



Coach Approach Ministries Podcast

Episode 77: Coaching Models Are Not Just Attractive Coaches

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Brian Miller: One of the toughest things for new and not-so-new coaches is finding paying clients. You need paying clients to get better as a coach, and especially if you want to be an ICF certified coach. People don't always realize that bartering is an accepted form of payment by the International Coach Federation. That's why we put together the Coaching Exchange. The Coaching Exchange is your ticket to paid coaching hours with really good clients. In the Coaching Exchange, you get 40 hours of paid coaching experience, and you help other coaches do the same. Experience matters. Go to www.coachapproachministries.org/coachexchange to find out more.

[Intro Music]

Brian: 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 and a guy who's entering No Shave November with vigor, Mr. Chad Hall. Chad I see that you are preparing yourself for a long winter.

Chad Hall: Not a long winter's nap, just a long winter.

Brian: You are putting off the stylish, and may I say, just wonderful goatee version of the beard, and you're going for the Abe Lincoln.

Chad: The Abe Lincoln, the thing I've always had a problem with Abe, several things.

Brian: Several things. So, okay, wait a second, wait a second. So this won't tie to our current podcast; we're going to set aside our current topic and say Five Things Chad Hall Has a Problem With Abraham Lincoln. One of the most revered presidents of, I'm going to say of all time. Maybe the top two, with Washington.

Chad: He's on Mount Rushmore.

Brian: He's on Mount Rushmore. Go ahead.

Chad: He does not have a mustache, and I think that's a little weird.

Brian: It wasn't in 1860.

Chad: Probably not.

Brian: But today, it's probably coming back. Anyway, our topic today is coaching models, and I just think this is an interesting topic. I think we kind of know what a coaching model is, but I think there's a lot of distinction to it. I think we want to talk about how to know when to use a model, and maybe even what are some models we could use. When I first heard coaching model, I thought this probably referred to the most attractive coaches, handsome or pretty, and I immediately realized I was not a coaching model, and, I might add, neither are you. I had a question in my mind: is our partner Bill Copper a coaching model? Honest to goodness, I didn't have the guts to ask him.

Chad: Yeah, he could be. He could be. Except that's not what a coaching model is.

Brian: Okay, okay. Well I think I started to pick that up pretty quick. So how would you define a coaching model? What's the basics here?

Chad: You know there are different types of coaching models, but in general a model is a theoretical framework that describes something that happens in reality. That's what a model is. If you think of something like a model train. A model train's not like a real train. It's a resemblance of a real train, helps you know the real train, maybe how it works or whatever. If you're an architect, you build a model of the park that you're designing. It's not the real park, but it's a representation of the reality. So, we use those representations. We use models, in coaching to represent things that happen in reality, and there are three kinds of models. I think what most people think about when they think about a coaching model is what we call a conversation model. It's a picture, it's a series of words, it's some kind of description, of an entire coaching conversation from beginning to end. Like the Hourglass Model describes that a conversation starts broad, it narrows, then it goes broad again as we explore options and possibilities then it narrows again as we get to commitments, those kinds of things. That representation helps you know how to express, in reality, a good coaching conversation, but it gives you that kind of framework or guidance you might say.

Brian: I love the picture of the train. I was trying to get my mind around how is it a model? What can it show us? What can we see? Well when you're standing near some tracks, you can see a train go by. That's it. You probably can't hardly tell if there's a curve in the track. You just see the train go by. But when you're looking at a model train set, you're seeing the whole loop, you're seeing where they stop, multiple stops, you're seeing different obstacles they might have. It just takes it down so you can see the whole thing at one time, especially what you just described, a conversation model, now I can see the whole conversation. I know where it's going. It helps me with managing my time because I know where I've got to get to before we get done.

Chad: Another way to think about a model would be like a map. A map is a theoretical representation of reality. Using a map, you can, in reality, get to my house from your house. It would take you a long time, especially if you went by train, but without that model of the eastern part of our country and the road systems, you'd never get from my house to your house or vice versa. This representation of reality helps us move through reality more effectively because we can see it all at once, we can see all the pieces put together. Think of a model train. You can pick it up and look at the bottom. You ever wonder what was under a train? You want to pick up a model train and look. You don't want to do that on a train that's going by. These conversation models help us not only get the big picture of what happens in a conversation but also helps us understand the steps, the process, how to show up differently, given where we are in the process. That way we don't just have to find our way through a conversation without any idea of where we're going.

Brian: So, you said there are three kinds of models, and the first model if I was listening well enough was the conversational model.

Chad: Yeah, which represents an entire coaching conversation. the Hourglass Model, the Grow Model is a conversation model. There's Steps of a Coaching Conversation which has these five steps. There are lots of those. By the way, if you're going to have a coaching book, you have to have a coaching model.

Brian: You need to invent a new model so you can say, "I'm presenting my new coaching model." I see. That could be a conversational model or that could be something else.

Chad: That's right, could be, and typically those are conversation models. The second kind of model is, what we tend to refer to as, an internal shift model, or you might even call it a creating new awareness model. So that doesn't represent an entire coaching conversation, it represents a truth that you might share as part of a coaching conversation. Within Coach Approach Ministries, we often use the Strengths Versus Skills model. Well, that's a model representation of reality for understanding the relationship between our inherent natural states and our developed skills and how we can end up using skills that don't overlay with our natural strengths and the tension and stress that can cause. Well you're going to share that within a coaching conversation. Heck, it may even take up the whole conversation, but that model doesn't really represent the sequence from beginning to end of that conversation. It represents a truth that would be helpful for a client to wrestle with within a coaching conversation.

Brian: A truth and it still provides a bit of a map. If we're talking about a map between where I live in Illinois and where you live in North Carolina, then we might need a map to get around Louisville. If I said that right... Louisville.

Chad: I think that's how you say it.

Brian: I should have just said Lexington, Knoxville, something I can pronounce easier. So, if that's the case, then the Strengths Versus Skills allows us a map, if you will, to say here's how to help the clients see what their natural strengths are, how they've built upon them, maybe how it's worked out for them, but it doesn't lead you all the way to the end of the conversation.

Chad: No, it's designed to help the client have a new idea that will help them move to their eventual destination. It gives them what they need in terms of awareness or that internal shift in belief or value or knowledge or whatever. I think of those as little lessons that get taught in the midst of coaching. We tend to not think that coaches do a lot of lesson-teaching, so we call them models instead of lessons. They're not necessarily just from us from my experience. They're these models that apply to everybody, and we can bring them. Other, really simple, examples, Stephen Covey's Urgent Versus Important grid, that's an internal shift model. It helps somebody get a grip on the time management issue. He also has that Circle of Influence, Circle of Concern. A simple model that would help somebody distinguish what part of this do I care about, but what part can I do something about? Those are models, and I tend to think that coaches don't need a ton of conversation models. You just need enough to help you know how a conversation moves, but the more of these internal shift models that we have access to, probably the better we are at helping clients move forward.

Brian: Got you. So, if I'm counting right that's one and two. What is the third type of model?

Chad: There's a third type at least in my own mind. There's a type of model that describes a type of reality that informs our coaching, but it doesn't necessarily lead us to share the model with the client. So, it's maybe our understanding of how reality works, maybe how change works. That kind of stuff. It's

not that helpful necessarily to speak it out loud to the coaching client and let that be part of the conversation. In our training, we talk about the Triple Loop Learning model that we've adapted from Chris Argyris and others. You can have change at the action level, you can have change at the strategy level, or you can have change at the paradigm-identity level. That's helpful for us to know as coaches: what kind of coaching are we doing here? What kind of questions might I ask? I don't think you're ever going to teach that model to a client. I guess you could. It just tends to inform my coaching more than it is this thing that we share out there in the conversation itself.

Brian: I would think that could be helpful again at spots within the conversation model. So, we like the Hourglass, which starts really wide, and if I catch myself getting really caught up in the problem, wanting to ask questions about the problem, the Triple Loop says, "Well, don't start with the problem. Start as deep as you can" actually. Start with strategy, or start with identity. Identity is a great place to make you think "What's going on here for the client." We want to coach the client, not the problem. Where else would you use the Triple Loop inside of a conversational model?

Chad: Yeah, my tendency is to actually start with the actions. If a change in actions can get you the results you need, great. That's where 99% of coaching happens, but what's it going to take to get you to new actions? Now, if you can't get to the new actions easily, that means that I, as the coach, I'm going to need to ask more strategy questions. How do you approach this? What do you tend to believe about this? How do you think things work? Those sorts of questions, and then the client has a strategy shift and now new things are open to them. If they can't have the strategy shift, now I need to ask more questions about identity, paradigm, how they see the world, how they see themselves in the world, the story they believe that they're in in the world, but I'm not going to start with those questions if what they're looking for is how to squeeze out 30 minutes a day for exercise.

Brian: Right, right, so I was having a conversation with a coach the other day, and what I find is that most clients don't come with something that particular. Their topics mushy. Once we get to a point where the topic is not mushy, "I want to know how to make this thirty minutes better," that's definitely a different approach. That mushiness at the beginning of a conversation, I think it can throw coaches because they think, "Okay, I've got to decide what they really want." You throw in some questions in there early that are really wide, that just help them think about why they're asking, why they're thinking about this, what do they really want out of this, those types of things. That's where I was going. So those are three coaching models, three types of coaching models. That's really helpful, and did you title the third one? For people that are keeping notes here? The first one is conversational models, the second one is internal shift models, and this third one which I'm not sure you just didn't invent...

Chad: I may have.

Brian: Because you are a book writer. Is there a good way to put a handle on that one?

Chad: I don't really have a title for it. I just think of it as models that I keep in my head that inform my coaching. You'll have to come up with a snazzier title if we're going to write a book on this, Brian.

Brian: Well, honest to goodness, I'm so impressed with you Chad because typically you would have had all of these starting with the letter C. Your brain just files stuff like that.

Chad: Let me work on that.

Brian: Well I'll give you three seconds because that's usually what it takes. You do pretty well. So, Chad, I'm in the coaching conversation, I think there are times you probably need to shift out of the Hourglass

because there's a better conversational model that you realize. I think there are times as you listen to the nature of the topic, as you listen to the client, there are times you bring up an appropriate internal shift model. There's going to be times when it's like digging a hole and you're mining and you hit something difficult and realize you've got to pull out something from a third, unnamed category to help fight through that, but what are some clues to know I need to shift or bring in a new model? How would I know that?

Chad: With the conversation model, I tend to think conversation models are for beginner coaches, or beginner clients, or a time when you need more structure. The average professional-level coach, I don't think they're thinking about a conversational structure as they're coaching. I think they just know a coaching conversation moves through certain phases. You're going to focus, you're going to explore, you're going to get to action, all that kind of stuff. There's a natural flow. Again, it's kind of like a map. If I drive it enough times, I don't need a map anymore. When I'm going to pull out a conversational model, a specific one, with a client, is when it's going to help both of us to know the way and be on the same page.

A lot of times with a new client, a lot of times if I'm with a team or a group, it helps us to be on the same page, like with the Grow model. Now we're talking about goals, now we're talking about reality, now we're talking about options, whatever. I'm going to probably pull out a model that I think best fits that particular context and is easiest to understand. With the Grow model, I'm going to pull that and naturally talk about goals. When a topic has already been named, I'm going to pull out one of the other models. One of the models I really like to use is, honestly, I don't even remember the name of it, it's from Thomas Crane's book *The Heart of Coaching*. It's a picture, it's just a loop. We used to call it, lovingly, the Jiffy Loop model, but it's basically you've got a focus, you've got a learning loop, and then you're going forward to the action. I've used that before with groups just to let them know where are we in the conversation? What part of the conversation should we be having now? That's just a facilitation tool that I'm going to use. That would be my thought on just conversation models, when to use them, how to use them, when to switch using them.

Brian: Got you, and it made me think of some of these models have great titles. I think we have an Eight Step model that we teach in our 501 Foundations class, and I think it's called the Eight Step Model because if I'm remembering right, it has, let's see, eight steps.

Chad: That's right.

Brian: But they end up being in a loop, and I think it has more to do with just that conversation. I think it's a way to think about multiple conversations. As you mention the train model, there's a sense that the train doesn't just stop here. It goes in a loop and helps us remember how do we go from one coaching conversation to the next. So that's coaching and how to have some clues; now what are some clues to now we need an internal shift model, and I think this is a hard one because certainly it needs to come out of listening and not, "I have a favorite model that I always like to use, and I know you're not an architect but let me use it anyway."

Chad: That's right. In fact, the ICF, one of their little cheat sheets to help distinguish between ACC, PCC, and MCC level coaches. They have this phrase on one of them that is, "The coach is using models that he/she is familiar with instead of ones that are actually helpful." That's my translation of their saying. How do you know that model is not helpful?

Brian: Certainly, I like, we haven't mentioned one, but I like Five Dysfunctions of a Team by Lencioni which can be used as a coaching model, but I certainly have to be careful not to think, "Oh, you need a

little,” like you said it can be called a lesson, “You need a little lesson here. Let’s take a second and give you a little lesson.”

Chad: Yeah. You’re missing something, I happen to have something, so it has to be that what you’re missing is what I have. No, that’s not true.

Brian: But it could be. So, there’s a clue there, I think, right? That you’re missing something. We believe that the client is the expert, but the client doesn’t know everything. It gets murky there for a second. So, Chad I think I interrupted you there for a second. What are some clues to know that I need an internal shift model?

Chad: I think if the client is having a hard time putting it together, they’re up against kind of this gap in terms of creating some new awareness for themselves. Having some kind of structure, some kind of little lesson would be really helpful. Mind you, the lesson is never what they should do. The lesson is how can we think about this topic or this challenge? If you have a repertoire of different models that you have access to then you can think as you’re very actively listening, really hearing the client, you’re maybe even subconsciously connecting what they’re talking about to the models that you have familiarity with. Again, they’re models to describe reality, but the models that you use have to be related to the reality of the problem you’re dealing with. So, if they’re dealing with time management, you’re going to use some kind of time management model, urgency, important. If they’re making a decision, you might use a decision model to help with that. You’re just totally basing it off of what they’ve got going on in that coaching conversation in the moment, not what’s one of your favorite little lessons to teach.

Brian: My rule of thumb, and correct me if I’m wrong here, is that if the internal model takes me longer than three minutes to explain, and I’m not now using it to ask questions and see now where they’re at on it, then it’s too long.

Chad: There are very few exceptions to that. Maybe the Strengths Versus Skills model that might take more, I mean it’d be pushing three minutes, but if you can’t share that model in about three minutes, you probably don’t know the model very well and you probably need to up your communication game in terms of being brief and clear because when you get over your rule of thumb of three minutes you’re probably getting into how should the client apply the model, and that’s not coaching. That’s a helpful distinction for people. The lesson isn’t what should the client do. The lesson is about a reality that will help the client determine what to do for herself or himself what to do or how to respond. A simple one like the Urgent-Important Grid, well that’s just true. Now what do you want to do with that? That’s where the coaching really kicks in, or another thing you’re doing is coaching from the client. “This is what Stephen Covey’s Urgent Versus Important says but how would you say it?” There’s no need to do that. You just share it quickly and then you coach off of it.

Brian: A model, especially that internal shift model should create, I like what you’re saying, I’m catching on to it, it should create a truth. You can put truth into coaching I think all you want, but it doesn’t create a solution on its own and the client needs to take that truth and apply it to their solution as they’re developing options. That’s how you know you’ve crossed the line.

Chad: And if you’re looking for one kind of models to get familiar with, you and I talk a ton about having a really distinct coaching niche, and that’s a big-time god. You and I, we do a lot of coaching with leaders so we’re going to be familiar with models around leadership, interpersonal dynamics, time management, setting priorities, those sorts of things, but if your niche was more about relationship coaching, maybe you coach parents of teenagers. Then you’re probably going to want to read a lot of

books and have a lot of models out of that world. A model of teenagers are looking for boundaries, let's just use that. You might have a model out of that that you would describe, but then how does the parent apply the model? That's really up to them, and you're here to facilitate them, applying the model in their situation.

Brian: So, the model for that might be somewhere around how to put the shock collar on the teenager? And where to put the wires so it would shock them when they go outside.

Chad: Well what shock setting do you think would be appropriate?

Brian: You and I both have high school, 16, 17-year-old kids so... Yeah, what do you think would be appropriate about a shock, that's a great question.

Chad: Just to be clear, we are not doing shock therapy, at least in our household, I can't speak for Brian's household.

Brian: No, no, I was completely joking.

Chad: Well I just used this the other day with the Sunday class I teach. One of the models in human development is that teenagers are looking for identity and they do it two ways. They explore and they commit. One of the things that trips up parents is that they mistake exploration for commitment. Just because a kid is exploring with some identity things and values and beliefs and groups and tribes or whatever, it doesn't mean that they're committed to that. So, I was coaching some of the class members, "Okay, how would you apply that? How much do you need to let them explore? How can you facilitate them making good commitments in terms of identity? What do you do when the commitment seems not healthy for them?" It's an easy model that they then have to apply with rigor in their own situation.

Brian: And it affects the whole conversation. It's not so rigid that we have to walk you through this internal shift. We can present it and then it kind of shows up at different places in the conversation.

Chad: That's right, it's a different way to think about the topic that's helpful. The more you're thinking about the model, probably the worse the model is. The model should be helping the person think about their topic, their situation.

Brian: Chad, I sure appreciate your time helping us think through coaching models and helping me understand it's not about attractive people, it's about letting us see the whole thing at one time, that's really helpful. We're also so glad everyone else joined us for this conversation. If you don't want to miss any of our podcasts, and I don't know why you would want to miss any of them, you can find us at iTunes, you can find us at Google Play, and you can find us at Stitcher, we'll see you next week.

One of the toughest things for new and not-so-new coaches is finding paying clients. You need paying clients to get better as a coach, and especially if you want to be an ICF certified coach. People don't always realize that bartering is an accepted form of payment by the International Coach Federation. That's why we put together the Coaching Exchange. The Coaching Exchange is your ticket to paid coaching hours with really good clients. In the Coaching Exchange, you get forty hours of paid coaching experience, and you help other coaches do the same. Experience matters: go to www.coachapproachministries.org/coachexchange to find out more.

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