

DR. LOIS FRANKEL

Get and keep the job you want.

Last week when I facilitated a coach-the-coach seminar I told the story about when I was first asked by a client to coach someone. That was over 20 years ago and not many people (including me) had heard of business coaching. I naively suggested to the client that I teach the person's boss how to coach him so that she would get a better return on her investment. I'll never forget her reply, "Lois, you know they're not going to do it." All these years later I can verify that she was right. The coaching team at CCI remains gainfully employed because supervisors and managers don't take the time, don't know how, or don't want to learn how to coach.

As much as it may seem like I'm shooting myself in the foot, I want to give you 8 tips for how to be a great coach.

1. **It's all in the relationship.** You can't coach if you haven't taken the time to build a strong relationship with your staff. Without the relationship they'll just assume you're setting them up for progressive discipline. Spend time every day getting to know your staff – and letting them get to know you. Trust me, the time you spend will pay dividends.
2. **Be religious about following the 7:1 rule.** You must give seven pieces of positive feedback for every one piece of developmental feedback if you don't want to be perceived as overly critical. Catch people in the act of doing things right and reinforce it – even when they're just doing what's expected of them.
3. **Be clear about your expectations.** When you delegate projects, discuss timelines, outcomes, and how success will be measured. Don't expect your staff to be mind-readers.
4. **Coach when you observe behavior that can be improved.** Major league coaches don't wait til the end of the season or even the end of the game to coach their players. They coach after plays and innings. If you coach regularly, those dreaded performance reviews become pro forma – you've done the real work of developing employees throughout the year.
5. **Coach people onto the playing field.** The workplace is a playing field with rules, boundaries and strategies. Your job is to make sure players are on the field rather than out-of-bounds. Framing it this way takes away the judgment and allows you to focus on helping the person to succeed.
6. **Coach the soft skills and the hard skills.** Many times managers are hesitant to coach someone who is being too abrasive, too passive, not a problem-solver, etc. They feel it's not tangible enough to talk about. You've heard me say it before, doing the job you were hired for and doing it well is just table stakes. Workplace success is contingent upon so much more than doing the job and your job as a coach is to help people develop all the skills needed to add value to your organization.
7. **Be a servant leader.** Robert Greenleaf coined the term to describe the way in which leaders (and coaches) must serve their followers so the followers can be effective. If your staff isn't serving you as well as you might like, the question to ask yourself is how well am I serving them?
8. **Prepare for every coaching session.** When it comes to coaching, winging it doesn't cut it. Trying using the language, "where you're getting stuck, and what you could do differently." Again, it's not about judging the person, it's about getting them onto the playing field.

For a free copy of my **Coaching Effectiveness Inventory** reply to this e-mail with the phrase "Free Inventory" in the subject line and we'll e-mail it to you.

Until next month, stay well.

Lois

Lois P. Frankel, Ph.D.