

# How Coachable are You?

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Curiosity gets the best of me when leaders tell me they want to hire a coach. Since many variables motivate this decision, it's intriguing to hear about their desired impact, coaching goals and definition for coaching success. Perhaps you've been wondering about getting started individually or with your team.

At its essence, coaching is a partnership between coach and client that requires clear intentionality from both. Having an exceptional coach is necessary, as is a client's coachability level.

Strong coaching is anchored in clarifying and challenging conversations, facilitating breakthroughs, and exceeding anticipated returns on the investment. Not surprisingly, individuals and teams who are highly coachable experience results that are far more significant than those who show up with low coachability.

Consider these two coaching scenarios that yielded very different outcomes:

- 1) He sat across from me with his eyes intently focused and his posture alert. He listened, fully engaged and able to block out distractions. When asked some tough questions, he processed them and responded transparently and openly. His homework assignments were completed on time (often times early) and revealed tremendous thought, self-awareness and insight. Tapping into several difficult but crucial opportunities in his leadership development, he experienced a breakthrough with coaching and now leads at a much higher and more mature level. Coaching has extended past our original time frame and proves to be pivotal for him.
- 2) She arrived late, again, appearing unorganized and unprepared. Listening "half-way", her eyes wandered throughout our conversation, and she had difficulty when prompted to sum up what she was hearing. Her responses to questions were vague, incomplete and lacked depth. Finishing exercises became a rare occurrence and consistent reminders had to be sent. Using deflection to dodge challenging topics, her awareness remained limited, her growth process slow, and her frustration high. Little progress was gained, and coaching conversations concluded without a strong win.

If you're committed to engaging in coaching individually or in a team, review these below factors to help you maximize the experience. Being real with where you're at and what you bring to the coaching partnership will help guide your decision making about the timing and investment needed for coaching to be fruitful and to provide sustainable success.

## **3 Ways Leaders and their Teams Know They're Ready for Coaching:**

### **1. Readiness for CHANGE:**

Undoubtedly, great coaching helps leaders and teams prioritize and navigate change; after all, you don't invest in a coach to stay the same. Managing internal and external changes that are needed on your growth trajectory, being ready to receive feedback, course-correct when needed, and dig deep are all hallmarks of

productive coaching students. Coaching isn't about *if* change is necessary; it's about *what* change is necessary, *when* and *how*. Having a high readiness for change is foundational.

## **2. Willingness to be CHALLENGED:**

Coaching isn't for those who prefer to stay surface-level, unwilling to do the more difficult internal work. It's for those who are willing to be stretched, can handle the tough stuff, and can get up close to reality and deal with it well. Great coaching should challenge you to think different thoughts, respond in unique ways, recognize unproductive reactions and patterns, and adjust your behaviors. It honors who you currently are but beckons you to keep growing so you truly maximize your potential.

## **3. Commitment to ACCOUNTABILITY:**

Extreme trust between coach and client is key to best practice coaching. When trust is present, solid accountability naturally follows and is invited vs. begrudged. Having someone hold us accountable is an important part of maturing in leadership. When you're innately holding yourself to a higher level of accountability, you know you're moving forward. This expedites the coaching experience and will help you gain the most traction in reaching your goals.

### **Success = Sustainable Change:**

Like other investments, coaching compounds growth over time. Speed is not the best indicator of success; sustainable change is. It takes courage to embrace change, time to implement it, and endurance to stay the course with it when it would be far easier to revert to old ways. You'll know you and/or your team has made significant progress in coaching when both you and others recognize changes from the outside looking in.

When you hire a great coach, you can trust that individual to have your back and be fully invested in your growth. When you bring your most coachable self into a coaching experience, your perspective, approach, effectiveness, results, and relationships all improve.