The Coaching Habit: Say Less, Ask More & Change the Way You Lead Forever

Of the many roles of a leader, one of the most important is that of a coach—someone who invests intentionally in the development of another. A seasoned coach knows that the fast track of that development is not found in imparting information but in crafting conversations that foment self-reflection and self-discovery. To that end, enter The Coaching Habit: Say Less, Ask More & Change the Way You Lead Forever by Rhodes Scholar and coaching thought-leader Michael Bungay Stanier. Among the many takeaways from this book are the seven carefully-curated coaching questions—questions that you will feel compelled to employ in your next coaching opportunity. Guaranteed.

Take a look at these **Book Notes** to see the gems that await.

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Title: The Coaching Habit: Say Less, Ask More & Change the Way You Lead Forever

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Book Description:

In Michael Bungay Stanier's The Coaching Habit, coaching becomes a regular, informal part of your day so managers and their teams can work less hard and have more impact.

Drawing on years of experience training more than 10,000 busy managers from around the globe in practical, everyday coaching skills, Bungay Stanier reveals how to unlock your peoples' potential. He unpacks seven essential coaching questions to demonstrate how—by saying less and asking more—you can develop coaching methods that produce great results.

- Get straight to the point in any conversation with **The Kickstart Question**
- Stay on track during any interaction with **The Awe Question**
- Save hours of time for yourself with **The Lazy Question**, and hours of time for others with **The Strategic Question**
- Get to the heart of any interpersonal or external challenge with **The Focus Question** and **The Foundation Question**
- Finally ensure others find your coaching as beneficial as you do with **The Learning Question**

A fresh innovative take on the traditional how-to manual, the book combines insider information with research

based in neuroscience and behavioral economics, together with interactive training tools to turn practical advice into practiced habits. Witty and conversational, *The Coaching Habit* takes your work—and your workplace—from good to great.

Book Quotes:

At the heart of the book are seven questions that will break you out of these three vicious circles and elevate the way you work. LOCATION: 181

The Kickstart Question is the way to start any conversation in a way that's both focused and open. The AWE Question—the best coaching question in the world—works as a self-management tool for you, and as a boost for the other six questions here. The Focus Question and the Foundation Question are about getting to the heart of the challenge, so you've got your attention on what really matters. The Lazy Question will save you hours, while the Strategic Question will save hours for those you're working with. And the Learning Question, which pairs with the Kickstart Question to make the Coaching Bookends, will ensure that everyone finds their interactions with you more useful. LOCATION: 185

The change of behavior at the heart of what this book is about is this: a little more asking people questions and a little less telling people what to do. LOCATION: 199

To build an effective new habit, you need five essential components: a reason, a trigger, a micro-habit, effective practice, and a plan. LOCATION: 214

WHEN THIS HAPPENS: After I've asked a question…INSTEAD OF: Adding another question. And then maybe another question, and then another, because after all, they're all good questions and I'm really curious as to what their answers are…I WILL: Ask just one question. (And then be quiet while I wait for the answer.) LOCATION: 311

An almost fail-safe way to start a chat that quickly turns into a real conversation is the question, "What's on your mind?"…Because it's open, it invites people to get to the heart of the matter and share what's most important to them. You're not telling them or guiding them. You're showing them the trust and granting them the autonomy to make the choice for themselves. LOCATION: 347-349

Some institutions distinguish between coaching for performance and coaching for development. Coaching for performance is about addressing and fixing a specific problem or challenge. It's putting out the fire or building up the fire or banking the fire. It's everyday stuff, and it's important and necessary. Coaching for development is about turning the focus from the issue to the person dealing with the issue, the person who's managing the fire. This conversation is more rare and significantly more powerful. If I ask you to think back to a time when someone coached you in a way that stuck and made a difference, I'll bet that it was a coaching-for-development conversation. The focus was on calling you forward to learn, improve and grow, rather than on just getting something sorted out. LOCATION: 357

If you know what question to ask, get to the point and ask it. LOCATION: 438

The AWE Question: "And What Else?"…With seemingly no effort, it creates more—more wisdom, more insights, more self-awareness, more possibilities—out of thin air. LOCATION:460-462

There are three reasons it has the impact that it does: more options can lead to better decisions; you rein yourself in; and you buy yourself time. LOCATION: 463

We've all got a deeply ingrained habit of slipping into the advice-giver/expert/answer-it/solve-it/fix-it mode.

LOCATION: 483

There's a place for giving advice, of course. This book isn't suggesting that you never give anyone an answer ever again. But it's an overused and often ineffective response. LOCATION: 491

If you can feel the energy going out of the conversation, you know it's time to move on from this angle. A strong "wrap it up" variation of "And what else?" is "Is there anything else?" LOCATION: 519

"And what else?" is the quickest and easiest way to uncover and create new possibilities. LOCATION: 522

ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS IF YOU'RE GOING TO FIND THE RIGHT ANSWERS. –Vanessa Redgrave LOCATION: 563

…we're claiming that "And what else?" is the best coaching question in the world… LOCATION: 568

Stop offering up advice with a question mark attached. That doesn't count as asking a question. LOCATION: 588

Here's Your New Habit WHEN THIS HAPPENS: I've got the answer, which I want to suggest… INSTEAD OF: Asking a fake question such as "Have you thought of…?" or "What about…?" which is just advice with a question mark attached…I WILL: Ask one of the Seven Essential Questions. And if I want to present an idea, I'll offer it up as an option rather than a question. LOCATION: 592

You need a way to manage the temptation to jump into fixing that opening challenge. You need to stop yourself (and your team) from getting entangled in the first problem that's put on the table. Slow down just a little and you'll get to the heart of the issue. And here's the question that makes all the difference: The Focus Question: What's the Real Challenge Here for You? LOCATION: 633

Focus on the real problem, not the first problem. LOCATION: 646

WITHOUT A GOOD QUESTION, A GOOD ANSWER HAS NO PLACE TO GO. –Clayton Christensen LOCATION: 665

Bring the focus back to the person you're talking to. Acknowledge what's going on, and ask the Focus Question. It will sound something like this: "I think I understand some of what's going on with [insert name of the person or the situation]. What's the real challenge here for you?" LOCATION: 690

The simple act of adding "for you" to the end of as many questions as possible is an everyday technique for making conversations more development—than performance—oriented. Yes, the problems still get sorted out. But with "for you" there's often additional personal insight, and with personal insight comes increased growth and capability. LOCATION: 713

Stick to questions starting with "What" and avoid questions starting with "Why." It's no accident that six of the Seven Essential Questions are What questions. LOCATION: 778

Here's Your New Habit WHEN THIS HAPPENS: When I'm tempted to ask them why… INSTEAD OF: Beginning the question with "Why… " I WILL: Reframe the question so it starts with "What." So, as some examples, instead of "Why did you do that?" ask "What were you hoping for here?" Instead of "Why did you think this was a good idea?" ask "What made you choose this course of action?" Instead of "Why are you bothering with this?" ask "What's important for you here?" LOCATION: 779

The first three questions can combine to become a robust script for your coaching conversation. LOCATION:

794

You'll be surprised and delighted at just how often these are exactly the right questions to ask. Open with: What's on your mind? The perfect way to start; the question is open but focused. Check in: Is there anything else on your mind? Give the person an option to share additional concerns. Then begin to focus: So what's the real challenge here for you? Already the conversation will deepen. Your job now is to find what's most useful to look at. Ask: And what else (is the real challenge here for you)? Trust me, the person will have something. And there may be more. Probe again: Is there anything else? You'll have most of what matters in front of you now. So get to the heart of it and ask: So . . . what's the real challenge here for you? LOCATION: 795

The Foundation Question: "What Do You Want?" LOCATION: 820

We often don't know what we actually want. Even if there's a first, fast answer, the question "But what do you really want?" will typically stop people in their tracks. LOCATION: 825

But even if you know what you want and are courageous enough to ask for what you want, it's often hard to say it in a way that's clearly heard and understood. LOCATION: 829

The illusion that both parties to the conversation know what the other party wants is pervasive, and it sets the stage for plenty of frustrating exchanges. LOCATION: 843

The "fundamental organizing principle of the brain"—neuroscientist Evan Gordon's words—is the risk-and-reward response. Five times a second, at an unconscious level, your brain is scanning the environment around you and asking itself: Is it safe here? Or is it dangerous? LOCATION: 889

When the brain senses danger, there's a very different response. Here it moves into the familiar fight-or-flight response, what some call the "amygdala hijack." Things get black and white.

However, there's insight to be gleaned here from a school of therapy known as "solution-based" therapy. They have a go-to question called the miracle question. Several variations exist, but in essence it's this: "Suppose that tonight, while you're sleeping, a miracle happens. When you get up in the morning tomorrow, how will you know that things have suddenly got better?" LOCATION: 954

The Foundation Question—"What do you want?"—is direct, rather than indirect. But it has the same effect of pulling people to the outcome, and once you see the destination, the journey often becomes clearer. LOCATION: 960

The power of "How can I help?" is twofold. First, you're forcing your colleague to make a direct and clear request. That may be useful to him. He might not be entirely sure why he started this conversation with you. LOCATION: 1063

A way to soften this question, as with all questions, is to use the phrase "Out of curiosity." What that does is shift the question from perhaps coming across as an inquisition to being a more noble inquiry. Other phrases that can have a similar softening effect on the question being asked are "Just so I know…" or "To help me understand better…" or even "To make sure that I'm clear…" LOCATION: 1078

The Strategic Question: If You're Saying Yes to This, What Are You Saying No To? LOCATION: 1198

People don't really learn when you tell them something. They don't even really learn when they do something. They start learning, start creating new neural pathways, only when they have a chance to recall and reflect on what just happened. LOCATION: 1367

The Learning Question: “What Was Most Useful for You?” LOCATION: 1370

This is why, in a nutshell, advice is overrated. I can tell you something, and it’s got a limited chance of making its way into your brain’s hippocampus, the region that encodes memory. If I can ask you a question and you generate the answer yourself, the odds increase substantially. LOCATION: 1386

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