

DON'T "DR PHIL" ME, BUT WHICH CAME FIRST? THE CHICKEN OR THE EGG – COACHING OR PSYCHOLOGY?

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(C) Coaching and psychology are often viewed as disparate concepts, consequently falsely arguing to be viewed as totally different spheres. However, the professional 'hard hitter' coach is generally a well-schooled and street savvy, psychologist. Don't get me wrong, many a good coach is not a formally qualified psychologist, but they do have a certain edge, possibly in terms of business or other experience and, of course, that all elusive street savvy with which to

advise their clients. But that is where the advantage ends.

In the midst of the ongoing debate of whether a coach should be formally qualified or not, it is necessary to consider the fact that effective coaching requires a platform – a framework from which to proceed. The average coaching session cannot be conducted effectively without meaningful insight into the individual or team being assessed for growth.

Building momentum in the coaching relationship requires a valid framework for understanding the building blocks of the desired outcome. The rudder that steers the coaching ship is the sound and tested set of underpinnings of the behavioural model. The question must be asked: If the coach doesn't understand the individual or the team's style of thinking, influencing, adapting or delivering, how will the growth and development be focused, steered and managed? It would be like sowing tomato seeds but believing

that cherries are going to sprout!

Once the individual or team agrees to a coaching relationship, and the individual or team has committed to growth and development, potentially fertile grounds exist. But to inhibit this growth without establishing a comprehensive understanding of the individual's or team's style is a gross disservice to the client. Effective coaching has to be measurable and must show added value at all organisational levels at any time throughout the process.

In order to prepare a viable and visible performance overview or template of the process, a thorough understanding and use of well validated and constantly reviewed and updated psychometrics in the leadership development coaching environment is essential. No coaching intervention can be executed successfully without an in-depth understanding of the 'dynamic styles' and the subtleties that distinguish individuals and team members. There is no way that this can be determined



without proper framing - of detailed performance framework that can be measured at regular intervals.

In order for the outcomes of the coaching relationship or team coaching process to create lasting value to the organisation, the skilful and responsible coach would want to understand the dispositions of the individuals, thus ensuring optimal growth and development.

Anybody can be taught to listen and reflect. That is, in fact, a rudimentary capability we 'learn' from the moment of birth. What differentiates the expert listener from others is the understanding, and grasping, of the dynamics of the individual styles and the conceptual semantics attendant thereto. The impact of the individual styles on the team and on the organisation and the shadows of the behavioural predispositions cast on the organisation should be analysed and thoroughly understood. The responsible developmental professional must understand the imperative of ensuring and

establishing an in-depth understanding of the unique predispositions that underlie decisions, thoughts, behaviours and preferences of the individual and the team. While, subconsciously most individuals know what they want, they do not consciously know it. Additionally, they will have 'learned' to believe certain behaviours and attitudes may be how to act and or think, as it were.

The skilled coach's job, therefore, is to assist the client to understand and challenge the gap between unconscious and conscious with the view to get from what they have been taught to believe to what they know. This facilitation is all but impossible to effect in the absence of the psychometric picture. The ethical and responsible coaching professional always exercises discretion and will limit his/her interventions in accordance with their level of proficiency, whereas less skilled and unsupervised coaches lacking a substantive support network who find themselves confronted by situations beyond their capabilities and who

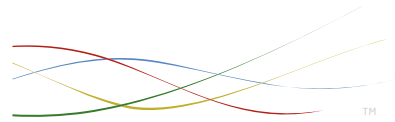
do not want to give up work will be tempted to "wing it", applying Dr Phil or alternative methods. Not only is this unethical and ineffective but, in the worst case, potentially dangerous!

Establishing the state of optimal flow within the individual, the team and the organisation requires an in-depth understanding of the psychological archetypes of the client, which indeed, necessitates a thorough understanding of the basic tenets of psychology.

Consider that at least 40% of Fortune 500 companies use coaching as a primary method to create lasting value in terms of enhanced individual, team and organisational performance. It reflects the value of the coaching intervention and thus provides impetus to the professionalisation of the coaching profession.

To ensure the best possible developmental coaching intervention always insist on measurable, responsible and professional coaching methodologies. Don't let any Tom, Dick, Harry or Sally tell you otherwise. ([HRJ](#))

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