



Coach Approach Ministries Podcast

Episode 63: The Best Way to Introduce Coaching to Your Organization

Published: August 31, 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 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 April, 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 the president of Coach Approach Ministries, Mr. Chad Hall. Welcome Chad.

[Presidential Music]

Chad Hall: Brian, I love the way you emphasize "president" every time. That makes me feel presidential.

Brian: I always want to do the little theme song, and maybe we should just put a little clip of that in there for you. I might just put a little clip of the presidential theme song in there for you this time. So, we want to talk about how you would introduce coaching to your team. Say you had two hours, and you wanted to introduce coaching to your team, not make them into coaches or anything, but just that introduction of what coaching is, what it looks like, why it might be important to your organization, and so we thought we'd just take a little time to lay out four, five, six things that you might be able to do to introduce coaching to your team. How else would you set that up, Chad?

Chad: I get this question all the time from people who are in love with coaching, and they want to begin to spread it, maybe within their church, their business, maybe even a school system, and they say, I've got a morning workshop. I've got an hour, two hours, three hours. What can I cover about coaching just to give people an introduction in it? A lot of times, it'll be a church wanting to do this, maybe with their small group leaders or a business wants to do it with their sales team, just to give them a taste of what coaching is about, maybe as a precursor to something more in depth later, but not necessarily.

Brian: That sounds great. So, where would you start? If you had two hours, and you're going into a church, or a business, some kind of organization to talk to a team, to a group of people, where would you start in introducing coaching?

Chad: Well, the first thing I would do before really getting into the training, is I would get it really clear in my own head, what am I trying to accomplish? So, the mistake I see a lot of people make is they take things like our 501 content and they think, “How can I shrink that down into just a few hours?” Well, you can’t. What they want to do is they want people to walk out knowing how to coach, being able to coach, that kind of stuff, and typically, you’re not going to get that done in two to three hours. So, kind of right-sizing your expectations in terms of outcomes.

Basically, what you can accomplish in maybe two or three hours is you can help people know what coaching is and what it isn’t, maybe just the basics of coaching, and they might walk out ready to ask better questions, be a better listener. This is also a good way to introduce people to coaching maybe for them to be a client, so if you’re starting a coaching culture within a ministry or a church, and it just introduces people to how coaching works, so they would be ready to be a client, but what you’re not going to do is turn people into coaches in two hours. I think once you right-size those expectations, you can begin to plan, okay, now what are the content pieces that I can cover in that amount of time to get to that end goal.

Brian: That may be the best tip the whole podcast right there, Chad. Certainly, that would be on my mind to have PCC-level coaches coming out of a two-hour introductory, and I really want to dive in on exactly how to ask questions. For sure, it’s just so easy, for me at least, to dive way too deep, and I like the right-size your expectations.

Chad: Part of this flows out of a phrase that we have heard and we use a lot of times between ourselves. We talk about the purse of knowledge. If you think on a scale from 1 to 10, most of our podcast listeners, when it comes to what they know about coaching, they’re way over on the 8, or 9, or 10 at how much they know about coaching, and they think, “Oh, I’m going to dumb this down a little bit for these newbies,” and they’ve downed it to a 5 or 6, and what you’ve got to realize is, no, people are coming in, they don’t know anything about this. You’ve got to think like level 2. You’re going to help them go from a 2 to a 3 or 4. I made the same mistake you’re talking about for a long time. I thought, “Oh, people are coming in at a 5 or 6. I’ll help them get to an 8.”

That’s not really going to happen, typically. So, when we think about the content that maybe someone who doesn’t know anything about coaching, what I try to do is I try to demystify it, and if they’re coming in with any misconceptions, first of all, we’ve got to get rid of the misconceptions, and then we can introduce them to what coaching is and how it works. So, one of the ways I like to try to get at what coaching is not is I want to try to wrestle it away from athletic coaching. People come in, they may think they know what coaching is, but they’ve got this athletic coaching sort of polluting their concept. So, they think coaching’s about telling people, it’s about instructing, encouraging maybe, but it’s got a lot of telling involved.

You could do this a lot of different ways, but one of the ways I do it is, I try to connect coaching to like a stagecoach, a form of transportation. A coach is a form of getting from one place to another, and then I just mentioned it, athletic coaches have adopted the term, but they help people get from where they are to where they could be in a different way than what a life coach or an executive coach does.

Brian: Taking the client from where they are to where they want to go. That’s a great place to start. To get that idea across, it’s not where I want them to go, but it’s where they want to go, and there’s so

many elements that start to come out about that about how they want to get there, who they want to go there with, and there's just a lot of expectation that needs to be put into place that as the coach, I'm not the driver.

Chad: That's right. The coaching relationship really is like that capsule, or that vehicle that you're in, and the person is getting where they want to go. Sometimes we talk about it being like a taxi service. The taxi cab driver doesn't tell you, unless you're in New York, he's not going to tell you where to go. You're going to tell them where you want to go, and they're going to help you get there, and so it sets up that idea of oh, coaches help people set goals and then do what's necessary to reach the goal.

Brian: Yeah, the coaching is different than the coach, isn't it as well? The coaching is the vehicle. The coaching should take the client from where they are to where they want to go, and me as the coach oversee that process. I'm there to make sure that happens for them.

Chad: That's right. We're going to facilitate that because we're the coaching experts, we like to say, and usually, we can cover that kind of thing in five or ten minutes, and sometimes even have some fun banter around, especially with athletic coaches, blowing whistles, running laps, doing pushups, none of that belongs in this kind of coaching, but usually we can cover that idea of what coaching is not in terms of relating it to athletic coaching, but then I also like to give some time to distinguishing coaching from some other helpful relationships, and I'm always clear to say these are other helpful relationships. They're not bad because they're not coaching. They're good. They're just not coaching, and typically, I'll try to contrast coaching with counseling, and mentoring, and maybe consulting. Brian, I know you do this all the time. What are some ways you help people make those distinctions?

Brian: Sure. I try to lay out a framework, a diagram. There's two shifts that I think need to be made, and I would definitely do this in the two hours. I would make the shift from who is the expert, that I'm the expert, or that my client is the expert. I want to make clear to you that that's a spectrum. I think every one of us in different situations, and with different people, are in a different place on that spectrum. My teenage kid, depending on what it is, I may think, I'm clearly the expert on this situation. You need to listen, clearly. I'm teaching my 15-year-old to drive. I am the driving expert, and he needs to listen very carefully to what I'm saying, but when it comes to something at school, the way he's feeling with a friend, I have to think to myself, "Now, he is the expert of that situation," and I want him to be the expert of that situation, and even in the driving analogy, as we go forward, I want him to be more and more of the expert, so that when I'm not in the car, he has the ability to think through. So, this is definitely a shift from I'm the expert to they are the expert.

Chad: Yeah, I think that is a really important shift. Again, we're saying that you can be helpful believing that you are the expert, but you can also be helpful believing the other person's the expert. This creates a glitch for some people. They hear, "Wait a minute. The other person's the expert. Why do they need you?" We kind of want them on the edge of their seats, wondering about that. That's a good question. Any time you can lead people to the point, they have a question they want resolved, they're in the learning mode at this point. I would just encourage anybody who's doing quick coach training not to get wiggled-out over those kind of, "Yeah, but, wait, hold on. How does that work?" You want those kind of questions. So, you mentioned two shifts. One is from I'm the expert to they're the expert. What's the other one?

Brian: The other one is where the awareness comes from. So, in the typical situation, the awareness comes from me telling you what the truth is, or what should happen, or what I see, and again, this is a spectrum, but the shift needs to go to that that awareness comes from asking questions, or there are other ways of creating awareness, which are coaching skills, which I won't go into, but let's just say, mainly, asking questions that bring awareness to oneself. So, it's a self-discovery, but it is processed by the coach asking great questions.

Chad: I like to put both of those spectrums kind of on top of each other. So, you get kind of a left-right, horizontal spectrum. I typically say on the left-hand side, let's imagine the person being helped is the expert. On the right-hand side, the person who is doing the helping is the expert, and then on the vertical spectrum, or axis, up and down, on the top I put asking. On the bottom, I put telling. This creates four quadrants. Most of the helping relationships we know about are going to go on that bottom right quadrant where the person helping is the expert and they create the awareness by telling.

Brian: I think it's bottom left. I'm the expert, and I'm telling you, it's bottom right.

Chad: Based on what I just said, the person being helped is on the left. The person who's doing the helping is the expert is on the right.

Brian: I understand at least that when I'm the expert, and I'm telling, that's most helping professions.

Chad: And I will say this, I know sometimes other trainers that are in some of our programs, they switch that left-right spectrum. I typically, just because of where I got the model, I typically put the person being helped is the expert on the left. The person doing the helping is the expert on the right. That's just where I got the model. Some people like it the other way because they think it makes it look like the person's moving forward. Left-right. I never got that. I'm Hebrew. I think it should go from right to left, but anyway, consulting, teaching, mentoring, these kinds of things are going to go in that quadrant where the helper is the expert, and they help by telling.

There's an upper, right-hand quadrant where there is a counselor. A counselor is the expert, but they help by asking, and they use a lot of questions, and then the upper left-hand quadrant, the coach is they're asking and the other person is the expert, and it just gives us a map of, okay, coaching's not like mentoring, and if they don't walk away with anything else, that's great. Coaching is not like mentoring. Coaching is not like counseling, those sorts of things. I always have a little bit of fun with that matrix because there's one quadrant that doesn't have anything in it where the person being helped is the expert, but I'm still going to tell them what to do. I like to joke that's where your mother-in-law goes.

Brian: Ouch.

Chad: Ouch. Unless we have mother-in-laws in the group, in which, that's not the case.

Brian: That's not funny.

Chad: Another thing is, I'll draw a circle right in the middle of that, and say, that's where a friend goes. A friend is someone who can flex, and they know when to ask, they know when to tell, they know when you're the expert, they know when you're not, and so, all of those are helpful relationships.

Brian: I think that gets the sense of it out there. I don't think it convinces anybody. If there's only one

thing up there, maybe it shouldn't be there. The other good news, though, is if it is there, that is a place where coaching is alone, and it is something that can be done in a way that nobody else is doing, and I love that that it is a wide open range for people.

Chad: Yeah, and this model originally came from, gosh, I'm trying to remember the name of the book right now. Maybe I'll remember before we finish, but I really like the way that they drew the diagram and that they would draw big circles around each of the helping relationships, showing that, like a mentor, mostly tells, but they might edge into some asking. A coach mostly asks, might do a little telling, we might have a little expertise, but most of it is in that one quadrant. People come into this kind of training, and they want to connect coaching to something they are already familiar with, so they naturally want to say, "Oh it's like... Oh, it's like athletic coaching. Oh, it's like mentoring." What we're doing is creating a clear path of, "No, it's really not. Here are the distinctions." Then they can be ready to find out what it really is.

Brian: So, if I'm going to compare it to athletics, I usually go to professional golf because it's a solo sport, for one thing, and it's easy to say, is Tiger Woods the expert of golfing, or is his coach the expert of golfing? And everybody gets that. Tiger Woods is the expert.

Chad: If the coach were the expert, the coach would be the one out there swinging the golf club.

Brian: That's right. So clearly, and the coach is another set of eyes to bring awareness to Tiger of what's going on with his swing or his mindset. So, certainly that can help. Chad, going from here, what I've found is the best thing to do at this point is to do a demonstration.

Chad: Absolutely.

Brian: Because people can hear about coaching all day and still say, "I don't get it." I've explained coaching to lots of potential clients and they're shaking their head left to right like, "Oh, I don't think that would be helpful," but demoing coaching to them, letting them have an experience of being coached or seeing someone coached, changes their whole outlook on coaching.

Chad: It really does because a lot of us just learn by seeing something. You can tell me, but please show me, and then I can put the show and the tell together, and it's going to be really helpful, so I'm with you, Brian. This is the place where I love to do a demo, and I just ask them that they notice what the coach does in the demo. They help the conversation move forward, and they're going to put some of the simple things we've already covered, they're going to connect it to what they're seeing in front of them. "Oh, that's asking a lot of questions. Oh, that's awareness coming from questions. Oh, that's what it sounds like to treat the other person as the expert." So, the demo's really helpful. We've helped a lot of people do training like this, and one of the hang-ups people have often is what if the demo goes badly? Hey, that's a possibility.

A couple of things that our podcast listeners might appreciate. One is, if you're not a little uncomfortable during the demo, you probably think too much of yourself. So, that little bit of anxiety is natural, it's totally normal. I've been doing this for a long time. I still think, "Oh man. I hope I don't get somebody who is uncoachable." Another thing I've learned is to set it up by saying, "This will not be a perfect demonstration of coaching." I've never been part of a perfect coaching conversation, but we are going to do some coaching. We're just going to try to be helpful as much as possible. Typically, we'll do a

15 minute or so coaching demo with a volunteer. By the way, if you know the people beforehand, you might ask someone to volunteer before the workshop even begins just to help things go a little more smoothly.

Brian: I think that's a great idea. Another idea is if you're just trying to introduce this, you're not bringing us in to do it, you're just trying to introduce it, you could get a video, there are definitely videos of you and me coaching, 10, 15 minutes, and the group could watch a coaching demonstration, and then debrief that if you felt uncomfortable doing the coaching demo, but like you said, I certainly had to make that shift from this has to be impressive to I just have to coach. The process works. I don't have to show them how impressive I am. I just have to show them coaching, and putting it out there of, "I don't know if we can land the plane." You've only got 10 minutes.

God bless you if you can land the plane in 10 minutes, but you can certainly get some aspects. The things people see when I do a demo, typically they say, "Man, you're patient. You leave a lot of room for the client. The questions you asked surprised me. I was surprised you didn't ask more details of what's going on." They get to see that piece. Two things I think that come out very powerful. One is that the client ends up talking about something really, really important and they bring it up, and I think that surprises people how willing they are to talk about really important stuff even in 15 minutes, and coaching just in itself seems to draw that out.

Chad: It really does. I think that, like you mentioned, can you land the plane or not? How far can you get? One thing that might help some of our listeners, if they want to do the demo live, you've really got to get comfortable with questions like, "What part of that can be accomplished in 15 minutes? What piece of this can be bite off and make some progress on in the time we have?" Those kinds of questions, which I've noticed, some coaches, it takes them a long time to get comfortable asking. A client says, "I want to make a career shift," and the coach automatically assumes, "Oh, we have to do all of that right now." No you don't. Part of focusing is what part of that can we get done in the time we have? That'll make, especially these short coaching demos, go a lot more smoothly than if you get anxious about, "Oh no. We've got to get all this done." It's impossible. Boy, that'll really trip you up as a coach.

Brian: Chad, speaking of time, we've got time for one more, I think. If you could do one more thing in this two hours, what would that be?

Chad: I would unpack what they just saw in the demo and connect it to three basic coaching skills, and so, I'm going to typically ask, "What did you see? What did you notice," and I'm going to connect it to three skills. Powerful questioning, by the way, I'm not going to tell them all the intricacies of what makes a question powerful. I'm just going to mention to notice the quality and type of those questions. Secondly, active listening, and that gets to what you said. A lot of people mention, "I'm impressed with how patient you are." Well, I'm not just twiddling my thumbs. I'm actually listening, and then the third skill, we don't talk about this skill very often in our longer classes, but I just call it guiding the conversation.

A good coach knows that at the beginning of the conversation, you're trying to find focus. Later, you're going to explore options, and then finally, you're going to narrow and start designing actions. We're helping the conversation go with the flow, and that's what we mean by guiding. I don't mean leading the client somewhere, just guiding them through a coaching conversation, and typically, people can walk

out thinking, “Oh, I can treat other people as the expert. I can do that by asking questions, by listening, by knowing the flow of an effective conversation.” They might actually walk out of the short training being able to do something that looks a little bit like coaching.

Brian: A third shift that I think can be made at this point is from coaching the problem to coaching the person because when you try to get new coaches to not coach the problem, they think, “Well, what am I supposed to do?” The twiddling thumbs made me think of that. Am I just supposed to sit here? No, actually, if you’re coaching the person, and you’re paying attention to the person, how they open up, how they keep accountability, what kind of questions really work for them, hearing stuff, listening for them instead of to them, and giving them some feedback. They don’t always know everything they’re saying. They don’t put it all together, and you have that ability to coach the person, not the problem, and I think that kind of sums up what the process is. That kind of sums up why it would be a skill. I think that helps people get ahead of the game.

Chad: I think you’re right, and as you’re looking for something for people to do after this kind of workshop. Again, totally depends on the context. Is it your tea, or your church, or what? A great thing to do is to have them have a coaching conversation with you, and they can schedule that, so rather than their next step being, “I’m going to go do some coaching,” Their next step is, “I’m going to go get some coaching now that I know what it is, now that I know how it works,” and that’s going to continue their development. So, they’re going to get great coaching. They’re also going to get further development in knowing what coaching is and knowing how it works.

Brian: Chad, you’ve already given me something. I’m going to start working with an organization, coaching five or six of their leaders, and I hadn’t thought about doing a quick introduction to coaching as a group. I think that’s a brilliant idea as I’m going into coaching this organization. I appreciate that. I’m going to put that in place.

Chad: People are a lot easier to coach when they know what coaching is.

Brian: Most people in an organization like that think, “Oh good. One more person’s going to tell me what to do.” I get that, literally, that’s what people say. That’s not what I’m going to do.

Chad: These short little trainings are a great way to educate your clients, prepare them to be coached. It keeps you from getting to session three and going, “I just got a bad client.” No. You got a client who doesn’t know how to be coached yet. Part of what you’ve got to do as a coach is educate them on how to be coached. That’s okay.

Brian: Well this was a really helpful podcast, Chad. I want to thank you for participating. I also want to thank all of our listeners for joining us today. A reminder, this podcast was 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 action, and reach new levels of success. We have a cohort forming in April, so if you’re interested, go to our website at www.coachapproachministries.org/coachnow. Hey, we’ll see you next week.

[Outro Music]