

TOP 10 COACHING MISTAKES

AND HOW TO AVOID REPEATING THEM



01 | WORKING TOO HARD

Most leaders I know are smart, resourceful, talented, and very committed. They have built their careers and, truth be known, their lives working harder than most others. As a coach, this is no longer your job. Your job is to encourage and challenge those being coached to do the hard work.

DOGGEDLY FOLLOWING A COACHING SYSTEM | 02

There are lots of step-by-step coaching systems out there, and they have one thing in common: They don't work. Certainly, it can be helpful to think of goals and options and ways forward; however, great coaching conversations rarely follow a pattern. They leap forward, circle back, go deep, change direction—they go wherever the ground is most fertile.

03 | NOT SAYING WHAT NEEDS TO BE SAID

Great coaching requires courage. The conversations can be uncertain, emotional, and even confrontational. Walk away empty. Finish the conversation knowing that nothing important was left unsaid.

NEGLECTING TO ASK THE OTHER PERSON HOW YOU CAN BE MOST HELPFUL

04

Unimportant topics quickly evaporate in a good coaching conversation. The great coach always starts with one question: “What’s the most important thing we can be talking about right now?”



05

ASSUMING THAT THE OTHER PERSON NEEDS TO BE FIXED

Even with the best of intentions, it's easy to be drawn into repairperson mode. That's not our job. We all have deficiencies, weaknesses, and flaws. Sure, we may be able to help the other person minimize the negative impact of these characteristics, but our main job is to help them use their natural giftedness to function at a higher level and, in the process, craft a better future for themselves.



TALKING TOO MUCH

06

Most of us love the sound of our own voices. Most of us are quite uncomfortable with extended silence during a conversation. Great coaches understand that silence creates space for reflection and contemplation. They also recognize they can often be most helpful by saying nothing, listening deeply, and allowing the other person to talk through his or her aspirations, dilemmas, and passions.

A woman with short curly hair and glasses, wearing a bright yellow sweater, is leaning over a desk. She is holding a pen in her right hand and looking down at a laptop screen. On the desk, there is a small potted plant, a green cup with pens, and some papers. The background is a blurred office setting.

07

OWNING THE OUTCOME

We all want to win, and it is natural for us to want credit for our victories. Coaching is different. The person being coached owns all the victories (and failures). When we are at our best, it is not unusual for the person being coached to say “My coach was pretty good, but I really did most of the important stuff by myself.”

A woman with long brown hair, wearing a white collared shirt, is sitting at a desk. She is gesturing with her hands while talking to someone whose back is to the camera. The background is a blurred office setting.

GIVING LOTS OF ADVICE

08

We love to give advice. We sincerely believe that we are being helpful, and it strokes our egos a bit at the same time. Unfortunately, this is a very weak form of coaching. Great coaches severely limit the advice they give, choosing, instead, to do the things that help others gain insight and take action, such as encouraging, challenging, inquiring, confronting, affirming, and questioning.

A coaching conversation is not intended to advance the interests of both parties; it is all about the person being coached. Great coaches prepare for this conversation by putting aside, temporarily, their priorities, concerns, problems, etc., so they can focus solely on the other person. They also spend time contemplating the other person's aspirations, talents, challenges, and the like so they can make the conversation all about him or her and his or her future.

Great coaching always has two outcomes: insight and action. If something does not change, it's not coaching; it's just an interesting conversation. Always challenge the person being coached to commit to specific actions that will advance his or her cause in a significant way.





**ARE YOU DOING ENOUGH TO EQUIP YOUR LEADERS TO BE
MORE COACH-LIKE IN THEIR EVERYDAY INTERACTIONS?**

Coaching is a critical tool that high-performance organizations use to hone specific skills in high-potential talent and help them reach full potential more quickly. Bluepoint Leadership Development can help.

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