

How to Coach **Like** Better Than a Boss

Part 2

Worksheet



A Leadership Development Resource

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What do good coaches do that turn them into great coaches? They practice. They constantly experiment with new questions, new ways of having conversations or discussions, new ways of preparing for conversations and new ways of thinking about their approach. Without practice we just have a set of intentions that never actually turn into any kind of real improvement.

Use this worksheet to practice how you prepare for your next coaching conversation. Work through the questions and the process you will use in your mind. Mental rehearsals count too as they help us build habits and work through specific steps that allow us to improve our process.

Coaching Questions

Plan for an Effective Coaching Conversation

Use these questions as you plan conversations to help you understand your team members' goals:

- What do you want to get better at or learn more about?
- What do you want to be different about your job in a year?
- What would you change about your job or your ability to do it well if you could?
- What challenges would you like to be better at handling in your role?
- What is your definition of “amazing” for someone doing your job?
- How would you instruct someone else to be a high performer at your job?

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- What would your best day at work look like? How would you plan for it, execute it and feel about it at the end of the day?
 - What other jobs or roles would you like to prepare for or pursue?

Value Questions

Consider asking questions like these to establish clear, tangible value with and in your team.

- What ideas do you have that might help you tackle this challenge or improve this set of results?
- What 1 or 2 things, if you did them more consistently or at a higher level would help you excel run this role?
- Who else do you know that is good at this and what actions do they take or what habits do they have that help them to be exceptional at it?
- How can I support you as you continue to develop or improve in this area?

Clarity Questions

Begin closing your coaching conversation with meaningful questions that crystalize learning:

- What are you taking away from this conversation today?
- What new insights, thoughts, goals or ideas do you have because of our discussion?
- If you had to sum up our conversation today, how would you describe it and what do you think the key points were?

Action Questions

Ask questions that will lay out a clear plan of action and execution for you and your team member by promoting measurable goals.

- What is your first step to tackling this challenge or making important changes?
- What would you tell someone else to do if you wanted to help them be great at this?
- If you were to map out a process for what you do next, how would you do it?
- How will you measure your success as you tackle this challenge?
- How often will it be important to practice your new thoughts or actions?
- What progress do you expect in the first couple of weeks?

Scenario

John is a member of your team and he seems to, in your view, waste a lot of time during the workday. It feels like it takes him far longer than you expected to complete tasks and execute his job duties. You would like to have a conversation with him that helps him speed up and become more efficient.

What questions can you use to connect with his goals:

Complete this exercise before reading below so you can practice your thinking

Our natural inclination here is to tell John he is too slow. But we want to connect more speed or efficiency to any goals or pictures of success John already has about what “good work” looks like. We do not want to miss an opportunity to add value if he says something like “well I feel like I could be a little faster in my work.” If he says something along those lines we have connected what we would like him to change, to his own goals and ideas. We are now coaching, not just telling.

Some of the questions we can use to get there might be:

- What would you like to improve or get better at in your job?
- If you could do one or two things differently that you think would improve your success in this role what would they be?
- Is there anyone around you that you think excels at this role and what are the things they do that makes them excellent?

Yes, there is the possibility that John is completely unaware of his need to be more efficient or faster, but our goal as a coach is to explore that first. Then we can add our feedback to his thoughts by saying something like, “One other area that I think you can consider is how you add a little more efficiency or speed to your work. What thoughts or ideas do you have about that?”

Let’s take a possible objection or roadblock that John might come up with in this scenario and use our coaching tools to deal with it.

What if John says, "well I can certainly work faster but I like to go at a pace that ensures high quality work"?

That’s a common challenge and here are some questions that can help you navigate that situation with John.

- We definitely need to care about quality John, if you wanted to add speed and still keep delivering high quality work, do you think you could make progress there?

- Do you feel like increased practice or experience would allow you to improve both at the same time and how might you go about practicing that?
 - Do you see anyone around you who has gotten to the point where they can deliver both speed and quality and what do you think helped them to get there?
 - If you wanted to improve speed without sacrificing quality what steps do you think you could take to start working on that?
 - If you want to achieve even greater success here, would adding speed to your work without reducing quality help you do that?
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Notice we are adding value through questions and we are NOT competing with John over his statement that quality and speed can't co exist. We are taking the approach of exploring the possibility that they might, working through how we might make that happen if it was possible and supporting John as he considers that.

It is always possible to let John think about some of these possibilities and resume our conversation in a few days to think through them together.

Remember our goal is sustainable change, not rapid change that fades and has to be repeated!

Here are some other questions for you to help you plan for an effective coaching conversation:

- What ideas do I have that might help someone improve in their work?
 - What steps would they take to make that kind of shift or change in the way that they work?
 - What would I do to help support someone who was trying to make changes in this area?
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- If I was struggling in this area, how would I want someone to support me as I worked through the changes I needed to make?

Resist the temptation to think that “I just need them to tell me and I will do it better or differently”. That is rarely the case for us humans. We generally need more than someone pointing our shortcomings out to actually change our behavior.

Plan and prepare for effective coaching conversations using questions that help others think and explore possibilities. Add your feedback to their thoughts and it will be received differently than criticism is. use this process to help those on your team become more successful and perform at a consistently higher level.