

PHILOSOPHY *of* COACHING

By Kay Psencik

Great coaching is an art. It involves skillfully asking questions and challenging assumptions. Coaching opens participants to changing the way they think about themselves, their leadership, and the opportunities they have to shape their own futures and the future of their schools. Coaching does not mean telling others what to do or how to solve their problems. It is not training. It is not being an empathetic friend. Coaching helps those being coached grow more confident and competent in leading and learning.

Here is a sample of one coach's philosophy of coaching. Use the form on p. 57 to develop your own philosophy of coaching.



The values that guide my actions in coaching others:

- I care greatly about my coachee's success. I will do whatever it takes to listen well, to be thoughtful about my questions, and to learn aggressively how to coach well.
- I will treat the coachee with respect at all times. I will keep my coachee's confidence. I will build trust by being reliable.
- I will focus on developing my coachee's competence and confidence to lead. Both are significantly important to being respected by others.
- I will listen from the coachee's point of view. I know I have experiences that shaped my leadership, but my experiences are not my coachee's experiences, my solutions not his solutions.

My beliefs about learning:

- Learning means changing behavior.
- Learning is energizing and a powerful force in a leader's success in complex times and within complex organizations.
- Learning is collaborative and organic. The more I work with others, the faster and better I learn.

My hopes and aspirations for those I coach:

I hope that they develop the skills, attitudes, dispositions, and behaviors essential to lead communities where all are learning aggressively.

My purpose in coaching principals:

I want to watch school leaders grow and learn so that more children in our community and nation are skilled, confident, and ready for the challenges they will face when they leave K-12 education.

The things I need to learn to be more effective as a coach:

- To listen well and ask strategic questions.
- To develop the wisdom and thoughtfulness to lead others to discover who they are, what they are learning, and the power they have to shape their futures and the futures of others.

ESTABLISH YOUR OWN

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The things I need to learn to be more effective as a coach:

Source: Psencik, K. (2011). *The coach's craft: Powerful practices to support school leaders*. Oxford, OH: Learning Forward.