

CONVERSATIONS...

IN SEARCH OF THE INNER SELF



Bengaluru
Charter Chapter

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A Coach's Journey – Inward And Onward

From the Editorial Desk

To The Coach Who Writes, Thank you.

We take this opportunity to introduce the new-old team in the Research and Publications (R&P) group of the ICF Bengaluru Chapter managing committee.

Meet Gayatri Krishnamurthy who has picked up the gauntlet of the 4th edition of Conversations.... Coach, writer and researcher, Gayatri says she started writing “silly articles” (in her own words) for class magazines in school. She kept writing even as she judged her writing to be work in progress. It was important to keep it up to hone the craft. Writing is daunting, says Gayatri. She says she often feels haunted by the fear of others disliking or even worse, being offended by her writing. Yet she persists. She says, “We coaches often say that each one of us is unique and I believe that there is a unique writer as well within us.”

Supporting Gayatri’s can-do and will-get-it-done spirit is Amita Bharath. Amita was a part of the last edition’s production as well. She is a coach in search of coaching hours and credentials. In another life (thirty years ago) she trained and worked in an English Language Daily and as an editorial assistant in a textbook publishing house. After coach training, she has united her love for language and coaching in serving neurodivergent students, adults, and their families.

We would like to thank the writers who have responded to our request for submissions for this edition. Thank you all for sharing authentically, putting a little bit of yourself out there and making yourself vulnerable through your writing.

Coaching is a deeply transformative and reflective process for both client and coach. This is true of writing as well. In writing, the coach activates the creative, reflective dimension of the mind, their own and the reader’s as well. The writing that flows from a confluence of reflection, coach training and the client experience often harnesses intuition and holds space for unlimited possibilities that may unfold. When coaches write, ideas such as compassionate leadership, positive intelligence, diversity beyond the gender issue and social impact emerge from the shadows of hard-nosed corporate speak. Coaching humanises the data- driven realm of business.

But let us face it, like Gayatri says, writing for others to read is intimidating. Writing takes time and patient practice. To craft good writing, the habitual mind-- that drives us nonstop through our workday --must quieten. A common coaching technique, the check-in, may help to calm that juggernaut mind: *How am I feeling? Am I where I thought I would be at the end of the day? What have I observed? Why have I not observed? What am I curious about today?* A bit like journaling, this process can help unplug the flow of words and thoughts. And it can be a record of ideas to explore in greater detail later.

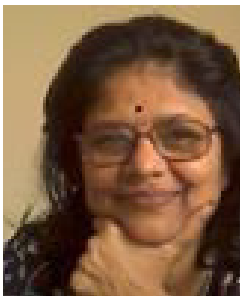
Such as when the editorial group launches a request for articles for the next issue of Conversations....

A heartwarming little story about the power of intention and the emergence of this edition's theme. As coaches, we appreciate and strive for the empty slate of experiences and learning. This is how this edition's theme– A Coach's Journey–Inward and Onward– came to be. Like pieces of a puzzle, articles arrived and built a basic picture. While we did not specify anything, our coach-writers wrote what they had to share, and the picture of the puzzle came together.

We hope that this liberates our future contributors as well and helps them pen down their experiences, thoughts, theories, emotions and feelings.

Before we end this missive to our readers, we would like to acknowledge Preethi Guruswamy, who painstakingly created the google form for submission and created the attractive PDF with the zen-like vibe. Thank you, Preethi!

And, far from the last and least, we most gratefully acknowledge the work and help rendered by Vidhi Vala, the publisher of this edition. Thanks Vidhi!



Gayatri Krishnamurthy (ICF-PCC)

Gayatri has a post-graduation in Personnel management and has been coaching for over a decade. She has been an Organisational Consultant for even longer. She practices as an Executive Coach. She is a certified Hogan practitioner and has used it in Coaching and given feedback to over 500. She is passionate about democratising coaching and works with educational institutions, NGOs, and Homemakers. Applied Research is an interest that she pursues. She has authored a few white papers on Coaching and is engaged in the early stages of further research.

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Amita is a new and yet uncredentialed coach. She is passionate about coaching as a tool for learning and development. She has an MA in Special Education needs and Inclusion and ADHD coach training. She wants to make the coaching intervention an option for neurodivergent students, families, and adults in India. Amita also partners with NGOs in the Diverse Learning Needs space to create greater acceptance and awareness of neurodivergent persons in our midst.

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A Man Distinguished by Service

Dr. Winston Jacob, MBE

President - Elect of the Management Committee of the ICF Bengaluru Charter Chapter, Dr. Winston Jacob is a senior Chartered Professional Consultant with a track record of over 50 years. He has spent 33 years in Papua New Guinea as Principal Appraiser, Consultant and Managing Director of the Papua New Guinea Institute of Management. In this tenure he oversaw and successfully revived several organizations after having restructured them to profitability. For his work and service in the areas of Management Consulting, Organizational and Human Resource Development, Research and Strategic Management, Dr. Winston was awarded the prestigious title of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire (MBE) by Her Majesty the Queen Elizabeth II. He was recommended for this distinction by the Government of Papua New Guinea for his service to the nation.

He is also an Ambassador of the Global University for Lifelong Learning (USA). He has an MBA from the International Management Centres Association (IMCA) in the UK. He has a Ph.D from the Global University for Lifelong Learning. Dr Winston is a credentialed coach with a PCC. He facilitates Executive Management, Mentoring and & Coaching in India and abroad. He has been involved with the Bengaluru Charter Chapter since its inception. He has been widely recognised with a long list of accomplishments and accolades spanning many continents.

Dr Winston is a lifelong learner and believes in being in an Action Learning mode; he inspires, empowers and motivates people to be better citizens by sharing his knowledge with others around the Globe. His vision is to be a Change Agent and a role model for this noble intent.

Dr Winston has a special message for the readers of the fourth edition of *Conversations...In Search of the Inner Self*.

"It gives me great pleasure with my vibrant team to congratulate Gayatri and Amita on the wonderful production of the Fourth Edition of 'Conversations...In Search of the Inner Self' with talk, interchange of thoughts and the Search of the Inner Self.

"Our Purpose is drawn from the United Nations Action Plan for People, Planet and Prosperity. Let us embrace Integrity, Excellence, Collaboration and Respect. Let us all unitedly strive to be the best chapter in the Globe by aspiring to build and maintain the highest standard of Coaching."



Dr Winston Jacob, President-Elect,

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My Thoughts on Coaching the Self

By Bikramjit Maitra

As the title suggests, this write-up covers my thoughts on how one can coach oneself and who all can accomplish that. While the ideas expressed here may appear inconsistent with popular practices, I strongly believe that self-coaching is viable and if thoughtfully pursued could produce magical results.

It is often said that to be a good coach one needs to be relatively self-aware. Becoming Self-aware is a continuous journey and is never complete. In this connection let me quote one of Tagore's famous songs: "My need to know myself is unending / With this each day my Lord, I learn thee." In Tagore's philosophy 'thee' is the embodiment of goodness in a human being. Self-awareness can only improve with sustained introspection. Why do we coaches put so much importance to self-awareness? It is because all of us have our own peculiarities and biases. Those biases always taint our interpretations, many times with devastating

effect. At times this leads us to adopt a flawed approach or action. A self-aware person always tries to look out for such loopholes, takes a pause and examines the validity of the premise of each important decision to be made. This process actively helps to uncover and avoid the known and unknown biases of an individual.

Assuming that a person has all the attributes of a good coach, the central question I have in my mind is, can such a person coach herself? But before we take on that question let us also understand the coaching premise or coaching cornerstones as mentioned in the book by Whitworth et. al., entitled Co-active Coaching: New Skills for Coaching People Towards Success in Work and Life (1998).

Bikramjit invites all coaches to a journey inside themselves. He proposes a simple structure for improving the Self using the principles of coaching.

The four cornerstones mentioned in the book are:

- 1 The client is naturally creative, resourceful, and whole
- 2 The agenda comes from the client
- 3 The coach dances in the moment
- 4 The coaching addresses the client's whole life

When we look at these four items we find that items 1, 2 and 4 define the coaching boundaries and beliefs while the third defines a very fundamental 'how to' of coaching. A coach needs to depend on her basic instincts and capability to constantly learn from every response of the client to decide where to go next in the coaching conversations. This keeps the Coaching conversation constantly shifting and flowing in directions which are not predetermined.

With this premise in the background, let us now imagine that a coach who is competent in handling the coaching needs of clients, decides to become her own coach.

Prima facie this does not pose any structural problem, but it does pose challenges of duality and the associated problem of dual perspective of interpretations. The first one is the Coach's Perspective and the second one is that of the Client's. Perhaps the solution to that lies in the use of the concept of changing thinking hats introduced by Edward de Bono in his book *Six Thinking Hats: An Essential Approach to Business Management* (Little, Brown & Co, 1985). So one can wear a coach's hat and a client's hat alternately to carry on with the self-coaching process.

To ease out the frequent changing of hats demanded by the principle of 'dancing in the moment', I would like to propose a few

additional systemic modifications. I think this process can be pursued through two different routes:

- **SELF-REFLECTION ROUTE:**

This is a well-known tool where an individual is encouraged to introspect on the events of the recent past.

- **THE AMBITION FULFILMENT ROUTE:**

This is also a very well-established coaching technique where the client is asked to contemplate success needs in different parts / areas in her life.

It is also important, at least to start with, like in any other coach - client situation, one should be as structured with the self. Here the preparation time may take a little longer. In the preparation stage with a coaching hat on she writes down the agenda or issues to be discussed in the session. The questions will depend on the route taken: through self-reflection or by ambition fulfilment.

I do not want to get into the actual framing of the questions. I also do not think that every self-reflection session, if one has the practice of doing it regularly, needs to be converted into a coaching session. In a typical reflection scenario, one would consider primarily what went well and what could have been done better. In addition, in this situation, one needs to inquire whether the current success is because of some promised changes one has brought in, or if it is because of routine practices.

For situations where the outcome was less than optimum or could have been better, there could be a need for deeper reflection: is it because of not changing as one had resolved or is the effect despite changes that were brought in, or does this indicate a need to prompt a new change in action.

I would think that a session like this can take place at most maybe once in a month. Another particularly important aspect would be to take copious notes or do a brain dump on paper to record thoughts during such sessions.

Ambition fulfilment route sessions can be less frequent and may need to be interspersed with normal reflection and reflection coaching sessions. This type of session can be broken into two parts: 1) to record ambition milestones or change in ambition milestones; 2) To take stock of progress and progress measures. Here too before the session starts, one needs to put on the coaching hat to write down the questions to be used during the session.

Apart from the set questions for a particular session, a set of follow up questions also need to be kept handy. How did I feel at that time? Why did I feel good? Why did I feel bad? What prevented me from taking that step? What encouraged me to take that step? These questions could be posed to the self and the thought-answers can be recorded. This will create the dancing-in-the-moment in the current perspective. The actual benefit will accrue when going through the notes: one could convert them into actual actionable activities and form a

simple development plan, and implement that plan with religious zeal. Before I end this essay, I want to allude to a couple of critical aspects related to self-coaching. Is it a be-all and end-all silver bullet? I strongly believe that not to be true. Though every management book of the season promotes one silver bullet or the other, we know for sure that there can be no silver bullets. So, this is not going to make coaching by others superfluous but can certainly augment that. The primary reason is perspective distortion. However self-aware an individual may be, because of the closeness of one with one's point of view, the risk of perspective error could be substantial and many -a-time observations may not be as objective as they need to be.

The second limitation which may make this practice not so universal is the need to commit a lot of time and a tremendous amount of self-discipline. Processing the brain-dumps and teasing out the questions will demand lots of time for self-introspection and contemplation. Needless to say, this endeavour will also demand a high degree of self-discipline. In conclusion it may be prudent to say that the self-coaching process may not be ideal for a person who is short on time and organisation.



Author Bikramjit Maitra (ICF-PCC)

Trained as an Electrical Engineer, Bikramjit Maitra, has worked in diverse leadership positions in corporate. Now he is an executive coach and also provides advisory to establish business aligned people practices. Bikram is a PCC from ICF and SP from EMCC. He built his coaching practice with the belief that anybody can significantly improve with sustained thoughtful efforts.

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Dots–Connections–Amalgamation

By Latha Bhonsle Nagendra Rao

David Kolb’s theory of the Adult Learning Cycle always made a lot of sense to me from the moment I heard of it. At the outset, soon after an activity during my train-the-trainer experiential learning workshop, I was like a wonder-filled child, listening intently as if I was all and only ears. It opened up my visual imagination as I followed through the explanations to my experiences which were unfolding like a story, being reflected upon, almost hypnotic at that point of time.

“So much to learn about myself“ I thought about my impact in those activities, my interactions with people, as realization dawned. Now when I think about it, it is easy to say it is or was generating awareness about myself, for myself, as a new beginning of a long journey that probably never ends; a continuous process, assuming the soul lives on....

While most of us are aware of and connect dots, some have the ability to connect seemingly totally different points or situations, putting them together so beautifully in a simple, straightforward and safe manner.

Latha Bhonsle explores the wondrous mystery of connecting experiences and facilitating learning and the awareness that lies at the core of seemingly everyday life events. She leaves us with a powerful question which is a coach’s ultimate aspiration.

One of my mentors, also a work partner, a friend, is so adept at weaving experiences together and expressing them so aptly to audiences – they listen, as if mesmerized. There have been times when I have wondered, “how does he say all that he does?” Well, there is so much authenticity and conviction in those words spoken from experiences he has been through; he sees different elements and integrates threads that come up that it lands beautifully.

I have had the opportunity to go on many off-site workshops with stalwart colleagues, where client audiences work in crisis-ridden spaces. The ability to bring everyone to the requisite plane, challenge them and yet be compassionate, comes with complete

awareness, not only of oneself but of everyone and everything around. “Global awareness” if I may call it, just as we speak of global listening, only this goes much beyond; not with respect to geographies but about the insights, the people, the affect, the cultures, the movements, the parting, the coming together, the pains and joys.

While some of us speak about personal experiences that may be unparalleled, some others speak authentically from vicarious learning – To be able to learn from others’ experiences through sensing, feeling and empathizing; To be able to connect one experience of theirs with that of others’ and say, “A-ho - Amen, I agree, I understand” to move deeper into exploration and create that “Aha”. This awareness, in my view, is still generated from that space of being global in approach and yet very focused on the individual with a wholesome, all-encompassing presence.

I have known some individuals who are simply amazing storytellers who weave stories of their own experiences and stories from vicarious learnings, stories that affected them even in small ways, but created an impact like the depths of an

ocean. They are able to recreate and relate so elaborately, just as my friend does, an experience one would dismiss as just another ordinary event becomes a point driven home and opens up minds. I realize, it is not the experiences themselves that make a difference but the putting it out there that matters: the manner in which it is re-told, inquired into and the awareness it generates is so powerful that lives are touched in the process.

So many aspects intertwined in these learnings for me – Personal belief systems, our world-view and reality, relating, connecting, adventing with nature, reflection and awareness. I have been working on these aspects constantly at different levels in different spaces in my coaching journey, in my journey of life and have had discussions and conversations within the community – Understanding, learning, growing –a constant process. Yet, the deep question is only answered in our being – How do we as coaches park everything we have brought along with us and simply walk with, walk alongside the one we are with, bereft of any baggage whatsoever, however valuable? How do we then just-be, immerse, flow and bring in transformation for one-another?



Latha Bhonsle Nagendra Rao, Bangalore, India (ICF-PCC)

Growth and Impact being key focus areas, Latha is a Leadership & Mentor Coach and OD Partner. Working with executives and teams across industries, she has brought transformations in individuals and organisations, with coaching, facilitation, multiple intelligence methodologies and inner-renovation work. Passionate about outdoors and nature, climbing, retreats, reflections and quests amidst rocks and mountains add flavour to her being, elevating depths for clients, transforming.

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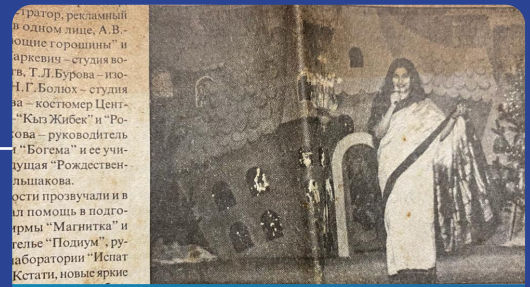
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MEMORIES

By Rashmi Shetty

*A new journey, a new program I was planning,
A few old books in the cupboard I was scanning,
As I turned an old book whose pages were yellowed,
Out fell a newspaper neatly folded & memories followed
Of an evening more than two decades old,
A performance that made me completely cold.
Singing a Russian folk song solo on the stage
The crowd was all cheering and clapping, all engaged.
It still seems like a dream near impossible to believe!
Am glad it went well; it was special for the accolades I received.
Looking back, I pause to understand how I did it
A word of encouragement was all I needed; I admit.
To stand before the locals to sing their popular song
From a country so different, my saree said I do not belong.
Yet the acceptance and cheer for a job well done
Is where the journey of my confidence had all begun.
A smile, a new found self-belief for what I am planning
Memories sometimes are all what you need in expanding
The faith, the fear, the music, the cheer, all proving
What you need to achieve your dream is within, grooving.
Get in touch with who you are and what you can be
You will be surprised; with the success you can guarantee!*



Rashmi Shetty introduces her poem Memories: Thoughts that started flowing when an old picture fell out of a book. Sometimes it is all about taking the first few steps, the rest will fall in line. Self reflection is magic when you want to find that all that you are seeking outside are within you!



Poet Rashmi Shetty (ICF-PCC)

Rashmi Shetty comes from a varied background of Coaching, Sales, Storytelling, Facilitator, Radio Jockeying, Chat show hosting, Emceeing & Podcasting. She is the founder Director of The Third Eye. A Trustee with the ICF Foundation, she intends to be instrumental in blending important issues like climate change into coaching.

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Colours, Courage & Coaching – A Journey

By Sindhu S. Rajbhusan

When I reflect on how I have grown as a Coach, I think of the many shifts I have made in my life, in my thinking, approach and perceptions. Outwardly, it may not appear to be so. But, the transformation has been in the way I see, feel and experience life.

Over the last several years, I have coached myself in many areas in which I wanted to change.

Coach and Artist Sindhu S. Rajbhusan writes about the symbiotic journey she experienced between coaching and self expression through Art. Her article is a moving account of journeying from Fear to Courage, staying focussed on the process rather than the outcome and coaching the Self towards taking on new challenges without getting overwhelmed.

One of those areas has been creativity and my identity as an ARTIST. Today, I see tangible evidence of improvement in my art.

My earliest memory of experiencing art was when I was 4 or 5 years old. I vaguely

remember being in the presence of my mother and a really old man with lots of grey hair. We were surrounded by children who were immersed in their books with colours in their hands in the front yard of a house. Whenever I recall this memory, it appears to me in a luminous shiny bright white colour . That is where it began. But it soon fizzled away as I succumbed to the misleading demands of life. Over the next few decades, I indulged in colours and let myself experience the beauty of creation on the occasional spur of the moment.

Four years ago, I started my journey of becoming a COACH. I realized then that I can coach myself on ANYTHING. One of the beliefs that crystallised very early in this journey and has continued to serve me well is - IF I CAN'T COACH MYSELF, I CAN'T COACH ANYONE.

This helped me become responsible and accountable, primarily for my own growth and evolution while I partnered with clients.

In the world of art, this is similar to PRIMING the canvas which is the first and most essential step before starting the actual

painting. (Primer is a fluid or a paste- like coating made of chalk, colour pigment and a binder. It is applied on the canvas which is made of processed linen or cotton fabric stretched across wooden panels of a certain size.)

Priming gives a solid foundation. It creates a sturdy yet smooth base for any creation to happen seamlessly on that surface and it accentuates the vibrancy of the colours. In this context, the priming is equivalent to the journey of self-awareness and personal growth a coach undergoes and commits lifelong to undertake.

One of the commitments I made to myself was to work on my self-expression. And Art was one of my ways to self-express. By this time, I had already re-discovered my interest in Art. I was creating Mandalas during my time off work. But there was always a yearning to explore more art forms and to create more. Quite naturally and unconsciously, I had created a GOAL in my head. Being a very visual and kinesthetic person, I would constantly imagine myself having created exquisite paintings, like those made by the Masters of Art. But something always stopped me from moving forward.

I decided to put the Coach hat on and explore what was not working. What I discovered was something quite unexpected and surprising.

My goal itself was the problem.

- First, the goal emerged from my imagination of painting like the Masters. When I examined what I was imagining, I realised that “I” was never in it. The paintings I had seen and admired in my imagination were created by the Masters. I never imagined myself involved in the process of creating these paintings. It was like a “dissociated” state. Further, my focus was on the outcome, the result, rather than the process.

- Second, my idols were the Masters. I look up to them like Gods. So subconsciously, the goal became daunting and overbearing. It felt heavy and seemed unachievable which had stopped me from moving forward.

- Third, my self-image (in comparison to the Masters). I viewed myself as someone who lacked skill and commitment.

- Fourth, the interplay of all this created anxiety in me rather than excitement. And the goal started to look a lot like the colour RED, which I associate with FEAR.

This awareness led me to explore how I wanted to feel about this whole thing. The first step I took was to replace FEAR with something more encouraging: COURAGE (the word I associate with the Yellow Colour). More questions came to my mind and as I dug further in, my realization of how I associated with the GOAL led me to replace it with something that excited and inspired me –GROW. At this very moment, I experienced a strong shift. The whole idea of painting like the Masters felt very possible. The image seemed much closer. My body felt light, I smiled and suddenly there was no pressure. The colour that came to my mind with the word GROW was GREEN, the same colour I associate with COACHING. Further, I went on to realize that the Masters did not achieve it all overnight. It took years of practice and experimentation. They were courageous enough to try, fail and then pick up the brush again. Modelling them is what I committed to myself, which meant, practice regularly, learn constantly, experiment with different styles, forms and mediums but, one step at a time.

As soon as this realization struck, I felt energised and ready to start. Over the next few years I attended workshops, art classes and started practicing regularly. I went on to even learn from the Masters themselves. I

experimented with colours and mediums. Today, I have a list of things I did for the very first time. The more I created and experimented, the more I was able to express myself and felt more courageous.

What helped me stay committed was the clarity I started getting with each step I took that helped me learn and grow gradually. This was possible because of a process I adopted. I call it — PiVoT.

- **P for Prepare**

I watched videos, took classes to understand the techniques

- **I and V for Imagine & Visualize**

I visualized myself creating the art piece step-by-step using the techniques I had learnt.

- **O for Observe**

While visualizing the process, I would also imagine myself observing the emergence of this art piece as a whole: How every step and stroke was aiding in bringing the creation to a desired completion.

- **T for Take action**

After all the preparation and visualization, I would just go ahead and do it.

At this point, the results did not even matter to me. I was so happy and content with the learning and the experience.

Below are two images that represent my journey as an Artist. Image 1 is how I started off painting the Buddha and Image 2 is how I completed it. Adopting the PiVoT approach and modelling the Masters helped me transition from Image 1 to Image 2. It even represents the exact colours I associate with Peace: Blue; Coaching and Growth: Green, although I did not consciously plan it.



Before (Image 1)



After (Image 2)

Much like the canvas that needs priming first before it provides an exceptional surface for the painting to thrive, working on the Self first can set up a powerful foundation to coach clients. One can also experiment by picking up something one always wanted to try or thought could never do and coach oneself through it. This can deepen self-awareness and lead to many discoveries and breakthroughs. So much so that, even a small shift in the body or a sensation one becomes aware of, can be a clue and a window of opportunity to bring change.

I experienced this change when I transitioned from Fear to Courage. This is my journey of how COACHING is helping me become a better ARTIST and how ART is helping me become a better COACH.



Sindhu S Rajbhushan (ICF-ACC) - Life Coach & Executive Coach

Sindhu is intrigued by human behaviour and utilises her curiosity coupled with coaching to serve her purpose of helping people in their journey to excellence and fulfilment. She adopts an integrative approach of exploring the interconnectedness of all life aspects to create self-awareness that bring the best results for her clients. She is an Associate Certified Coach (ICF), Certified Systemic Team Coach, NLP Practitioner and an Artist.

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Good Leaders are Good Coaches: They ask, they don't direct

By Sunil Kumar Vaya

Leaders in organisations are tasked with growing other leaders. When I think about the word “leader”, many different faces and occasions come to mind. When I look back at my journey in various corporations and roles, I recall several instances of how leaders interacted with me on various occasions, and also how I had interacted with future leaders. While most of the interactions were very transactional, a memorable few have been inspirational.

Sunil Kumar curates questions that can empower the connection between the leader and the team member to create a safe space of learning and growth within the organisation. He recommends blending the coaching approach into leadership styles to increase engagement and belongingness.

Today when I look back and reflect as to what made those interactions inspiring or transactional, a subtle difference emerges in my mind. The few interactions which were transactional were based on some compulsion coming from the organisation and were not heart-to-heart, open and engaging discussions. The discussions which inspired were so because they reflected the leader's personal interest in my growth within the context of the organisation.

As a leader, one must find or rather create opportunities at least once or twice in a year to have open discussions and a dialogue with one's team members. In this dialogue the leader chooses to ask exploratory questions and listen carefully over being directive and talking about work and performance. The leader takes the role of a coach by focussing on their team members'

aspirational needs. The leader asks powerful questions to ensure that the individual feels seen and valued.

The following simple questions can lay the foundation for a compassionate and powerful exploration.

What is helping you and what is hindering you to bring your best at work?

This provides an opportunity to the team member to think through how they can bring their best to the table every day. Additionally, this will give the leader a clear idea of their team's strengths, and allows them to determine whether they are optimizing these strengths. This might follow up with, "What would you like to improve or change in your work, if you could?" This follow-up query adds to the leader's awareness about the team members' interest and joy, which is good to know to better engage members of the team. At times even a small readjustment pays back richly by boosting the energy and engagement level of individual team members.

What support from me will help you to deliver your best?

A leader's concern, interest and a clear intention to support their team members in their journey and growth, builds an environment of trust and belongingness. Leaders who inspire always free-up their time and resources to help the team feel fulfilled.

How would you like to grow within this organization?

Taking an early initiative to check an individual's aspirations, identifying career

development opportunities to help in their journey of growth will help a leader to stay ahead by being proactive. Jointly curating the team members' development needs in terms of training, participation in projects, enhancing their visibility, and creating opportunities for them to grow with due mentoring and coaching will help them feel safe. Team members are more likely to stay engaged if they feel like they are growing and their growth needs are fulfilled. Further, this question can create consensus on what is possible and not possible, and what needs to be done in order to accomplish goals. This is a useful query especially when some individuals in the team have a false understanding of their contributions and very high aspirations.

What makes you connect with a sense of purpose in your job?

This is a deeply introspective question.. This will afford an opportunity for the team member to look at their higher sense of purpose in life. With this question, the leader helps them to tap into what holds meaning for them and connect it with the values and purpose of the organization. Younger individuals in the workforce have been known to get more engaged in the organisation when they are able to connect their purpose with the larger purpose and values of the organisation.

What can we do differently in the team and the organisation that you feel will help?

This brings an opportunity for a higher level of engagement and belongingness to the organisation. With this question, leaders provide team members a chance to participate in curating a vision for the

organisation and its policies. People feel valued, when their voices are heard. They will feel pride when they are able to connect and resonate with changes and decisions in the organisation's policies.

Leadership is more compassionate and engaging when the leaders see everyone as human beings and care for their needs as human beings. Leadership is a human thing.



Sunil Kumar Vaya

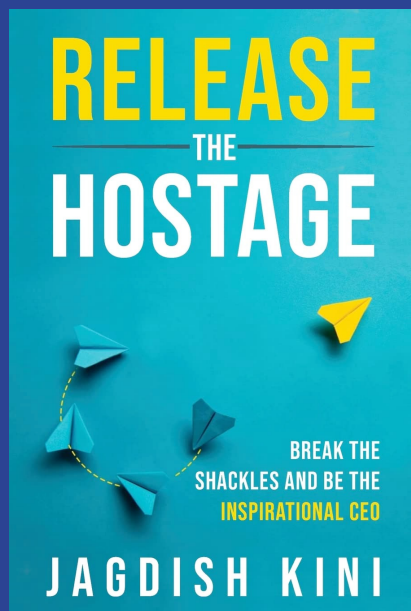
Sunil Kumar Vaya has 27 years of corporate experience. An ICF credentialed and Leadership coach, he is passionate about coaching younger leaders and youth to develop positive consciousness for success with happiness. Designing a stress-free Life and career for success with a positive attitude are his areas of practice. At present he is serving as an Indian Administrative Fellow with the Government of Karnataka in the inaugural cohort of private and public sector leaders to scale sustained social impact.

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Unleash the Leader Within – A Book review

by Usha Raghunath

Release the Hostage: *Break the Shackles and be the Inspirational CEO* by Jagdish Kini is a playbook for aspiring senior executive leaders and those who wish to commit to co-creating and building resilient business teams by searching for win-win results.

The author shares his own journey with vulnerability and authenticity. The stories he shares helps us understand how everyday actions build our confidence, strength and ability. He does this by identifying how to have an internal locus of control rather than holding everyone else responsible for our happiness or lack of it. He inspires us with evocative analogies to “finish the race” with renewed energy and hope after every failure.

As a good coach, he does not try to convince — so he is convincing. He does not try to influence — so he inspires. As a good leader, he acknowledges, appreciates, accepts and allows, thus helping others to succeed.

I personally found his advice, “Don’t move

the goalposts” powerful; to not dilute our vision and intention, but take stock, rewind, reboot and rethink strategies to carry on with extra energy; to conquer our fears and limiting beliefs and set oneself free. Have an open mind and be willing to move out of our comfort zone to achieve our goals— this is the essence of Author Jagdish Kini’s book.

Do read the book to understand the three things we do have control over — our perceptions, decisions and actions. Self-awareness around these three gives us the strength to lead ourselves and others, to be the secure base around which a team builds trust. It gives us the ability to be vulnerable, which is a sign of self-belief.

The book positions itself as a toolkit to accompany aspiring leaders on their journey. Imagine being at full potential, being inspired, being abundant and being in service. How would you be your own best role model?

Every page of the book is packed with questions, frameworks and tools to help us

create the awareness we need, with a new level of detail, as we set out on our journey to build habits, change and achieve success. At the same time, the author teaches us how to be kind to ourselves on this journey by taking care of ourselves. He warns us against over-using our strengths. Overused strengths can sabotage us, he cautions the reader. He reminds us to be present and of the power of silence. More significantly, he underscores the power of listening to connect with others for dynamic co-creation.

With great insight and gentleness, he offers us the SCARF framework to help us look at our deepest needs and fears: How we feel about ourselves in any context; our need for certainty, autonomy, relatedness and fairness and our discomfort when they are not available and the importance of understanding and practicing these

aspects to be the master of our own destiny.

The author peels back layer upon layer to arrive at the core of what creates trust in teams: the glue that holds everything together. In this way, he draws us into learning how to be Coach Leaders.

The book is a valuable addition to our bookshelves, physical or virtual, as we learn to create the future, rather than be in a passive or reactive mode, trying to predict it or be at the mercy of what we cannot control.

In conclusion, do read the book to learn from a coach, peer and leader of almost 3 decades who has led at the team, organization and industry levels in a reflective and aware manner. This book is a generous sharing of what the author has learnt with the community of leaders and coaches.



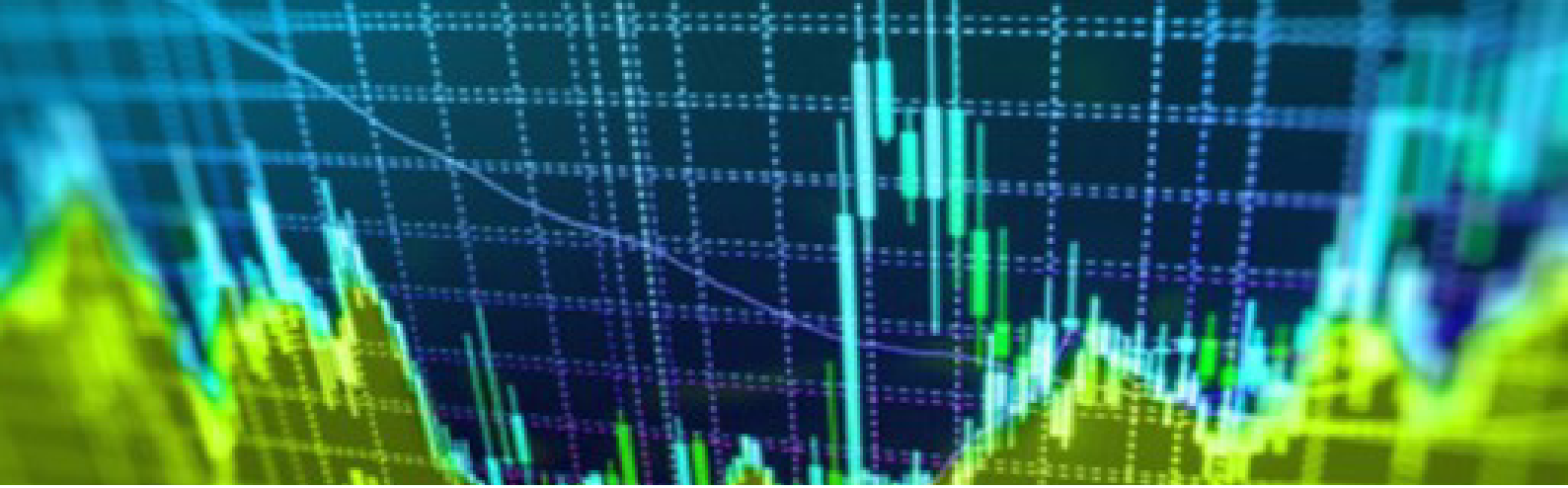
Usha Raghunath (ICF-PCC)

Usha has over three decades of consulting and leadership experience in global corporations and international non-profits. She is currently the National Vice President for the WICCI Coaching Council. An executive and leadership coach, she also consults and teaches around Leadership, Business and Digital Transformation and Design Thinking in premier MBA schools in various countries.

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The Coaching Investment

By Nikhil Benegal

Coaching is a 'like-to-have', if not always a well-recognized 'must-have' in virtually every organization today, aimed at senior leaders and those with potential to rise to such positions. The popular cartoon Dilbert makes fun of coaching often, so it must be mainstreamed!

Nikhil Benegal leverages decades of business, coaching and counselling experience to provide a meaningful summary of a 2015 study on hard measures of coaching impact.

Some questions that any coaching sponsor (such as L & D, HR, senior leader, owner/promoter) or initiator of coaching may have while deciding to get onto the bandwagon or expand on the current spread, are:

“Is there an objective and hard measure of coaching impact?”

A little more deeply probing question from the HR/ L & D person, “Is there any ‘before and after’ measure, independent of stakeholder feedback?”, and,

“Can instruments such as Behavioural Event Interview or Psychometric instruments measure change in competency levels or behavioural changes that translate into discernible business results?”

In short, “How can I justify coaching?”, “How can I get those who hold the purse strings, to loosen them willingly for more coaching?”, and “how can I defend the coaching spend that has taken place?” are critical questions for coaches to answer to expand their practice.

Parallel to these tracks of investigations is the investment of time and resources on



training managers and leaders to harness the ‘coaching-style’ of managing and leading their people. More than two decades ago, Daniel Goleman, the psychologist and journalist popularised the terms Emotional Intelligence and Emotional Quotient (EQ). In a Harvard Business Review (https://hbr.org/2000/03/leadership-that-gets-results) article, Goleman identified six leadership styles.

The Coaching style of leadership provided a markedly positive impact on performance, engagement, organizational culture, and the bottom line. So, is the investment in getting managers and leaders to coach-lead their people worth the time and money to train and enculture them in this style? How would we know?

A review of coaching effectiveness measurement approaches taken from an ICF Special Interest Group (SIG-5, published 2015) research paper under the aegis of the erstwhile ICF Hyderabad Chapter is given below. This attempts to meet what a senior leader or the one who loosens the purse-strings for more coaching, might expect. This expectation is typically captured by this survey-generated quote: “The effectiveness of coaching can be measured only in terms of business results. Unless the coaching is impacting the business positively, there is no point calling it successful.”

Some methods of measuring coaching impact are:

- Stakeholder feedback through questionnaires or via 360-degree survey based on a competency framework
- Focused feedback from the Coachee through different means e.g., interview, questionnaire responses
- 2-way/3-way/4-way reviews between Coach and Coachee / Sponsor / Line

Manager / HR at various stages of the engagement e.g., mid-course, end of assignment, etc.

- Other sources of feedback: Employee Engagement surveys, Team interviews/surveys
- Targeting other result-oriented metrics e.g., Business metrics (sales), Operational metrics (e.g., customer satisfaction) and working back to Coachee’s role and behaviour ‘before and after’ and the Coachee’s attribution of coaching to the metrics’ improvements

What worked and what did not

From the research survey interviews conducted for the SIG research paper, two variables came out as effective in getting a grasp on the coaching impact and were widely used across many organizations. These are:

- 360-degree surveys before and after
- Stakeholder and Coachee interviews

What was not effective and left the sponsors concerned and grasping for more were:

- Insufficient formal and an inadequately structured approach to measurement
- Subjectivity of measures which revealed a need for more quantitative or objective measures
- Too generic feedback with few specifics; inadequate evidence-based feedback
- Lack of engagement or commitment by the key stakeholders to the process (Of Coachee’s development via regular feedback).
- Inadequate follow-through at various stages, e.g., to ensure that the development through coaching process is completed, to know for sure that change is because of coaching and change/progress made is sustained
- “Non-coachability” of the Coachee – here

other factors could have influenced the process, such as age-related fixed mindsets, relationship dynamics and perceived discrimination that led to a resistance and push-back

What was desired more:

- To introduce Formal, Objective (quantitative, if possible) and Consistent measurement
- Measures should have clearer linkages with business results
- Making feedback collection more engaging.

Insights & Challenges

When sponsors were interviewed or surveyed in detail, they produced these insights:

- Popular and typical methods used were 360-degree feedback before and after
- They kept track through periodic check-ins amongst Coach/ Coachee /Sponsor/HR

SIG survey respondents identified the following key challenges in the process:

- Keeping a balance between organizational and Coachee priorities and needs
- Maintaining Confidentiality as the sponsor/financer were key organizational members e.g., the manager, HR, skip-level manager
- Lack of visibility of changes
- A more subjective/qualitative type of change that was often reported
- Timing of measurement, where some respondents felt more time was needed to measure the real impact of coaching

What they found helpful were the following:

- Alignment of stakeholders
- Clarity of goals / Outcome, the more specific the better
- Coachee having a choice in the selection of Coach led to more comfort
- Feedback / Inputs from stakeholders

- Mid-term review or more interim reviews
- 360 at start and at end

Aspirationally, going forward, some ideas that could find some merit when tried out are:

- Get feedback from all relevant stakeholders with a simple question on a 1 to 10 scale with 1 denoting negative change and 10 denoting significant positive change. The actual question can depend on the Coaching priorities (like Delegation, stakeholder collaboration etc.).
- Use the same set of survey respondents Before and After (as far as possible).
- Coachee answers same question as self-assessment
- For organizations introducing coaching a rating of 7 and above is successful
- For organizations who have adopted coaching for a significant length of time and have a coaching culture, the Net Promoter Score (NPS) methodology, adapted suitably, could be used. (NPS is developed by and a registered trademark of Fred Reichheld, Bain & Company, and Satmetrix).

A question that comes up on reflecting on the prevailing status of finding hard measures for the impact of coaching on business results is –

“While hard business results surely pay for coaching to be a really relevant process, should we focus instead on the integrity of a process that has clear linkages with generating behaviours that have a high probability of producing business results?”

To take a cue from Personality factors assessed through psychometrics like the Big 5, high measures of Conscientiousness (and IQ) and low measures of Neuroticism are reliable predictors of success in the objective world of corporates and entrepreneurship. So, if we can identify

which process of behaviours of problem-framing, creative solution-finding, implementation and so on have a higher general probability of influencing objective factors in the real world, we could measure the prevalence of key success factors identified. Just food for thought and contemplation and hopefully serious research! In conclusion, the best impact measure is stakeholder feedback across time, which includes the Coachee themselves, their managers, their subordinates, their peers,

their associates, the sponsor, HR, and so on. This feedback is subjective in nature to a degree that it may concern the coaching-investor enough to prompt them to ask for 'harder' data. Producing hard data that links the coaching effort directly to hard business results without subjective attributions is very difficult. A shift in the focus from Outcome to a result-linked Process and the integrity of this process may be a better way when made feasible.



Nikhil Benegal – ICF-MCC and Certified Behavioural Assessor

Nikhil has over three decades experience in global multinationals in leadership and management development roles. He has been a successful senior leader and manager developer in FMCG, Manufacturing, Agronomic, and other industries – both in the capacity of corporate roles and briefly as a consultant.

A master certified coach since 2018 and professionally certified coach since 2012 he has over 3,000 coaching hours. He is certified behavioural assessor and an experienced designer of development centres. As a coach, he brings insightful expertise in developing CXO level leaders, potential middle managers, students, and others, in demonstrable and sustainable ways that help them to adapt themselves to challenges and opportunities where they can be their most capable, creative and calm selves. As a certified counsellor, he is experienced in emotional counselling as well.

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