

**How do you coach leaders and their teams to change - to shift their behavior from destructive emotional intelligent habits to more constructive emotional intelligent habits ?**

***What are proven coaching processes that optimize and reward talents, results and possibilities by shifting from a passive to an active coaching approach- where the client defines the issue, understands the WHY, identifies what can and cannot change, sets the milestones and rewards, and accepts the consequence of little or stalled behavior change.***

## A Growth Paradigm

**Coaching is an opportunity to leverage leadership talent across the generations whether individually or within small group forums, both of which can steer an organization toward a constructive culture build on humanity, humility and heart.**

Coaching has shifted from a problem to a growth paradigm. Yes, often organizations refer their problem employees to coaches to fix them or the Problem. ! However, constructive, connected and compassionate cultures recognize that leadership is emotional and relational first - not heirarchical or paternal. This means everyone's role is to inspire each other to achieve business objectives with the leadership mindset of "What is Possible and not what is the Problem?"

- What are best practices?
- Who is the actual client: the leader being coached or the organization footing the bill?
- How should impact and return on investment be measured?
- Where do you draw the line between personal and business issues?
- How can confidentiality be preserved when stakeholders and team members are part of the mix?

## Establishing Ground Rules

In the beginning, the coach and coachee must clarify the ground rules, calling attention to the following key areas:

1. **Confidentiality, expectations and commitment:** The coach must be clear about what will be shared with the leader's boss and what will be kept confidential. Clarifying and aligning behavioral change with the organization's business objectives and values are crucial.
2. **Reporting relationships:** There must be clarity among the three key participants: the organizational sponsor (boss or HR representative), the coach and the leader(s)/ team being coached.
3. **Methods of information gathering:** Key stakeholders, team members, customers, board members, direct reports and others involved will be contacted by both the coach and the coachee/team.
4. **Making judgments, avoiding advice, setting objectives and monitoring progress:** The coach helps the leader and key stakeholders maintain objectivity. The coach help coachee focus on one or two behaviors, and facilitate honest sharing about progress.
5. **How, why and when the coaching will end:** Coaching parameters must be set at the beginning of the engagement, with milestones for assessing progress and a completion date (usually 3 to 18 months).

It is critical to clarify at the outset who the client is. When all understand that the company/team/customer/relationship is the client, then metrics and stakeholders become clear.

### Measuring Sustainable Success

Success *isn't* measured by:

- How well the leader performs with the coach's help. It must be judged on how well he or she performs *after* the coach has left the scene.
- How leaders feel about their own progress. It must be judged on the *changes* stakeholders perceive.
- The leader's positive feelings toward, and relationship with, the coach—a natural byproduct of a successful coaching engagement. Success is measured by demonstrated results.

### Behavioral Coaching Approach to Change

Marshall Goldsmith has been called America's foremost executive coach by several leading magazines and newspapers (*Fast Company*, *Forbes*, *Wall Street Journal*, *Harvard Business Review*). His model for behavioral coaching outlines a reliable process to help leaders achieve positive, measurable changes in themselves, their staff and their teams.

First, the coach secures an agreement with the client (the organization) and the leader being coached with respect to two key variables:

1. What are the key behaviors that will lead to the greatest positive change in leadership/team/relationship effectiveness?
2. Which key stakeholders should determine (predetermined time) if the behavior change has occurred?

3. Goldsmith and his associates work only with leaders/*teams* who:
  - Are considered good coaching candidates
  - Are seen as valued contributors
  - Have not committed an integrity violation
  - Are willing to make a sincere effort to change
  - Embrace vulnerability

### Protocols for Key Stakeholders

In this model of behavioral coaching, the coach asks key people involved in the leader's or team's performance to be a stakeholder in the coaching process. The coach sets "Stakeholder Protocols" in four critical arenas:

1. **Let go of the past.** Key stakeholders must agree to focus on a future that can improve, as opposed to a past that cannot. Goldsmith calls this process "[feedforward,](#)" in lieu of [feedback.](#)
2. **Be helpful and supportive—not cynical, sarcastic or judgmental.** If the leader/team feels this is a "should request" he or she will become defensive and engage in "right fighting behavior."
3. **Tell the truth.** Key stakeholders are advised not to gloss over or embellish their behavioral observations- good and not so good.
4. **Champion for Self-improvement.** The leader/team will ask for ongoing suggestions on what is going well and what needs to get better. Stakeholders also will be asked to select an area for improvement and solicit suggestions. This makes the process a two-way street, allowing stakeholders to serve as "fellow travelers" in the quest for self-improvement (as opposed pointing the finger at that problem leader or team who must change).

## Steps in the Behavioral Coaching Process

Research indicates that if leaders or their teams fail to complete these basic steps, they probably will not improve. Conversely, if they successfully accomplish these steps, growth is more probable.

1. *Allow leaders to be involved in determining desired behaviors.* Empower leaders and their teams to craft their improvement plan, identifying what they can and cannot change, path to victory, and impact of new behavior on culture and business goals.
2. *Let leaders assist in identifying key stakeholders.* There are two major reasons why leaders deny the validity of feedback: wrong items or wrong raters. Engagemetn in the coaching process acceeartates when the employee and boss agree on desired behaviors and key stakeholders.
3. *Collect feedback.* The coach can accomplish this by interviewing key stakeholders and/or using 360-degree rating systems.
4. *Determine key behaviors for change.* Select only one or two key behaviors that will have the most positive impact on effective leadership.
5. *Have the Coachee respond to key stakeholders.* The leader or team being coached should talk with each key stakeholder to collect additional "feedforward" suggestions on how to improve in the targeted areas. The Coachee guides the conversation - keeping it positive, simple and focused. When mistakes have been made in the past, it is generally a good idea to apologize and ask for help in changing the future. Leaders are to *listen* to stakeholder suggestions without *judging* or blaming them.
6. *Review what has been learned, and help the leader develop an action plan.* After listening to suggestions, the leader must return with a plan describing what he or she wants to accomplish. The coach helps the leader live up to each commitment and identify triggers that may trigger the unhealthy beahvioral habits.
7. *Develop an ongoing follow-up process.* Follow-up should be very efficient and focused on the future, incorporating questions like, "Based upon my behavior last month, what ideas do you have for me for next month?" Within a predetermined time, conduct a two- to six-item mini-survey with key stakeholders, asking whether the leader has become more or less effective in each targeted area for improvement.
8. *Review results and start again.* If the leader has taken the process seriously, stakeholders invariably report improvement. Build on this success by repeating the process for each behavioral habit.

This coaching model has a proven track record with leaders from some of the world's foremost organizations. When leaders practice these guidelines and work with competent executive coaches, they focus their behavior on what works best for them, their team and the company.

The coach must keep the focus on the specific behaviors selected with the leader, facilitate information collection from key stakeholders and act as a catalyst for "feedforward," emphasizing positive, measurable progress as noticed by team members and stakeholders.

# Smarter Coaching for Behavior Change

## Why Leaders Give Up

When it comes to creating new behavior, individuals start off strong, yet often fail to “stick with the program.” Regardless of a coach’s competence, failure to achieve goals may occur for several reasons:

**1. Ownership:** The more leaders feel the process is being imposed upon them or that they are just casually “trying it out,” the less likely the coaching process will work. If leaders are simply “going through the motions without an emotional commitment, their bosses must be willing to discontinue the coaching engagement.

**2. Time:** Goal setters have a natural tendency to underestimate the time needed to reach behavior targets - or create a new habits. Ordinarily, our *behavior* changes long before our coworkers *perceive* any change.

**3. Difficulty:** Goal setters’ optimism applies to difficulty, as well as time. Not only does everything take longer; it also requires hard work and consistent practice.

**4. Distractions:** Leaders underestimate or allow distractions and competing goals to take priority over personal change. By acknowledging and managing distractions, setting boundaries, and weaving behavior practice into one's daily routine, will decrease the stop-delay-start change cycle.

**5. Rewards:** Individuals who believe and really feel that any personal or professional improvement should lead to a promotion or merit raise, can become cynical, saboteurs or create a toxic emotional climate. Expectations must be discussed, clarified and aligned with business, culture, personal or relationship goals.

**6. Maintenance:** Putting in the practice and effort may seem good enough to some leaders to achieve a goal. Maintenance requires support, practice and accountability. Establishing continuous practice and rebound plans need to be part of the coaching conversation.

Behavioral Coaching requires trusted vulnerability, humility and shared accountability by all parties—the coach, coachee, boss and stakeholders. And most important, it starts with self awareness of those habits that derail leadership or relationship success, and creating new habits that brings out the best in self and others, inspiring a culture of humanity, humility and heart.

**Contact [cynthia@smart2smarter.com](mailto:cynthia@smart2smarter.com) to explore coaching solutions for your leaders and teams using an evidence-based stakeholder process that creates new habits to bring out the best in self and others.**

Goldsmith, M., Lyons, L. & Freas, A. eds. *Coaching for Leadership: How the World's Greatest Coaches Help Leaders Learn*. Jossey Bass/Pfeiffer. San Francisco, CA.

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