

May 2004



A C A D E M Y

The Chair Academy

# Leadership Tips and Tools

## Leadership Tips and Tools

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Our days are filled with opportunities to help others be successful. We work to transform our colleges, departments, classrooms, teams, and ourselves! We work to facilitate the personal and professional growth of colleagues, staff, and students. Along the way an occasional tip or tool offers a little help in the form of insight, practice, and inspiration. The Chair Academy's *Leadership Tips and Tools* newsletter is practical and useful information for leaders. Our goal is to offer ideas for you to use! This issue is devoted to Tips and Tools for Coaching Success.

## Tips for Coaching Success

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The following ten tips for coaching success will help us to be mindful of key issues related to helping, managing, and leading others through a coaching relationship.

**Tip #1: Work toward a collaborating coaching style.** "Because I say so" will not be a productive coaching strategy. Coaching can not tolerate a dominating style of leadership. On the other hand, persons who need help and coaching lose respect for leaders who constantly exhibit an accommodating or avoiding style. Remember that coaching requires our transformational leadership skills. Strive to be assertive and cooperative. Leadership is a relationship. Coaching is a relationship. Keep a collaborating style.

**Tip #2: Move away from a mode of advocacy toward a spirit of inquiry.** Defending a position or behavior locks us into advocacy. Communicating in a mode of advocacy gives us little chance for forward movement. Produce positive coaching outcomes in a context of reflective thinking and in the spirit of

inquiry. Use the coaching conversation to help the other person feel heard. Then move them away from a mode of advocacy toward a spirit of inquiry. As a coach, we need to decrease the amount of time and energy devoted to the past and increase the amount of time and energy focusing on the future. These two efforts will help to reduce dysfunctional advocacy and increase a spirit of inquiry. Move from advocacy to inquiry.

**Tip #3: Avoid extreme consciousness-raising and excessive self-disclosure during coaching.** Burnout, dysfunctional interpersonal behaviors, and manipulation can be the results of extreme consciousness-raising and excessive self-disclosure during coaching. Avoid them. Excessive self-disclosure can derail coaching success by placing emphasis on overly personal behaviors and interactions. Sharing past experiences may appear to be a form of personal identification; however, such sharing can turn manipulative. Coaching parties usually cannot sustain the consciousness

## Tips for Coaching Success, cont'd

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or self-disclosure as the coaching sessions continue. Stick to behaviors. Focus on the current situation. Move forward.

**Tip #4: Assess individual risk-taking ability.** Provide support for behavioral change and interpersonal risk-taking. Plan your coaching strategy by focusing on achievable steps forward. Be aware of the other person's ability to manage change. Coaches need to be especially sensitive to the needs of the other person and their personal risk-taking behavior. Continually assess time, energy, and style as you ask others to change their behaviors. Take cautious steps forward if you are coaching a person who tends to resist change and fears the unknown. Provide consistent and observable support for new behaviors and attitudes.

**Tip #5: Signpost ideas.** Coaching requires great clarity. Be explicit about goals and progress toward them. Signpost ideas. Some issues or behaviors are non-negotiable. Clearly identify issues or behaviors that are non-negotiable. Get the non-negotiable issues on the table at the beginning of the coaching discussion. Identify and assess the non-negotiable issues during coaching sessions. Signpost these issues and behaviors explicitly throughout the coaching experience. Monitor movement, recognize and celebrate positive progress. Be clear.

**Tip #6: Build individual pride on task-related (work) behavior.** Encourage identity built on task-related (work) behavior. As long as identity is built on task and work skills, individuals can see themselves as contributing to the common good of the team, class, department, or college. Build a common identity as the foundation for managing coaching success. Encourage the person with whom you are working to take pride in work behavior regardless of whether the task-related behavior is in the department, class, or college.

**Tip #7: Work against premature closure.** Significant change does not happen quickly. Coaching requires great patience and persistence. A "quick fix" may not be the most productive coaching strategy. This is especially true when dealing with complex

issues or problems. Provide clear direction toward the coaching goal. If the goal is complex, take it apart and work on small incremental steps of the process leading to the final goal. Spend time to build rapport, listen, facilitate decision making, monitor success, and celebrate movement toward a significant coaching goal. Avoid a "quick fix."

**Tip #8: Engage in face-saving behavior.** Develop and use communication strategies that transfer ownership of ideas from individuals to solution-centered management. Coaches help others seek more positive interactions and behaviors. Good coaches work for positive results regardless of the coaching situation, the other person, or the behaviors to be coached. Produce lasting behavioral change by allowing others to "save-face" when struggling with new behaviors. Celebrate and encourage ownership of positive interactions to produce lasting results. Nobody likes to appear foolish. Remember to leave the other person with their dignity intact. Save face!

**Tip #9: Recognize and encourage incremental success.** Pay attention to the smallest movement toward the coaching goal. Recognize it. Reward it. Lasting change usually happens in small incremental steps. One of the best communication strategies we can use as a coach is to recognize and encourage movement toward the goal. Supporting incremental movement provides motivation for achievement of the coaching goal. Recognize the "little things." They provide the foundation and motivation for achieving the goal.

**Tip #10: Engage in identity affirmation and renewal.** Coaching extracts a toll on the parties involved—AND it is worth it! As a coach, make an effort to reaffirm and renew the self-esteem of the person you are coaching. Issues and behaviors may be entrenched in old ways of thinking. They may be anchored in years of practice and behavior. Recognize that change may be difficult. Support the other person through the relearning and renewal process toward new and successful behavior. Coaching takes energy, time, and emotional resources. Remember to engage in self-affirmation! Be reflective. Take time to focus on your own learning and leadership.

# Tools for Leadership

Use the following three leadership tools when coaching faculty, staff, and students.

## **Tool #1: Ask!**

**ASK don't TELL! Effective coaching requires us to be other-centered.** Covey reminds us to "Seek first to understand and then be understood." This principle of leadership is the foundation of good coaching. Our job as a coach is to elicit ownership of issues and solutions. Use the "ask mode" to engage the other person in reflective thinking and communication. ASK don't TELL! "To understand someone from the inside out, you have to ask questions."

## **Tool #2: Listen!**

**Effective coaches know that they don't just listen to words, but the heart and soul beneath the words. Pay attention to others by listening. Make them feel heard!** The greater the perceived level of listening, the more likely the other person will be to accept comments and contributions from you.

- Set the tone for effective coaching by using nonverbal behaviors that establish rapport
- Use your people reading skills to identify behaviors that demonstrate defensiveness or a need for reassurance
- Use brief expressions that acknowledge and confirm the other person. These phrases communicate support, reassurance, understanding, acceptance, and empathy.
- Invite communication by showing interest and involvement. Use opening words like: "Can," "Do," "Did," and "Is." Avoid: "What," "Why," "When," and "Where."
- Put the factual portion of the message you are hearing into your own words to check your perceptions and accuracy in understanding as you communicate with another
- Reflect the feeling you hear from the other in your tone and responses. Watch and listen!
- Use listening skills to help the listener understand both the thoughts and feelings of his/her own communication
- Listen! Really Listen!! Seek to understand! Help the other person feel heard!

## **Tool #3: AID! Actions. Impact. Desired outcome.**

Use the following three-step process in coaching conversations. Use the ASK MODE and LISTEN while providing A.I.D.

- Ask the other person to identify their **ACTIONS**. Do not allow the other to use this step to advocate for their behaviors. This is a time to identify the behaviors taken. Encourage reflective thinking and careful behavioral descriptions. Listen totally.
- Ask the other person to identify the **IMPACT** of their behaviors. Again, work for a spirit of inquiry, not advocacy. Reflective thinking and behavioral descriptions of the **IMPACT** of the behavior will help the other person own his or her behavior.
- Ask the other person to identify whether or not the **ACTION** and **IMPACT** achieved their **DESIRED OUTCOME**. If they did not, you now have an opportunity to coach new and more successful behaviors.

Continue cycling through A.I.D. as you continue to coach. Ask the other person to identify an **ACTION** that might achieve the **IMPACT** they desire, leading to their **DESIRED OUTCOME**.

*Example:*

1. Ask the other person to identify the **Actions** that they took. "Can you walk back through the steps you took?"
2. Ask the other person to highlight the **Impact** and/or implications of their Actions. "Can you identify the effect that your actions had on...?"
3. Ask the other person if the Action and Impact resulted in their **Desired Outcome**. "Did you get the result that you wanted? Is the result of your action the desired outcome for the class, department, or college?"

Recycle through the A.I.D. process for forward movement in coaching:

- "Can you identify some options (for your Actions) for the future?"
- "Do you think you will have a different effect (Impact)?"
- "Will the new action and effect meet your Desired Outcome?"

When delivering positive feedback and praise use the first two steps of A.I.D. By specifically highlighting the Action and the Impact, the other person can more fully understand why he or she has "done a good job" and integrate the behavior into daily practice.