really listening, supporting and trusting your staff to work through that process.

You need to let go of these in most cases including coaching conversations- judging, assuming, and solving the problem for them.

Using coaching skills works in your day-to-day as you're going about your business.

*How did that go?*

*What did you think went well?*

*What didn't go well?*

It works when you're talking about what kind of investment your staff is looking for in their growth and development itself.

*How do they learn best?*

*What are they trying to learn?*

*How can you support them?*

It does not work in cases where things are too urgent, too technical, or too new.

It's not fair to your staff when you have to come up with something, a quick answer to something, or you're giving them something entirely new and they have no basis or background to respond to questions. Like how would you go about doing this when they've never done it before?

A model we use in coaching is incidentally called The GROW model. The way it works is you start with the end in mind.

What's the ultimate goal?

Then you explore the reality or what is the situation now, including whatever obstacles



might be there.

What are the options of how you can get to that goal?

And finally, what are your action steps?

What's your plan to get there?

For example, if your staff is really nervous about public speaking. I've heard multiple times that people are more afraid of public speaking than they are of death. I don't know if that's true, but of course, it's true that it's really challenging for a lot of people.

If you're trying to help them you can combine coaching with also advising and giving them tips, but in the coaching portion, you can use this model:

Ask them what their ultimate goal is. What will a successful presentation look like?

Where are they now?

What are their options?

How are they going to create the steps to get where they want to go?

The good news is you're probably using a lot of this already without maybe calling them coaching. I don't care what you call it. As long as you are working with your staff to help them become the best they can be then that is the ultimate goal.

So the most important question for you is how can you adopt a coaching mindset to best support your team?

See you next time!