

Whilst becoming a great coach can take years, this is not because the principles of coaching are complicated.

Imagine setting up a business, selling a simple product in a stable, uncomplicated market where you could predict consumer needs - relatively straightforward. Now consider this quote from three Michelin star restaurant owner, Daniel Meyer:

“Business, like life, is all about how you make people feel. It’s that simple and it’s that hard.”

It is simple to explain what makes coaching effective and why scientific research shows leaders learning how to coach will deliver business benefits. However, using those coaching principles in a busy daily life with real people, all of whom are complex and different with both positive and unhelpful habits and in a fast-paced changing world, is quite another matter!

This is not least because on top of everything going on in the heads of other people, applying coaching at work means as leaders we often need to re-wire habits and learn to pause from instinctive responses that may have contributed to our success so far.

Learning to coach is worth the effort! Growing self-awareness, self-management, empathy and relationship skills such as active listening and asking open questions with genuine curiosity are at the heart of any coach training programme. These are also the core skills of emotional intelligence or EQ. The World Economic Forum found people with average IQs outperform those with the highest IQs 70% of the time. 90% of top performers at work are also high in EQ. Just 20% of bottom performers are high in EQ. This means you can get great results at work with a technically competent and intelligence team who lack empathy, self-awareness and self-management – but your chances are not high!

We are often asked to define coaching. We prefer to describe what happens. Coaches learn how to build trust and empathy quickly and use the resulting safe space to pose challenging questions. They then hold that space to give clients time to think and a judgement-free space to tell themselves the truth.

Coaching is about building trust and being challenging at the same time. It sounds simple and makes sense, so but don’t be disheartened if it is difficult to do both at the same time in real-life to begin with. It’s not your imagination – it is hard! We will share some science about why it being difficult makes physiological sense on the programme – it will help you feel better and to push through so that you become better at having conversations that may well feel uncomfortable but will absolutely add value to you, the other person and the business.

Some people shy away from using the word ‘coaching’ or see coaching as separate to leadership. We see more similarities than differences between effective coaching conversations and powerful leadership conversations, so we call them the same thing – ‘Top Right Conversations’.

Our Top Right Conversations model is based on theories developed at Harvard and Stamford where Deborah Gruenfeld (Stamford) and Amy Cuddy (Harvard) illustrated their findings with similar 2x2 grids. Kim Scott (former Apple and Google Executive) describes a similar combination of Care Personally and Challenge Directly in her Top Right box as ‘Radical Candour’.

It’s our belief that ‘Top Right’ is where coaches and leaders benefit from spending as much time as possible – to grow their people and their businesses.

[Click here to watch Kim Scott explaining ‘Radical Candor’](#)



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