



## Coach Approach Ministries Podcast

### Episode 65: How Mark Got 150 Leaders to Coach

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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. 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 October, so if you're interested, go to our website at [www.coachapproachministries.org/coachnow](http://www.coachapproachministries.org/coachnow). I'm Brian Miller, strategic director for Coach Approach Ministries, CAM for short, and I'm joined here today by Mark Deterding with Triune Leadership Services. He is an executive coach, a leadership consultant, speaker, and author. Welcome to the podcast, Mark.

**Mark Deterding:** It's great to be here, Brian. Thanks so much for having me.

**Brian:** I'm noting your subtitle, or whatever you would call that little extra piece. I've got one myself, but, "Transforming lives and cultures through servant leadership." I think, initially, all of us understand "transforming lives," but you also say, "Transforming cultures." What's that about?

**Mark:** So, a lion's share of the work that I do with organizations, Brian, is around their overall culture, and really the type of environment that they want to have for their employees, and customers, and so forth within their organizations, and everything that I do, really, is focus on building a culture of servant leadership and even more specifically, on how to lead Jesus' way. My book is titled *Leading Jesus' Way: Become the Servant Leader God Created You to Be*. So, that's really what sets my feet on the floor every morning to do is really help people to understand what that looks like, and then, how to institutionalize that type of environment within that organization, and their families, and their communities, everything that they're involved with.

**Brian:** Well, I'm going to be transparent. I want to be you when I grow up. That's my goal, very similar. This idea of transforming cultures, and you say it's a servant leadership culture. I find, and I'm curious about your insight to this, I find that the coaching skills, coaching mindset, has a lot in common with servant leadership.

**Mark:** You could not be more spot on on that, Brian, and I actually have some very specific coaching I call, "The Coach Approach to Servant Leadership," because it does tie right in. Much of servant

leadership is about being an effective listener which is certainly exactly what coaching is about, asking the appropriate questions, and really helping to build leaders. I mean, as a coach, your trying to obviously look forward and help people to become that person they want to become, and day to day, as a leader, that's what we set out to do is build people up to, like you say, help them achieve what they were born to achieve, what their God given gifts are and really expedite that process for them. So, it's definitely tied right in line with the coaching and service leadership, the two together.

**Brian:** I was listening to an interview with Alan Horn who is the current president of Disney, and before that, he was the president of Warner Brothers, and he was talking about a mentor that he had that said his job as a leader was he was the janitor. He had a whole set of keys on his ring, and he tried to find the right key that opened each of his employees' hearts. So, it wasn't about mission. It wasn't about vision. I'm sure it's about clarity, but it was really about investing and drawing the best out of the people around him.

**Mark:** Yeah, and when you do really take on that attitude as a leader, that will drive you out of bed every day. What's wonderful about leadership, it isn't about providing answers, hitting people over the head, telling them what to do, and that type of thing. It's more about, you know, helping them into discovery and helping them to really fulfill the gifts that they've been given. So, yeah, that's a great analogy.

**Brian:** So, I'm curious, when did you first hear the word, "coaching," "coach?"

**Mark:** During my time in the corporate world, in one of my stops, I was president of an organization, I guess. I was promoted to a spot that was having a lot of trouble, and I engaged with the Ken Blanchard Organization to try to help drive the culture we were trying to drive, and during that process, they have an internal group of coaches that they work with their clients. So, I had the opportunity of being coached by somebody, a highly effective coach at that time that really taught me a lot about how to drive culture, be intentional about that, but that was the first time that I had really engaged with an executive coach, if you will, and I saw the difference that it made. When I wanted to, basically, start my own business, if you will, I knew that was part of what I wanted to do, so I wanted to take that very seriously. Just by the fact that you're in leadership roles, your whole career does not necessarily make you a great coach, so I did go through and get certified through the International Coaching Federation to really equip myself to be an effective coach. That was when I really came across your organization, Coach Approach Ministries. You helped me with my mentor coaching during that time, and I just could not have been more pleased with the great work that you and your team did.

**Brian:** We appreciate that, very much so. So, you left, what was the thought about leaving, I assume, a corporate culture and starting your own business. What led you to that?

**Mark:** So, after working for 30 plus years at a couple of the largest printing companies in the world, I had done a fair amount of traveling and that kind of stuff, and I really wanted to get off the road and more specifically, just totally focus this point in my career on helping leaders, building leaders. In an aspect that values totally align with my values. With that was really the Christian aspect of really bringing Jesus onto your team as a leader and the difference that that can make. So, that's why I stepped into starting my own business called Triune Leadership Services, and you mentioned it at the start. That's based on the Trinity which I think is an example of the ultimate servant leader model, if you

will. Anyway, I just tied that in with the coaching aspect. I just was really passionate about wanting to help people lead at a higher level, to help them to understand the difference that they could make when they're in that leadership seat if they get intentional about it, about what they're doing with people and coaching them along each and every step of the way.

**Brian:** So, we're a little bit about the nuts and bolts of building a business from time to time in our podcast, so I'm really curious, did you just quit the corporate structure immediately, or did you kind of ease your way into your own business? How did you make the transition?

**Mark:** I did make a pretty clean cut, and what I did, Brian, was, full transparency, I had a group of leaders in the community that I lived that was aware of the work I had done with the Ken Blanchard Organization, and around servant leadership, and that kind of thing. Ken had me speak at a couple of his national client conferences around building a culture of servant leadership and how to drive a purpose-driven, values-based culture. So, they were familiar with some of the work I was doing, and they kind of asked, "Would you be open to starting a training experience for people in our community in helping them to understand servant leadership and how to really be impactful with that and really be able to play out their faith in the workplace?" So, I did that.

I said, "You know what? That sounds really fantastic," and I wanted to get out of the airwaves, being at the airport every other week and so forth for so many years. I thought this would be kind of fun to start my own business, so I decided to do that, started what I call leadership round tables, and started with 20 senior leaders from our community that signed up after invitation to this, and ran them through 6 months of training where we met one time per month, and really trained them up on what it looks like to lead Jesus' way. It just took off, Brian, beyond my wildest dreams, as far as how God blessed that whole scenario. Then, people were wanting to be coached one on one. People were wanting me to come into their organizations, work with their senior leadership teams and really help them drive a culture of servant leadership. So, that's kind of how I just started from that leadership round table to the point where now, I'm working with between 100 and 150 leaders in the leadership round table every year.

That same group that started is completing their seventh year of leadership round table in September, and then each year, I start a new group that starts in at year one of that, and oftentimes, that leads to coaching clients, that leads to clients that want me to come in and work with their teams, coaching their teams and helping them to drive this culture and so forth. So, it just kind of blossomed from there. I never have had to, I guess, if you will, market at all. It's just word of mouth, and what's happened in seeing these organizations that have really dove in and whipped this culture and seeing their success, I mean they're driving sales, and earnings, and employee engagement at levels that are just mindboggling after institutionalizing this for the last four or five years.

**Brian:** Are these people who are local, geographically, to you, or have you moved beyond geography?

**Mark:** So, yeah, most of my clients are in Minnesota, but many of them also have locations and divisions in other parts of the country as well. One example is one of my clients has a division down in Dallas, Texas, and actually, a number of their employees are Hispanic speaking, and my training has even been interpreted. I work with an interpreter to provide the training to them in Spanish as well which is kind of fun. So, it has definitely focused in the state of Minnesota just because that's where I started this work,

and that's the word of mouth from the Twin Cities up to the northwest part where I live. I've done work in Indianapolis, and Dallas, and Iowa, and a number of different places as well just from springing out from those organizations I work with here in the state.

**Brian:** Got you. Sometimes Chad Hall and I both need an interpreter just to speak to people who understand English. It's difficult sometimes to communicate, but I love that. So, are you coaching... For me, I coach some on the phone, some via video conferencing, and some in person. Do you have a percentage of how that works for you?

**Mark:** Yeah, I would say, Brian, 75% of the coaching I do is via the phone, and about 25% in person. I have a number of clients that just like to meet face to face, so we do that, but the majority, like I say, at least 75%, is via the phone.

**Brian:** I may be putting you on the spot here, and I apologize if I am. What are a couple things that you learned... Your client draw is this leadership round table, what are a couple things you learned about how to maximize drawing people into that?

**Mark:** The biggest learning of all, Brian, 100%, is to get senior leaders that can then make a difference as far as the people that they want in those seats going forward. So, for example, that first year, I had basically, the CEO or owner of every organization in our community in that room, and then from there, they said, "Oh wow. This is exactly the kind of leadership I want in my organization." Then we start piling the rest of their leadership team into the class each year. There's one organization that, minimum, every year will send eight people, eight new leaders, to the next year's class, to year one training. So, it just perpetuates itself. So, the biggest key is really inviting those influencers, those decision makers, that can get the word out, share the impact and so forth with others, and that really is how it really ends up spreading. If you look back, I always reframe it on Jesus' model. He hand selected his senior leadership team of 12 people and invested into them like crazy and expected them to go out and multiply, and that's the exact same model that I've used, really invest in some very, very key influencers that can make a difference and then go out and multiply. It's just been amazing to see how that has worked out.

**Brian:** We live in a very internet-driven world, obviously, and I think people are under the misunderstanding that if I just put up a website, somehow Google will find me, and that will draw me clients which, one, that's not the way to get clients on the internet, just simply by putting out a shingle. It doesn't work exactly that way, but in this internet-driven environment, you started, at least geographically, in your immediate area.

**Mark:** That's exactly right, Brian, and to your point, there's people out there that advertise that as all you have to do like they just throw up a website, put a notice out, and all of a sudden, you'll have all these clients, and it just doesn't work that way. I have a fair amount of social media following, but for five and a half, six years, I've written a weekly blog that has built that from one or two followers to 13, 14 thousand now, whatever it is. It takes time. It takes a lot of time, effort, and energy, and even all that work, that's all great. They're getting the writing of servant leadership, but the true people that I work with and coach, I can tell you, I've maybe gotten one or two clients from that social media world, and the rest of them are the hand to hand where you're in touch, where they know you, and they can experience you, or others have experienced you from them, and they share that. It's just a lot of hard, heavy lifting work. You just have to be patient, put your time in, and you will end up with clients for

sure, but your clients are going to be your best marketing tool, and as you deliver value on a consistent basis to them, then it will mushroom from there.

**Brian:** And how important was it for you to have a book to build credibility?

**Mark:** That's a great question, Brian, and the book did not come until... Well, this is the one-year anniversary in September. So, I built my business, and the reason that I wrote the book was I had enough people say, "You have to get this information out, beyond the borders of Minnesota. You have to build something to share this because it's just too valuable to hold tight to us." So many people encouraged me to write it, so that's what I did. We've since come out with online training that we're just doing right now too so people can access it that they can't get here in person. So, that was just something that I did after the fact, actually. So, it definitely wasn't a part of building the business. Certainly now, it definitely has had an impact. I think I'm far more effective now with having a book to be able to reference. It's just far more detailed and so forth. It helps people to understand what the organization's about, what they can expect, and that type of thing.

**Brian:** I know in our training, we talk about the difference between doing coaching and being a coach. Do you think that, maybe even thinking about those initial people who signed on with you, that they see your credibility in what you had done or in who you were?

**Mark:** I think that was a combination of both, Brian. They could see the competence. The fact that I was at a senior leadership level at one of the largest printers in the world. When I left the corporate world, I had 10 business union presidents that were reporting to me and thousands of people within my sphere of influence. So, that in and of itself, they see what I had done, but the person that I am... I mean, I was engrained in this. I was on the board of directors of this unity foundation that was all about promoting faith at work activities, so people knew who I was and what I was all about and the whole aspect of the grounding, that this wasn't leadership by Mark Deterding. This was leadership by the Master servant leader, Jesus. I tested it out in the corporate world. I studied a lot scripturally, as far as trying to understand how Jesus went about leading and building his following. Then I put together a model that I talk about in this book on how to be actionable because, again, I want to provide people tools and actionable things they can step into and really do. I don't just want to talk about theory, right? It's the combination of all of that that I think attracts people. At the end of the day, I'm going to tell you it's not me. It's the Holy Spirit working through Jesus' message in this book. He calls us to be servant leaders. At the core, people are fundamentally pulled to that, so they're curious. They want to know more.

**Brian:** Without breaking any confidentiality, certainly you've got to keep confidentiality at that level of leadership too in coaching. When you're coaching executive coaches, what are two or three of the most common topics that they bring up to be coached around?

**Mark:** It all starts, Brian, with purpose. That's where, when I start any coaching relationship, when I start any work with an organization, that's where it starts because I want people to be grounded on what their personal purpose is, and that's a discernment process, right? That's one of the things that I learned so much in my coaching training is helping people to really discover and discern what their personal purpose is. That's where everything starts and where all my personal engagements really resonate from is helping people really get grounded on that. Then from there, it's all about, basically, how to really, practically drive a culture. People just don't know what they don't know, and nobody's been taught in

schools on how to drive culture. So, how to really help the organization to know what they want, it's really helping them to build clarity around this purpose, around vision, around values, how people are going to behave within the organization. So, getting people grounded personally on that, and then they take that personal work that they've done and then take it to the organization and even to the family. I do a lot of work with families as well, Brian, and helping them to bring up to be intentional about the culture of their family is, about what their family purpose is, their family values, how they're going to treat each other and what they want their legacy of their family to be, so it's all those things. Those are some of the very core things, and then the practical aspect of how do we build performance. In a manufacturing setting, or in a church, or in whatever kind of organization, on a family farm. How are we going to get better every day? If we're not getting better every day, somebody's going to pass us by, we're going to become irrelevant.

Helping them to understand the tools, what you need to do, how you need to measure things, how you need to drive improvement, that type of thing, how you build relationships. It's intentional. As leaders, they're coached around getting out of their office and out amongst the people and getting proximate with people. That's how you really lead and how you really coach. Coaching isn't done from the corner office throwing out orders. It's done face to face, hand to hand. Let's work together and just collectively do this. You're going to have to do this by getting out of your office. So, those are a few of the things, and so often, people have come up through a positional authority type environment, and that's all they know, so this is all very foreign to them. It does take a lot of coaching and a lot of work back and forth to really help them understand, but boy, when the lightbulb goes on, it totally reframes their whole purpose in life as a leader, and they see the impact and the transformation of people's lives within their organization and their families.

**Brian:** Hey Mark, I really appreciate you spending some time with us, talking with us about your business, and obviously, it's a calling. You have such a tremendous heart to help people through the service leadership shown to us through Jesus. I so appreciate your time and your work.

**Mark:** That's my pleasure, and I would say the same thing to you, and Chad, and the whole team at Coach Approach Ministries there. The work that you're doing is significantly impactful. It's impacted my life personally, and I know I've recommended your organization to others, and I know it impacted them as well. Just keep up the great work that you're doing too. I really, really appreciate it.

**Brian:** Thank you so much. For more of Mark, go to his website at [www.triuneleadershipservice.com](http://www.triuneleadershipservice.com). You can download the first chapter of his book, *Leading Jesus' Way*, at his website. Thanks so much for all of you joining us. If you don't want to miss any of our podcasts, I invite you to subscribe to our podcast at iTunes or at Google Play. Next week, I'll be talking to Paul Ramey about his coaching niche with worship leaders. That's going to be a good one. This podcast was 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 October, so if you're interested, go to our website at [www.coachapproachministries.org/coachnow](http://www.coachapproachministries.org/coachnow). We'll see you next week.

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