

# The Coaching Habit Notes

## You Need a Coaching Habit

- Despite coaching being a common thing that is taught, it's very hard to get right. As a result most coaching given and received isn't very effective (and this has also skewed stats on coaching). Three common reasons for this:
  - The coaching training in the first place wasn't sufficient nor practical
  - There was not enough time to practice and think about coaching effectively before implementation - leading to poor results
  - It's difficult to lean into asking questions rather than just providing answers (which is necessary for coaching)
- Coaching can help eliminate over dependence. Coaching can empower others and create self-sufficiency, whereas direct help / advice can often lead to folks coming back to you for more help, creating a kind of a loop.
  - This also should reduce your overall workload as a result
- Coaching helps folks understand how to identify where impact lies and pursue that work more effectively than direct advice as it comes from the self (I.e. Inception)
- The foundation of a coaching (in this book) is 7 essential questions

## How to Build a Habit

- You can make yourself into a good coach by applying the Habit Loop (The Power of Habit by Charles Dughitt | Hooked by Nir Eyal)
- Some tips:
  - Pick someone that might be more forgiving to try it on at first
  - Start small and build up to more complex ideas/instruction
  - Practice with others (some support group)
  - Have check-ins so if you fall off you can get back on

## Question Masterclass

1. Ask a single question at a time
2. Cut the intro and ask the question
3. Don't give advice disguised as a question
4. Stick to questions starting with "What"
5. Silence is okay; let the other person thinking break it
6. Actually listen; don't just show the signs of it
7. Acknowledge the questions you get positively

(8): Rather than respond to in a long-winded way giving advice, apply one of the questions above

## The Kickstart Question (1)

- The Kickstart Question: "What's on your mind"
  - It's a great way to start a real conversation since it's focusing, goes straight for impact, and isn't too narrow
- The 3P model helps drive "coaching for performance (i.e. a specific problem)" to "coaching for development" (solving the problems behind the problems)
- 3P - Project, People, Pattern (i.e. love-its / could-be-bettters)
- After the kickstart question, a natural thing to focus the conversation further is to zoom in on one of the 3P's (let them pick)

## The AWE Question (2)

- The AWE Question: "And what else"
- Jumping straight into giving advice isn't often not ideal. Chances are you haven't build up sufficient background context and understanding of the nuances.
  - "And what else" helps with a chance to bring in that context
- It also buys you time to process what's being brought up
- Tips for doing so:
  - Be legitimately curious so you actual \*get\* that context
  - It can bear repeating 3-5 times (likely more than once)
  - There is nothing wrong with an answer of nothing
  - This can also be used to wrap up a conversation
- It's a great way to prompt further brainstorming and increase the option space and likelihood of landing on a good answer
- It also prompts re-deliberation, which studies have shown lead to getting more answers correct

## The Focus Question (3)

- The Focus Question: What's the real challenge here for you?
  - The keyword 'real' helps focus the question, "challenge" steers the discussion towards the "meat" of the subject, and "for you" makes it specific and about what the person likely needs answered
- It can be used to reign in on-going conversations and get results rather than just vent; it can focus topics into specific things rather than abstractions
- The "for you" also helps with coaching development rather than performance, as it has growth tied to it at the foundation
- Coaching is partially about getting the other person to think and come to an aha moment themselves

## **The Foundation Question (4)**

- The foundation question is "What do you want"
- Often behind a "want" is a fundamentally need, specifically: affection, creation, recreation, freedom, identity, understanding, participation, protection, subsistence
- Aim to increase "TERA" for smoother outcomes when applying this given its directness
  - T=Tribe (are you with or against)
  - E=Expectation (do i know what's coming next)
  - R=Rank (status dynamics of the situation)
  - A=Autonomy (do i get a say or not)

## **The Lazy Question (5)**

- You can only be so helpful until you're overwhelmed with folks that depend on you. Being "directly" helpful can only scale so far and only works in certain situations.
  - There can also be subtler implications, diminishing them by disempowering them or implying you could in a way do it better
- Keep in mind the Karpman Triangle between:
  - Victim: Believes everything is hard, often not their fault, attracts rescuers, but pays the price of being ineffective and potentially annoying.
  - Persecutor: Believes everyone around is doing a poor job, things are specifically others fault, you feel superior and have lots of control, but you become overly responsible for everything, micromanaging, and creating victims.
  - Rescuer: Believes they can jump in and fix problems by helping victims, they believe it is their fault/responsibility to contribute, you feel more like you're indispensable, but it can perpetuate Victims because the help is only temporary (often)
- The above can be dealt with using the Lazy Question: "How Can I Help"
  - It prompts clarity in a request and it puts the onus on them and empowering them, preventing a cycle where you are always come back to
  - It can be in a more situation specific form as well

## **The Strategic Question (6)**

- The strategic question: "If you're saying yes to this, what are you saying no to"
  - By understanding the cost of saying yes, we'll stop saying yes in

situations where we often don't need to or shouldn't (helps defeat bloat)

- A "yes" only means something with the boundary of a "no", so when asking this form of the question try something like "What X do you need to give up to make Y happen" or "What habits do you need to break" etc
- How to say no when you can't say no
  - Say yes more slowly by staying curious first and asking questions like the above, it may not be necessary
  - Say no to a 3rd party, the feature, the X, and not the person themselves
- Five key strategy questions
  - What is our winning aspiration?
    - ◆ Forces winning thinking
  - Where will we play?
    - ◆ Focuses resources
  - How will we win?
    - ◆ Forces thinking about value prop and competition
  - What capabilities must be in place?
    - ◆ Forces to think tactically and 'how'
  - What management systems are required?
    - ◆ Figure out how to manage and understand what you want

## **The Learning Question (7)**

- The Learning Question: "What was most useful for you"
  - By asking this, you force learning to happen; empowering them for the future
- This is helpful for many reasons
  - It assumes the conversation was useful
  - It focuses on the most important thing
  - It makes it personal
  - It gives you feedback based on what is said