

## Leader as Coach

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Daniel Goleman introduced his [six different leadership styles](#) back in 2000. The introduction of coaching as a leadership style was revolutionary at the time, and now 20 years later, we know it is a differentiator in retention and engagement. Of course, *retention + engagement = productivity*, so many ears perk up when we discuss coaching now! Interestingly enough, it is also the leadership style that most leaders rank as their least favorite, saying it takes too long and requires too much work to help people grow.

I know that not everyone is coachable, and yet, it is hard for me to understand why a leader isn't invested in the growth of their people. Coaching is an underutilized skill that more than 70% of people who have received it report improved work performance, relationships, and more effective communication skills. Seems like a worthwhile investment in a service-oriented world!

Coaching is best done through personal development, in other words, one-on-one. Maybe you want someone to understand consequences of a behavior, or their motivation for decisions they are making, so they are aware and can choose differently next time. Think about the proverbial tardy employee that you make statements about attendance over and over and nothing changes. Now, imagine raising their awareness to their behavior so they can see it and choose differently. That's the benefit of coaching!

Empathy and self-awareness are essential for leaders who want to coach their teams. Knowing when you are stressed, for example, is one piece of self-awareness that is valuable so you aren't entering into a coaching conversation when you are only focused on the things that have to get done. Empathy is also critical to acknowledging the starting point of your staff. If you want a new skill to be learned by your team member, begin by relating to the difficulty in learning something new. That self-awareness helps you in the conversation with them, perhaps slowing you down to make bite-sized pieces for them to feel success as they grow.

Coaching is a skill that starts in strengths. Working with someone through their weaknesses isn't empowering, so begin with what they do well, and how they contribute to success. Have them connect their strengths to the learning, so they aren't only overcoming challenges, they are building on what they do well. For instance, most new managers are promoted because they have technical skills that are exceptional. Now they are a manager, and you don't want them doing the technical work, only the people management. Where will they rely on their strengths in this transition?

Consider smaller technical tasks that they can maintain while they learn more about managing workload, or personalities, or whatever their role requires beyond the technical skill.

Talent challenges have existed forever, and more recently recruiting, hiring, and retaining talent are particularly difficult. This is intensifying as employees can choose their employer by culture and opportunity. Maybe you want to improve your leadership skills by adding coaching to your toolkit? If so, everyone wins!

For more information and further reading on Leadership, visit our [online library](#).



### **JUDY HISSONG, CLM**

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Judy understands leadership and teams. And, she knows how to help you maximize the potential of yours. For over two decades, Judy has applied her vast knowledge of team dynamics, emotional intelligence, work/life balance, leadership, and finance to help organizations improve their people, process, performance and, ultimately, profits.

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