



CHAPTER ONE

THE ACCOMPLISHED LEADER

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A leader becomes complete only after giving something back.

The Sheraton Hotel at Brussels airport is a short walk from the terminal building, making it a popular meeting place for the affluent traveler. Those adventurous enough to explore beyond the spacious restaurant level will find a secluded café frequented by the business jet-set. Chuck, a dapper fifty-something, confidently saunters in, immediately searching out a quiet corner. The plush atmosphere evokes a feeling of opulence and a sense of power. This is the life.

Chuck has arrived early, so finds time to reflect. Surely twenty-five years' experience in the corporate world amply qualifies him for this imminent encounter. Chuck has worked in small businesses and in huge corporations. He was once a line manager responsible for a department of six-hundred people. He has done major tours of duty in operations, finance, and customer service. In one posting, Chuck served as a deputy regional manager. Chuck has experienced the thrills and spills of mergers from both sides. Chuck has lived the corporate life, and Chuck has survived.

In his time, Chuck has come across many difficult situations and plenty of challenging people, each providing some new learning experience. An alumnus of the “hard knocks” school of management, he has acquired a sharp taste for reality. Chuck knows how much damage is done daily by organizational politics and mindless rules. He has seen great ideas get quashed, and under-spent budgets wastefully squandered at year-end. Chuck is mature now, and has learned how to play the corporate game. Chuck understands—and often correctly predicts—organizational outcomes that are completely counter-intuitive to the man in the street. Chuck speaks the language of management. Chuck is able to think as a leader. Chuck has much to offer; today he is ready to give something back, to pass on his learning.

Remembering that this will be his very first face-to-face meeting in his new role as an independent business coach, he opens his briefcase and again reads his notes. . . .

Soon, Chuck is to meet Susan, a fast-track executive currently running the marketing department at a blue chip. In her early thirties, Susan has ambitions to work in public relations before moving to some more senior position, maybe one day to go onto the board. In their phone conversation last week, Susan told Chuck that she does not get on well with her boss and has recently been passed by for promotion. Susan suspects she is hitting a “glass ceiling.” Susan directs the work of fourteen marketing communications and program people, and seems to have only a vague idea about the work or personality of her peers.

A careful observer sitting in the lobby might notice Chuck lightly biting his bottom lip while contorting his eyebrows. He is now deep in thought: *How do I start to make sense of Susan’s story? What do I really know about marketing or glass ceilings? What should we talk about? Where should I take this? What good can I do? And, more acutely: What damage might I do?* As Chuck ponders these grave matters, he realizes that deep down he is just a tiny bit worried.

We’ll leave Chuck in suspended animation, anticipating Susan’s arrival at the hotel. *Painting by numbers* won’t effectively guide their conversation because Chuck does not know what gambit Susan might bring. Chuck’s strength lies in his ability to be responsive to Susan, to follow the needs of his client. To help him in this, Chuck needs general orientation, not specific advice. How should Chuck define the area of his work? How should he deal with his own lack of familiarity with some of Susan’s situations? How can Chuck play to his strengths? He does not realize it yet, but Chuck is in great shape. What he badly needs right now is a good theory.

A Clear Focus on Coaching

Now would make an excellent time for Chuck to focus his thoughts on what he is meant to be doing. In the conversation yet to take place, Chuck will follow Susan into many and varied topics. As coach, Chuck will at times touch on career planning; he may borrow techniques from personal counseling; he will sometimes process-consult. He will always bring his own experience and knowledge into the room. Yet at all times it is *executive coaching* that must remain at the forefront of his efforts. A commitment to *coaching* places Chuck's work squarely within a learning context. The client is always an *executive*, so Chuck works exclusively within an organizational setting.

Executive coaching is about helping clients gain benefit from learning in an organizational setting. Ranging from the development of general personal skills, to helping Susan figure her way out of a tight corner, all that Chuck does as coach is in pursuit of that end. Chuck's impact will be determined by his ability to transform organizational situations into realistic learning challenges matching the immediate needs of his client. Supremely importantly, *How the client now thinks* and *How the client might think differently* will be key components of that project.

Requisite Variety

Different people prefer different learning styles. This makes it extremely important for Chuck to offer Susan a choice of learning approach. As manager, Chuck himself may be able to get easily from *A* to *C* via *B*. As coach, his task is not to escort Susan to *his* intermediate comfort-point *B*; rather he should help Susan find her own path to *C*. Or, indeed, find an even better destination.

At work here is the systems concept of *equifinality* permitting a variety of personal styles, any of which may be applied to a given situation, to meet the same learning or business objective. Such choice is vital to ensure that each and every step in Susan's learning program respects her personal values. It is only freedom of choice that allows Susan to remain true to herself. She must never feel that her quest to become a leader is forcing her to mimic a style that is distasteful to her, or make her adopt noxious behavior that she would recoil from seeing in others. Her ability to design her own authentic "Susan" style will bolster Susan's feeling of comfort with herself and with her coaching program. She may at times test an unfamiliar tactic; while doing so she must never be asked to compromise her integrity of action.

At the root of designing such a learning strategy lies the coach's ability to deeply understand "the organization," how it works, and the different ways in which a client may survive, win, and prosper within it. Fortunately, this is an area where Chuck can claim to be something of an expert. Good coaches do more than point out an executive's faults. They best help their clients by encouraging them to play to strengths. It is no different for Chuck, one of whose strengths is his expert understanding of *organizational dynamics* absorbed from his exposure to the corporate world. This is a skill he must leverage when making the transition from manager to executive coach.

Thinking Like a Theorist

An effective manager-turned-coach thinks like a theorist; acts like a researcher; never gives advice.

Theory can be that dry stuff found in textbooks. Alternatively a good theory inspires and stimulates action. Theory is capable of doing many useful things. It helps focus our attention on what is important when it encapsulates useful ways we have found in which to view our world. Theory can help get us quickly to the point. Theory helps us discover hidden connections; it helps us remember what otherwise we might forget. Theory may be the only thing we can cling to when we have little reliable data at hand. For coaches, who are behavioral practitioners in an imperfect world, a good theory is simply shorthand for good practice.

Theory truly comes alive when it helps practitioners tackle practical problems. While waiting for Susan in the freeze-frame action at the hotel, it is this more vibrant type of theory that Chuck definitely needs. Chuck may believe he is simply looking for some tested theory to help guide him along his new coaching path. Theories and models abound; simply collecting them is largely a sterile activity. Chuck adds value only when he helps his client. He will only start to do that and make real progress as a coach when he comes to understand that in his new job he has *become* a theorist. A theorist is someone who admits to not knowing and who is prepared to begin by making an informed guess as to cause and effect in a problem situation.

Learning by Theory

There are many parallels between Chuck's work and that of a scientist. Both pick up the theorist's work and conduct experiments in the real world from which learning results.

As a coach, Chuck must be clear about his role and know the boundaries of his work. He must be able to crystallize what he already knows and have the ability to transfer his insight. His deliverable will always be a learning opportunity. Of course,

this is far from saying that Chuck will always have the right answers. Chuck's perspective on a situation will never constitute more than a candidate hypothesis which may have to share the stage with several competitors. As always, the client must herself select between approaches and choose an appropriate way to learn. The best Chuck can hope to do is question and inform Susan based on his experience.

Chuck is concerned that some of Susan's presenting issues seem to be outside his immediate experience. For one thing, he has never personally encountered a glass ceiling. The good news for Chuck in his conversations with Susan is that although he may come across subject matter with which he is totally unfamiliar, as a former manager he is well qualified to analyze what counts—the patterns of situations and relationships he is likely to find. Even better news for Chuck is that as he is now a coach not a manager, his role is all about learning systems: this positively prohibits him from giving any content advice. Shifting a gear into the theoretical level is just what Chuck needs to help keep him honest.

Chuck knows that very soon he will hear Susan's story. He is preparing himself to draw out and organize Susan's ideas. He considers for a moment the far-ranging scope that this conversation will likely have. During today's little chat, Chuck must expect to exert considerable influence over the lives of Susan, those close to her, and others in and around the organization for which she works.

Chuck feels it important to shed any prejudices and false assumptions that may be in play—in his own mind, as well as in Susan's. He feels a deep sense of listener responsibility and realizes that he will need to discipline himself in the way he chooses to receive Susan's story. Chuck does not want to contaminate or judge that story. He will succeed by assuming a research style, or, in more familiar management terms—by conducting a friendly audit. Today, Chuck will say little, and instead concentrate his efforts on building rapport while simply *listening to the music*.

Susan's Story

Susan has proven herself to be an exceptional marketing professional. Susan has the experience of growing and leading an excellent team. She has reached a career stage where the perceptions of her by peers in other functions have become critical to her advancement in the company. To be credible at her present level, it is important for Susan to express herself in terms of broader business ideas. To remain strong, Susan must demonstrate that she can think strategically and orchestrate the political dimensions of her role.

Susan's regional boss wants to combine the marketing and public relations departments locally, and can see economies in doing so. But Susan works in a matrix organization in which her marketing boss wants to keep these functions separate. His logic for this is that PR audiences and market sectors need very different handling,

different skill sets, and different kinds of people to engage them. It also happens to be the case that the alternative would mean a smaller marketing empire.

Susan remains loyal to both camps and therefore has pursued only timid policies that are controversial to neither manager. This has caused her some personal frustration. For as long as this issue remains unresolved, it also harms the business. While Susan treads water, the business remains sub-optimal: resources are duplicated; motivation stays low; productivity inevitably suffers. For as long as such ambiguity in her position persists, Susan's long-term future as a leader is at risk.

The political situation causing this stress is a form of organizational madness, even though it is constructed solely out of rational positions taken by interested parties. Susan needs to succeed in the face of and despite this madness. As is often the case, many of the tools she needs are closer to hand than she realizes. Susan needs to become more politically astute, to play to her strengths and capitalize on her proven knowledge of marketing. She needs a coach to help her see how easily she could apply her existing know-how to promote *herself* in the company—in the same way her marketing team promotes the company.

Systems Change Agent

At any time the coach may appear to be talking to one individual person but in reality he is always—in some sense—in dialog with the entire client system. Shortly, Susan will tell Chuck about her situation. We do not yet know what they will say. But we know it is likely that, as a result, Susan will be doing some things differently tomorrow. Susan may ask her bosses new questions; she may try out new responses in familiar situations; she may even create totally new situations in which to initiate new dialog. Susan may start to investigate the feasibility of integrating two departments by floating a few probing questions.

Today's conversation is going to extend far beyond the hotel walls. Its ripples will be felt by Susan's bosses and others. With thoughtful preparation and presentation, Susan has an opportunity to impress her peers and inspire her direct reports along the way, as she makes progress in learning how to address the structural dilemma she faces.

Chuck will speak to Susan yet engage her whole organization. And Chuck will do even more than that. He will influence Susan's career beyond this corporation. He will expand the skills Susan employs in her personal life too. Chuck has become an agent of change in a set of complex systems, and he carries a heavy burden of responsibility.

Theoretical Foundations

Thinking in a Corporate Setting

The most basic concept in executive coaching is how a person thinks in a corporate setting. It is the degree to which this concept is developed by the coach that makes any coaching intervention impactful. A good theory distinguishes itself by offering a working model that captures a sufficiently rich corporate description for the job in hand.

Depending on circumstances, Chuck or Susan might use this model in different ways. Chuck reflects on his own thought processes to better understand how he thinks as a manager; in this case Chuck becomes the model's subject. In another application, Chuck employs this model with Susan as the subject, the aim here to unravel Susan's thinking towards the supposed glass ceiling. Then again, in their conversation the pair considers how Susan's work colleagues regard Susan, now placing her managers, direct reports, peers, or customers under the lens at the center of the model. Chuck and Susan have the option to collect *feedback*, to populate their current model with data, to ignite a more public learning process. When a coach is present, some model for *thinking in a corporate setting* is at work whether we are aware of it or not.

No single discipline holds a monopoly on thinking about thinking. Sharing our common interest in the topic of thinking, psychology and philosophy, each has something to offer for coaching theory. Both contribute insights to help us understand *how the client thinks*. These contributions only become valuable to executive coaching clients, however, when they are set in a management context that directs practical action towards business results. It is primarily the job of the coach to help the client translate insight into action within their specific corporate setting.

We might observe that a certain executive thinks fast. Indeed, this may be very important where the objectives of coaching are purely behavioral: there is a potential danger that colleagues who think at only the normal rate may get left behind. This situation is grist for the mill for the middle-manager behavioral coach who may suggest trying out new techniques for "bringing the audience along."

Thinking Deeply

At senior levels in the organization the application of coaching tends to shift focus into the strategic and political arenas. Here, these same words *how the client thinks* should be understood to extend their meaning to include whatever rational, social, attitudinal, emotional, interest-centered, planning, goal-directed, or any other aspects of *thinking* may be relevant so that useful coaching work can get done.

Suppose Susan tells Chuck she has “engaged” participants in her new marketing project by writing them a memo. Chuck has seen this memo and agrees it contains logical, impressive, compelling and elegant arguments, the correctness of which seems indisputable. Susan is surprised that none of the recipients has taken any notice whatsoever.

The problem here is that Susan thinks about engagement in purely rational terms. Her *thinking* about engagement does not yet extend to recognize the importance of her personal presence or the power of an appeal to her colleagues’ own interests. To usefully engage she must articulate the link between her pet project and the greater good of the business; rewards to shareholders, benefits to customers, contribution towards a better life on the planet. For her, *engagement* means giving a rational explanation: this is how Susan now thinks.

The challenge for Chuck is to explore how Susan might think differently. Modeling Susan’s thinking, Chuck will extend the idea of *thinking* to include any important attitudinal components in play. Susan lacks confidence in inspiring her peers. She harbors feelings of restraint when there is a need for her to stand up to her line manager. Then again, Susan may have some genuine blind spot of which she is totally unaware. She may have a phantom obstacle she needs to expunge: a glass ceiling, perhaps.

Chuck finds it useful to say that all of this has to do with how Susan “thinks” in a corporate setting. Insight into Susan’s thinking provides Chuck with an essential building block for designing her learning program.

Rich Description

Sometimes we use words such as *think* to include other factors that are more commonly described by separate words. Another example is *process*, which may simply mean a mechanistic repetitive set of actions. Equally, we may use the word to denote a complete system that has knowledge of its purpose, the structure, and culture in which it operates, and even has the ability to adapt itself to change. In one sense, a whole business could be described simply as a process.

When theorists choose to extend the meaning of a word in this way, far beyond the regular face-value dictionary definition, they are using *rich description*. Rich description can open new horizons to expand the extent of a coach’s impact. For the client, too, it offers a useful choice about how to think in a given situation. If Susan were to use a rich description of the word *audiences* in her conversations with her managers, she would have at her disposal a vocabulary highly conducive to integrating the work of marketing and PR in her region.

Acting Like a Researcher

As a coach, Chuck will spend a lot of time involved in research. A researcher is someone who, when presented with a tangle of information, will first sift out what is important and then go on to formulate new questions. These research questions seek to uncover what might be important yet currently unknown. With its focus on learning in an organizational setting, the research aspect of executive coaching will often have as its objective the discovery of perspectives to assist the client's personal development. Susan benefits from finding out the extent to which her credibility as a leader will improve were she to properly engage her peers and inspire her bosses.

Chuck needs to be more than just a regular researcher; he must be forensic and meticulous when looking at evidence. In today's conversations with Susan, all data comes from a single source—Susan. Quality data will likely be scarce, especially as Susan has some blind spots. While it may be safe for Chuck to assume Susan's reporting of her own experience is totally genuine, any data describing Susan's environment—including any perceptions held about her by work colleagues—will be largely unsubstantiated. In truth, from today's exchange alone, Chuck may have little verifiable information to work with.

Tentative Solutions

Given the high degree of risk in Chuck's raw material—reliable information—we might allow him to pause for a moment and rejoice that he has become a theorist. With a paucity of data, any coach is in real danger of making a serious mistake through incorrect inference. It is in such a situation that theory excels. Chuck's insight into real-world organizations contains exactly the theory he needs to help bridge gaps in data and make his intervention more robust. Chuck brings to the conversation a large number of theories and research questions grounded in the experience of real organizational life. Chuck uses story-telling to bring prototype models into his conversation with Susan.

Client Learning

The research that Chuck will engage in will always be of the *pure* kind. This again keeps him at the theoretical end of his partnership with Susan, whose role is to do all the hard work. It is Susan as client who will be interacting with her work system by raising new questions with peers and bosses. After all, the learning must be experienced by Susan, not Chuck.

Reaching Out

Chuck may find he does not have access to Susan's stakeholders. Susan will periodically return to future coaching sessions with stories that relate interactions with work colleagues from which theories will get built and refined. This coaching approach can be extremely effective in highly charged political situations; when the executive is new in post and so is "unknown" to colleagues; and in other cases where supporting data cannot reasonably be collected. This does not mean that involving more people in data gathering is necessarily better. Triangulating data from multiple sources brings its own problems.

Challenge vs. Validation

Like many amateur coaches, Chuck is in danger of becoming evangelical, insisting his client *changes for the better*. Chuck zealously wants to make Susan a "better" executive, and to do this he thinks he must *challenge* her to instantly address some perceived weakness indicated by the feedback. It is possible he will feel the need to say: "*Susan, I know you think you are an excellent listener. But I have here the feedback from twelve of your direct reports who completely disagree with you. Now, should we get started on improving your listening skills?*" There are many useful techniques for achieving this, such as leaving pauses in the conversation to allow people the opportunity to seek clarification.

Chuck will not make such an elementary mistake. Chuck, who thinks like a theorist and acts like a researcher, asks: "*Susan, they say you don't listen; why might they think this?*" Susan responds that during the past six months, as well as running the marketing department in Europe, she has been representing the company in secret merger discussions, reporting directly to the CFO. These talks take place frequently, involving specialist consultants from the Big Five, together with teams of attorneys, accountants and technical experts, all of whom take up residence across discreetly separated suites at a top Beijing hotel. The consequential volume of travel and follow-up work placed on Susan is monumental. Susan says that she is aware her team might feel alienated but insists she is not allowed to tell them why.

Instead of immediately looking for compensating behavior, a researcher first questions source and context. An expert coach will *validate* raw data. Chuck will be interested to know what was happening when Susan's feedback was being collected, and whether anything unusual might have been going on at that time. A research approach wins the day. Suggesting to Susan that she should fix her listening problem by taking long breaths between sentences would not have been helpful.

How Chuck Came on the Scene

Joe is the management accountant responsible for, among other things, improving expenditure in Susan's company. A few months ago, he made his first serious mistake. Joe almost bounced Thelma's budget. Thelma is Vice President, Human Resources. Thelma is a no-nonsense executive with attitude. Joe's email had asked Thelma to produce a *return on investment* justification for her coaching program. Joe reasoned that management is responsible for investing shareholders' money, and shareholders are entitled to know what they should expect in return. *Where is the bottom-line benefit?* Joe had questioned in his email. The answer, *that the bottom line will be there*, was not the one he had expected, or indeed was prepared for.

Instead of replying with a curt email, Thelma sensibly invited Joe to her office. Joe was prompt. As Thelma was running behind schedule that day, her personal assistant told Joe he could wait in her office, which he did.

When she eventually arrived, Thelma offered her apologies, announcing with a knowing smile that she was exactly ten minutes and twenty-two seconds late. She had unexpectedly stopped off to fit a replacement watch battery. Joe suspected that Thelma's accurate time-check was her way of making sure she was getting good value for money from her recent purchase, a quality Joe highly admires in a budget holder. Little did he know that in a very short time he would be back in his office wondering what had happened.

"You asked me to estimate the return on investment for our coaching program, so let's start there. As an investment the RoI from this program would simply be an increase in share price. In my experience, investors tend to like that. So I guess that settles *that* question. Our investor relations people tell us that share price is strongly related to analysts' confidence in the quality of management. Coaching is the method we're using here to grow our management quality and translate it into tangible business impact.

"As I remember, your standard accounting paperwork doesn't ask for the most fundamental measure of success that's relevant here—the protection and enhancement of share price. Until it does, how can I be expected to properly respond?"

Thelma beamed. Joe tried to say something, but was cut short.

"But that's not the point. By asking for RoI, you're telling me you haven't yet understood what we're dealing with here, Joe. We're not justifying our *Coaching for Leadership* program as an investment. Make no mistake, this program is an unavoidable expense; we won't safely achieve this year's plan without it. That's why your request for a return on investment figure is technically meaningless."

During the short pause that followed, Joe scribbled something on his multi-column legal pad. To Thelma, who admittedly was reading upside down, it seemed to resemble a cartoon character, but she could not be totally certain about that.

“Moreover, you should be aware that the relevant asset has already been acquired. It’s in place right now. And this planned expenditure on it has already been implicitly justified at corporate level by the main board. Frankly, further justification seems unnecessary.”

For some reason, at just that moment, Joe had unexpectedly become aware of the existence of his Adam’s apple, but was unable to say why. He had so many questions; he did not know which to ask first. He did not get the chance.

“You look confused, so let me explain. The asset in question is the senior management team, our regional board. Corporate expects us to carry out a program of work, plus whatever unexpected change the world might throw at us—over the coming year. Our success in this as a business is not negotiable. Indeed, as a board we have a responsibility to do whatever is necessary to give ourselves the best chance of achieving our objectives. The coaching program resources that responsibility.

“It strengthens our bottom line by squeezing out the risk of missing it.”

Joe repeated that last sentence to himself slowly inside his head. Thelma paused to give Joe time to take this in, then smiled broadly, her face now full of reasonableness. Conspiratorially, she continued:

“Look around. We have members who are new to the board, and with the recent re-organization we have people on the board who will need to work together in totally new ways this year. We also have aggressive sales targets, growth targets, and an extremely turbulent business environment which may include making a local acquisition. We are running this coaching program to make sure the people we have in place are given the best chance to be as effective as the business needs them to be in doing all this. It’s simply the ‘soft’ part of our business plan that has already been agreed and signed-off. I am only sorry we didn’t start all this earlier.

“Yes, it is true that there are some choices to be made. Of course we’ll be prudent. The key to getting all this right lies in the design of our HR program which we’ve framed as a change initiative. We’ve put a lot of effort into that. Naturally only suitably qualified coaches will get anywhere near our top talent. For high potentials like Susan we’ve found an individual named Chuck who may fit the bill perfectly. For the senior management team, we want a heavyweight coach to work closely with the entire regional board. Given the strategic challenges and degree of change we’re facing this year, we’ve decided to get a very experienced coach at the top end of the range. Of course, I’ll copy you on the figures as soon as I have them all.

“Joe, I appreciate your taking a personal interest in this. I know that direct share price enhancement and bottom-line risk reduction may not be the typical

benefits you normally recognize in our regional cost center budget. But our business has to recognize exactly that. If we've learned anything from our experience of *business process re-engineering* it's that soft factors drive hard results. We have a board who strongly believes in that maxim, and in response to that, we in HR have built a robust plan to achieve those hard results today and protect our talent well into the future.

"The senior management team is a corporate asset, even though you may not see it as an accounting asset. Yet it still needs nourishment. This new approach will make us a stronger company. That's what this coaching program is really all about. This is how modern companies look at senior coaching programs.

"Well, I guess that just about covers everything. It was so good for us to talk today rather than to simply exchange paperwork. I am a great believer in cross-functional co-operation like this. Joe, I want you to know how much I value your support. Thank you so much for taking the time to see me today."

As Joe was leaving, Thelma locked his gaze, smiled, and then lovingly looked down at one of her personal assets—the diamond-studded Rolex Cellini Quartz sparkling on her wrist. "Nobody will balk about paying a fair price for a replacement battery," she said. Then, looking directly into Joe's eyes with the slightest hint of a wink: "But who'd want to propose owning an expensive watch that can't correctly tell the time?"

In an era when HR is striving to find ways to add strategic value to the business, it is leaders such as Thelma who hold out a blazing beacon to lighten up a path. And, as Joe will attest, its brilliant flame has the power to cauterize as it goes along its way.

The Hybrid Coach

We have become familiar with the consultant as an external agent of change or as someone responsible for helping managers develop the purely technical aspects of their business, such as marketing or operations. More recently, working with individuals and teams, the behavioral coach has emerged as a practitioner in the development of the social fabric of the organization. Today's executive coach is a hybrid of these prototypes and whose playground is the management of an entire socio-technical business system. As such, he or she must be adept in engaging the mesh of political-behavioral and strategic-philosophical components of the organization.

The modern corporation has awakened to realize that a business does not exist in splendid isolation. Far beyond its functions of simple economic exchange, the corporation is today regarded from those outside as having its place in society and

its role in the world. Those managers who inspire co-workers by linking the immediate task at hand to their personal development and to the greater purpose of their enterprise are among the new breed of corporate leaders. And those coaches able to foster this sense of *purposeful connectedness* by inducing inspiration in the minds of leaders are truly coaching for leadership.

Back at the hotel, Susan enters the lobby. Chuck has returned the notes to his briefcase alongside his well-thumbed copy of *Practice of Leadership Coaching*. Chuck is prepared. He will succeed today and into the future. With more experience, Chuck will go on to coach more-senior individuals; to work across an entire management team; and even to accept the hardest coaching contract of all: coaching clients across organizational levels within the same team. In that very challenging context, he will advance his capability. Chuck has the potential to one day be among those few able to offer coaching as a highly effective results-oriented conflict dissolution alternative, reaching way beyond brute confrontation and sub-optimal mediation.

Chuck is focused, oriented, and ready. That's partly because Chuck is well-read in the subject of coaching. It helps a lot that Chuck brings a track record as a solid line manager. These factors go a long way in explaining how Chuck will so easily succeed in his inaugural coaching assignment. Chuck will excel, to one day become a truly great coach. For in the deep recesses of his heart and embedded within the very fabric of his approach to life, he is a leader.

In a few weeks, Susan proclaims her first success as a coaching client; she is beginning to make her mark in the organization. Only now is Chuck certain to have truly given something back: he has started to pass on his learning. Susan's breakthrough gives him an especially deep sense of achievement. He also has the feeling that something fundamental has changed. Then the awesome self-realization dawns: Chuck is an accomplished leader.



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Dr. Lyons is regarded as a pioneer in the field of executive coaching; he has coached hundreds of senior and high-potential executives in organizations in the United States and across Europe. Many of his personal coaching clients are to be found in *Who's Who*.

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