

THE COACHING HABIT

By Michael Bungay Stanier

Coaching is a foundational skill for every manager and leader. When people make coaching an everyday way of working, they create more focus, more courage and more resilience. They help others (and themselves) work less hard and have more impact.

“ We live in a world our questions create.”

DAVID COOPERRIDER

Everyone comes to you for advice and their appreciation for their input makes you feel in control, valuable, and needed. It's why you hold the position you do. (Or want to.)

And when they take your suggestions and it succeeds... It's empowering. See? You are the expert.

But what happens when your team relies more on you for direction and problem solving than themselves? When the "follow-ups" and the "get back to you on that's" are piling up?

You become the roadblock.

In fact, you are ultimately hurting your team and your organization's future growth.

The majority of employees have said that coaching hasn't helped them. That's pretty disheartening in a world where coaching is a buzzword.

This book is about changing that statistic.

Imagine if your team learned to solve 80% of the

everyday nagging problems you're confronted with? You'll move faster, with greater confidence, less risk and more rewards.

It's time to change your coaching style from simple advice-giving to coaching for development.

In his book, *The Coaching Habit*, Michael talks about two types of coaching:

- Coaching for Performance.
- Coaching for Development

One focuses on projects, tasks and getting things done in the moment. But when you can move into coaching for development, the magic solve happens. You're preparing for the future. And it's not as hard as you think.

It takes building a habit of asking seven questions when someone comes to you with a problem. The real challenge is taming your advice monster.

Let's begin.

1 WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND?

Advantage: The answers might surprise you and gives them the breathing room to discuss more than the original perceived problem. It can also focus them when they drift off course or ramble.

Tips: Answers are usually based around one of three tension points. Projects (the tasks), People (and it's never about the person but about their role in the relationship) and Patterns (of behaviours or ways of doing things). Identifying which pain point will help guide the conversation.

2 AND WHAT ELSE?

Advantage: If you start giving advice too early, you could be solving the wrong problem. And you train your team to come to you to solve the problem rather than solve it themselves. It also prevents you from getting stuck on a single topic.

3 WHAT'S THE REAL CHALLENGE FOR YOU HERE?

Advantage: Indicates that there are multiple challenges, and you are zoning in on the one that affects them specifically. Especially helpful when the first two questions aren't getting to the root of the problem.

Tips: Avoid asking WHY questions. It puts people on the defensive. Instead, ask WHAT questions. For example: "What made you decide to take this course of action?" Or, "What were you hoping for?" When too many "real challenges" surface, ask "If you had to pick one of those to focus on, which would it be the real challenge for you?"

Master these three questions and you'll ratchet up your coaching style immediately, helping your employees feel better equipped in their roles.

The fear we can have when shifting from advice-giving to coaching is that we will no longer have value in the company's eyes. After all, if they can solve their own problem, why are you here?

Surprisingly, the opposite happens. Your employees will come to you, not because you tell them what to do, but because you always seem to be the one to help them nail down the real problem and discover the solution. You become invaluable to them. And to your company.

Take your coaching to the next level by digging deeper with the next two questions...

4

WHAT DO YOU WANT?

Advantage: It helps create answers with the end in mind. When you see the outcome, the journey often becomes clearer.

Tips: Get comfortable with silence. It gives the other person breathing room to think and respond. Humans have 9 essential needs; affection, freedom, participation, creation, identity, protection, recreation, understanding, and subsistence. If you can identify the need in the WHAT you can better answer their what question, even when it's a no.

5

HOW CAN I HELP?

Advantage: Your forcing your colleague to make a direct and clear request and stops you from thinking you know best how to help and leaping into action or shift them from complaints to action.

Tips: Rather than immediately answer, "That's a great question. And I have a few ideas but I'd like to hear your thoughts first..." or, "What else could you do?"

6

IF YOU ARE SAYING YES TO THIS, WHAT ARE YOU SAYING NO TO?

Advantage: Defining the cost of saying yes helps them determine if it is worth it.

Tips: It's been proven that it's easier to say no to those closest to us (like your spouse, kids) and those far from us (like telemarketers), but much harder to say no to everyone else. That's everyone you work with!

7

WHAT WAS MOST USEFUL FOR YOU?

Advantage: People don't learn because you told them something. Not even when they do it. They learn (and create new neural pathways) when they have a chance to recall and reflect on what just happened. It moves the results into memory.

MINISTRY INSIGHT

WHAT IF YOU COULD WORK LESS HARD AND HAVE MORE IMPACT?

To do that, you need to change the way you work.

We have been the distinct privilege and honour of working with volunteers who donated and sacrificed countless hours to build the Kingdom of God.

In turn, we pour our energy into training them up for the work of the ministry (Ephesians 4:12) so that our impact in our cities and communities are far greater than we ever could alone.

This means expanding their capacity to lead and handle problems.

So focus on development, not performance. While performance is important, even in our volunteers, you won't empower your team if you're constantly putting out small fires and forgetting the larger goals.

Remember, coaching is simple. Not necessarily easy, but simple.

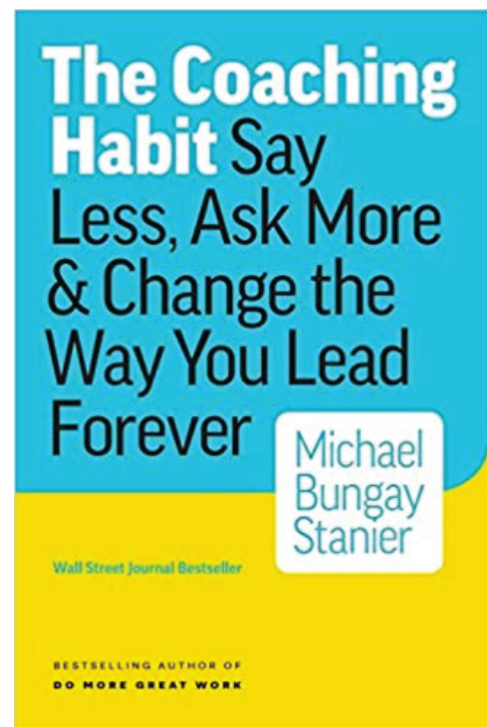
A good coach doesn't just spout advice to a team. They genuinely listen. They guide their staff, team leads and volunteers toward self-sufficiency in a positive, caring way.

Try adding these seven simple coaching questions to your next meeting and see what happens.

Til next time,
Parallel Leaders.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Coach for development (not performance).
- Silence is powerful, especially when coaching. Use it wisely. Pause, not just for effect, but also to give the person being coached time to articulate their thoughts in their own heads.
- Don't rush to action. Create space for others to have their learning moments.
- Everything that is worth doing well requires practice- coaching is no different. Move away from being a "problem solver" and focus more on being a "people developer."



For more information on Michael Bungay Stanier, visit his company website Box of Crayons at boxofcrayons.com