



Leadership Lesson #4: PEER COACHING—FINDING RESOLUTION

Overview: This lesson introduces the practice of peer coaching and develop youth peer coaching skills. Peer coaching can be a great way to bounce ideas off of a trusted thinking partner and avoid unnecessary stress or worry.

Learner Outcomes

Youth will:

1. Know how peer coaching can be a tool to resolve conflict.
2. Develop awareness of self, others, and place.
3. Practice their peer coaching skills.

Getting Ready

Materials: Youth need journals and writing utensils; staff need a dry erase board with markers, and handouts.

Preparation: Staff should practice peer coaching before this lesson or have a rough idea of what coaching will look like.

Lesson at a Glance

Intro to Peer Coaching (15 minutes)

Introduces peer coaching and describes the roles of the peer coaching groups.

Peer Coaching Practice (45 minutes)

Youth divide into groups of three and individually brainstorm what they would like to be coached on. Then the three rounds of peer coaching and feedback begin.

Concluding the Lesson (5 minutes)

End with reflection on the peer coaching process.

Focus on the Whole Person

For most people who want to be helpful, and for most people in a coaching role, the question that’s often foremost on their minds is “What’s the problem to solve?” It’s a question that comes from the best of intentions; a desire to understand and provide valuable assistance so that a problem can be solved. But when a coach is sitting across from a coachee, the coach is not sitting with a problem to be solved; the coach is simply sitting across from a person. This person does have a problem to solve - a change to make, a dream to fulfill, a task to accomplish, a goal to reach - all of that is true. But this person is more than a problem; they have a heart, mind, body, and spirit. And the issue, whatever it is, is not neatly isolated. It is inexorably entwined in the coachee’s whole life.

Maybe “focus” is a little misleading in the title of this cornerstone. We are certainly not talking about a hard, tight, concentrated focus on the whole person. It is more of a broad attention that includes the whole person and their life. It involves listening on many levels because, too often in our eagerness to be helpful, we access only the place between our ears. We use the mind to probe and understand and then create logical, pragmatic solutions. Analysis and logic are worthy and useful attributes but they don’t tell the whole story. Sometimes a “correct” solution can have emotional consequences that are just as important; sometimes what the mind says yes to, the spirit feels as a loss. We are not suggesting that a coach focus on coaching the heart, body, mind, and spirit independently, but instead be tuned into the influences that are present in each of these.

As coaches we need to be aware of all the ways the issue or topic before us is interwoven in this person’s life. There is a vast ecology of people and priorities that are interconnected with the issues at hand. It is entirely possible for the coach and coachee to limit the conversation to a single, narrow subject: completions of a specific project, for example. The ability to take the conversation into an area that the coachee finds compelling doesn’t mean the coach insists on declaring the destination and going there. The key is increased awareness, because no topic exists in isolation. A decision in one area of life inevitably ripples through all areas of life. An exciting career move may be very fulfilling but it may also affect health, family relationships, free time, and geography. A coach can work effectively with a coachee on a very narrow topic, but there is a larger picture also at play that includes the whole person.



Background

The following material is used in the suggested procedure and is necessary to instruct the lesson. Adapted from Whitworth, Kimsey-House, H., Kimsey-House, K., & Sandahl, 2011.

Four Cornerstones of Coaching

Naturally Creative, Resourceful and Whole

We start with this assertion: people are, by their very nature, creative, resourceful and whole. They are capable of finding answers, making choices, taking action, and recovering from setbacks. Most of all, they are capable of learning. This capacity is wired into all human beings no matter their circumstances. With this understanding, as coaches we take a stand for other people's natural creativity and resourcefulness and become champions on their behalf.

The alternative is a belief that people are fragile and dependent. With that belief, the coach's job would be to guide the 'coachee' to the safest possible outcome. This approach to coaching doesn't believe in a person's capabilities to reach conclusions on their own. You can feel the difference between the two methods. As coaches, we want to assume resourcefulness and creativity that allows us to discover possibilities with the coachee, instead of dictating the possibilities to them. We expect to be amazed.

The key here is that we want things to happen naturally. Yes, of course, there are times when the circumstances feel too overwhelming for even the most resilient human beings. Circumstances and that inner sabotaging voice that says "Why bother?" or "You don't have what it takes" can leave one feeling less than creative, resourceful, and whole. On those days, more than on any others, it is our place as coaches to see the true, natural self who was and is still capable. We remind our coachees of their own inner light and help them find it again.



Dance in This Movement

A conversation is a powerful and dynamic interchange between people. It's natural to pay attention to the content of the conversation—the words, the positions, the ideas. The content is often what is most "visible" and easiest to respond to but every conversation creates tone, mood, and nuance. There is as much information in how the words are said versus the words chosen; sometimes there is more information in what is not said. For the coach, a conversation becomes an exercise in listening intently at many levels, and how to respond. The information about what to say or ask does not come from a script. It comes in the moment and to "dance in this moment" is to be present to what is happening right now and to respond to that stimulus rather than a master plan.

To "dance" is to respond from a coaching core to move the dance forward. In a coaching relationship there are moments when the coach leads the dance, moments when the coachee leads the dance, the moments when it is not clear at all who is leading and who is following. All three states of the dance are natural; the third, the point where movement seems to lose leader/follower clarity, is a rare state of connection. It is being tuned in to each other in a place of vulnerability built on extraordinary trust that flows with the conversation. It does feel like an exquisite dance to music, with both partners in tune with the tempo, tone, and steps. This agility is all for the sake of the coachee's learning and discovery.

Evoke Transformation

Coach and coachee meet in this conversation for a common purpose: the coachee's full life. The topic of the coaching will likely be something quite specific but there is always a deeper connection possible. The goal or motivation of the coaching might be clarity and action for a specific project that the coachee is focused on. The coach, however, sees the larger, fully connected life. Coaches in this model hold a vision that sees the topic as an expression of something even more valuable to the coachee. This action at hand is the means to a higher end in whatever area the coachee finds important.



There is a yearning for the full potential that the coachee can experience. When the connection ignites between today's goal and life's potential, the effect is transformative. Now the task at hand more than a check box on a to-do-list, but an expression of inner conviction. The accomplishment is a message about who the coachee can be. Part of this deeper awareness is the knowledge that the coachee has an expanded capacity to reach his potential. What he learned from this one experience he will naturally apply to others.

This is why we evoke transformation as a cornerstone of coaching. We see this as potential for the coachee to evolve, grow, and expand from this one area of focus into many avenues of life. Coaches play a key role by holding a vision of what is possible and committing to transformative experiences. Coachees choose the topic, the action, and the results they want. But by taking a stand for the greatest possible impact from even the smallest action, coaches encourage and ultimately evoke transformation.

Suggested Procedure

Peer Coaching (15 minutes)

Staff will:

1. Ask:
 - a. Are you familiar with peer coaching?
 - b. What do you know about it?
 - c. What does it look like?
 - d. Where have you seen it used? **(D1)**
2. Act out two skits to demonstrate peer coaching (see handouts).
3. Ask: What did you observe about the peer coaching relationship? How is it different than just sitting down to talk to a friend?
4. Define Peer Coaching on the dry erase board.

5



10. Suggest the following questions to use throughout their coaching group and provide the powerful questions handout (see handouts).
 - a. What is the change you want to make? How will it benefit you?
 - b. What do you want and feel?
 - c. What steps would you take if you had no fear?
 - d. What do you know to be true?
 - e. What are the resources or help that you will need to succeed?
 - f. What are the obstacles that might get in your way?
 - g. What accountability will you structure to ensure your success?
 - h. What are you willing to do to make this change happen?
11. Review the process involved in the Introduce the Coaching Feedback Form (see handouts). Emphasize the role of the observer in this step.
12. Introduce the "Balancing Inquiry and Advocacy" handout (see handouts); review this handout and refer to it as a tool for their coaching session.

Peer Coaching Practice (45 minutes) (F1)

Youth will:

1. Divide into groups of three. Before they start the peer coaching practice, have each person think of an area that they would like to be coached on. It could be something that they find challenging, a problem they would like to resolve, or something they would like to improve.
 - a. If they are having a hard time thinking of something, encourage them to go last in their group and practice being an observer or a coach.
2. There will be three rounds of peer coaching and feedback.

Conclude (5 minutes) Once everyone has had the chance to be in each role, gather as a large group. Ask: **(S1)**

1. What are the pros and cons of the coaching process?
2. What did you find challenging about either being the coach or the coachee?

7



- a. Peer Coaching: a confidential process through which two or more peers work together to reflect on new skills, share ideas, teach one another, or solve problems in the work place, school, or other parts of their lives.
5. Explain in depth the relationship between coach and coachee.
6. Explain that everyone will have an opportunity to practice his or her skills in becoming a peer coach, as well as receive feedback from an observer. Everyone will rotate roles as a coach, coachee, and observer.
7. Explain each role by writing on the dry erase board:
 - a. Coach: Drives coaching process.
 - b. Coachee: Invites a coach to listen.
 - c. Observer: Focuses on the coach's behavior during the observation and manages the group's time. Provides feedback to coach at the end of the peer coaching session.
8. Explain that each group will follow the format below (see figure). Draw this figure on the dry erase board.



9. Explain the following:
 - a. **Listen**: Find a partner for whom you have respect and empathy; clarify roles and goals.
 - b. **Learn**: Understand, develop the issue; paraphrase; go for concreteness.
 - c. **Empower**: Confront the issue; use immediacy; minimize self-disclosure.
 - d. **Recap**: Coachee provides summary.
 - e. **Action**: Create a plan - where to next?



6

3. What did you learn by being the observer?
4. How might you use peer coaching in the future?

Assessment Check Ins:

(D1): Examines prior knowledge, interests and misconceptions of peer coaching, to assist staff in planning instruction.

(F1): This assessment provides insight into how youth could implement their peer-coaching skills.

(S1): Assesses what youth have learned by reflecting on their observations of other peer coaching practices.

Staff Notes:

- Peer Coaching: Talk about real issues and practice your demonstration of peer coaching before instructing the lesson.

References:

Coach U Inc., (2011). Core Essential Fast Track Program. Retrieved from:
<https://www.coachinc.com/CoachU/Programs%20and%20Services/Enroll/Program%20Information/default.aspx?s=1&tab=Information&ProgramID=%7BADB236AF-B003-4654-8016-553E5DA94421%7D>

The instructional activity content served as figures and sequences in this lesson. The content was modified in the following way: Some instructional language was changed to match the REC.



8

Bergh, A., & Smithhammer, K. (2012). Peer Coaching: Coaching Feedback Form. Workshop conducted by Leadership at Play. Teton Science Schools, Kelly, WY.

The instructional activity model and content served as the central activity in this lesson. It was modified in the following ways:

- a. *Instructional language was changed to match the REC.*
- b. *The introduction and conclusion are additions to this lesson.*

Senge, P., Kleiner, A., Roberts, C., Ross, R., & Smith, B. (1994). *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook: Strategies and Tools for Building a Learning Organization.* (pp. 254) New York, NY: Crown Business.

The instructional activity content served as figures in the handout “Balancing Inquiry and Advocacy” in this lesson. This content was not modified.

Whitworth, L., Kimsey-House, H., Kimsey-House, K., & Sandahl, P. (2011). *Co-Active coaching: Changing business, transforming lives.* Nicholas Brealey Pub.

Whitworth, L., Kimsey-House, H., Kimsey-House, K., & Sandahl, P. (2011). *Co-Active coaching: Powerful Questions.* Retrieved from: <http://www.thecoaches.com/docs/resources/toolkit/pdfs/31-Powerful-Questions.pdf>

The instructional activity content served as “Powerful Questions” in this lesson. This content was not modified.

Handouts:

- Peer Coaching Skits
- Powerful Questions
- Coaching Feedback Form
- Balancing Inquiry and advocacy



The following material is from Whitworth, Kimsey-House, H., Kimsey-House, K., & Sandahl (2011).

Peer Coaching Skit 1

Coachee: I know I'm starting to sound like a broken record on this, but there just wasn't time this week. I'm out of town one or two days a week with the basketball team, I'm still carrying the one evening class, I need to spend some time with my family before I head off to college...

Coach: So what do you want to accomplish, Tom?

Coachee: I'm committed to helping my dad take care of mom. God knows at his age—and with his own health issues—he could use the extra support. I just can't seem to live up to the time commitment to make it happen.

Coach: What will you commit to—really commit to?

Coachee: I don't control the travel of the basketball team—and being out of town just throws everything off—I don't see how...

Coach: Bottom line, Tom. What will you commit to?

Coachee: Ok. Two evenings a week—somehow I will help my dad take care of mom. And I can usually call him even when I'm out of town, so, more phone calls, I know he appreciates it.

Peer Coaching Skit 2

Coachee: I plan every week. I use a planner. I take the time on Sunday night to plan my week. None of it helps. By Tuesday, my week is in shambles.

Coach: What happens when you try to stick to your plan?

Coachee: Other tasks come up, from different people like my English teacher needs help putting up a bulletin board for the club that I'm president of. These things that are normally urgent things and that I didn't necessarily have in my plan—so wham, it's all out of kilter.

Coach: What happens if you say no to these other task that come up?

Coachee: I can't if I want to stay reputable. It doesn't work that way. If you're going to succeed at getting good grades and being involved in after school activities you have to move fast, be flexible, and respond to the fire that's burning. That's the only way to get into a good college; get good grades and be involved.

Coach: Sounds like you end up paying a pretty high price for that. It also sounds like you've got a couple of things tangled together. What if we try to separate them?

Coachee: Like what? I'm not following you.

Coach: You seem to be saying, "When people make requests of me, I need to abandon my plan."

Coachee: I'd say that's true.

Coach: So, would you be willing to play along with me here? I'd like to find an alternative point of view, just to give you some additional perspective.

Coachee: Sure.

Coach: Here are the two facts: people make requests, and you have a plan. In the past, you've said yes to the request automatically. What would be another way to deal with the requests?

Coachee: I could postpone saying yes by telling people I have to check my calendar first.

Coach: Good. What would be another way?

Coachee: I suppose I could learn to say no sometimes.

The following material is from Whitworth, Kimsey-House, H., Kimsey-House, K., & Sandahl (2011).

Powerful Questions

Anticipation	Evaluation	Fun as Perspective
What is possible?	What is the opportunity here?	If you could do anything you wanted, what would you do?
What if it works out exactly as you want it to?	What is the challenge?	Fun as Perspective
What is the dream?	How does this fit with your plans/way of life/values?	What does fun mean to you?
What is exciting to you about this?	What do you think that means?	What was humorous about the situation?
What is the urge? What does your intuition tell you?	What is your assessment?	How can you make this more fun?
Assessment	Example	If you were to teach people how to have fun, what would you say?
What do you make of it?	What is an example?	History
What do you think is best?	For instance?	What caused it?
How does it look to you?	Like what?	What led up to it?
How do you feel about it?	What would it look like?	What have you tried so far?
What resonates for you?	Exploration	What do you make of it all?
Clarification	What is here that you want to explore?	Implementation
What do you mean?	What part of the situation have you not yet explored?	What is the action plan?
What does it feel like?	What other angles can you think of?	What will you have to do to get the job done?
What is the part that is not yet clear?	For Instance	What support do you need to accomplish it?
Elaboration	If you could do it over again, what would you do differently?	Integration
Can you tell me more?	If it had been you, what would you have done?	What will you take away from this?
What else?	How else could a person handle this?	How do you explain this to yourself?
What other ideas/thoughts/feelings do you have about it?		

What was the lesson?

How can you make sure you remember what you have learned?

How would you pull all this together?

Learning

If your life depended on taking action, what would you do?

If you had free choice in the matter, what would you do?

If the same thing came up again, what would you do?

If we could wipe the slate clean, what would you do?

Options

What are the possibilities?

If you had your choice, what would you do?

What are possible solutions?

Outcomes

What do you want?

If you got it, what would you have?

How will you know you have reached it?

Perspective

When you are ninety-five years old, what will you want to say about your life?

What will you think about this five years from now?

In the bigger scheme of things, how important is this?

Planning

What do you plan to do about it?

What is your game plan?

What kind of plan do you need to create?

Predictions

How do you suppose it will all work out?

What will that get you?

Where will this lead?

Resources

What resources do you need to help you decide?

What do you know about it now?

How do you suppose you can find out more about it?

What kind of picture do you have right now?

What resources are available to you?

Starting the Session

What's occurred since we last spoke?

What would you like to talk about?

What's new/the latest/the update?

How was your week?

Where are you right now?

Substance

What seems to be the trouble?

What seems to be the main obstacle?

What is stopping you?

Summary

What is your conclusion?

How is this working?

How would you describe this?

What do you think this all amounts to?

How would you summarize the effort so far?

Taking Action

What action will you take?

What will you do? When?

Is this a time for action? What action?

Where do you go from here?

The following material is used with permission from Bergh & Smithhammer (2012).

COACHING FEEDBACK FORM

COACH: Self evaluate (2 minutes)

Did you use the model?

What went well for you? What was challenging?

COACHEE: Evaluate coach (2 minutes)

How was their presence as a coach?

Did you feel as if the coach listened well and asked relevant questions?

Was the coaching helpful in moving you forward?

OBSERVER: Evaluate coach (3 minutes)

What did they do well? What could they develop for next time?

Give them feedback on their body language and/or facial expressions.

Did they exhibit empathy and respect?

Did they use immediacy?

BALANCING INQUIRY AND ADVOCACY

(Used with permission from Bergh & Smithhammer, 2012).

