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ADVISORY



DISPOSITION OF COACHES

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While coaches have to be technically subject agnostic, are there certain archetypes that emerge, when we study the coaches that operate within the business or organizational framework?

Lately I have noticed that the need for executive coaching within organizations has increased tremendously. If supply is any indicator of demand real or perceived, I think we are witnessing a tsunami of coaches who are passionate and trained to take this profession to the next level.

My own experience as an executive coach, as a Master Trainer for a global coaching organization where my role was to train and supervise new coaches, and also as a professional who was a core team member, tasked to design and implement a coaching culture for one of the biggest global conglomerates, helped me to witness some interesting aspects linked to the background of a coach and the coaching areas that were jointly identified by them in many of the coaching discussions.

As I start jotting down my experiences, I am reminded of few quotes

The beauty you see in me is a reflection of you. -Rumi

Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves- Carl Jung

While helping several executives in their journey of becoming a coach, I realized that three broad categories emerged. To make it simple, I call it the 3Ds of coaches' dispositions.

Direction Coach:

Imagination is more important than knowledge- Albert Einstein

Here is a coach who is in his/her elements when the coaching area is finding a new "Direction". When the area of coaching identified is vision, future, where do we go from here, what next, how the future can be imagined, etc. I realized that professionals who have been/ are entrepreneurs, initiated and led greenfield sites/projects, led expansion or new markets, involved in conceptualizing a new possibility like a product, charting a new course for their organization or a business unit etc, feel homely and enthused to be a coach in such assignments.

Area of caution- coming across as fuzzy, abstract, metaphorical

Diver Coach:

"What a liberation to realize that the "voice in my head" is not who I am. Who am I then? The one who sees that."- Eckhart Tolle

Here is a coach whose self resonates the most when the coaching area is finding a deeper meaning, purpose, the "why" hiding behind many layers of outward existence. This type of coach is amazingly great when the coachee needs help in the area of values, finding out real drivers, beliefs, what holds the coachee back, uncovering fears/ inhibitions, what really matters to the coachee, who is the coachee from inside if all social programming is removed. Individuals who have a background in helping professions e.g. psychology, therapy, HR, human process consultants, professionals who have led successful turn-around management for organizations etc usually seem to do great work in such assignments.

Area of caution- scratching the surface more than required

Doer Coach:

Knowing is not enough; we must apply. Willing is not enough; we must do.- Johann Wolfgang von Goethe

The Doer coach is in perfect rhythm when the area of coaching is about helping the coachee to get into action, getting things done, like planning, reaching out, forming network/connections etc anything that involves helping the coachee to take action so that the inertia that perhaps is crippling the coachee gets broken and the energy and momentum is built up to ensure movement. At the heart of every coaching conversation, there lies an action component, what differentiates the Doer coach is his/her promptness in arriving at “actionables”. A lot of successful business leaders/managers when they start coaching, they seem to be extremely good in this area. The larger the span in terms of geography, market, team that this coach has or is handling as a manager, more polished and sophisticated are the tools and methods that he/she has to enable the coachee to “do” something.

Area of caution- action mistaken as real progress

We know that a coach is someone who helps the coachee to help themselves, it is also not absolutely untrue that we tend to see our own self in the other person. The ability to detach oneself so that we truly understand the state of being of another person and meet the coachee where he/she is, isn't an easy ask.

For a lot of coaches who have been successful professionals and/or want to be acknowledged as competent and successful professionals, this need itself becomes a detriment in coaching. Very early on they start looking for breakthroughs in the conversation. If it's not happening, in some cases, it starts building anxiety about their own competence as a coach and at times it is at this stage that one starts seeing sign of a coaching area which perhaps relates more to the experience and disposition of the coach rather than the coachee's genuine need. In some of my conversations with budding coaches as part of the supervision process, this phenomenon got repeated several times.

The above classification is based on my own experiences, it is not an attempt to typecast coaches. I have met many wonderful coaches who are great human beings. Their ability to connect and help, is a combination of experience, skill, mindset, values and a degree of intuitiveness which makes them easily and deeply relate to people across cultures, geographies, race, gender, age etc. In their company I noticed how effortlessly through a process of authentic conversation they enable the coachee to frame an issue/problem/challenge and then make the coachee see clearly the view that he/she holds, challenge some assumptions/beliefs and then help the coachee to frame options, solutions, possibilities to make things move forward. They can connect deeply with the coachee and yet maintain a distance. They are aware of their own dispositions and perhaps it is this awareness that allows them to transcend it.

***To know more about creating a coaching ecosystem, connect with us
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