



Coach Approach Ministries Podcast

Episode 19: Q&A - Rechanneling Expertise and Being More Natural

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[Intro Music]

Brian Miller: Welcome to the Coach Approach Ministries podcast where we help people find their way with God by training the best Christian coaches in the world. I'm Brian Miller, strategic director for Coach Approach Ministries, CAM for short, and I'm joined here today by the CAM Leadership Team, Chad Hall, the President of CAM, and Bill Copper, Executive Director of CAM. Today's episode is a bonus episode that comes from our CAM Leadership Team's Q and A series. In these Q and A's we try to go below the surface of the questions. I'm always disappointed when I get access to a favorite author or speaker in a breakout session or even on a podcast and they simply rehash the first chapter of their book. We want our answers to give you a true insider's look to the world of Christian Coaching. Today's Q and A considers rechanneling expertise and being more natural. We hope you enjoy it.

Brian: Welcome to Coach Approach Community of Coaches' Q and A podcast, joined here by Bill Copper, Executive Director of Coach Approach Ministries, and Chad Hall, the President of Coach Approach Ministries. Welcome guys. I'm going to jump right in. Here's our question for today, "How do you overcome wanting to be the expert?" I mean that's a good question. Whether we think of ourselves as the expert, we've always got ideas for the client that would just make this so much easier if we could just give them the answer. Chad, how would you begin to answer that? How do you overcome wanting to be the expert?

Chad Hall: I think two things come to mind first of all, for me, Brian. One is you may not overcome it. But that doesn't mean you can't manage it. Your want, your desire to be the expert doesn't mean you have to act like the expert. Mature people don't do everything they want to do, so self-management is a big deal. You can manage the behaviors even if you still have the attitude. The other thing that maybe helps more with the attitude is to really be an expert at not being the expert. A lot of us who really value being competent, being good at things, once we realize that as a coach we have to make room for the other person's expertise, then, at least this really applies to me, I embrace, "I am going to be the expert at the other person being the expert." As sort of multilayered as that sounds, it really helps me think, "Oh yeah, when I don't act like the expert that's me being competent as the coach, that's me doing expert coaching." I get that need met to be confident, to be good at something.

Brian: Yeah, I like that. I like that I'm the expert at making them the expert. That still gets my need met of having competence and focus. That's definitely a switch I know I had to make. Bill what would you add to that?

Bill Copper: Well, I agree a bit with what Chad said, but it's about managing, and here's how I manage the wanting to be an expert. Two issues. One is I, similar to what Chad said about being an expert at not being an expert, I think that the expertise that I bring is in the coaching process. So I don't have to give up being an expert. I don't have to give bringing skill or value. I bring it in a different way. My expertise is not in the content or in the direction they're going, but my expertise is in the coaching process, keeping the conversation moving, and it's such a drawing out of expertise from the subject matter for them. I think the other way that I manage not wanting to be the expert is just being real about how much value I bring doing one versus the other. Honestly, when I was the expert, when I did bring answers and solutions and ideas, I thought I was bringing great value because my stuff was pretty good, as you know. But the truth is nobody did anything with it. As we know, people don't do what they're told. They do what they tell themselves. So when I think about the value that I was bringing to people when I was the expert, if you will, it was really low because they weren't doing anything with what I brought, they weren't following up, they weren't following my advice, they weren't owning their mistakes. Now the value that I bring in drawing out of them is much higher even when I'm holding back my expertise, my expertise in their content. What I can think about how do I bring the most value, it is in holding back anything I might think I know about the topic. Those are the ways I try to manage the issue of not being the expert, those are the two keys for me.

Brian: Also just from the experience right? I just had this experience yesterday, I was being coached and my coach clearly said, "Hey, I'm going to step out of the coaching relationship here. I'm going to give you a piece of advice. I think it's a great piece of advice, and I know it's not coaching." I mean very clear and then gave me the piece of advice and my initial and still my response today is, "Yeah, no." So I said to him at the end, as we were giving some feedback, I said, "You know, we say not to give advice because it's rarely any good. I'm not trying to be mean, but that was not helpful today." That's the experience that we find nine times out of ten it's kind of a wasted effort. Chad what's the final word on being the expert?

Chad: I would say, to piggyback on what Bill's talking about, it really does help to separate content and process. Every conversation has three parts: a purpose, a process, and a content. The way I've started talking about this in some other coach training classes is that really the client is 95% the content expert. Yet, you might have some expertise in their content, and there are technique ways of bringing that in that are much better than what you just described that your coach did. When we do our 5% of content expertise, we actually don't switch being a coach, we do it in a coach-like way, but with the process we're at least 60% the expert. Now, if we're totaling the expert, we're probably doing kind of ACC level coaching as we move towards PCC level, we're inviting the client to help create the process more and more, but it never becomes this thing where the client is totally the process expert or even the majority. The coach really does bring that expertise. Get good at that, get good at becoming a process expert. How to help a person process their content. To me, that really does allow us to be competent at something. That'd be my extra two cents.

Brian: I think people think, “Well I’m wired this way, so I’m really wired to be the expert.” I do think there’s people who think that: “I’m wired to be the expert and, you know what, and also I’m not wired to be a listener so I just don’t think coaching is for me,” but nobody has all the skills except Jesus. Nobody’s wired to have all the skills, and there’s certain skills that you have got to make adjustments. You’ve got to work at it.

Chad: Not that they’re too deep into therapy or anything here, but if someone says, “I just have to be the expert. It’s against my nature to not be the expert.” You may want to do a little dig in there. There’s something that that’s satisfying for you maybe. Talk to your shrink, I guess, would probably be my bias. That’s probably not serving anyone outside of you. It’s probably just serving you. Then we have these filters where we think, “Oh I’m so much the expert, people value my expertise.” You’re probably filtering out all the times when people really just think that your advice is kind of worthless. I just always am curious for people who are so locked in to being the expert. I’m curious, what’s that doing for you? You may want to investigate that.

Brian: We talk about making accountability. Usually the question is “Who can keep you accountable?” and I always say, “If you can find a person who loves to keep you accountable: run. This is not a person you want to be accountable to.”

Chad: Run away, not toward.

Brian: Not toward, away. So let me transition into another question. I’ve been working with my tribe, trying to create a coaching culture in the denomination and a question that the leaders of that tribe are asking, which I think is a great question, is “How do you make coaching a natural, fluid transition as you create a coaching culture?” The real question here, I’m not sure I phrased it very well, is “How do you just make it a natural part of your leadership, without saying ‘Why don’t you make an appointment and I’ll coach you.’” So Bill, how would you start by giving people some ideas about how to make a fluid transition into coaching, just from a leadership point of view?

Bill: I love that question because I want to feel like that’s how I coach. Coaching for me doesn’t feel like something I’m doing to somebody. Even though there’s some formal times set aside oftentimes for my coaching, most of the coaching that we do is in those other non-formal ways, so it is smoothly transitioned. For me, the coaching that I do most often is that I ask questions differently. In meetings, I add differently, I draw out in conversations I have with leaders, I just begin to have a mindset that I’m more curious to hear what this other person thinks and has to say about a topic than I am about saying what I think about a topic. That’s just the way I want to think and act in normal conversations. When I’m a bit more intentional about it and want to transition into a coaching mindset around a particular issue, but I just slip into it, I don’t say, “Well how about if I coach you for a minute?” or “Hey, can we?” I don’t do anything, I just start coaching. I say, “But what do you want to do about this? What are some ideas you have about this?” and just start asking questions and drawing out. Again, it comes from that curiosity about what others have to say more than my certainty about what I think about it.

Brian: Yeah, that’s good, Chad what would you add to that?

Chad: Yeah, I think a couple things. One is I would push back on natural, fluid, that kind of stuff being of inherent value. I think sometimes we think, “People know I’m coaching, it’s not going to work. That’s

going to be weird, or awkward, or whatever.” Whether we do formal versus informal coaching, neither of those is inherently valuable, so you have to think, “What’s going to create the most value in this relationship, in this conversation?” Is it to slide into it without acknowledging there’s a coach approach happening here? Or is the most valuable thing to create a marker that says let’s approach this differently? Let me try to draw out from you some solutions instead of me trying to solve all your problems for you. That’s an intentional shift that can sometimes be really positive and more powerful than that kind of slide into coaching. Now if for whatever reason it is valuable to slide in, to kind of have that natural, fluid transition, I’m rebellious on it, just ask better questions on it, being curious. That’s probably going to really raise the contribution of the other person much more. I wouldn’t chime in too much from just coaching them, whether it’s a fluid transition or not. I think sometimes we shy away from that, especially if we’re new to coaching because we think, “Well, that’s not going to work, they’re going to know I’m coaching them.” Well, it might actually be why it works, is because they know you’re coaching them. It’s a partnership, and if you go in thinking, “Oh, I’m doing something to them,” then you’re probably not doing a very good job coaching them, if you’re just technique-ing them. You think, “I’ll show them, I’ll coach them, and they won’t even know it.” That sounds manipulative to me, and maybe I’m being too negative, Brian. So to push back on that, and we can explore more the sort of natural, fluid approach.

Brian: Sure, sure. I think this question is coming from some people who are more executive directors. So they come into a situation not directly involved, but trying to be of a help. I think when a director comes in too, in my experience with a church, the question usually asked is “What do they want?” They don’t want anything. They want to be of some help. That’s the hope. Here’s another part of this is that ten years ago, somewhere around ten years ago, I was a member of our regional, it’s a multi-state ad council leadership team, and I don’t know that I’ve ever been so mad in my life. The last meeting, I was just thinking, “Here’s what I want to see happen. In my heart of hearts, think this is what definitely needs to happen. It’s not going to happen, and in all my righteous indignation I was pretty sure it should happen.” I couldn’t take it any more in that sense. Ten years later I’ve been asked to serve on that board again, so somebody’s forgot how mad I was. I’m not usually a mad person. Going back in with the coach approach, even thinking about the hourglass, creating a good relationship that makes sure there’s trust. Having some big questions asked, but making sure that somewhere fairly quickly we know what a win looks like if we have the best meeting ever, making sure we have some specific action steps, that someone knows what steps they’re going to be taking, knowing that I can think more about the process being the expert of the process rather than the expert of the problem and helping them to think more broadly, and more creatively, and more awareness. To say I’m excited about it may be an overstatement. I think just being a coach trainer, it’s going to be really healthy for me to be in that so I can see how coach approach can best be taken in an environment that many people struggle with.

Chad: I think that’s maybe a different approach at least to the topic, and I think one that’s got a lot of room for fruit to be born. The way I would account that is, how I as someone who’s a coach, who really sees the value and power of coaching, how do I show up differently in strategic conversations such as team meetings or a council meeting. I think probably, Brian, you and I are wired a lot alike, that my righteous indignation comes out too and especially when I think, “Gosh, there’s a better way to have this meeting. There’s a better solution to get to.” I’m always on the lookout for how can I add to this

conversation using coaching. That's not the same thing as how can I turn this into a coaching conversation, but I was just in a meeting yesterday, and it was all, I call it serial monologues, when a person talks for fifteen minutes, another person talks for fifteen minutes, so he just peers at his clock, my coaching contribution was to just ask questions. That's a very simple contribution, but I think we've got to look for those ways to make a different, more significant, more valuable contribution using really good listening, powerful questions, a sense of curiosity, and a sense of process. That's where I contribute quite a bit, and the teams I'm on at Western Seminary, I'm always thinking about process. I think that actually helps us have better team meetings.

Brian: That's a good word. Thanks guys for coming alongside and helping our CAM community of coaches just think through some of the best questions we coaches are facing. I appreciate it.

Chad: Thanks Brian.

Bill: See you Brian.

Brian: Thank you so much for joining us. You can find out more about us by going to www.coachapproachministries.org and downloading our free eBook, *The Beginner's Guide to Christian Coaching: How to Have Powerful Conversations That Really Make a Difference*. We'll see you next week.

[Outro Music]