



## Coach Approach Ministries Podcast

### Episode 2: Expanding Your Leadership Capacity

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**Brian Miller:** Episode #2: Expanding your leadership capacity. I think, and I want to be careful here, but I think he likes being the expert, and maybe you like being the expert. Maybe you like it that everybody comes to you and says, “Hey, we’ve got a problem, and we need you to solve it,” and you’re like, “Can’t anybody else do anything around here?” But secretly, you’re like, “I like it that they come to me cause I’m the smartest person in the room, and I know it, and now they do too.”

[Intro Music]

**Brian:** Welcome to the *Coach Approach Ministries Podcast*. Coaching is a skillset and a mindset that helps people find focus, discover options, and take action. At CAM, we train the very best Christian coaches in the world, and over the last decade, we’ve trained well over a thousand coaches. Through this podcast, we want to share insights from the coaching community and help you to develop a broader understanding of coaching. You can find out more about us at [www.coachapproachministries.org](http://www.coachapproachministries.org), and sign up for our proven coach training.

Brian is the strategic director for Coach Approach Ministries and the director of the CAM Community of Coaches. He loves to think, write, and talk about coaching, and how to build a coaching culture. Brian was the founding pastor of the Crossover Church in Mattoon, IL which began in 2000. He has served on numerous non-profit boards including Habitat for Humanity, Williams Elementary PTO, and New Life for Haiti. Brian brings considerable coaching experience to help clients gain clarity and confidence. He has been married for almost 25 years to the love of his life, Danelle, and they have three wonderful children. They reside in Mattoon, IL.

We hope you enjoy this talk given by Brian Miller at Winebrenner Theological Seminary in Findlay, OH entitled, *Expanding Your Leadership Capacity*.

**Host:** At this time I want to introduce to you our new president. Some of you may have met him, some of you may have not, but Dr. Brent Sleasman is here, and he’s going to come, and he’s going to introduce our speaker and offer prayer for our meeting today. Let’s welcome Dr. Sleasman as he comes.

[Applause]

**Brent Sleasman:** Welcome today. It’s good to have you at this event, and it is my privilege and honor to introduce Brian Miller who will be with us in just a few moments. In addition to the other qualifications

that I'm going to share, just on a personal note, I've known Brian, and it makes me feel old just to say this, but for almost 25 years, and I consider him to be a good friend, and so not only is it someone who is incredibly qualified, but someone who has that capacity as well for enduring friends such as myself, and that says quite a bit even though you don't know me, and if you did, that would be funny. We'll proceed with the plan. Brian is currently the strategic director for Coach Approach Ministries, and in addition to that relatively new role for him, he has served on non-profit boards for Habitat for Humanity, New Life for Haiti, the Williams Elementary PTO.

In addition to those items, he served as a pastor for 20 years and 16 years of those was as the founding pastor of the church plant The Crossover in Mattoon, IL, and that was the most recent pastoral position that Brian shared. He has been married to the same woman, Danelle, for 20 wonderful years, and he has three wonderful children, and I'm sure that if you found time to talk with him, he has plenty of things to share about being married, being a parent, in addition to his topic today. I'd like to invite Brian to come, and let's welcome Brian to our event today.

[Applause]

**Brent:** We're going to go ahead and pray for Brian, for our time together, and then we'll turn the session over to him. Let's pray. Father, thank you for this time to come and to be part of the work of your kingdom. Father, we thank you for the fellowship, the love that you extend to us, and Father, we pray for Brian, and we pray with him today that as he challenges us to expand our leadership capacity, we'll also be willing to listen to your voice and be able to interact with him and just learn about what you're challenging each one of us to better understand about ourselves. Father, we're grateful for the gift that you've given to each one of us in Jesus Christ, and we ask that this session in glorifying to you, and Father, allow your spirit to work through Brian as we share this time together. We pray this in your holy name, amen.

**Brian:** Thank you. Thanks. It's good to be here with you today. I'm kind of relaxed about speaking. I hope that comes across. Once in a while I'll say something you might think, "Was that supposed to be funny?" Probably. Okay? Just so you know. Don't feel bad. I wanted to talk about expanding your leadership capacity, and I'm excited. The more I think about expanding your leadership capacity, the more excited I get about that topic. I come at this topic as a leadership coach, so you're going to here coaching throughout the piece, there's no doubt, and how I might be able to show you some skills that you might be able to use as a coach. I've only got 15 minutes, so you're not going to leave here fully equipped, but maybe I can give you some ideas about how to expand your leadership capacity.

I think in my bio, it says I've been married over 20 years. This will be our 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, Danelle and I. We'll be married 25 years in June, and I'll tell you what, she's the love of my life. We're partners, we're friends, it's good to be married and be friends, isn't it? It doesn't always happen. She's just a delight to me, and in our partnership we are raising three children. Alyssa is 20 and at university, and Cayden is 16, he's a junior in high school, and Ethan is 14. He got out of the thirteens and it didn't kill him, and I just praise God for that. Sometimes he was 13 all day. I mean, I'm telling you, it was a deal, and our goal for these children has been to raise great adults who do not come back home. Anybody relate to that as a goal?

Some people love to have great children. I don't care whether I have great children or not. I want to have great adults who do not come back home. I want them to visit, then I want them to leave, and I

want them to take their kids with them, and their dogs, and whatever else they bring. I want them to go home, and I don't do that for my own selfishness. I do it for their good because I want them to be responsible people who are able to provide for themselves, cope in this changing world, be able to take risk and fail, and get back up and try something again. I want them to have that in them and be able to, you know, have that for a life. Now, the statistics are that 1 in 3 children come back home, and I told you how many I have. I'm at almost 100% on that, so I've got to work at this.

So as I give that framework for you, I want to expand my leadership capacity in every way. I want to expand it in my home, and I want to expand it in my work and in your work, and maybe in your home too, but that's not what I'm here to talk about. There are three ways I want to tell you you can expand your leadership capacity today. The first one is that you see the other person as the expert. The second one is that you create an environment of discovery, and the third one is that you partner with them for their success. So let me take the first one. You could expand your leadership capacity by seeing the other person as the expert. I pastored for 20 years, as Brent said, and by the way, I am a proud graduate of Winebrenner Theological Seminary. '94! Both of us did real well that year, so... No, it was bigger than that, obviously, but I am proud of being here.

So, 20 years, and I was sitting in a hospital waiting room, and one of my young leaders was having his second child, he wasn't, his wife was, and it was a cesarean, it was scheduled, we were there. Anticipation. That's the best reason to be at the hospital, right? For a baby's delivery, and my wife was there with me. It was exciting. She works a lot, so she was able to be there with me. The husband was there waiting to be asked back. He was really nervous, you know? And the grandparents were there. One specific grandparent, the father of the young leader in my church, his phone began to ring while we sat there, and he answered his phone, and it was work, and he had to... Boy, he would tell me what the problem is, and then he told them exactly what to do, and then he got off the phone, and then the phone rang again, and it was work.

And he'd listen to them, and they'd tell him what the problem was, and he'd tell them exactly what to do, and then he got off the phone. It wasn't ten minutes later, his phone rang. I wonder who it is? It was work, and he stepped outside this time and was gone for 30 or 40 minutes, and I said to his wife, "Is it always like this?" She goes, "Even on vacation." He's the expert, and I think, and I want to be careful here, but I think he likes being the expert, and maybe you like being the expert. Maybe you like it that everybody comes to you and says, "Hey, we've got a problem, and we need you to solve it," and you're like, "Can't anybody else do anything around here?" But secretly, you're like, "I like it that they come to me cause I'm the smartest person in the room, and I know it, and now they do too."

But to expand your leadership capacity, you have to move from you being the expert to them being the expert. I just started coaching a really bright young woman that's working at a non-profit, and she has staff, really young staff, like even 16 years old and some college age staff, and some of them are on site and some of them are not on site, and as she came into the job, she found that they work a lot harder when they see her, and other times, she sees them checking their phone and they don't take as much responsibility, and as soon as we saw that, I think this absolutely applies, that she needs to immediately stop seeing herself as the expert and letting them see her as the expert but to see them as the expert, and as they begin seeing themselves as the expert in their own situation, they stop standing around, they start looking around, they start taking responsibility because they're the expert of that situation.

And it really is true. Nobody knows more about that situation than even that young worker who's in that situation with that kid, or whatever that situation is. People know their own lives better than you do. They know their job better than you do, and they know their selves better than you do, and I'll get to that. So you need to make a shift from seeing yourself as the expert to seeing other as the expert, and I think as a Christian, it's not that hard to do that because these are godly people developed with the image of God. I believe that with all my heart. So I think we can look at them and say, "There's something there. God made them available and responsible." Let me show you the second one. The first one is, so if I want to expand your leadership capacity, you can do that by seeing the other person as the expert.

The second thing you can do is create an environment of discovery. You want to go from being a teller to being an asker, and I don't mean you want to ask permission, you know? Instead of saying, "I want you to go do this," instead you should say, "Hey, would you please go do this? Maybe. If you have time?" That's not what I'm saying. That's not the kind of atmosphere of discover that I'm talking about. I was coaching a pastor, and the pastor felt stuck. The pastor felt like he could not move his church off of the, you know... It just wouldn't take one step, and he was frustrated, and he was getting angry. It was just getting out of hand, and instead of telling him what to do because I'm not the expert of his church, he's the expert of his church. He knows that church better than anybody else besides God, and so I started asking questions, discovery questions, open-ended questions so he could begin to get some perspective.

So that he could see this maybe not just from his own angle. He needs to see it from his own angle, but he could see it from his leader's angle, and he could see it from his congregation's angle, and he could see it from the community's angle, and he could see it from God's angle, and he got some perspective on that church, and he could see it from a much more broad sense. Here's the analogy. I use it all the time. He felt like he was running into a wall, but after he got a good look at it, he saw that it was a post, and then you feel kind of silly running yourself into a post over and over again. You can walk around a post, but you're creating that kind of atmosphere of discovery, asking open-ended questions that first of all, you can't say yes or no to an open-ended question.

You ever pick a kid up from school, "How was school today?" "Good." That's not an open-ended question. What was the best thing that happened today? What was the worst thing that happened today? What was your best encounter today? Something that makes people think makes them make connections, see it from another perspective. It's a shift from telling to asking. It's a major shift. Let me tell you about the third shift. The third shift is partnering for their success. The first shift I'm not the expert, they're the expert, and that's even when I talk about my children. I want my children to be the expert of their lives. I want them to know they know about. I want to make an environment of discovery not only for my children, but for my employees so that they can begin to ask good questions.

I worked for IBM right out of college, and their motto was "Think." Think. Think about it. Think about your situation, and the third one is partnering for their success. So I'm not partnering for my success. I'm not just glad to have a lot of people around me so I can be more successful. If I want to expand my leadership capacity, I need to partner for their success, and that's a shift from my success to their success. Dave Ramsey who's a financial guru and quite the guy in business, and his business is always #1 Place to work in Franklin, TN which is right outside Nashville. Every year.

My favorite story that he tells is this one. He says, "When somebody comes into my office and they sit across from me, it's like they have a monkey on their shoulder, and when they sit down, immediately that monkey jumps onto my desk," and he said, "My one goal for that meeting is that, when this is over, that monkey gets back on their shoulder and walks out with them." Because the truth is, some of us like to collect monkeys. We like it when people bring their monkeys in, and some of us pastors, we've got a pastor's heart, and so we say, "Why don't you just let me hang onto that monkey for you for a couple days, give you a break." That's a mistake as a leader, so we're partnering with them for their success.

As a coach, let me make this really clear, this is where the shift occurs, and I think you can hear it, I don't coach a problem. I never coach a problem. I always coach a person. I almost don't care what the problem is. If someone comes to you with a problem, you almost always sit down and say, "Well let me think about that. Tell me what you've tried, so I can know what the deal is, so I can understand it." You don't need to ask. When I ask questions on that second shift, when I ask questions on discovery, there's two questions I never ask: One that I want to know the answer to. Because if I want to know the answer to it, so I can solve it, and the second one is, I never ask a question they know the answer to because why do I want to hear them say what they already know?

That's not discovery. So in this point when I partner with them, I don't coach the problem, I coach the person. How can they lean in to it? What kind of strengths do they bring to the situation that might just make this work? You know, the greatest sports heroes in the history of sport are the lousiest coaches because they think, "You should do it just like I did it." They just don't even understand that different people bring different strengths. So that's the three shifts I want you to look at making. A shift from you're the expert, and you kind of have to humble yourself, and look at other people, and look at them more deeply, and quit being pessimistic about how other people just aren't as smart as you. The second shift is from telling people to asking great questions and really listening at a deep level, and the third shift is this partnering for my success, and stop worrying about my success, and partnering for their success, and that, if you being to think about it, really expands your leadership capacity.

I'm going to tell you the number one way to bring this into your life, and it's going to sound tremendously self-serving. Okay? Just telling you up front. Hire a coach. Hire a coach for yourself. Put in the money. It can be a little pricey at times, but what we find is the value of it is exactly that price, and more. The return on investment on coaching, statistically, companies like Fast magazine, like Fast Company, have said it's like 5 to 1. I'm making that number up. It may be like 10 to 1, but it's huge. You get your money back, and then you begin to have somebody who looks at you as the expert, and you begin to have somebody who looks at you, and they ask you great questions to help you really become a discoverer, and they partner with you for your success. It's a mindset and a skillset that you begin to catch onto.

The other opportunity that I would suggest to you is that the seminary has been really gracious to allow me to come back on March... I think it's 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. It's on the little piece of paper that I gave you, so if I'm wrong about those dates... It's a Thursday/Friday. I'll teach a two-day class on the basics of Christian coaching, and this was designed by, mainly by, two women. One who learned to coach at IBM Business Corporation, and she was the first corporate coach at IBM, and she designed all this stuff, so it's all really solid stuff that works. IBM still uses it today, and the other lady is Linda Miller, and she works for the Ken Blanchard Association, so this is quality stuff, and I'll be teaching that for two days in March if you're

interested. The website's on there. You can talk to me, but you can even register for it on the website on the paper.

[Outro Music]

**Brian:** I hope you enjoyed listening to my speech, *Expanding your Leadership Capacity*. If you would like more information, you can go to our website, [www.coachapproachministries.org](http://www.coachapproachministries.org) and download our free eBook, *The Beginners Guide to Christian Coaching*. We're glad you joined us and hope we can help you to find focus, discover options, and take action.