
RYP QUARTERLY

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21 Practical Ways to Cultivate a Coaching Mindset

The Right Coaching Mindset is a Pre-Requisite Before Learning Any Coaching Skills

Research conducted in 2024 by Oxford has revealed that the #1 requirement for Front-Line Leaders in their quest to engage and influence staff is to adopt a Coaching Mindset. This must precede any coaching skill development program.

The Research highlighted two ingredients that maximise the likelihood of any coaching skill acquisition program being effective, and thus providing a return on investment:

Ingredient #1: Front-Line Leaders Assume a Coaching Mindset

Ingredient #2: Any skill learned is applied within 6 Days of Learning

The Prerequisite for Any Effective Coaching Skill Development Process is a Coaching Mindset

Adopting a Coaching Mindset:

Adopting a Coaching Mindset requires leaders to see themselves as a Coach. Thus, a leader's fundamental role is to coach their team to improve performance and ensure standards meet expectations, without the need for constant supervision. Coaching is a subset of Leadership. It is about engaging, equipping, and empowering teams and individuals to perform at maximum potential. A Coaching Mindset entails the need for:

1. Active Listening
2. Being curious and having a growth mindset
3. Having empathy for others and a certain level of emotional intelligence
4. Facilitating empowerment and responsibility into others
5. Creating an emotionally safe environment for two-way feedback
6. Buckets of patience and resilience
7. A climate of continuous improvement

Introducing: The 21 Practical Ways to Cultivate a Coaching Mindset

Attribute	Descriptors
Active Listening	1. Leader listens to understand – not listen to reply 2. In meetings, the Leader listens to others and talks less – asks more questions 3. The Leader makes time to formally and informally check in with team members and listen to how they are (personally and professionally)
Curiosity – Growth Mindset	4. The Leader is curious and does not pre-judge people 5. The Leader fosters an endless focus on growth and development (team & personal) 6. Encourages on-the-job learning and development opportunities
Empathy	7. The Leader is genuinely interested and concerned for people 8. Understands people have personal and family commitments 9. Prioritises wellbeing over all other priorities
Empowerment	10. Understands empowerment is about Commitment, Confidence, Competence, and Permissions 11. Does not micromanage people once they have been given authority 12. Backs and supports the decisions made by their staff
Emotional Safety	13. Leader creates a welcoming environment where feedback is treated as a gift without any fear of retribution 14. Actively seeks new ideas and welcomes feedback from others 15. Demonstrates gratitude for feedback, and publicly acknowledges people for their contributions
Patience & Resilience	16. The leader keeps cool in difficult circumstances 17. Focuses on solutions to problems, not laying blame on others or seeking retribution 18. Constantly affirms and validates the mindsets and desired behaviours
Continuous Improvement	19. Creates an environment for continuous improvement 20. Links improvement to feedback. Without feedback, no progress can occur 21. Has a mechanism and methodology for driving progress

Adopting a Coaching Mindset is both a mindset and a discipline.

- Mindset is how the Leader thinks and behaves.
- Discipline is how the leader pursues their coaching through their symbolic habits, rituals and routines

These provide the necessary ingredients and mechanisms upon which the Coaching Dynamic occurs.

Apply Learnt Coaching Skills:

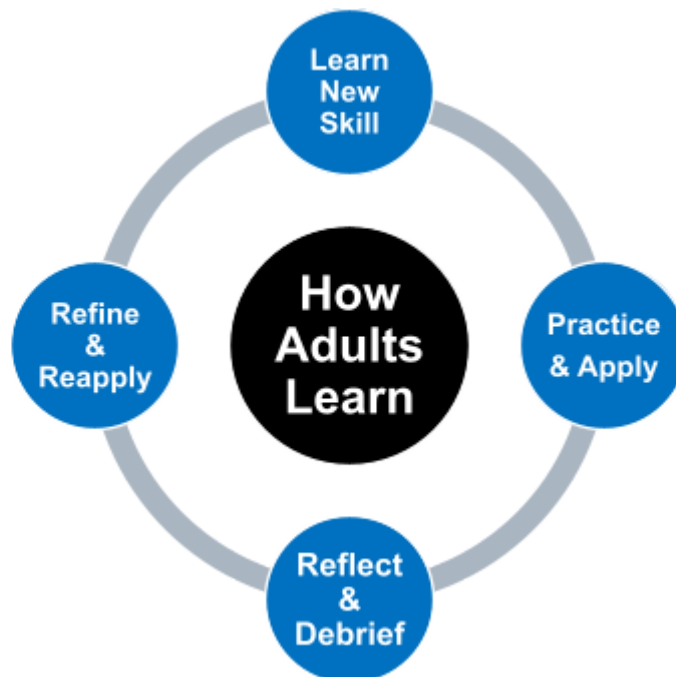
Adults learn by doing. Coaching skills are developed and acquired over time, and require constant practice and application, otherwise they diminish. Research highlights that adults will lose 85% of what they learn within 6 days of learning. So many training regimes and programs are a total waste of time, effort and money because there is no structured mechanism to apply what has been learnt.

Learning without Application is Useless

Any new skill learnt must have a mandate and opportunity for it to be applied. This is especially true of coaching skills. Part of a coaching mindset is to apply what has been learnt, insist on critical reflection, and then reapply the learning. This is a crucial step for any learning and skill mastery process.

Without Feedback and Reflection, no Learning can occur

How Adults Learn: Learn – Practice & Apply – Reflect & Debrief – Refine & Reapply



Adult Learning Cycle:

Adults always bring to any learning setting their own lived experiences, observations, past learnings, and opinions. Hence, any new skill acquisition needs to be first processed, and then it requires practice and application. Any new skill attempted, practice, and application requires reflection and feedback, and a debrief. This is the critical learning process, as without application and reflection, no learning can take place. If this process does occur, then it is more likely the refinement and maturity of any new skill will take place.

“The Critical 6 Days”

It is not enough to say you enjoyed a learning experience. There must be a practice and application mechanism of any new skill. Otherwise, it will be lost and forgotten, rendering any training as a total and utter waste of time and resources.

A simple yet game-changing skill acquisition discipline is to adopt the six-day principle. That is, have a crack at applying a new coaching skill learnt within six days of learning. This ensures that there is an increased likelihood of being able to recall what was learnt.

Research shows that where there is no practice and application of any new skill within 6 days of learning, 85% of the content will be lost or forgotten. This is an important feature too often overlooked or ignored when conducting training and professional learning.

The key is for leaders to enforce and endorse the need to practice and apply what is learnt. This requires a mechanism and methodology to do this, not just a demand. This can be as simple as a leader checking in with a debriefing with their staff on how they have applied what they learnt. This forces staff to reflect and share what they did. It will soon become self-evident if they have not done

The World is full of Managers stating "I done things like this before" when undergoing leadership training. Often, the obvious response needs to be "How come you have then not implemented and applied what you have learnt?" Every workplace is full of Managers who have undergone management training and never applied what they learnt. If they have a Coaching Mindset in the first place, will have a greater likelihood to apply what they learn.

No Appetite to Coach – No Application! It is simple as that!

anything. A leader must permit staff to attempt and apply any new skill.

How Executive Leaders Create a Coaching Mindset Amongst Managers

What any senior leader's role models and constantly endorses and enforces with managers and supervisors will have the biggest impact on creating a coaching mindset. To be clear, without a coaching mindset being in place, any skill acquisition to enhance coaching skills will have negligible impact. In one ear out the other as the saying goes.

Eighteen Tips for Leaders to Implement a Coaching Mindset with their Team

1. Shift from Directive to Facilitative Leadership
2. Actively empower managers to be responsible for Coaching Performance
3. Encourage on-the-job growth & development over formal classroom training
4. Actively listen in meetings (this is a key Leadership attribute)
5. Ask questions – Facilitate discursive problem solving
6. Encourage ownership for decision making and taking proactive action to problems and issues (you can always coach up the effectiveness of an action or decision)
7. Promote the need for adaptability and resilience to issues and problems
8. Foster a psychological safe environment for all – this will help fuel a propensity to provide the gift of feedback
9. Demonstrate an appreciation for a divergence of views with staff
10. Approach conflict resolution without emotional outbursts, but in an objective manner
11. Be curious and think "above the line" when addressing problems and issues
12. Encourage peer-to-peer coaching – so staff will see this is an expected behaviour and mindset
13. Be externally focused. Understand the needs of customers and key stakeholders intimately and deeply
14. Encourage ideas and innovations to pursue continuous improvement
15. Foster the importance of long-term relationships
16. Seek feedback on how effective your coaching is as a Leader
17. Role model self-reflection and self-awareness
18. Be open to learning and new ways of doing things

The above all require coaching and encouragement by a Leader.

The Benefits to the Organisation by Leaders Adopting a Coaching Mindset

The Oxford Research suggests that the following benefits occur with Leaders who adopt a Coaching Mindset. There are increases in the levels of:

- Trust & Psychological Safety in the team
- A propensity for staff to proactively see and act on issues
- Morale and Team Cohesion
- Communication and knowledge sharing
- Team engagement and a sense of belonging
- Team adaptability and the volunteering of ideas
- Team collaboration and alignment
- An ability to resolve conflict and have direct conversations
- Customer satisfaction
- Team performance standards

Finally:

A Coaching Mindset is what transforms a workplace to create a climate of team engagement, a sense of progress, continual improvement, and team alignment

Leadership Lesson:

A Coaching Mindset Embraces Curiosity Over Judgement and Growth Over Comfort.

Coaching Is a Life Skill

Facta Non-Verba – Deeds Not Words



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