Coaching for Performance

If you have only a distant acquaintance with the world of professional coaching, you have been introduced to the perhaps its key forerunner and thought-leader John Whitmore. In the sixth edition of *Coaching for Performance*, Whitmore, along with co-author Tiffany Gaskell, bring fresh updates and insights to this foundational textbook on all things coaching.

As a leader, you wear your coaching hat all the time; sometimes in a formal setting, but more often than not, in countless daily interactions. Take a look at these **Book Notes** to gain an understanding of a helpful framework to maximize any coaching encounter.

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Founder | Lead With Your Life

Title: *Coaching for Performance*

Author: John Whitmore and Tiffany Gaskell

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Book Description:
Coaching for Performance provides a foundation for those who want to understand the potential and power of coaching. The Sixth Edition is a must-read and a want-to-read; with updates, powerful case studies, and empirical evidence of coaching making a difference, having lasting impacts, and transforming societies.

An international bestseller, featuring the influential GROW model, this book is the founding text of the coaching profession. It explains why enabling people to bring the best out of themselves is the key to driving productivity, growth, and engagement. A meaningful coaching culture has the potential to transform the relationship between organizations and employees and to put both on the path to long-term success.

Book Quotes:

When we reflect on what a company is, we tend to focus on strategy, market leadership, financial performance, and shareholder value. Frankly, while this is realistic and essential, it's all a bit technical and sterile. When I was faced with the enormous complexity and uncertainty of steering a path to long-term success, I discovered that a company is more than a business: it is an ecosystem with an enormous impact on individuals, businesses, government, and society as a whole. LOCATION: 45

Simply put, coaching empowers. Being a coach empowers; being coached empowers. Applying learning and insights from coaching empowers. LOCATION: 113

Coaching focuses on future possibilities, not past mistakes. LOCATION: 289

Coaching is all about a journey and nothing about instruction or teaching. It is as much if not more about the way things are done as about what is done. Coaching delivers results in large measure because of the

powerful working relationship created, and the means and style of communication used. LOCATION: 293

Coaching is unlocking people's potential to maximize their own performance. LOCATION: 318

Instead, coaching requires expertise in coaching, not in the subject at hand. LOCATION: 346

Leaders need to clearly articulate the emotional reasons the business exists. Every business is clear on the logical rational business reasons, articulated in their Strategy. This speaks to the head or rational mind and gives people reassurance about the business's future. Few businesses have articulated the emotional reasons they exist. This speaks to the heart and gives people a reason to commit themselves to the business. LOCATION: 552

People no longer want to work every day just to meet their foundational needs. They want to be part of something bigger that excites them, a community that is enjoyable and a place where they learn and grow. LOCATION: 558

Emotional intelligence (EQ) is twice as important as cognitive ability (IQ) in predicting outstanding performance. LOCATION: 911

Transformational coaching is the practice of emotional intelligence. LOCATION: 917

Emotional intelligence can be described as interpersonal intelligence or, even more simply, as personal and social skills. Goleman and others have defined many competencies, including self-confidence, empathy, adaptability, and being a change catalyst, which can be grouped neatly into four domains: self-awareness, self-management, social awareness, and relationship management. LOCATION: 946

Successful leaders of the future will lead in a coaching style rather than command and control. LOCATION: 1010

There is a paradox in coaching leadership, because the leader traditionally holds the pay check, the key to promotion, and also the axe. This is fine so long as you believe that the only way to motivate is through the judicious application of the carrot and the stick. However, for coaching to work at its best, the relationship between the coach and the coachee must be one of partnership in the endeavor, of trust, of safety, and of minimal pressure. The check, the key, and the axe have no place here, as they can serve only to inhibit such a relationship. LOCATION: 1028

To coach successfully you have to adopt a far more optimistic view than usual of the dormant capability of all people. LOCATION: 1258

The antidote to criticism is curiosity. By getting curious rather than getting critical, you will ensure that partnership and collaboration are not derailed when things get tough. LOCATION: 1353

A coach is not a problem solver, a counselor, a teacher, an adviser, an instructor, or even an expert; a coach is a sounding board, a facilitator, an awareness raiser, a supporter. These words should at least help you to understand what the role implies. LOCATION: 1388

Telling or asking closed questions saves people from having to think. Asking open questions causes them to think for themselves. LOCATION: 1564

To summarize, powerful questions:
- Create awareness and responsibility
- Follow the interest of the coachee

- Inspire creativity and resourcefulness
- Increase possibilities/vision
- Are goal oriented and solution focused
- Are non-judgmental
- Compel attention, thought, and observation
- Demand a higher degree of focus, detail, and precision
- Demand answers that show quality of thought, performance, and learning
- Are supportive and challenging/motivating
- Create a feedback loop LOCATION: 1676

A coaching approach means being fully attentive to the coachee's answers to questions – what is said and the feelings conveyed. Trust will be lost if this doesn't happen, and the coach will not know the best question to ask next. LOCATION: 1692

Whether in a formal coaching session or when having an informal coaching conversation, the sequence of questions we suggest follows four distinct stages:
- Goal setting for the session as well as the short and long term.
- Reality checking to explore the current situation.
- Options and alternative strategies or courses of action.
- What is to be done, When, by Whom, and the Will to do it. LOCATION: 1789

The sequence conveniently forms the mnemonic GROW, to which we will refer frequently. And since choice and self-motivation are critical to success, we like to emphasize the Will element in the final stage because it is here that intention turns into action and it is for this reason that we call it transformational: Goal, Reality, Options, and Will. LOCATION: 1794

STEP 1: WHAT ARE YOUR GOALS?
- Identifies and clarifies the type of goal through an understanding of ultimate goals, performance goals, and progress goals along the way.
- Provides understanding of principal aims and aspirations. LOCATION: 1860

STEP 2: WHAT IS THE REALITY?
- Assesses the current situation in terms of the action taken so far.
- Clarifies the results and effects of previously taken actions.
- Provides understanding of internal obstacles and blocks currently preventing or limiting progression.

LOCATION: 1864

STEP 3: WHAT ARE YOUR OPTIONS?
- Identifies the possibilities and alternatives.
- Outlines and questions a variety of strategies for progression. LOCATION: 1867

STEP 4: WHAT WILL YOU DO?
- Provides understanding of what has been learned and what can be changed to achieve the initial goals.
- Creates a summary and plan of action for implementation of the identified steps.
- Outlines possible future obstacles.
- Considers the continued achievement of the goals, and the support and development that may be required.
- Estimates the certainty of commitment to the agreed actions.
- Highlights how accountability and achievement of the goals will be ensured. LOCATION: 1869

Now you come to the goal or goals related to the issue at hand, and here you need to be able to distinguish end goals from performance goals:

-End goal: The final objective – to become the market leader, to be appointed sales director, to land a certain key account, to win the gold medal – is seldom absolutely within your own control. You cannot know or control what your competitors will do.
-Performance goal: Identify the performance level that you believe will provide you with a very good chance of achieving the end goal. It is largely within your control and it generally provides a means of measuring progress. LOCATION: 1898

One reality question that seldom fails to contribute value is “What action have you taken on this so far?” followed by “What were the effects of that action?” This serves to emphasize the value of action, and the difference between action and thinking about problems. LOCATION: 2289

The purpose of the options stage in GROW is not to find the “right” answer, but to create and list as many alternative courses of action as possible. The quantity of options is more important at this stage than the quality and feasibility of each one. The brain-stimulating process of gathering all the options is as valuable as the option list itself, because it gets the creative juices flowing. LOCATION: 2446

The purpose of this final phase of the coaching sequence is to convert a discussion into a decision. LOCATION: 2611

The “W” in GROW stands for the will in “What will you do?” LOCATION: 2613

Arguably, the most important role of a coach is to hold accountability, which is different from responsibility. Holding accountability means asking coachees to define specifically what they will do and when they will do it, and then trusting them to do just that. The reason accountability is so important is because it has the power to translate a coaching conversation into action. We are individually responsible for our own development. LOCATION: 2632

How will this action serve your goal? Now that you have an action and a timeframe, it is important before you proceed any further to check that this is leading in the direction of both the goal of the session and the long-term goal. LOCATION: 2662

What obstacles might you meet along the way? It is important to prepare for and pre-empt any circumstances that could arise that would inhibit completion of the action. LOCATION: 2666

The biggest step to finding meaning and purpose is to realize that, ultimately, your current reality is your opportunity. It means stepping from being a victim of fate into being a creator of destiny. Coaching empowers the coachee to take responsibility for their current situation, choose how to relate to it, and take action to create or change things and ultimately create something more meaningful. LOCATION: 3152

Formal coaching, commonly called 1:1 coaching or executive coaching, works best if it takes place over a period of six months. By spacing the sessions out over months, the coachee benefits from plenty of practice of new habits and ways of doing things with you, their coach, as a champion and support. LOCATION: 3190

The chemistry meeting is where you meet the coachee for the first time and is usually free of charge. It is an opportunity for both you and your coachee to check that you feel you are a good match to work together. It is customary to let each other know after the chemistry meeting if, on reflection, you feel you are a good fit or not. If not, don’t worry – sometimes the chemistry is just not there. LOCATION: 3215

For the most part, the structure of the remaining coaching sessions will be something like this:
- Checking in and following up from last session.
- Setting the session goals.

- Coaching.
- Setting accountability. LOCATION: 3267

Leaders of the future should be obliged to embark on their own journey of personal development to earn the title of leader. We live in a world that seeks, even expects, instant gratification, but leadership qualities come neither quickly nor cheaply. LOCATION: 4066

Note: should you wish to find any quote in its original context, the Kindle "location" is provided after each entry.