PART ONE
The purpose, nature and practice of coaching and mentoring

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In the mainstream?

When we wrote the previous edition we said you would need a very large removal van to carry all the books, journal articles, news stories and Internet references referring to coaching and mentoring. Since then the volume of publications on these topics has continued to grow, although with the increasing popularity of e-publications perhaps the physical volume is not so daunting.

Over the last decade we have all seen a tremendous amount of change in our working lives. The enormous growth of mobile and social networks has influenced our lives in many ways, not always for the better. The pace of globalization – particularly with the rapid development of the BRIC nations – has accelerated.

Against this, the economic instability of the European region and the Far East has prompted many organizations to 'batten down the hatches' and think more carefully about future investment. As a result, we are seeing organizations place much more focus on return on investment and measuring results of any training and development activities, including coaching and mentoring, so those who are doing them are doing them much more effectively.

In the world of work and the broader social community, a rich variety of examples of successful applications of coaching and mentoring abounds. It has become a mainstream focus of interest for many organizations, as well as professional institutes, management schools, corporate and community policy makers and anyone interested in people development. Coaching and mentoring, we believe, have become so integrated into work and community life that they can be described routinely as simply 'the way we do things round here'.

Despite these activities being considered as a recognized profession, it seems surprising that there is still confusion over definitions and language. Later in this chapter we will attempt to dispel some of this confusion.

Before we look at coaching and mentoring in more detail, we will first attempt to sketch the 'big picture' review of the trends, developments and influences of this explosion of activity.

The management and academic 'influencers'

Our interest in the potential for both coaching and mentoring came from our own experiences of corporate life and the management writers (who were largely from the United States) of the 1980s. It was impossible to read the new thinking on issues like 'process re-engineering', 'total quality management', 'customer service excellence', 'employee empowerment' and 'the learning organization' without recognizing that the days of the traditional management science of command and control were numbered. The notion of coaching began to enter the language of people management and development literature, either implicitly or sometimes explicitly, in accordance with one of Blanchard's situational management styles.

The 'Situational Leadership Model' was developed by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard in the 1970s. The model comprises four quadrants, depicting the simple concept of the four different styles of leadership that a manager may need to adopt in any given situation: see Figure 1.1. One of those quadrants is called 'Coaching'.

Figure 1.1 Blanchard and Hersey's 'Situational Leadership Model'
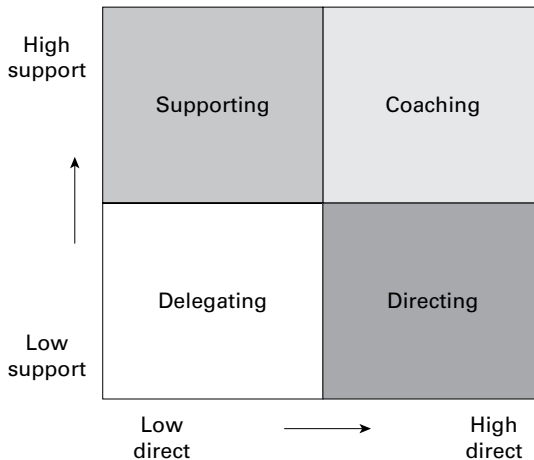
Hersey and Blanchard's use of the term 'coaching' did not have its current meaning, however: by coaching they meant a way of leading and persuading staff to adopt a manager's solution to the situation.

The US writer with the greatest early impact on the emerging profession of management coaching in Britain was most likely Tim Gallwey in his book *The Inner Game of Tennis* (1974). His simple proposition that all great tennis players needed a coach to maintain their high levels of performance was

a metaphor and message that was easy to relate to the management of people's performance at work. Gallwey made this message even clearer in *The Inner Game of Work* (2000).

Gallwey's philosophy that 'Performance = Potential minus Interference' was accompanied by the message that a coach's job was primarily to release the self-knowledge and potential that everyone possesses. The key to this was to develop greater self-awareness and a sense of self-responsibility in the performer. Again, these are messages that were in tune with the emerging new thinking about management and organizational performance.

Since 2000, a number of UK universities and some in Australia have pioneered programmes leading to formal academic qualifications. Oxford Brookes University was the first to offer a master's degree in Coaching and Mentoring Practice and the first to offer a doctorate; Middlesex University offered a master's degree and a doctorate with a strong psychological emphasis and Sheffield Hallam University also built on its long involvement with mentoring research. Similar academic qualifications are becoming more widely available all the time. Anthony Grant in Australia has been widely published, advocating the need for an evidence-based approach to academic research. One positive aspect of this increasing academic involvement has been a rapid advance in respectable research-based evidence and a recognized body of literature that many consider an essential requirement for the establishment of a genuine coaching and mentoring profession. Qualifications and certification processes and requirements are explained in more detail in Chapter 10 – 'An industry or a maturing profession?'.

The sport coach 'influencers'

Not surprisingly perhaps, it has been the famous 'sports-coaches-turned-management-coaching-gurus' who were the most visible group in shaping the early thinking and approaches to applying coaching to the workplace. Among the leading exponents were John Whitmore, former champion racing driver; David Hemery, former Olympic medallist; and David Whitaker, former Olympic hockey coach. Towards the end of the 1990s, the former tennis player Myles Downey teamed up with The Industrial Society (later renamed the Work Foundation) to form a 'School of Coaching' for high-flying managers. More recently, the former Olympic swimming gold medallist Adrian Moorhouse joined up with the leading sports psychologist Professor Graham Jones and created a successful coaching company. Appropriately named Lane 4, this has helped to further consolidate the connection between sports coaching and a notion of 'best practice management'.

The medium most commonly used by this group to convey their messages is highly stimulating and memorable training courses. Here practical examples of sports coaching are used to relate to the world of work. The analogy between high achievers in sport and work has fostered the belief that it is possible to develop 'great coaches' who can help produce 'extraordinary results'. However, John Whitmore's book *Coaching for Performance* (1997, updated 2002) remains an inspiring call for a change of management philosophy. Like many pioneers before him, he has faced a growing number of other 'influencers' who challenge the sports coach approach.

The basis for some of the challenges is that the skills required to be a successful sports person are far narrower than those required to manage, for instance, a busy call centre, the intensive care ward of a large hospital or a pharmaceutical processing plant. Thus it has been claimed that the approaches and techniques are not easily transferred from one environment to the other. Indeed, to suggest that they can be easily transferred simply results in raising false hopes and expectations.

Another challenge to this school of 'influencers' relates to the difference in motivation between sport, which has a combination of personal competitiveness and pleasure, and the world of work where many, if not most, people's motivation is a mixture of reluctance, fear and resistance to change. Apart from the natural high achievers, it is claimed that the sports coaching approach often produces little real change in behaviour and performance. While we can all develop our self-awareness, most people don't aspire to be Olympic champions at work.

Despite the challenges, it remains true that this rather narrow and simplistic approach to work-based coaching continues to be a widespread basis for many training programmes, producing results that satisfy a particular segment of the market. However, John Whitmore has more recently continued his intellectual journey into the realms of the psychological and spiritual areas of transpersonal coaching, which he views as a natural evolution from his initial ideas.

The human resources professional 'influencers'

The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD) has more than 140,000 members in the UK and is the main professional body for those involved in the corporate world of human resources and development.

In that role it has a leading position in influencing the development of coaching and mentoring in the UK, conducting regular surveys of organizations' development activity that are accepted as authoritative. In 2015, the CIPD (2015) reported that coaching by line managers or peers along with on-the-job training and in-house development programmes remain the most commonly used and most effective development methods, in line with previous years. Interestingly, 65 per cent of the respondents said that coaching by line manager or peers is expected to grow over the next two years.

In addition:

- Just over three-quarters of all responding organizations offer coaching and mentoring to employees. This is more common in large organizations, rising to 89 per cent of the public sector.

- Nearly two-thirds of organizations use in-house coaches/trained peers and line managers. A further third use a combination of in-house and external providers. Only 4 per cent of larger and 10 per cent of smaller organizations say they rely solely on external coaches.

- 13 per cent of organizations do not currently offer coaching or mentoring but plan to in the next year.

- 9 per cent of organizations (predominantly smaller, less than 250 employees) do not offer it and have no plans to do so.

The 2015 survey also found that coaching, mentoring and buddying schemes along with in-house development schemes were among the most commonly used and most effective talent management activities. Such surveys continue to show strong evidence that coaching is not being seen as a panacea, but rather as an essential and valuable feature of a modern organization's learning and development strategy. This is indeed strong evidence that coaching and mentoring are now mainstream and no longer marginal activities.

The counselling, psychotherapy, psychology and philosophy 'influencers'

As coaching and mentoring have become more widespread, practitioners from other 'helping' disciplines have been brought into the arena, who believe that their traditional methods and approaches are highly relevant. This has certainly increased and enriched the debates and involvement of many more people in the formation of the emerging profession. We recognize

the importance of this contribution and, in Chapter 5, 'Awareness of individual differences', we explore this contribution in more detail.

However, the widening of the debate has also had a somewhat negative and confusing impact. It is our opinion that too many people from the different disciplines are now trying to overcomplicate the world of coaching and mentoring. The current marketplace is swamped with a multiplicity of apparently conflicting brands and terminology: NLP, co-active, ontological, buddy, transpersonal, solutions-focused – the list goes on. Differences between the brands sometimes relate to a specific context but more often to some theoretical or academic influence that is of little relevance to the process.

The professional body 'influencers'

Inevitably, as coaching and mentoring have become so widespread, there has been pressure to form networks and associations that can lead to representative bodies bringing some coherence into an emerging profession in the UK. At the same time, existing professional bodies have recognized this need and a possible opportunity for them to extend their membership and influence.

The CIPD, representing the human resources professional, has played a leading role but it has increasingly recognized that it needs to collaborate with others. The Chartered Management Institute (CMI) is dedicated to raising the standards of management and leadership. They see coaching and mentoring as core skills for effective managers. The British Psychology Society (BPS), which has several different groups within its membership, has taken a more defensive attitude and has emphasized the case for psychologists leading the debate. The British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists (BACP) has adopted a position somewhere in between the other two bodies.

Far more influential in framing the debates have been the new representative bodies that we discuss in more detail in Chapter 10 – 'An industry or a maturing profession?'. The International Coach Federation (ICF), initially largely North American, now has more than 12,000 members in a range of countries around the world. They are complemented in North America by coaches mainly from the corporate sector who have formed the World Association of Business Coaches (WABC). In Europe, the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC) took a lead in developing standards and qualifications for both coaching and mentoring in the corporate

world and the community. The Association for Coaching (AC) is dedicated to promoting best practice and raising the standards and ethics of coaching worldwide. In 2014 they partnered with the Association of Coaching Supervisors (AOCS). In the UK and many other European countries, national associations for coaching have been formed and energetically promote the benefits of coaching to help their largely individual membership. In the UK, a group of psychotherapist coaches formed their own association, the Association of Professional Executive Coaching and Supervision (APECS).

The existence of these various bodies with their own agendas initially added considerably to the confusion in the market. Fortunately, common sense and recognition of mutual interests have led to an increasing level of cooperation. A good example of this increased cooperation was the creation by the EMCC, the ICF and the AC in 2014 of the Global Coaching and Mentoring Alliance (GCMA), with the purpose of professionalizing the industry.

So where does that leave us?

For buyers of coaching services, it can be tempting to give up trying to navigate this swamp of theoretical models and obtuse jargon, but if one is patient, steps back and asks what all these people are doing and why, it is really pretty straightforward. If you watch coaching or mentoring in action, in most cases what you will see is simply two people having a conversation, and we all have conversations every day.

A closer analysis of these conversations would establish that they are often very focused, confidential and ideally voluntary conversations that are quite structured and follow a process that helps learning to occur, allowing performance to improve and potential to be realized. In truth, they are a very specific type of conversation and not everyone, in management for instance, is used to having the patience and skills to help people learn in this way.

It is now generally accepted that people learn in different ways and therefore it is also common sense to accept that there is no single correct theoretical approach that should be followed. Clearly, the motivation behind coaching and mentoring in education or, say, for drug users is quite different to that used for high-potential young managers in large businesses. We explore 'Helping people to learn how to learn' in Chapter 4.

The words 'coaching' and 'mentoring' have a long traditional usage and interpretation but, in the early 21st century, the activities they describe have taken on new dimensions in corporate, community and social life across the world. This has led to considerable confusion over the appropriate modern definitions. In our opinion this is mainly because of the confusion between:

- *what* they are and do;
- *why* they are used;
- *where* they have come from;
- *how* they are done.

What they are and do

Both coaching and mentoring are conversations that generically follow a simple, although slightly different, four-stage process to help and support people to take responsibility for managing their own learning and change.

Why they are used

The main purpose of both these conversations is either to improve skills or performance, or to realize individual potential and personal ambitions for the future – or any combination of these.

Where they have come from

Modern coaching and mentoring have been shaped by a range of influences and schools of thought as well as Western and Eastern cultures. As such, these conversations take from this rich tradition ideas of what it is to be human and how to help people realize their innate potential.
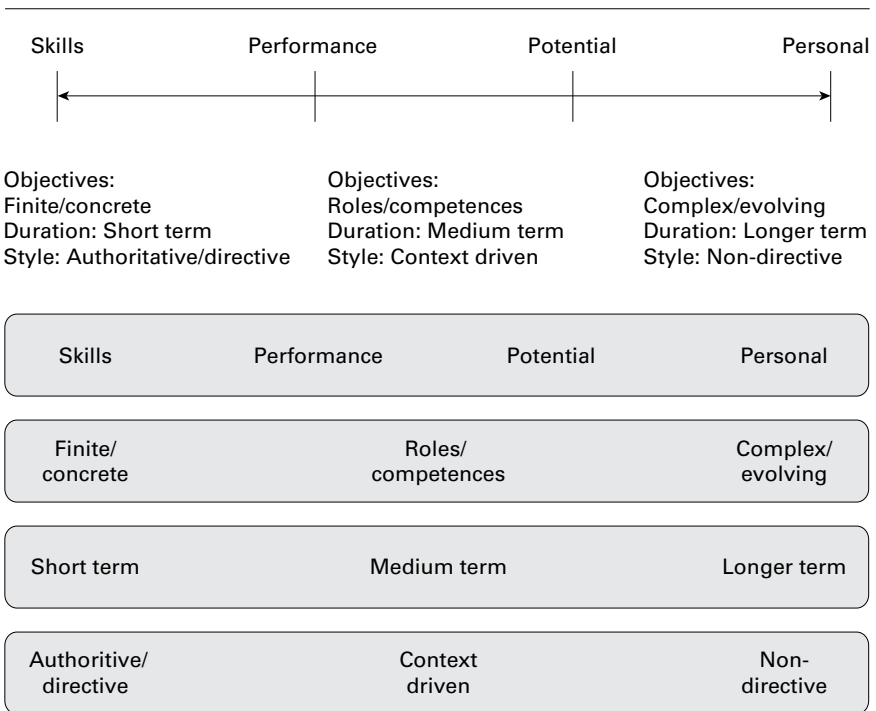
How they are done

These conversations take place in so many varied contexts and for so many purposes that there is no one correct way of 'how to do it'. However, successful conversations imply the building of a relationship that includes a degree of mutual trust and commitment.

There is a considerable overlap in the knowledge, competences, skills and techniques that can be used by the individual coach-mentor. However, there is also considerable flexibility to choose an appropriate style of intervention to suit the context in which the conversations take place, varying from a

highly non-directive style to a highly directive style, and from theoretical or philosophic standpoints to pragmatism and common sense. Opinions vary strongly on these issues between the purists and the pragmatists who believe interventions can often be a combination of styles, even during a single conversation.

As pragmatists ourselves, we have chosen the term 'coach-mentoring' for the modern definition of these conversations. Similarly, we believe that the range of coaching and mentoring styles that can be chosen is most simply understood as related to a continuum of situations, as shown in Figure 1.2.

Figure 1.2 Situational coach-mentoring continuum

Skills	Performance	Potential	Personal

Objectives: Finite/concrete
Duration: Short term
Style: Authoritative/directive

Objectives: Roles/competences
Duration: Medium term
Style: Context driven

Objectives: Complex/evolving
Duration: Longer term
Style: Non-directive

Skills	Performance	Potential	Personal

Finite/concrete	Roles/competences	Complex/evolving

Short term	Medium term	Longer term

Authoritive/directive	Context driven	Non-directive

This illustrates the typical objectives and duration of the relationship for each broad purpose and the most appropriate intervention style for each situation. Professional and effective coach-mentors need the knowledge, competences, skills and techniques to be able to adjust their style seamlessly as the situation in which they are working changes, even during the same conversation.

Throughout the rest of this book we will use the term 'coach-mentor', as well as the term 'learner' (rather than coachee, mentee or client) since we believe we are all involved in the learning experience. We will also continue

to keep our ideas and suggestions as simple and practical as possible, believing with Leonardo da Vinci that 'simplicity is the ultimate sophistication'.

In that spirit we will advocate a number of 'practical tips of simplicity' derived largely from our years of experience in the world of work and the community.

Simplicity Tip 1

Success comes most surely from doing simple things consistently

We have met very few people who could not become good, competent and useful coaches and mentors. The key to success is not to overcomplicate the roles or to erect unrealistic and unnecessary barriers and expectations. Our 'tips of simplicity' reflect an approach that provides the basis for successful coaching and mentoring relationships. To achieve real sophistication, however, we must also recognize that 'simple' does not mean 'easy': in fact, the opposite is probably true.

Simplicity Tip 2

First agree what you are going to talk about

Many effective coaching and mentoring conversations can happen spontaneously and informally but, if the purpose is to effect serious learning and lasting change, a series of conversations over a longer time frame is more likely to produce results. In this case, it is important to be very clear at the start of the relationship exactly what the ground rules are going to be so that you can both stay focused and disciplined. This phase of the relationship has become known as the 'contracting' phase: not in the sense of a written document but in the sense that all those likely to be affected by the conversations understand what is being aimed for. This can lead to a three- or four-way contract if managers or representatives of a sponsoring organization are involved, as they often are the paymasters.

Simplicity Tip 3

Make sure you meet

By far the most common reason that coaching and mentoring schemes fail is that the busy coach-mentor, volunteer or manager doesn't find the time to

meet with his or her learners. Of course, time pressures are intense on everyone and have arguably grown significantly in recent years. Yet we all have the same amount of time available to us. So the real issue is what we choose to do with our time and what tools we can use to help us find the necessary 'extra' time. Here technology, such as the telephone, or more recently computer-based communication techniques, has a real role to play.

The tool most commonly used to help manage our time is, of course, the diary. We strongly advocate the use of some form of learning and/or planning diary in which both the coach-mentor and learner commit to each other to make contact at a specific time and on a particular day each month. The simple act of writing the commitment down increases the likelihood of it happening.

But be honest: if you don't intend to keep the commitment, don't write it down. No manager, in particular, can advocate the need for others to take personal responsibility for improving performance if he or she is not prepared to take personal responsibility for finding the time to meet. It is as simple as that.

Simplicity Tip 4

Keep it brief

Time is precious so there is no point in wasting it. Formal coaching and mentoring sessions in the workplace can be productive if they take between 30 and 75 minutes. If they are shorter you don't really have time to become focused, but if sessions take longer they run the real danger of straying into the realms of counselling or therapy sessions.

We acknowledge the need to be flexible in applying this rule. Sometimes situations are too stressful to be rushed. Sometimes learners need time to unburden themselves. Certain types of people simply don't respond easily to time-pressured situations. So the coach-mentor has to be willing to be both flexible and patient.

This is where the 'make sure you meet' tip applies. Regular meetings allow the coach-mentor to vary the length of the meetings to take account of the occasional stressful or difficult session. But after, say, three of these necessarily lengthy sessions, we would advise turning to another specialist for help. Coach-mentors cannot be expected to be able to handle every situation and they become potentially dangerous if they think they should.

Simplicity Tip 5

Stick to the basic process

At the most basic level, coaching and mentoring sessions are one-to-one meetings where the learner talks about issues he or she chooses and the coach-mentor listens and asks questions. However, the conversations need focus, structure and, especially, good time management. Sticking to a simple process that ensures this happens is therefore crucial:

- Ask the learner either to come prepared with his or her agenda or spend the first few minutes agreeing it.
- Ideally you should both write it down and then manage the time spent on each item.
- Agree that taking notes is purely optional.
- Try to make certain you both write down any action points that the learner decides he or she genuinely wants to commit to (and make sure it is the first item on the agenda for the next meeting).
- Agree the date and time for the next meeting.

The process really is as simple as that. If you adhere to it you are signifying to the learner that:

- These are *not* management, operational or performance review meetings.
- These are *not* appraisal meetings that require documentation for the personnel department.
- These are *not* disciplinary meetings.
- These *are* meetings that are controlled by the learner and focused on him or her and his or her needs and ambitions.
- In most situations the contracting phase should have ensured that they are also meetings that are completely confidential.

Simplicity Tip 6

Develop the 'ask, not tell' habit

Most managers quickly develop the habit of 'acting as managers are expected to act'. This will vary from organization to organization depending on the prevailing culture (and probably on how many different training courses managers have attended!). It will also depend on age, sex and

personality type; but you can be pretty sure that there will be 'management-style' habits.

You can also be reasonably sure that many managers will be unfamiliar with acting as coaches and mentors, and not likely to fully accept the underlying philosophy that letting go of control opens the potential for higher performance. The idea that good coaching and mentoring mean moving quickly away from a 'directive' to a 'non-directive' style is one of the most difficult barriers for managers to overcome.

Developing the 'ask, not tell' habit is a vital new habit for managers and the community volunteer mentor to learn. Spelling it out as a formula of '75 per cent asking questions, 20 per cent giving answers and only 5 per cent sharing suggestions', is another way we have found to help some people adapt their style. However, it is probably the constant repetition and reminder of this tip that are the most certain way to get it established.

Even managers who can accept this philosophy intellectually have real problems with applying it. Faced with the pressures of accountability for both positive financial and customer satisfaction short-term results, many managers tend to revert to more traditional command and control styles and techniques. We appreciate that to expect otherwise is unrealistic and unsympathetic.

Simplicity Tip 7

Remember it's all about learning

Another attitude barrier that busy people have to surmount is the concept of 'self-responsibility for learning'. A deeply ingrained habit, indeed preference for some people, is to associate 'learning' with classroom or training course activities. Traditionally, organizations have taken primary responsibility for developing the skills and knowledge of their employees. They have also taken responsibility, in many cases, for planning whole careers. The role of the line manager has all too often been largely confined to conducting the annual appraisal and agreeing a 'wish list' of training courses.

Coaching and mentoring sessions on a monthly basis, discussing a personal development agenda determined by the learner, will represent a major change of behaviour for a large number of managers. In our experience only about 30 per cent of any management population will, in the short term, be open to being persuaded to try to implement this kind of change in their routines. Even then it will take three to four months before the benefits become apparent; but benefits there certainly will be and patient, persistent trust in the process will be rewarded.

One of the benefits most likely to be noticed first is the real cost-effectiveness of coaching and mentoring compared to the results of sending people on courses away from the workplace. An hour of on-the-job learning and development conversation that can be immediately related to current applications saves a great deal of time and money. Persistently reminding people that 'it's all about learning' and simply pointing out the real-life benefits help to make coaching and mentoring become the habitual 'way we do things round here'.

Simplicity Tip 8

Expect to gain yourself

Benefits from coaching and mentoring are not a one-way flow in the direction of the learner, the employing organization or the wider community. Coach-mentors almost always benefit too by learning new techniques for getting results from the people they work with. There are also the less tangible benefits of the feedback from more highly motivated and appreciative colleagues or from those who have made real breakthroughs in managing their previously difficult life situations.

Coach-mentors should not be embarrassed to acknowledge the 'self-interest' expectation. Indeed, we would positively encourage them to adopt this win–win attitude. Equally, it is worth emphasizing that our definition of the overall purpose of coaching and mentoring includes 'helping people to become the person they want to be'. This opens the possibilities of rewards from outside the immediate environment of the organizational setting.

Simplicity Tip 9

Be aware of the boundaries

Even in the community context where extreme patience is required, it is still important to keep a sense of proportion about the time spent in a programme of coaching and mentoring dealing with stressful and difficult issues. These sessions may be therapeutic but they should not become therapy.

The workplace is a robust environment and is possibly becoming even more demanding and unforgiving. We accept that counselling and therapy have an important role to play here but we believe they are jobs for specialists. Recognizing the boundaries of 'normal' stress and anxiety from those behaviours that border on clinical dysfunction is an important skill for the non-professional to develop. Making people aware of these boundaries

should be an essential element in any coach-mentor development pro-gramme. While always being prepared to listen, attempting to help beyond the boundaries of your competence can be really dangerous.

Simplicity Tip 10

Don't try too hard

Inexperienced coach-mentors who have an idealistic and enthusiastic desire to help people learn and change often make the mistake of expecting immediate results and become disappointed and disheartened with their own lack of competence or insufficient tools and techniques.

It is important to recognize that the coach-mentor is joining the learner on a journey that has often been in progress for many years already. While most people have the potential to change attitudes or behaviours, it usually takes time to achieve. Coach-mentors are basically providing the time and space for that to happen. They need to trust in the process and be content to simply be there for their learners, bringing their own personality, values and confidence in themselves to the situation. It is not necessary to try too hard because it really is as simple as that.

Simplicity tips – summary

1 Success comes most surely from doing simple things consistently.

2 First agree what you are going to talk about.

3 Make sure you meet.

4 Keep it brief.

5 Stick to the basic process.

6 Develop the 'ask, not tell' habit.

7 Remember it's all about learning.

8 Expect to gain yourself.

9 Be aware of the boundaries.

10 Don't try too hard.

But please remember that simple is not easy! To remind you again of the aphorism often attributed to da Vinci, 'Simplicity is the ultimate sophistication'.

Endnotes

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