

## Unlock Your Greatness: Embracing the Power of Coaching

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### ABSTRACT

As an individual, do you know your purpose in life? Do you understand your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis? Do you know what you need to get to the next level in your career and life? Do you find it challenging to solve problems? Do you know how to be truly present in your conversations? Do you struggle to handle different personality types? What is your biggest frustration at work right now? Coaching is a vital tool for every individual to have at their disposal if they are committed to fulfilling and advancing their potential, as well as balancing life and work. Coaching empowers individuals to take action, think creatively, increase their personal performance and professional effectiveness in problem-solving and decision-making skills, and influence others. We will explore the value coaching brings to your life and work and why coaching should be part of your professional development plan.

### INTRODUCTION

The specific rationale for coaching at any level is that organizations wish to have talented individuals who can be developed to fulfill defined current or future leadership roles. Once the coaching need is established, the type of coach to do the work can be identified. Coaching needs for individuals might include but are not limited to change management, conflict management, stakeholder management, and cross-cultural management. Coaching strategically helps clients take responsibility for their career and life decisions by working out what needs to be done and committing to it. Thus, coaching is a facilitative process that helps individuals to reflect and not become locked up in their own frame of reference.

While there is no legally binding definition of coaching, the International Coaching Federation (n.d.) has defined coaching as the art of partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential. According to Passmore (2015, p.21), mentoring is a partnering relationship where the mentor has experience in a particular field and imparts specific knowledge to the mentee while acting as an adviser or tutor. The ability to think is considered an essential asset for both the coach and the coachee and is regarded as a critical rationale for coaching. The coach has the immense task of allowing the coachee to think through their problems and develop solutions. To promote learning and change, executive and business coaches may use a range of interventions, such as listening, summarizing, paraphrasing, providing feedback, interpreting, discovering links with other themes, and the present coaching interaction itself.

Ethical standards are necessary to establish the coach and coachee relationship. The International Coaching Federation (n.d.) has asserted ethical guidelines and professional standards to be followed when setting up the coaching agreement. Furthermore, establishing trust and intimacy with the client through a positive coaching presence has been deemed a success factor for executive coaches. The federation

encourages effective communication that adheres to powerful questioning, active listening, and direct communication. While managing progress and accountability is a characteristic or rationale for coaching and mentoring, coaching goes further by designing actions and creating self-awareness for the coachee.

## THE VALUE OF COACHING

In the book *The Oscar Coaching Model*, Andrew Gilbert and Karen Whittleworth suggest that coaching encourages the individual to take action to increase personal performance and professional effectiveness in problem-solving and decision-making skills, as well as influencing others. In addition, coaching provides a lower cost-benefit ratio than many other developmental approaches, is results-focused, builds personal commitment to learning and professional and personal development, and helps improve team involvement, engagement, and motivation. Coaching can also be viewed as a conduit to help people cope with transition and manage anxiety created by increased complexity and uncertainty in the busy corporate world.

Coaching strategically helps the individual or senior executive to take responsibility for their career and life decisions by working out what needs to be done and committing to it. Furthermore, coaching has been used to help new senior leaders or individuals transition to a new role, potentially fast-track executive and senior roles, help valued leaders with specific performance problems, and provide private thinking space for senior executives and individuals.

Coaching is thus a facilitative process that helps executives or individuals to reflect and not become locked up in their own frame of reference. Furthermore, coaching is action-oriented, uses a toolkit of questioning techniques, and attends to the gap between actual and desired outcomes, and behavioral outcomes can be evident within a prescribed timeframe.

On a personal level, I have served as a coach and mentor for several employees and clients in the Americas, UK, Eastern and Western Europe, the Middle East, and Africa. Most of the employees I have worked with as coach and mentor have expressed significant value in the relationship as they navigated through a transition or set up new goals in life and career. During my tenure in the bio-pharmaceutical industry, I saw my former employees become more self-aware and confident and close the gap between being stuck and moving to new positions.

## FINDING YOUR PURPOSE IN LIFE

An individual's behavior is grounded primarily in what they believe and consider important. Effective coaching strives to understand the values and beliefs of the individual and how these affect their behavior and environment. Bringing this awareness to clients enables them to identify areas where they can develop and overcome their blind spots. Many people don't know what they want in life and career. In such cases, coaching uses frameworks or tools that allow the coach to question the client to answer specific questions effectively:

- What is your **PURPOSE IN LIFE?**
  - Who am I?
  - Why am I here?

- Where do I go from here?
- What do you need to get to the next level in your career and life?
- What do you want to **BE**? (NOT do!)

Many more questions can be asked to help unlock the hidden potential within an individual and allow them to realize that their work should not define them; instead, they should look deep inside to find that passion that makes them smile. Feeling mentally, emotionally, and physically tired when you get home is a potential sign that you have not yet thought through what you want to be in life. Being coached can clear that sense of darkness and offer clarity. Coaching can help you delineate between growing up and growing older. Growing up means finding your purpose and the opportunity to change. As you prepare to unlock your greatness through coaching, give yourself a strong finish.

### **BEING TRULY PRESENT IN THE MOMENT**

Most individuals go through life without appreciating the beauty of being here and now, in this present moment. Others don't like to listen and will interrupt you in the middle of your thoughts to tell you what you should or should not do. There is a TEDx I like to watch once in a while by Michael B Stainer (What is your advice monster?) where he describes that there are three types of advice monsters. These monsters are "Tell It," "Save It," and "Control It". The Tell It is those people who are here to advise you. The Save It people's only job is to save everybody. And the Control It folks don't let go of the grip of anything because they are better than you, and you are not good enough! We all oscillate between the three monsters, or one is more dominant than the other two. Whichever the case, the idea is that we do not know how to be present at the moment and listen actively. With coaching, you can learn to listen deeply actively, and ask the right questions. For example:

- What is the real challenge you are facing?
- What do you want to think about?
- And what else?
- Is there anything else on your mind?
- What options do you have?
- What obstacles are you facing now?
- What have you tried?
- Who can help you get this task completed?

### **WHY YOUR SWOT ANALYSIS IS INEVITABLE**

The future of work is one where AI and strategic reskilling converge to craft a trajectory that is not only informed and foresighted but also adaptive, flexible, and innovative. It is about harnessing the power of AI to enhance decision-making, ensuring that the individual not only navigates through the complexities of the corporate landscape but also soars into new horizons with informed confidence and a well-crafted SWOT analysis in order to land new horizons. Many financial, technology, biotech, and biopharmaceutical companies have been laying off people in the thousands in the last two years. Many people are caught unaware and find they do not know their next steps.

I coach using the "Accelerator SWOT Analysis," which focuses on unlocking an

individual's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. A well-executed SWOT analysis with your coach will have the benefits of:

- Prepare your career entry and exit strategy.
- Be confident in your skills.
- Eliminate imposter syndrome.
- Transform you to be conscious of your true worth.
- Face your fears.
- Aspire to raise your game of life.
- Make a plan for your life and career goals.

We know that there is a paradigm shift from the gospel of hard work and maximum effort, so investing in your SWOT analysis is inevitable. Here is a template from MindTools you can use.

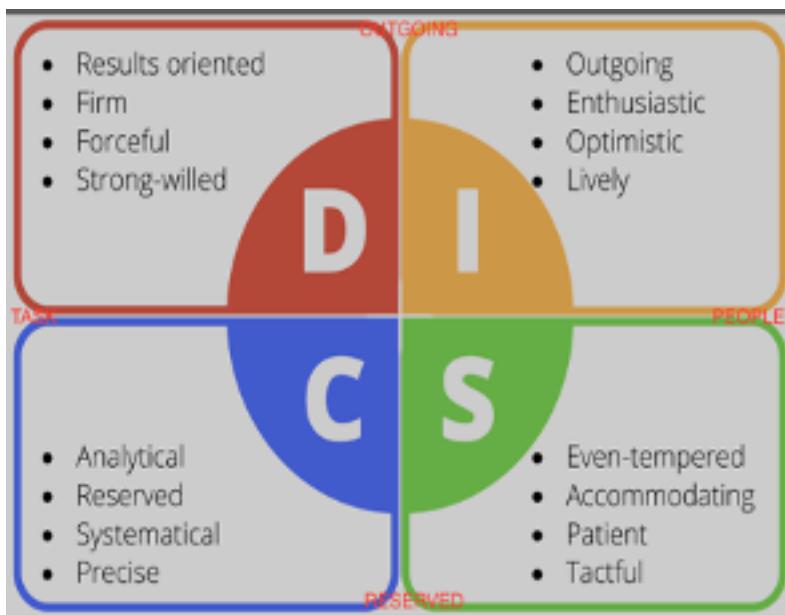
<b>Strengths</b> What do you do well? What unique resources can you draw on? What do others see as your strengths?	<b>Weaknesses</b> What could you improve? Where do you have fewer resources than others? What are others likely to see as weaknesses?
<b>Opportunities</b> What opportunities are open to you? What trends could you take advantage of? How can you turn your strengths into opportunities?	<b>Threats</b> What threats could harm you? What is your competition doing? What threats do your weaknesses expose you to?

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## HANDLING DIFFERENT PERSONALITY TYPES

The workplace comes with many different personalities, and handling people requires skill. One of my favorite leadership books is by Dale Carnegie, *How to Win Friends and Influence People*. In the book, Carnegie emphasizes the importance of seeing things from the other person's point of view. This is crucial when dealing with any personality type, as it helps understand their motivations and responses. Carnegie also points out that people of all personality types typically appreciate attention and interest in their thoughts and feelings. You create a sense of rapport and understanding by encouraging others to talk about themselves. Carnegie advises that criticizing others is often counterproductive. This is particularly relevant when dealing with sensitive or introverted personality types who may take criticism more personally. The principles above are more about general interpersonal skills rather than tailored strategies for specific

personality types. However, they are versatile and can be adapted to various individuals and situations. The key lies in understanding the person you are interacting with and applying Carnegie's principles in a way that resonates with their personality and needs.



Marston, W. (1928). *Emotions of normal people*. Britain; Read Books Ltd.

In the coaching field, the DISC model, developed by psychologist William Moulton Marston in 1928, is widely used. The model is a behavioral assessment tool that classifies people's behavior into four distinct personality types: Dominance (D), Influence (I), Steadiness (S), and Conscientiousness (C). To use the DISC model effectively in coaching, the following points should be considered:

- **Adapt Communication:** Tailor your communication style to match the other person's preferred style. For example, be more direct and to the point with 'D' types and more engaging and expressive with 'I' types.
- **Understand Motivations:** Recognize what drives each personality type. For instance, 'D' types are motivated by results and control, while 'S' types value security and stable environments.
- **Conflict Resolution:** Use the model to navigate conflicts by understanding each type's different perspectives and approaches.
- **Team Dynamics:** In a team setting, use DISC to allocate roles that suit each personality type's strengths and to foster better teamwork and understanding.

While coaching, the coach also keeps in mind that DISC is a model for understanding human behavior and should be used as a guide rather than a strict rulebook (Soames, 2019). Everyone is a unique mix of all four styles, and their behavior can change depending on the context. So, if you adopt the model for your team, please keep these points in mind.

## TIME MANAGEMENT

I need not dilate here on the excellence of time management; doubtless you should know and must know how your time is spent each day and hour. Time is one of your

most precious commodities and should be guarded with zeal. In the corporate world, finding yourself in the fourth quadrant of busy work, trivia, and time wasters is very easy. I hear someone saying yes to meetings that could have been held via a phone call or simple, instant text. Meetings have become time mismanagement monsters for individuals and corporations today. It is no wonder corporations are not scared to lay off employees; they consider liabilities and not assets on the financial books. Are you being creative at work? Are you using your creative potential or letting others “ride” your calendar? Take back that control and govern your time.

Urgent		Not Urgent	
Important	1	2	PLAN/SHOULD
	DO/MUST	Exercise Vocation Planning	
Not Important	3	4	Trivia Busy work Time wasters ELIMINATE/ NOT NOW
			DELEGATE/ COULD

Covey, S. R. (7). Habits of highly effective people: Powerful lessons in personal change. New York: Fireside.

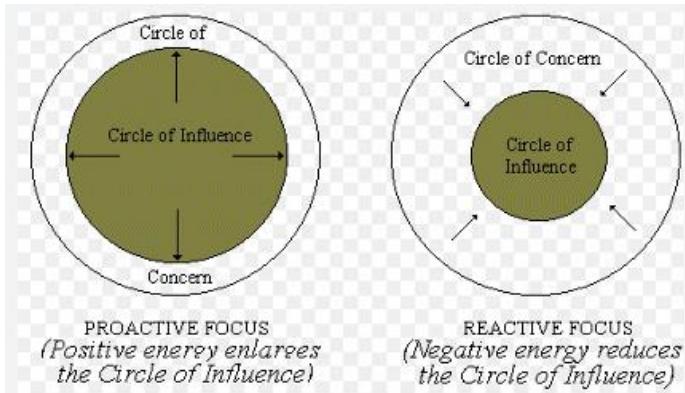
Being coached on time management will help you put first things first and build a daily habit of evaluating where your time is spent. Using proven tools and frameworks, coaching will help you focus on essential tasks that should be done first. People say they are always stressed, which bothers me a little because the innate power to control your environment and who you are is within you. You are what you think all day long (Kline, 1999). So, here are three stress-buster questions that work magic when coaching such clients. Use them daily to bring yourself back to reality. Remember to write down your answers.

- What will happen if you stay stressed?
- What won't happen if you stay stressed?
- What will happen if you are not stressed?

## IT'S NONE OF MY BUSINESS: FOCUS ON WHAT YOU CAN CONTROL AND INFLUENCE

We all tend to get involved in what is not our business and bring that to our circle of values and beliefs. The opposite is to guard your values and beliefs and focus on what you can influence and control. Some level of emotional intelligence is required to have absolute control over our emotional responses to what happens in our lives

(Goleman, 1996). The same EI is needed to have the absolute power to control our response to others' behaviors. With coaching, you can learn to be firm but kind and refuse to yield. Remember, appeasement never wins.



Covey, S. R. (7). *Habits of highly effective people: Powerful lessons in personal change*. New York: Fireside.

When coaching my clients on what constitutes proactive and reactive focus, we dwell on the importance of the circle of influence and the circle of concern. Most clients find themselves with a bigger circle of concern at the beginning of the sessions, which dissipates when the circle of influence kicks in. The trick questions I use are straightforward. Here they are:

- Is this something I CAN control?
- Is this something I CAN influence?
- Is this something I CANNOT control and influence?

Your work is to focus on what you CAN control and influence. When the habit is formed, the benefits are limitless. Try it at home, at work, and in your social environment.

## CONCLUSION

The coach's goal is to raise awareness in the individual so that they are constantly making better choices and understanding what consequences these choices bring (Landsberg, 2015). Coaching can be a valuable instrument for organizational and leadership development to develop change agents in corporations, the community, and throughout the states and beyond. Furthermore, coaching outcomes for leaders or individuals include the benefits of exploring their challenges during career transition, experiencing real-world experiences in a global environment, and elevating leaders' passion for service or transformation by exercising their leadership skills. Indeed, the ultimate goal of coaching is to unlock your greatness and know who you want to be.

*"Coaching helps you to take responsibility for your life, let go of what others think, and become your true self. It's about you creating the life that you want – and deserve." – Emma-Louise Elsey.*

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I thank the Great Architect of the Universe for leading me, guiding me, comforting me, and increasing me in Wisdom, Beauty, and Strength as I work on myself, a rough ashlar that is continuously transforming in the direction of the Eternal Light.

I dedicate this paper to all readers who want to find their true purpose in life and to all my current and future executive and business coaching clients.

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