



Coach Approach Ministries Podcast

Episode 73: Five Ways to Coach the Person and Not the Problem

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[Intro Music]

Brian: 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. In today's podcast, we talk about coaching the person instead of the problem, and Chad lays out some distinctions that help us draw out the fullness of the client. Strangely, we talk a little too much about jockeys, and stay tuned until the very end for instructions on how to download a free tool that will help you to dive deeper into today's topic. I'm Brian Miller, Strategic Director for Coach Approach Ministries, CAM for short, and I'm joined here today by soon to be doctor, but still for today, Mr. Chad Hall.

Chad Hall: I tried to put that on a letter I was writing the other day, and that long intro didn't quite fit. It fits on a podcast. That's good.

Brian: I love it. That's great, soon to be doctor, but yet today mister. I crack myself up, so I repeat myself.

Chad: I like it.

Brian: I'm my favorite person to quote. I do it all the time.

Chad: In fact, I just was saying that the other day.

Brian: Chad, when we talk about coaching the person and not the problem, which I love that piece, many times we need some distinctions in order to help draw out the fullness of the client. I think we

lump everything into one group.

Chad: Yeah. Kind of beginner coaching is you coach client to do stuff different, but the client doesn't really change. When you go to more of a professional level coaching, really good coaching, the client changes, but we kind of think, "What's that mean for a person to change? What about a person changes?" Kind of what's the makeup of a person we would see grow and develop? I noticed myself, for years, just kind of conflating a bunch of stuff. So, I found it helpful for the last few years to start making some distinctions about what is the makeup of a person that we might see develop through coaching.

Brian: Well, one of my favorite things even about coaching itself is it helps me understand distinctions. It helps me think through some finer points of how to approach something at maybe a more surgical level, so we can, I'm just mixing my metaphors, drill down on a specific area. You and I were discussing it. Someone will say to me, "What's a good spiritual gifts assessment?" I'll say, "The bible." I don't find good assessments for such things like that. It's too broad.

Chad: Yeah, and because we can assess some aspects of who a person is or what they have to offer. We might think we can assess anything, like spiritual gifts, but one of the challenges I have with spiritual gifts assessments, or inventories, is they tend to conflate and not distinguish very well spiritual gifts and other aspects of a person, their natural gifts, their wiring, their personality, even skills that they've learned along the way. This podcast isn't the best venue to take out all of our hatred towards spiritual gifts inventories. We'll do that on a later podcast. Maybe today, we should just make some distinctions.

Brian: Everyone in my church had the spiritual gift of music, yet no one could sing. I'll stop at that. So, where do we start with some distinctions, Chad?

Chad: The best distinctions that I find is to distinguish between natural gifts and acquired strengths. What we might just do with this podcast is lay out five different aspects of who a person is, what they have to offer. So, the first two that we could distinguish would be natural gifts and acquired strengths. Natural gifts, that's what you're born with. You didn't do anything to deserve it. You didn't work for it. It's in your genetics, or whatever. For me, those are things like some natural talent, a person's IQ. Their cognitive ability tends to be they just showed up with it.

Brian: IQ seems to be the speed of your neuron firing mostly.

Chad: That's right.

Brian: You can just process faster, and you can't acquire that.

Chad: Yeah. It's not like a muscle that you can develop and have faster neuron processing. Physical stature, there's very little you can do to be taller, or shorter for that matter if you wanted to be a horse jockey, and you were too doggone tall.

Brian: I'm glad you said horse jockey because I think most people were thinking elephant jockey?

Chad: Camel jockeys. Those camel jockeys make big money.

Brian: Apologies on my part for jumping to conclusions.

Chad: You were very culturally insensitive with that, Brian.

Brian: So, natural gifts are things you are born with. You can't really change it. You might be able to accentuate it, to hone it, but you're born with it. You've got to start that way.

Chad: You could steward it, but you can't acquire it.

Brian: As opposed to acquired strengths. I'm going to guess that you can acquire them.

Chad: Hence the adjective, acquired. This is the difference between the Strengths Finder assessment. Strengths Finder is addressing a natural talent. You have a natural talent theme. Again, I don't want to make Strengths Finder all encompassing, but it's divided into 34 signature talent themes, and those are natural, you just have them. Acquired strengths would be things that you add on top of those natural gifts. Think skills, knowledge, abilities, things that you develop. If someone has a high cognitive function, which is a natural gift, they might acquire language ability with that, speaking multiple languages. If someone had a natural athletic talent, they might add to that, they might acquire the strength to apply that to karate, or being a camel jockey, or whatever.

Brian: Horse jockeying.

Chad: Or a horse jockey. No judgement what kind of jockey you want to be.

Brian: No. No judgement here.

Chad: Natural strengths are nature. Acquired strengths are nurture. So, you've done something, or someone around you in the environment has done something to help you acquire the strengths. They're just different, so if we try to acquire natural gifts, that's going to be really frustrating.

Brian: When you're coaching, if you are drilling down, and you get to some natural gifts, you could coach around what acquired strengths would really accentuate your natural gifts. That would be very custom coaching.

Chad: It would be, and you may hear a client say something along the lines of, in fact I was just talking to a coaching student a couple weeks ago, and she said, "Well, you know, I'm just not very smart," and I said, "Well, that may or may not be true. I don't know, but what I hear is that you're just trying to be smart in too many areas. You're trying to do it all, and my guess is if you focused, you'd make the most of the smarts you have." She said, "I'm just not very good at focusing." I said, "That is an acquired strength. By acquiring the strength of focus, you can make the most of the natural intellect you have." That was really helpful for her, and that simple distinction helped her know where to focus her time and energy and maybe a different way of envisioning herself.

Brian: That's true for everybody. I would say most people think, "I'm not smart in all these areas," and it kind of messes with our head a little bit, or you've got a few people who think they're smart in every area, and they're not, so this could be some help that way too. So, you give us two, natural gifts and acquired strengths. There's three more. What's next?

Chad: Another aspect of who we are and what we have to offer is personality, and this one gets kind of confusing, or confused with some of the others, because it's both nature and nurture. There's an aspect of our personality that we're just born with. We tend to call that temperament. Then we add on top of that through life these layers of personality. Personality is a way of experiencing the world and engaging

the world based on how we interpret it. One of the best descriptions I heard years ago was it's these patterned ways of feeling, thinking, and behaving, and we acquire that, but we acquire it on top of some natural ways of just showing up for people. Personality is things like being extroverted, or organized, or intuitive. There are these different personality traits, and that can change over time, but there's aspects of it that aren't going to change.

Brian: So, I get the nature part. Some people are Type A, they're laid back, they're hyperactive perhaps. There's different pieces to that that you're kind of born with. It's hard to step away if you're a Type A person. You can't hardly change that, but tell me more about the nurture part. Where does that come in in the personality?

Chad: It's interesting. There's probably far more of our personality that's actually nurtured than we really think. The longer it becomes a patterned part of who we are or how we show up, the more challenging it is to change it. So, something even like extroversion, from what I read, people are born leaning toward extroversion, but what happens is, they begin using extroversion as a way of navigating the world, it becomes more, and more, and more comfortable for them, it becomes more of a rigid pattern for how they show up, interact with the world. It's hard to change, and we don't even realize it was a nurtured part of who we are. However, when you put someone in a really different circumstance for a really long time, you begin to notice those patterned ways of thinking, feeling, showing up, they begin to change. The patterns aren't as rigid as maybe we thought they were.

Brian: I like to think that I was born sarcastic.

Chad: That's an acquired strength, not a personality trait.

Brian: But it's a personality trait because of the family I was born into. It was hard not to be sarcastic. I like what you said earlier. It is a pattern of experience, so sarcasm becomes a pattern through personality, through nurture. It's who I am as a personality, but it's through nurture. You can change that.

Chad: You can. One of my favorite books recently has been Ian Cron's book on the ideogram. It's called *The Road Back to You*.

Brian: Ideogram is popular today.

Chad: Boy, it's hot. It's hotter than the Golden State Warriors.

Brian: No, no, no, no.

Chad: It's probably not that hot. Never mind. Never mind on that. Anyway, one of the things Ian Cron says in there is that the personality both protects and imprisons you. So, we develop personality to protect us. Then we get later in life, and we realize it's kind of imprisoning us. We can't not show up in these ways even when we would like to show up differently. Part of really understanding and developing who we are, maturing as beings, is recognizing the imprisoning part and choosing to do something different. That's where we just say thankfully it is nurture. We don't have to be imprisoned. It's not genetic that we have certain personality traits.

Brian: So, I don't know if this is what you're talking about or not. I see people who run everything

through the pattern of victimization. “There’s no way I can get ahead because it’s rigged against me.” They see things like that, and that’s a pattern of thinking that becomes part of your personality, but you can change that.

Chad: Yeah, and so they may be born with a temperament of that melancholic temperament, but they begin to add on top of that these layers of personality of avoiding, blaming. I tend to think victimization is kind of a blame game, blaming others for things being bad. The good news is, you don’t have to stay there. A coach might help somebody unpack how their personality has led to some of these assumptions that are beginning to imprison them, or maybe have imprisoned them for a long time, and the client can begin to choose his or her way out of that prison.

Brian: I think coaching can also allow some better awareness because sometimes you are victimized. I don’t mean to say you’re not, but if you’re always processing everything like that, it’s hard to know that is being victimized, and that’s not. That’s just me thinking it is. So, coaching can help make those distinctions as you think about part of personality that’s not nature, that’s more nurture. That’s interesting. I love these distinctions. They definitely help me think about how to ask better questions.

Chad: Another distinction, and this kind of gets to your intro with the spiritual gift inventory, I get this all the time at church, and certain classes I’m teaching, what are spiritual gifts? What I tend to see is people confuse spiritual gifts with all the other things we’ve talked about so far. So, someone says, “Well, I’m organized, so that means I have the gift of administration.” No, it means you’re organized. A spiritual gift, and we’re talking to Christians here, a spiritual gift is what God gives to Christians to help grow the church, either grow it bigger or deeper. That’s it. Let’s be really clear. In the New Testament, they talk about spiritual gifts. They’re God-given, and they’re for the good of the church. So, when you think about spiritual gifts in terms of, “Well, at work, I’m really good at project managing, so that means I have the gift of administration.” No, it probably means you have the natural gift of being organized. It may be part of your temperament to be more organized. That’s not a supernatural bestowing of God’s spirit in you to administer something. Scripture gives us really clear lists of spiritual gifts. I’m not sure those are exhaustive lists, but they’re certainly example lists. I think when you consider God has given me a gift to be used in his church, that really changes it from it’s just my personality or something I learned in school as an acquired strength, or even a natural gift.

Brian: So, I heard some of what’s not a spiritual gift. Give us an example of what is a spiritual gift and how you’ve seen it used in the church for the growing of the church.

Chad: I think a good one, for me, would be an act of service. I am not naturally a compassionate person.

Brian: No, no.

Chad: That’s probably a surprise to you, Brian.

Brian: No. You are not.

Chad: I’m not.

Brian: Good self-awareness there, Chad.

Chad: Actually, that’s called wife-awareness. There’s an assessment you can take. It’s called getting

married, and you learn all kinds of things about yourself. So, I'm not a naturally compassionate person, but there have been times where God has just gifted me with the ability to act and to serve in ways that meet specific needs that grow the church, again, either wider or deeper. I can think of several instances along the way, and my personal theology about a spiritual gift is just because God gives it to you for a time, doesn't mean it's permanent. Think of it like a tool. God puts a tool in your hand to get something done that God needs done and needs you to do it. It's like he's letting you borrow his tools but for use in his church. For me, the times when I have been gifted with acts of service, I can kind of stand back and say I know that's not for me. That's not Chad-generated act of service. I think where it gets confusing is God also wants us to use our natural gifts, our acquired strengths, and our personality in God's kingdom, but that doesn't make all of those things spiritual gifts.

Brian: I do think sometimes we confuse spiritual gifts with superpowers, such a comic book hero... I can fly. I also have heat-vision. I don't know, but out of these five, I think sometimes we elevate spiritual gifts to such a level of the others don't matter. I think developing people is more helpful when we think of some of the distinctions and help them in a lot of different areas to help them understand what's going on, as opposed to just their spiritual gifts.

Chad: Where I found spiritual gifts to really come in big time in coaching is when a person is facing something as a part of their walk with God and their inhabiting of God's kingdom, and they are trying to rely on natural gifts, acquired strengths, maybe personality, and that's not enough. They say, I guess I'm not supposed to do this or whatever. In coaching, I say if you had a spiritual gift that God could give you, just for this, what would it be? Maybe it's the gift of mercy, gift of evangelism, whatever. Evangelism's a big one. "I'm not an evangelist." Well, that's why God would give you a gift of evangelism because you don't have it. You can really help people pray for a gift, recognize the need for it, or even find somebody to partner with who has that gift that God's given to them as a way to move forward.

Brian: That's an interesting piece. I think spiritual gifts have a lot to do with where you're at in the body of Christ. It tends to be something you can use well in a team. That's why I talk about it being more a superpower. I can go out there and just use this and whack down the bad guys, or whatever it is, but it really needs to be thought of in a team situation. So, there's one more. You've teased us. You've got four, and we've got one left. What's the big reveal on number five?

Chad: I don't know that I left the best 'til last, but the fifth one for me is character. So, character is just what kind of person are you? My own definition of character is what kind of person are you based on your virtues, your vices, and your values? Virtues, positive patterned ways of showing up that lead to life. Vices are negative patterned ways of showing up that lead to death or separation, or hell if you want to be... Since I'm in the south, I can say hell. So, it's that combination, virtues, vices, and certain values that make up who you are as a person. It's the character. It's the mark of who you are. Are you honest? Are you prideful? Are you courageous? Are you slothful, greedy? Those are aspects of character that are both natural... Not they're both. They are all three. They are nature, they are nurture, and they are supernatural. All of those feed into who you are, what kind of person are you? For me, the character is really what's happening when you're being transformed into a person of Christ. Each of us is being called to be more like Christ. That's a character project. So, it doesn't really matter your personality. Introverts, extroverts, they can all be formed into the person of Christ. Dishonest people, that's not Christlike, so there's the distinction.

Brian: So, you're coaching a client, and you're hearing some things, and you're thinking this would be a good time for distinction. What are some clues to know which of these five you should dig into?

Chad: It helps me to think of these in distinct ways because if I hear a client trying to pick up one and use it in a way that's really the other, I'm going to invite a distinction and maybe draw out the distinction. So, for me, having it as a framework, first of all, is really helpful. Again, if I hear somebody talking about a personality trait as being un-Christlike, it's probably not true. It's probably a character trait that's not Christlike, and that's something that can be formed. It just helps to put it in the right category. What is it? The first step of wisdom is calling something by its rightful name. So, just know what you're dealing with.

Brian: So, there's lots of places you could use this, but one place you're saying is as you're trying to help someone become more like Christ, there are some distinct areas we can look at, and that will help us to help them see clearly the designed actions that will help them in that distinct area.

Chad: Yeah. Another place would be in our relationships. People are always navigating relationships in a coaching conversation, or in a coaching relationship. So, if you have a client who they're talking about maybe their relationship with somebody at work, and they say, "I think my personality just rubs them the wrong way," and you begin to hear what is the personality you're talking about? You might say, "Actually, that just sounds like you're full of pride. That's a vice, not a personality trait." We may not be that direct with a coaching client, but we might be. It just helps them to know, what's really going on here? Another place would be in terms of when they're trying to get something done. Which of these aspects of who they are should they look to leverage in order to get that thing done? Are they looking for a natural gift? Do they need to acquire some more strength to be able to get it done through nurture? Do they need to go off track of their personality for a while to try to get it done? It just helps them to know where to look for in terms of their resource to be able to move forward on something.

Brian: That's good stuff, Chad. I really appreciate you bringing these five distinctions of kind of the human person to use and helping us think things through.

Chad: Brian, it's been fun, and hopefully, we're going to have a resource on this. I'll let you tell others about that, maybe in the closing.

Brian: Stay tuned, and after this short break, I'll give you instructions on how you can download Chad's free tool that will help you dive in to today's topic.

As a trained coach, you need to stay sharp. If you don't, you can lose your certification. Our advanced coaching courses provide the development you need to expand your skills, tackle specific coaching issues, and get the continuing education you need to stay sharp and stay certified. In the first few months of 2018, Coach Approach Ministries is offering four advanced classes. One is *A Coach Approach to Change, Transition, and Transformation*. The second one is *The Language of Coaching*. The third, *Coaching and Positive Psychology*, and finally, *A Coach Approach to Evangelism and Discipleship*. Go to www.coachapproachministries.org/coachadvance to sign up and keep your coaching skills sharp. Set time aside right now to take your next class, www.coachapproachministries.org/coachadvance.

Chad wanted me to make available a one-page breakdown of the seven heavenly virtues. You can download this helpful resource by going to our website at www.coachapproachministries.org/virtues.

That's www.coachapproachministries.org/virtues. We'll see you next week.

[Outro Music]