

# 6 Quick Fixes to Improve Your Coaching

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March 22  
Connect: son's birthday party  
Review: asking the second question  
Today:



# Introduction

From little league to Olympians, athletes understand the value of coaching. Fans and parents also see the value of coaching in sports. Coaches equip, encourage, motivate and help players take their game to the next level.

If coaching is so valuable, why don't we use it in all areas of life: like running a business, becoming a great leader or finding work/life balance? At The Mind of a Champion, we believe everyone needs a coach. However, not everyone needs the same coaching relationship.

The following pages are written for leaders who have the opportunity to invest in others with coaching.

**#1**

**Connect Before  
You Coach**

The most effective coaching happens in relationships. When leaders are all task master and have no relationship, coaching can feel like getting in trouble. Know your people. You do not need to be best friends or a therapist, but you do need to connect.

The world is full of over-connecting and under-connecting people. Those with the over-connecting gene will spend 20 minutes of a 30 minute coaching sessions just checking in. Those in the under-connecting group go from good morning to "let's get down to business." There is a better approach.

As a general rule, spend 10% of your coaching block on connecting. For a one-hour coaching session, that is 6-minutes. For a 20 minute coaching session, that is 2 minutes. The exception to this rule is when you are doing Coaching in the Moment. When you see an opportunity for coaching in the moment, just ask, "Are you open to coaching?"

When you get an affirmation, move straight to the coaching conversation.

Useful phrases for Under-Connecting Leaders:

- Catch me up on the family...
- Did you watch any football this weekend... what was the best play you saw?
- Let's take just a few minutes and connect... how was the weekend?

Useful phrases for Over-Connecting Leaders:

- Give me a 2 minute highlight reel of this past week.
- I would love to hear more about it. Let's plan lunch soon to connect so we can get into our coaching today.

Additional transitions from Connecting to Coaching:

- Let's get started...
- I was reviewing our coaching notes and wanted to start with an update...
- Great update. How about we get started coaching...

**#2**

# **Coach on the Plays**

The sports world has this one right. The coach uses the scoreboard (data) to determine when and what to coach. The coach calls a time out and brings the team together. Does the coach turn the attention to the numbers with comments like, "Do you see these numbers? They are not what we agreed upon. We are not making our numbers." Absolutely not. In sports, we coach on the plays with comments like, "We need more intensity on defense. Let's start communicating out there." In sports, we coach on the plays.

Business leaders can learn from great sports coaches. Use the scoreboard to focus your coaching. Your coaching conversation is about the activities that change the scoreboard. You can coach on quantity of plays, quality of plays or both.

If you want to talk about xx results, ask your team member to list all the activities that impact those results. Leaders can add to the list, but you want a majority of the information to come from your team member. For example:

"Let's talk about improving sales results. What are all of the activities you are doing to drive sales?"

Team Members starts listing things from cold calling to closing the sale.

Leaders can use comments to move the conversation forward such as, "good, what else, yes, keep going..." You can also say, "and how about we add xx"

Once you have a list, you can coach on the quality and quantity of play execution.

**#3**

**Ask questions.**

**Stop talking.**

**Take notes.**



When a business leader is coaching a team member, who talks more? The person being coached. One of the biggest mistakes we see in coaching is a leader who just tells, tells, tells. As a leader, you can impart all your knowledge when training. Once you move to coaching for execution, it is time to listen. Think about coaching conversations with questions like:

- Did you complete your tasks?
- You need to do it this way.
- Why is it a good idea to sell this product?

Compared to coaching conversations with questions like:

- I know you are practicing pivoting. What are you learning?
- What are your thoughts about "important task."

A great coach will get a lot of information in the beginning of coaching. It is a discovery conversation that helps the leader direct the coaching. Be sure to ask more than one question. Simple ways to continue the conversation are:

- And what else...
- Tell me more...
- Interesting. Keep going...

**#4**

**Big Changes  
Need Coaching  
More Often**

The bigger the change the more frequent the coaching. The more frequent the coaching, the lower the duration. If I need some accountability for a few small changes I am making or I just want to be coached on continual improvement, then we can meet once a month. Many leaders use a one-hour, once-a-month cadence for coaching.

If I have a bigger change, I need more frequent coaching. Rather than one-hour, once-a-month coaching, take the same hour and divide it into 15 minute weekly coaching. You can even take that 15 minutes and divide it into daily coaching for the first week.

Let go of the words "check-in" or "accountability meeting" and use the word coaching. You can coach for accountability, correction, encouragement and motivation.

Accountability is all about getting information to improve your coaching. When coaching for correction, use one sentence on the mistake and have a conversation about the correction. Encouragement is about recognizing success. Celebrating the No because you know it will lead to a yes. Bring motivation to your team by helping them remember past success.

With higher frequency coaching, you are going to be getting more information. It is important to remember this is information (data / scoreboard) to then coach on the plays. Asking your team member if he hit his numbers squelches the coaching conversation. The coaching is about what you are learning and continuing to tweak your execution plan into a winning game plan.

**#5**

# **Coaching with a Direct Purpose**

There are times when you know exactly what you need to coach around and want to jump right in with, “we need to talk about asking for referrals.” Even when you know what you want to discuss, you need to have a conversation rather than lecture. We find giving choices on the direction of the conversation helpful.

After define the topic you say, “Do you want to talk about quality, quantity, strategy or mindset?” We have found these choices to work in most situations.

“We need to talk about pivoting. Do you want to talk about quality, quantity, strategy or mindset?”

“We need to talk about tracking calls. Do you want to talk about quality, quantity, strategy or mindset?”

“We need to talk about asking for referrals. Do you want to talk about quality, quantity, strategy or mindset?”

The person you are coaching decides where to begin the conversation. Once the coaching conversation has started, you can continue the conversation with the other choices. For example, start with quality and shift to quantity or strategy.

**#6**


**Say NO to  
Fuzzy  
Agreements**

Let's talk next week. I am going to get better. I will try that. These statements are all fuzzy agreement and fuzzy agreements slow progress. At the conclusion of any coaching, summarize what you will practice and when you will check your progress.

We are very intentional with the word practice. Practice indicates I will do it more than once. Practice allows me to get better over time. The alternative to practice is trying. Team member 1 will try to ask for referrals this week. Team member 2 will practice asking for referrals this week. Who will get better results?

You know you will review results to see if the coaching is being applied. How about shifting your mindset to checking the results to see how to continue the coaching. Most behavior changes take more than one coaching conversation because you are creating new habits. Studies on habits show 25 to 28 experiences before the habit is created. Some newer studies suggest 60 experiences before becoming a habit. State up front what the coaching looks like over that time.



A woman with dark curly hair and glasses is smiling while talking on a black smartphone. She is wearing a white tank top under a dark blazer and a necklace with a cross. The background is a blurred office setting.

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