Christian Coaching

Title: ***Christian Coaching: Helping Others Turn Potential Into Reality***

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Book Description:

Coaching has expanded beyond athletics to almost every aspect of life that requires accountability, encouragement, and a commitment to growth.

Dr. Gary R. Collins takes the successful principles of coaching and gives them a God-centered application. Broader in scope than either mentoring or discipling, Christian Coaching helps people find God's vision for their lives and learn to live accordingly through stories, insights, and interviews.

Book Quotes:

Stated concisely, coaching is the art and practice of enabling individuals and groups to move from where they are to where they want to be. Coaching helps people expand their vision, build their confidence, unlock their potential, increase their skills, and take practical steps toward their goals. (14) Coaching is not for those who need therapy to overcome disruptive painful influences from the past; it is for relatively well-adjusted people to build vision and move forward toward the future. Coaching is not reactive looking back; it is proactive looking ahead. It is not about healing; it is about growing. It focuses less on overcoming weaknesses and more on building skills and strengths. (14)

Coaching does not involve making a diagnosis or giving advice. A coach does not need to be an expert in the areas that concern those being coached. Instead, the coach needs an ability to listen, understand, ask insightful questions, summarize what is being said, and guide as nondirectively as possible while a person looks at his or her own situation, reaches conclusions about what to do, and then takes action. In the process, the coach is an encourager, cheerleader, challenger, and accountability partner, but the coach is not there to give expert advice or direction. (18)

Counseling or therapy deals mostly with a person's past and trauma and seeks healing.

Consulting deals mostly with problems and seeks to provide information, expertise, advice, strategies, and methodologies to solve them.

Mentoring deals mostly with succession training and seeks to help someone do what the mentor does.

Coaching deals mostly with a person's present and seeks to guide him or her into a more desirable

future. (from Patrick Williams and Diane S. Menendez, Institute for Life Coaching) (20)

What we believe influences who we are and, in turn, impacts everything we do. (24)

It's a cardinal principle of good leadership that people will not follow you unless you have their trust. This also is true of good coaching. Trust can never be demanded; it must be earned, and that takes time. (35)

Good coaches don't try to coach everybody; they find a niche and work within their area of specialty and conviction. (38)

As a coach, think of yourself as a change assistant and a change initiator. You assist people to accept change, but you also gently encourage them to make changes, even when changing is uncomfortable. (52)

What is most effective in bringing change? Deutschman calls these the three Rs: relate, repeat, reframe. First, good coaches need to *relate* to their clients in ways that build emotional relationships, sustain hope, and inspire.

Second, for change to occur and stick, there must be something more than words from a teacher or coach. There must be *repetition*.

The third key to change is *reframe*. Most counselors are familiar with this concept. If you take a photograph and put it in a different frame, everything can look different. In coaching people to change, they need to see their current situations in a fresh way. (57)

By studying people who sought to free their lives from harmful habits, the research team identified six distinct phases that most people go through as a part of the change process.

1. Precontemplation
2. Contemplation
3. Preparation
4. Action
5. Maintenance
6. Termination

(59-62)

Then one day I saw these words flashing on the sign in front of a hotel: *Leadership is action, not position*. Had others been with me, they would have seen that I was visibly shaken. I can't describe the impact, but I felt jolted by a charge of hope. It was true: I could still be a leader even apart from the organization I had left. I could be a leader apart from any organization. What now seems so obvious was at that time a powerful insight. It is possible to be a leader even without an office, an assistant, a public platform, a leadership job, or a title. For the first time, I realized that I could lead through writing, speaking, teaching, parenting or one-on-one mentoring. We can lead through the way we live, and certainly we lead through coaching. More than that, if you are a coach, you already are a leader. The two go together. (70)

Good leaders are people who have learned how to think, see situations clearly, and be creative even as they are flexible. And their ultimate success as leaders is marked by both their ability to produce new leaders and the effective performance of these leaders when they are on their own. (72)

As coaching grows in influence and as more people understand what coaching involves, how will we see

coaching and leadership tie together more closely? The following are a few observations.

1. **Coaching and leadership are about experience.** In teaching others to coach and to lead, I have learned one core principle: Coaching and leading are skills that are learned through experience and practice.
2. **Coaching and leadership are about relationships.** Coaching is a special kind of relationship. It is a partnership with a purpose–a partnership marked by honesty, respect, trust, and movement toward mutually accepted goals.
3. **Coaching and leadership are about character and competence.**
4. **Leadership and coaching are about community.** (76-78)

First, the coach must take the lead in building a partnership that will persist and keep the client engaged over time. Second, you need to be clear about the assumptions that you and your client bring to the relationship. This includes clarifying what coaching is and what it is not. Coaching is guaranteed to stall if you try to move forward with unclear or different assumptions. Third, near the beginning it can be helpful to explore the issues that the client wants to discuss. All of this will enable you to evaluate the client, including the pros and cons of working together. Finally, at some time you will need to have an agreement about how the coaching will take place. Together these five issues become the core of the coaching relationship. (83-84)

Coaching is an alliance between two equals that exists for the purpose of meeting the client's needs and goals. (84)

This coequal, coactive focus is what sets coaching apart from counseling, mentoring, consulting, and other more top-down relationships. Coaching begins with the development of a trusting relationship characterized by mutual respect and commitment. (84)

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT COACHING:

Coaching…

- Is collaborative partnership between the coach and person being coached
- Involves dialogue rather than advice giving, discipling, or therapy
- Is built on trust, integrity, self-discipline and accountability
- Is results-oriented, focused on reaching goals
- Discusses weaknesses and obstacles but emphasizes strengths and positive change
- Assumes that people are resourceful and able to set goals and reach them
- Lets clients define and move toward their goals with God's help and coach's assistance
- Helps people reach their peak performance
- Assumes that life is integrated – we cannot assume that one's work, family life, personal history, spirituality, or lifestyle can be put into neat compartments
- Embraces change as something that is always occurring, sometimes confusing, often positive, and usually growth producing (88-90)

It's a core assumption of coaching that the client sets the agenda and that the coach is nonjudgmental and as nondirective as possible. (91)

Coaches use at least three kinds of listening skills: informal listening, active listening, and intuitive listening.

- **Informal listening.** This is most common. It's the way we listen in our everyday conversations. Often it involves listening for facts or information.
- **Active listening.** Active listening is different because the listener concentrates on what is being said, pays close attention, shows awareness of the speaker, and sometimes makes brief comments or asks clarifying questions.
- **Intuitive listening.** This entails a high level of concentration and awareness. The coach listens for inconsistencies that the client may not notice in the conversation, attitudes and emotions that come out with the words, topics that resurface at different times, values and beliefs that can be discerned from what is being expressed, dreams for the future, frustrations, and self-sabotaging behavior that prevents progress. (101-103)

You will notice that none of the questions in the above list starts with the word *Why* (like "*Why* do you want coaching?") This is because *Why* questions tend to encourage analytical thinking, excuses, defensiveness, or trips to the past. It is better to ask questions that start with *What, When, How, Who, or Where.* (106)

Coaching is not about giving advice or telling people what to do. Coaching is about asking powerful, thought-provoking questions that stimulate fresh thinking, lead to new insights, clarify issues, and challenge clients to explore innovative possibilities. (107)

Good questions pick up on the language, terminology, and metaphors the client uses; poorer questions often miss what the client has said. (108)

In the 1980s, de Shazer suggested a simple but provocative question that has been used by coaches and many therapists ever since. Here is what now is known as the miracle question: *Assume tonight you went to bed, and before morning a miracle occurred so that when you woke up, your problem was solved and everything you wished for had taken place. How would things be different?* This powerful question lets the client imagine and visualize how things could be different. It clarifies possibilities and can become the basis for creating specific goals toward which the client can work. The miracle question loses its power if it is asked too often. But it is a question that can jolt people out of their feelings being stuck and can stimulate creativity, hope, and possibilities for action. (109)

Coaching Process:

1. AWARENESS: Where are we now?
2. VISION: Where do we want to go?
3. STRATEGY AND ACTION: How do we get there?
4. OBSTACLES: What gets in the way? (120-123)

One of your greatest tasks as a coach is to help others uncover, face, and get past the self-defeating behaviors and mental self-talk that hinders progress. (124)

Every coach and everyone who comes for coaching has a mind-set. Some call this a life perspective, a mental model, or a worldview. This is an inner set of beliefs and assumptions about how the world works. (139)

Values are difficult to define and hard to identify. They are the foundational beliefs that anchor our lives, the things that matter to us, the non-negotiable characteristics that most clearly define our identities. (140)

The same is true for effective coaches. You will never reach your maximum effectiveness as a coach until you are aware of your values. People being coached will never move forward until they deal with the issue of values. (142)

A clear awareness of values can help in determining one's vision for future and can guide the process for achieving goals. (144)

Most coaching is not about changing values; it is more about clarifying values and helping people recognize values, live with them, and then build on their values as they move toward their goals. (148)

As a personal inner force, passion *drives* us forward. But most people also need a mental picture of where they are going. They need a vision of what can be possible. Vision *pulls* us forward. Once that vision clearly is in mind, we can deal with the practical strategy steps of getting where we want to go. (171)

Even so, there are general characteristics that coaches are likely to discover in their cross-cultural coaching with next-generation, postmodern leaders:

- Values and experiences are more important than vision casting and reaching goals.
- Images and stories are more valued than words and facts.
- Building community may be more important than building individual success.
- Active participation and ownership are preferred over passive submission to authority and professional expertise.
- Spirituality is valued, religion is not. (323-324)