



Coach Approach Ministries Podcast

Episode 53: Things You Need to Learn to be a Great Coach

Published: June 22, 2017

[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. Our podcast today is sponsored by our certificate in Christian Leadership Coaching. This is a nine-month, ICF-approved, coach training program that will prepare you to coach those around you to set goals, take action, and reach new levels of success. We have a cohort forming in July, so if you're interested, go to our website at www.coachapproachministries.org/coachnow. I'm Brian Miller, Strategic Director for Coach Approach Ministries, CAM for short, and I'm joined here today by my good friend and the President of Coach Approach Ministries, Mr. Chad Hall. How are you doing Chad?

Chad Hall: I am having a very good morning so far. You and I are recording this on a Thursday, and I love Thursdays.

Brian: Thursday is always a day I think, "Oh, I kept that one separate so I could have some room in my schedule." Not so today. You get to Thursday, you think, "What happened to my open day?"

Chad: You filled it up with podcast recording.

Brian: I did, which is a good day for me. That's enjoyable. We also just spent a week together at the Princeton Theological Seminary Writing Conference. You'll have to say Frederick's last name because I seem to say it wrong.

Chad: Yeah, Buechner.

Brian: Frederick Buechner. So, you should immediately see, if you enjoy our podcast, you might go to our blog post and see that, "Oh my gosh, have these guys been to a writing conference?"

Chad: They may read our blog and say, "You may want to attend a few more."

Brian: That could be, it was an interesting experience, and I enjoyed it. Today though, we want to talk

about a book in fact. That kind of segues right into the topic because you've written a new eBook called *Nine Things It Really Takes to be a Great Coach*. Nine things. How did you come up with nine things Chad?

Chad: It's kind of like that Mel Brooks thing, "I give thee fifteen commandments, oh wait a minute, ten commandments." You know, because he drops a tablet. I was trying to come up with ten, and I guess I dropped one. These came from literally over the course of a decade of training coaches. I thought, "Well what does it really take to be a great coach?" I didn't want to be exhaustive or exhausting, but I did want to cover the most common responses I give to that question. That just happens to total nine. I wish there was some kind of symbolic significance to nine, but there is not.

Brian: There is not a significance to nine. It is not a Biblical number. That's the first thing that I noted, that it's not a Biblical number. We already did part one to this, and we covered thing one and thing two. Thing one was a natural desire to help others, and thing two was some natural talents. You can check that out on a podcast we called *How to be a Natural Born Coach*. Today we want to talk about thing three, four, and five, and they all start with 'coaching.' A coaching mindset, coaching skills, and coaching tools. So, the first part was this word natural, the word natural was in there a lot. This thing three, four, and five, you've got the word coaching in there in everything.

Chad: Yeah, and you may think that thing one and thing two are you've got it or you don't have it. You've got it in some degree or you don't. Not everyone is really born to be a coach, but things three, four, and five are added. You add coaching to who you are naturally. The flow of these nine things is from inner, innate more toward outer, developed either skills or attitudes, and then later even activities, things you have to do or acquire. We're going from natural stuff to adding coaching. That's where these three come in.

Brian: That's great, so these three are things you need to add to be a great coach. Let's start with the first one, which is a coaching mindset. Mindset. Unpack that word for us a little bit.

Chad: Let me tell you where this comes from. Later we're going to talk about skills because I can remember Bill Copper and I training people for a couple of years in the skills of coaching, and we kept running into this barrier with people where they were using coaching skills but inappropriately. They would say, "Oh, it's about asking people questions to get people to think it was their idea." That kind of thing. Finally, we realized, "Oh, people aren't thinking like a coach." They don't have the mindset. They don't have this deep approach to other people, and we realized that even though that may not be natural for people, they can develop it. You develop a coaching mindset and that means you really shift in how you show up to other people. Not just in your behaviors, not just in what you do with others, but really how you think about other people. How you think about, and what you believe deeply, about others and how to relate to them.

Brian: That's great. I know there was a couple shifts in my mindset. My Bachelor's Degree is in Engineering, so I do have a natural tendency to come with a problem-solving mindset which lots of people come with a problem-solving mindset. Then I realized that was a problem. Certainly, the shift is that instead of me problem solving, I have to sit there quietly. That's not the mindset either. I finally got

to the point where the shift was that I am problem solving the process, and I am problem solving the person. I don't want to overstate problem solving the person, but I am trying to think, "How can I help this person in particular open up? How can I help this person in particular have new awareness? How can I help this person in particular build accountability?"

Chad: Yeah, and if you're going to describe the coaching mindset shift in really big, broad brushstroke terms, the shift is from, "I'm here to help; they need me," to, "I'm here to facilitate; I'm here to make it easier or more streamlined, what they do to help themselves." We show up not thinking not just that we have all the answers, but just that we're the ones making the difference. We just approach people in a way that ends up not being very helpful. The coaching mindset, of course, really believes in others rather than try to get them to think the way I think, I try to pull out their best thinking. It's really a way of putting them in the driver's seat as a different metaphor.

Brian: Not only because the process works better that way because it certainly does, but it also creates more ownership on their part because they were the expert, they did bring that thinking to the conversation. I would also say it brings some confidence into the client because they were approached by someone as the expert. They were treated as the expert. They were treated as a fully developed human being if you will, capable.

Chad: Just because you're developed and capable and creative and resourceful and all those things, doesn't mean you're perfect, doesn't mean you have everything, but how we show up to other people is really going to be different when we believe that they're creative, they're resourceful, they're competent. People tend to show up the way you treat them, so if we treat them that way, they'll show up that way. In the eBook, it is brought to us by the number nine because there are nine things you need to be a really great coach, and then we cover nine shifts from an old mindset to a coaching mindset. We don't need to cover all of those right now. People can read the eBook; it's free. Some of the ones that stand out to me, that I think have been the most important. Your one shift is from "People do what you tell them to do" to "People do what they tell themselves to do." That's a mental shift. What do you really believe? When you start believing that people do what they tell themselves to do, it makes a really big difference in how you show up with them.

Brian: That's true about everybody. It's true about children. It's true about my aging parents. It's true about employees. It's true about students. It is a very true statement.

Chad: Another one, if we just cover two of these Brian. The way I put it in the vernacular is the old mindset is, "I see things the way they really are. I understand things more clearly. I see things more accurately than the people around me, including the person being coached." The coaching mindset doesn't shift to I don't know anything. I see things terribly. It's not like one of sees things clearly, and the other one sees them in a murky way and we switch roles. The coaching mindset is, "I have some information. I see some things clearly, and the person being coached also sees things clearly, although it may be from a different perspective." They have some information as well, but what that does is allows us to partner with them, and then we can begin to treat them as that creative, competent, capable person. It doesn't turn them into God, but it turns into somebody who has agency. It right sizes our

relationship versus this idea of, “I see things more clearly than other people.”

Brian: It’s interesting, the metaphor that came to my mind. I don’t want to call myself a runner, but I run enough to know a little bit about running. There’s a point with running, certainly different from any other exercise, that your body changes how it uses oxygen. When you just start running, you’re just breathing as hard as you can, and you’re working from that oxygen, but something shifts. I’m probably not saying that as clearly as I need to be, but there’s something that’s true about that with coaching. The metaphor for me is that I’m thinking and they’re thinking, but if we can create a partnership where we’re drawing on each other’s thinking somehow, if we were comfortable enough with each other, there’s actually science behind this. You can get better solutions. You can get better awareness in that partnership. I can prove this. Everybody has experienced this. I couldn’t solve this problem, but as soon as I described this problem to someone else, I had the solution. I’d been thinking about it all day, but I told my wife, “Boy, I can’t figure this out,” and I said, “Oh, I know what it is.”

Chad: There’s a dynamic when somebody else is with you, and of course we’re going to get to the coaching skills where a coach actually doesn’t just show up and listen. There’s a shift. We actually do some things to help draw that out of the other person, but the basic idea is they don’t need me to put in the solution or put in the answers because I see things so much better than they do. The client needs me to draw it out from them because they already have things, and they see things clearly. It’s treating people as that competent, capable person because they really believe that they are.

Brian: Let’s shift then. This is a good place to shift into coaching skills.

Chad: Yeah, it’s not enough to just have the mindset of a coach. You do need to develop some skills, and different people talk about different numbers of skills. There’s no right answer to that, but in the little eBook we cover four of the most important coaching skills. I’ll bet most of our podcast listeners already are familiar with some of these, especially active listening, powerful questioning. Those are things we learn how to do, and we develop those skills to a higher and higher level as we become better and better coaches. I also in the eBook cover two more that might be a little surprising. Designing actions, that’s a skill. It’s actually one of the ICF’s eleven core competencies. If I have great listening, I have powerful questioning, help create awareness, well then we need to be skillful in helping that person design actions. Turn awareness into actions. That’s a learnable skill, but you have to learn it. So, Brian, talk some on designing action before we get into that last and trickiest skill.

Brian: Designing actions, if you’ve ever been in a meeting, you know that the worst part is clearly designed actions. Who’s going to do it and by when? Being realistic about it, there’s all kinds of stuff in designing actions which is so helpful, and being a partner like you were talking about, allows you as a coach to be a guide. To help put things in the right place. To create something very clear, very structured in designing actions. Of course, we can add accountability on the back of that. That may be another skill as well, but for me that accountability needs to be done along with designing actions. As a client, for me, I need to put that all together. I can design, and you and I have done this. We’ve designed the best actions, but how do we know it’s going to get done?

Chad: That’s a great reminder. The ICF, they look at these competencies. Skills, competencies, those

aren't exactly the same thing, but there's a ton of overlap. They have some of those 11 core competencies, designing actions is one. Managing progress and accountability is another one, but I love when you are going for your PCC, they have these markers that indicate, "Are you doing these competencies right? Are you demonstrating them," and those last few competencies, they throw all those markers together. They know that you can't distinguish designing actions from managing progress and accountability because it's together. To me, this is the real distinction for us as coaches from identifying actions to designing actions. Beginner coaches tend to just help the client identify, "Oh, I'm going to have a conversation." A really good coach helps them design it, and it's the things you'll talk about. When will you have the conversation? What do you need to be ready for? What will success look like? How can you make sure that you stay on track? How can you make sure that you get it done? All that is in the design piece. We shouldn't just assume that if someone has identified an action, they're going to take it. That's only a third of the battle. It's the design that's the magic.

Brian: Chad, I may be putting you on the spot. I hope not. I doubt it because you truly are a master at this stuff. You talked about a beginning coach helps them identify, a good coach helps them design when, where, how. What's a great coach do? What's a master coach do?

Chad: I'm not sure there's a ton of distinction between a really good coach and a masterful coach. I would say if there's a distinction, it's in terms of what qualifies as an action. Maybe at a good level, action is still defined as an activity. The client is going to go do something. As you develop as a coach, you begin to realize it could include, a lot of times does include, activity, but it could also include thinking, creating, as Christian coaches, praying. Those are still actions that could be designed. So, if someone says, "I need to think on that," the masterful coach doesn't say, "Oh, ok, well we will come back to that next time." Instead they say, "Oh good, what's going to help you think about it? What will good thinking look like? What resources do you need to help think about it really well? How can you make sure you keep thinking about it?" That's the accountability piece. Don't get tripped up by that not being an external action activity.

Brian: That's great. So, coaching skill number four that is listed in this new eBook, *Nine Things It Takes to be a Really Great Coach*, guiding the conversation.

Chad: That's right. We've got active listening, powerful questioning, designing actions, and guiding the conversation, which people who have had some coach training are hopefully thinking, "What? You can't guide the conversation. You have to let the conversation unfold." A coach really is a process expert. We don't just let a conversation unfold. We know that there are better and worse ways to have a conversation, so we don't really guide the content of the conversation, but we guide the conversation so that it's most effective. An example of this would be if you say, "Gosh, I really want to get back to running." You brought this up, so I'll run with it.

Brian: You'll run with it?

Chad: "I really want to get back into running." A not so good coach says, "Oh, what can you do," and dives right into action. Well, that's not a very effective conversation. An effective conversation is, "Let's talk the Hourglass Model or the Grow Model." We want to explore your goals and motivations and

Transcribed by Cayden Miller

intentions around all of this, and then we're going to find a place to focus on what part of this is most challenging. Then we're going to explore options. It's providing the shape of that conversation. Within that shape, of course the client is the one generating the content, but if we don't have that guiding of the conversation, the conversation goes in circles or circuits or all kinds of bad things happen. Great conversations don't naturally happen. Otherwise, Thanksgiving would be a lot more fun.

Brian: With that running example, you really jogged my memory about this idea that a coaching skill is guiding the conversation really should be put near the top of our training so that people understand that a coach is not just someone who gets permission to tell people what to do. That you're really a process expert. For me, that is a real highlight of what coaching is.

Chad: I know we're running out of time probably, or our podcast members may be running out of time, so do we want to transition to the last item?

Brian: Absolutely. I am right there man, I was standing on the precipice, ready to jump. Coaching tools is the third thing. Coaching mindset, coaching skills, coaching tools.

Chad: I like to be clear on this to begin with. The right tool in the wrong hands is a disaster, so are there things I can do with a car sure, but don't put certain tools in my hands and let me go at it with my car. It won't run tomorrow when I'm finished with it. We put tools after mindset and skillset because you have to have the right mindset and then you have to develop those skill and then when you are ready, you can pick up some of these tools and use them appropriately. And the three that I mentioned in the eBook: assessments, that's a tool. Myers Briggs, or a 360, or a High Performance Pattern, or a StrengthsFinder.

These are tools that we can use in our coaching, and if we've got the right mindset and the right skillset, we'll use that appropriately. A second tool would be a model, like a coaching model. We teach a lot of these different models, but we can maybe talk about that more. The third tool is what I call interventions. Sometimes we call that field work or homework. It's something that spurs the learning and development for the client, but it's something that the coach brings, the coach suggests an intervention. A homework, a field work, some kind of assignment, and you can imagine if you're not a really good coach, these could cause a lot of problems, but the eBook isn't nine things it takes to be an okay coach, it's nine things it takes to be a really great coach, and the coaches I know who are great use some of these tools: assessments, models, and/or interventions.

Brian: Let me jump in with some thoughts on assessments. I was teaching our 507 class called Coaching Teams, and I did the introduction. We just got to know each other, saw what was going to be in there, and with ten minutes left in the class, one of the students asked, "Can I ask a question because I'm going to present a StrengthsFinder assessment to a group in about three or four weeks. Will we have found out how to present that before that?" I don't think we will actually, it's farther in than that. Give me ten minutes to describe how I would think about giving this assessment to your group, and I'm so glad I did. I could tell she was like, "That's not what I was thinking initially." You can really bring an assessment poorly to a team.

Chad: And the way you bring an assessment poorly either to a team or an individual client, there are a lot of mistakes you could make. There are a thousand ways to do it wrong, but one of the most common ones is that you make the conversation about the assessment instead of about the person.

Brian: As soon as you say that, I think, “Well what would you say about the assessment if it’s not about the group or the person?”

Chad: Part of this is I know it because I’ve done it wrong.

Brian: Me too.

Chad: You start teaching the assessment, you end up going into the background of the assessment. What’s the model based on? I do a lot of Myers Briggs, and if you want to, I could talk to you all day long about Carl Jung’s theory of how people engage the world around them. Blah, blah, blah, blah. Well, that’s typically not very helpful, so we want the assessment to reveal about the person, really talking about the client, not about the tool itself.

Brian: What does it reveal about the person? What does it reveal about the group?

Chad: In a group format, yeah.

Brian: Especially letting them come to awareness because like I said, “I want to present this assessment, I want to show you all the twenty things I saw in it.” That’s problem solving again. I’m a process expert, I have to think about how to process. So, let’s move into the models issue. That’s a good one too, and you can use the wrong model so easily. Can you give an example of where a model could be used wrong?

Chad: First of all, there are two kinds of models, and we don’t really get into this in the eBook because it’s a really short eBook. There are conversation models like the Grow model or the Hourglass model or the steps of a coaching conversation. So, a conversation model, again provides shape for the conversation. I guess you could go wrong with one of those, but where I see people go wrong more is with the second kind of model, and that’s more of an awareness model. An awareness model is sometimes a formula, it’s a little miniature teaching of a truth that then should reveal new awareness for the client.

We know what the model is, we know the general truth, but we don’t know the specific truth that it’s going to reveal for the client. An example of that is we do a lot with the strengths versus skills model that Jane Creswell developed. It’s just a way of saying, “Yep, you develop skills on top of your natural strengths or natural talents.” That’s a helpful distinction, and there’s a little story that we’ve got with it; it’s really good. Where we could go wrong with it is we could say, “And so therefore, this means x about you.” You present the model, and then you let the client come to the new awareness. It’s there to spur their creativity and their deeper learning, not provide a specific deeper learning for them.

Brian: Or you pull out a model that you think is a great model, but it really doesn’t apply. You weren’t listening carefully enough, this isn’t what they need right now, but if you pull it out at the right moment of what they exactly need, that is a beautiful moment. You’ve been in situations, as have I, of maybe not

a coaching but just in conversation where someone starts talking about something in particular where you're going, "This has nothing to do... How do I get out of this room?"

Chad: That's right, so that's why this comes right after the skills. If you don't have the skill of active listening, you would present a good model at the wrong time.

Brian: So, we have literally a minute left. Interventions. This is something that I think is more on the masterful side. Where you are able to then intervene. One thing you've taught me that I've begun to use, I don't want to say a lot, but I've been able to use it, is a challenge. To give someone a challenge is to say, "I hear what you're saying; I sense a lack of confidence on this issue. Let me give you a challenge. You can take it or don't take it, tweak it or throw it out, doesn't matter. Let me present you a challenge." That has been in the right mindset, at the right moment, with great listening, that can be a beautiful thing.

Chad: You should say, if you don't have those things in place, it can sound bossy, or directive, or really not fit where they are. There are lots of interventions. Some are really simple, a pros and cons list. That's just a way of processing information to make a decision. That's a type of intervention. What I don't want coaches to do, is say, "Well we couldn't do a pros and cons list because the client didn't say that they didn't come up with that idea." With interventions, you say, "The coach can suggest an idea for how keep the learning going to keep processing." Something as simple as, "Let's try a pros and cons list," or, "Let's try a visioning exercise," all the way to something that's more like a challenge, which would be, again, you don't have to say, "Hey, Brian, would you issue me a challenge?" "Oh, well, I've got the clients request, I'll do it." No, you are intervening. Again, we don't force them to do it, but it's part of coaching is that we request it and then we roll with it if they're open to it.

Brian: Chad, at this point, I have been able to hear from you five things, not the whole nine, but at this level of five things, I'm assuming this book has a value of \$79.92. I'm thinking I'd pay it now. I'd pay at least \$79 for this book. Where can folks find this book, and how many payments do they need to make a month?

Chad: For three easy payments of zero.

Brian: What?

Chad: I know. Go to the Coach Approach Ministries website, and you'll see in the sidebar a place where you can download the eBook for free. I think the eBook together with this podcast series is really good training. Honestly, the eBook, I've tried to keep it really short. I think it's really well designed. By the way, I didn't design it, I just wrote it. It's well written too, not trying to be braggy about me. It's well designed, that's bragging on the designer. But it's something hopefully that's helpful, and you can't beat the price.

Brian: I think one way, if you're interested in just knowing more about coaching, this is a great eBook. If you are someone who is a coach, and you want other people to understand what coaching is because they just don't get it, download this eBook for them, head them towards our podcast. I really think this

will open their eyes to what coaching really is. That's another resource we're offering to you. Maybe even to clients who are just, "I don't understand what this is," or they don't understand the process. Maybe that's something you could use this resource for as well. We just love coaching, and we wanted to provide a resource that we thought would be really helpful to the culture of coaching. Chad, thanks so much for writing the book and joining me today.

Chad: My pleasure Brian.

Brian: And thanks so much for you joining us as well, folks. We appreciate you listening. This podcast today is sponsored by our certificate in Christian Leadership Coaching. It's a nine-month, ICF-approved, coach training program that will prepare you to coach those around you to set goals, take actions, and reach new levels of success. We have a cohort forming in July, this is June so it's coming right around the corner. There's still time. We'd love to have you in it. If you're interested, go to our website at www.coachapproachministries.org/coachnow. We'll see you next week!

[Outro Music]