



# Streamlined Coaching for Individuals and Their Team

*WHEN HELPING ONE TEAM MEMBER  
HELPS EVERYONE*

By Marilyn McLeod

## About the Author:

Marilyn McLeod is the author of *7 Steps to Success in Business & in Life: During Recession or Recovery*, and several articles for Leadership Excellence and other publications. Her clients include Marshall Goldsmith, Gary Ranker, Chris Coffey, and Cathy Greenberg.

Coaching as an industry has grown tremendously over the past decade, both in the number of companies hiring coaches for their senior management, and also in the range of coaching specialties offered by the growing number of coaches available for hire.

The coaching investment isn't just about a line item in your budget with funds for a coach. A coaching engagement takes more than money. It takes time. It takes an agreement with your coach about how you will work with each other. It takes a goal. It takes consistency. It takes trying new behaviors.

## When Is Coaching Worth the Investment?

When every dollar in your organization's overall budget counts, each line item must contribute to the bottom line. Leadership coaching, which focuses on how human beings think and behave, cannot be measured on a financial balance sheet with any logical certainty. How do you know that the money you're spending on leadership coaching is worth your investment? In addition to the financial cost, your time and attention are extremely valuable. How can you get the most return on your investment?

*When you create a role for yourself that you will be living with for the long term, it's highly valuable to create something you will enjoy doing day in and day out for years.*

If the change in behavior makes an important positive contribution to the organization, and if the leader sustains the change long after the coach has moved on, then the coaching was worth the investment.

## What Is the Method?

Marshall Goldsmith, Chris Coffey and Frank Wagner have distilled Marshall's highly successful behavioral coaching methods into an eight-process that can be taught to others:



1. Ask
2. Listen
3. Thank
4. Think
5. Respond
6. Involve
7. Change
8. Follow-Up

### **Feedback**

Most of us don't relish the idea of 'feedback'. We have had too much experience with what sounded like criticism, judgment and analysis. We've responded with longwinded explanations which not only went unappreciated, but seemed to actually fuel distance between us and our intended message, and our desired connection and rapport with the other person.

### **FeedForward**

Marshall created a *FeedForward* exercise which involves asking key stakeholders to provide suggestions for the future that might help the client achieve a positive change in their selected behavior. No discussion of the past is allowed, and no attempt to defend or explain past perceptions is permitted. The client simply takes verbatim notes documenting the stakeholder's suggestions for the future, and the only acceptable response to these suggestions is "Thank you!"

The end result is the client gains a list rich with valuable suggestions, and the stakeholders feel heard. While no expectation is offered that any of the stakeholders' ideas will be implemented, the client now has a very clear description of how their stakeholders define success.

#### **Giving *FeedForward*:**

- Be honest and fair
- Be a positive, supportive coach
- Offer ideas for the future

#### **Receiving *FeedForward*:**

- Take careful notes of ideas
- Suspend judgment and any need to defend or explain
- Just say thank you!

In Marshall Goldsmith's *FeedForward* coaching method, each person being coached agrees to involve key stakeholders in their coaching process. The stakeholders are chosen by the person being coached (the client) with approval by their manager. The



coach interviews each stakeholder, asking what the client is doing well, and what could be improved. The coach creates an anonymous list of comments received, presents this to the client, and helps the client choose one behavior to focus on for the year-long coaching engagement.

This means the client chooses their own behavioral goal and their key stakeholders. The coach screens stakeholders initially to assure they are willing to let go of the past and become a positive coach for future improvement in addition to client and coach conversations as needed.

The coach then helps the stakeholders become effective coaches to the client, and helps the client follow up on a regular basis and apply ideas generated through the process. This is accomplished through monthly 5-minute conversations between the client and stakeholders using *FeedForward*.

The result is that an entire team enjoys the benefits of coaching. Stakeholders may choose a behavior to improve as well, so the 5-minute session may become a two-way *FeedForward* session.

A unique component of Marshall Goldsmith's coaching is a pay-for-results model. Periodic mini-surveys are sent to stakeholders to monitor progress toward the goal. The coach receives payment only when stakeholders determine the client has achieved measurable improvement in the target behavior.

## **Learning From Mentors**

"When the student is ready, the teacher appears."

One of the secrets to my success is that I have always had wonderful teachers. What influenced my ability to learn from them? Coachability.

## **Coachability**

Can you identify a behavior or habit of yours that limits you, where a positive change would improve your life? Do you care enough to make an effort to change?

This is the foundation of being coachable. If you are not interested in changing, this is not the process for you. If you are, a coach can make the difference between years of saying 'I should do something about this' to 'Well, that wasn't so difficult! What's next?!'

If you're the person being coached, why would you make that investment? Is it because your boss expects you to work with a



coach? Is it because you want to get better at something? Is it because you have a feeling you are about to be fired or divorced so you think you have to get better or else ...?

## How to Choose a Coach

Everyone has their area of expertise, and this includes coaches. Find a coach who specializes in what you need. If a coach tells you they can coach about anything, make sure your needs are for a generalist.

You may choose a coach you get along with, or one you know will draw performance from you even if it's uncomfortable.

One of my top priorities: Find a coach who treats me with respect and who listens in addition to offering their own ideas.

## How to Choose a Goal

Look at your values, what your boss wants, what your stakeholders want, what will help you most in your work, and how it fits at home. Choose a goal that you feel very good about, something that will motivate you over the long term, or one day when you don't feel like following up.

You might feel very motivated and ready to make a big personal improvement list. Just choose one or two things to improve. Here is what Marshall Goldsmith tells his clients to ask themselves:

"What am I willing to change now? Not in a few months. Not when I get caught up. Now. Then get started on the activity within two weeks, or take it off the list. And quit tormenting yourself!" -  
Marshall Goldsmith

## 20 Annoying Habits

In *What Got You Here Won't Get You There* (Hyperion), Marshall Goldsmith and Mark Reiter discuss 20 workplace habits successful people need to break to become even more successful:

1. Winning too much
2. Adding too much value
3. Passing judgment
4. Making destructive comments
5. Starting with "No," "But," or "However"
6. Telling the world how smart you are
7. Speaking when angry
8. Negativity or "Let me explain why that will not work"
9. Withholding information



10. Failing to give proper recognition
11. Claiming credit that we do not deserve
12. Making excuses
13. Clinging to the past
14. Playing favorites
15. Refusing to express regret
16. Not listening
17. Failing to express gratitude
18. Punishing the messenger
19. Passing the buck
20. An excessive need to be 'me'

## **Assessments**

The good news: there are many assessments available. The bad news: we can tend to label ourselves with static ideas about who we are when we see the results of assessments about us. Use any assessment results only as a tool for viewing yourself in a new way. Judgments of others or ourselves rarely help. Focus on the positive! You are an evolving human being, with a great capacity to become a better new you! What ideas do you have for yourself for your future improvement?! Your assessment of yourself is as valid as any outside view of you. One may be more accurate than another, and each has some truth and value.

## **Follow-up**

Marshall Goldsmith has found that follow-up is the most important factor in behavioral improvement. The clients who make their 5-minute monthly stakeholder check-in a priority consistently show significant improvement.

## **Coaching Etiquette**

- Be respectful of each others time
- Follow through on your promises
- Say thank you

## **Keys to Success**

- Be consistent.
- Keep the length of your behavioral improvement list to something that motivates you, and doesn't feel overwhelming.
- Remember, you don't have to do everything on your list, and you don't have to do it perfectly.
- If you find yourself falling short of the same goal consistently,



don't assume you're doing something wrong. Take a moment to ask yourself how important this task really is to you. Is it the right goal? The right time? Removing the item or adjusting it may make it a more effective goal for you.

## Next Steps

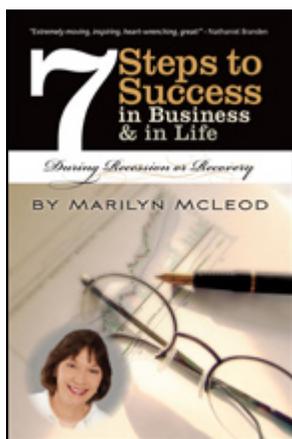
Decide what you need next:

- Coaching strategy
  - Coach
  - Goal
- 2) Create time in your schedule to follow through with your intention.
  - 3) Is there anything in the way of you following through? If so, address this as best you can to support the improvement you want.

## Useful Resources

This paper provides a brief overview. If you would like someone to help you develop your coaching program, or you want support for your personal goal, we offer the following services to help you:

- **Training & Coaching:**
  - Corporate Training
  - Virtual Classes & Webinars
  - Individual & Team Coaching



- **Book:** *7 Steps to Success in Business & in Life: During Recession or Recovery*. For expanded information and stories. Marilyn McLeod, personal management coach for small business owners, takes the reader through seven important steps to increase success in business, projects, and life. Idea-generator, reference, and comfort food for the soul, the book has a friendly tone and includes candid stories of real people and key principles by today's greatest thinkers. Easy to read with chapter summaries and exercises, *7 Steps to Success in Business & in Life: During Recession or Recovery* is a powerful tool for people in any capacity who choose to take an active role in creating a better life for themselves and those around them.
- **Blog:** [www.CoachMarilyn.com/blog/](http://www.CoachMarilyn.com/blog/)



## How to Reach Us:

Find more information and resources available from Marilyn McLeod, Chris Coffey and Frank Wagner at [www.CoachMarilyn.com](http://www.CoachMarilyn.com) or call Marilyn at 760-644-2284.

## The Last Word

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