

ebooklet

UNLEASHED!

Expecting GREATNESS
and other secrets
of coaching
for exceptional performance

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WITH SUSANNE BIRO

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ebooklet

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“*Unleashed!*” is a provocative read that delivers.”

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Karen Schweitzer, www.businessmajors.about.com/

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Dub Hay, *Senior Vice President, Coffee & Global Procurement Starbucks Coffee Company*

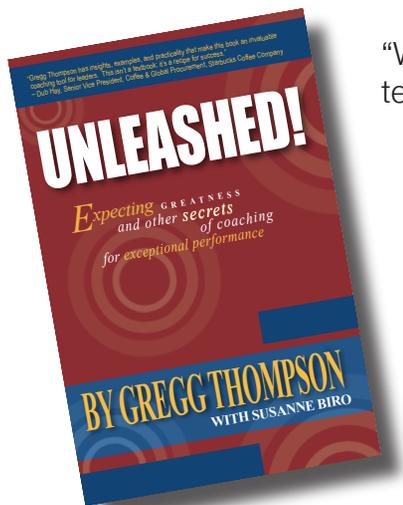
“At last! A book on coaching that brings integrity to the key elements of this profession. This is a must-read for anyone who wants to create a new vision and provide real tools for their clients”

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My Own Greatest Coach



I was twenty years old and in college when I realized that I was really quite ordinary. By then, the damage had already been done. I had spent the first two decades of my life under the delusion that I was special. Who was to blame? My mother, of course. It was all her fault. At an early age, she took me aside and told me secrets, secrets which I promised to reveal to no one.

You are very, very smart; you'll probably be the smartest boy in the school. You must be careful not to lord this over others. You will also have many friends, probably too many. You must do your best to spend time with each of them and help them in any way you can. I've also noticed that you are very fast, probably the fastest in the neighborhood. You must help others run just as fast.

By the time I was ten years old, my mother's perspective on my abilities had taken complete control of my life. I marched into school thinking I was smart, waded into relationships believing I was likable, and tried out for sports teams convinced I was athletic.

As I look back now at these three aspects of my life—academics, relationships, and athletics—I can see how blessed I was with rich experiences. They were not always perfect. I did not always make the honor roll. Sometimes I was rejected by those I considered friends. I was cut from sports teams I desperately wanted to make. But I dove into these endeavors with the confidence that I could succeed, if not this time, then next time for sure. And I succeeded more times than my limited abilities should have allowed. My mother gave me many gifts during her life, but none as precious as the gift of

GREAT EXPECTATIONS.

Why Coaching? Why Now?

Management futurists are fond of predicting a **War for Talent**. They foresee a time in the near future when organizations will be battling for their very survival in the arena of top performers.

I agree; however, I also believe that **this war can be fought and won primarily within the organization itself.**

Look around your organization right now –in its cubicles and inside its hallways, in its meeting rooms and labs, on its factory floor. Any place where people work you will find enormous, untapped potential waiting to be developed. No need for headhunters or expensive recruitment campaigns.

Talent is everywhere. Coaching is the key to unleashing it!

What is Coaching

In the last few years, coaching has moved away from being the exclusive purview of professional coaches. Now, leaders at all levels are being asked to become more coach-like with their team members and colleagues.

And yet, despite its growing popularity, certain misconceptions about coaching remain pervasive.

Coaching is not a neat cognitive process involving the exchange of feedback, insights and action plans.

Rather, it is a muddled, awkward expedition in self-learning, experimentation, disappointment and elation.

The ultimate goal is the development and elevated performance of the individual being coached. I call this person **THE TALENT.**

From good manager to great Leader Coach

As a manager, you are ideally positioned to play the role of coach. In fact, because there are so few good coaches in the workplace, by becoming a skilled coach you can distinguish yourself as one of the most integral types of leaders:

The Developer of Talent

What is Coaching (con't)

You likely already have solid interpersonal and leadership skills. But while skills such as listening, giving feedback and performance planning are important, they are not the subject of this ebook.

Rather, my goal is to remind you of the distinctive personal qualities and timeless practices of great coaches... and to challenge you to become that kind of person for others.

As you read this eBook, I invite you to answer three crucial questions any leader must address before setting out to coach:

- 1.** Have you earned the right to coach?
- 2.** Are you capable of establishing the kind of relationship necessary for coaching?
- 3.** Are you willing to engage in the kind of conversations that stimulate changes in performance?

What is High Performance Coaching?

The Role of the Leader Coach

As a Leader Coach, your job is to challenge the Talent to fully employ all of his gifts, and to unleash his highest performance.

But what is high performance? If we are to coach for it, surely we must first be able to describe it.

Defining and measuring high performance is quite simple – it is not an achievement but a journey. **It is realized when the Talent is on the road towards fully utilizing his natural capabilities in his work.**

The role of the Leader Coach is to help the Talent onto this road, and to help his accelerate his journey down it. They do so by:

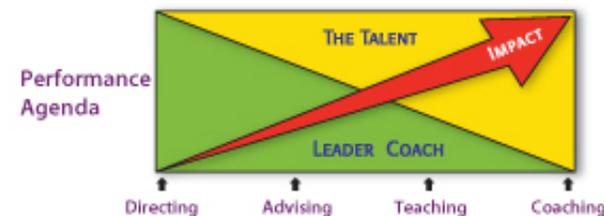
1. Establishing a potent, development focused relationship, and
2. Engaging in difficult, performance-changing conversations.

Who determines if the Talent is performing at a higher level?

THE TALENT. (much to the consternation of performance assessment proponents everywhere)

Who Owns the Agenda?

As coaches, the more we can set aside our own agenda, and allow the conversation to be completely directed by the needs and ambitions of the talent, the greater our coaching impact.



The Expectation/Performance Connection

The great coach deliberately seeks out others' highest potential, often intentionally overlooking their shortcomings in the process.

For many of us, this practice does not come naturally. In fact, the contrary is more often true; it is finding fault that comes most naturally. **What would it take for you to develop the habit of focusing on only the best in others?**

As a coach, it is imperative that you see your role not as a judge of others' performance, but rather, as an advocate for their potential. Great coaches expect others to bring all of their talents and energies to every job. They expect others to do their best work. They

Expect Greatness.

Having taken this appreciative view of others' potential, great coaches then confront them with that vision, and hold them accountable for achieving it.

The Great Expectations Coaching Model

Susanne Biro and I have developed the **Great Expectations Coaching Model** to provide all managers, from supervisors to CEOs, with a simple, straightforward model for creating a culture of high performance within their organization.

The model consists of three guiding principles. They are not predetermined coaching steps. They are three interdependent principles which operate concurrently, each representing a key element that exists within all effective coaching relationships.



- **Earning the Right to Coach**
- **A Perfect Partnership**
- **Dangerous Conversations**

Earning the Right to Coach

Consider this – as a coach, you are asking another person to let you into some of the most sensitive, important areas of his performance and career. Have you earned the right to do so?

Managers are not automatically coaches. Hiring, planning, performance management and other such tasks naturally accompany the role of manager –but coaching does not. We do not assume the mantle of coach just because we are managers.

Becoming a Leader Coach requires that two choices be made:

- 1** – Our decision to help another person create personal change
- 2** – The choice that person makes to include us in his effort to change

Coaching is a peer-to-peer relationship in which the Leader Coach is welcomed into a personal, behavior changing relationship. Managers must **earn this welcome.**

We have identified three key traits which all coaches display when they have earned the right to coach:

- 1. AUTHENTICITY –** They are individuals who are recognized for being clear on their personal values, and acting in ways that are consistent with those values.
- 2. SELF ESTEEM –** They are people who exhibit a unique blend of confidence and humility, gained from a high level of awareness of their personal strengths.
- 3. NOBLE INTENTION –** They are individuals who, in the coaching moment, can manage their own interpersonal needs to ensure the conversation is of greatest service of the Talent.

Earning the Right to Coach

You are the instrument

Like it or not, you are always on display. As someone in a leadership role, the impact of your actions is noted and magnified. Your behavior is continually scrutinized. People watch you and form opinions about who you really are. They ask themselves if you're the kind of person they respect and trust.

As a coach, the greatest tool at your disposal is yourself. Ask yourself:

- **What impact - positive or negative - do you have on those with whom you work most closely? To what extent do you think others would agree with your assessment?**
- **What would it be like to work with someone like you? Would you feel valued, appreciated, talented and valued as a team member?**
- **Is being in your presence a positive experience? If so, why?**

Be gentle and appreciative in this self-reflection. Remember, you are doing this personal work so that you can help others ask these same questions of themselves.

When you continue to develop yourself by addressing these questions with courage, honesty and compassion, you earn the right to challenge others to embark on their own journey of self-development.



A Perfect Partnership

Imagine that tomorrow somebody new comes into your life. This is a different kind of person, one who looks right past your smiling personality, your typical defenses, the insecurities you've worked so hard to mask, and the failings you're ashamed to admit, let alone accept. This person seems to see only you. Your abilities, aspirations and goals, and the ways in which your personality, defenses and insecurities can get in the way of you performing at your very best. He knows when you subtly sell yourself short in your work and career, in pursuing your passions and dreams, and in your expectations for the future. And he won't let you get away with it anymore.



Because this person sees the real you and has your best interest at heart, he will not accept anything less than you are capable of becoming. With a deep appreciation for who you are, this person confronts you with a degree of honesty that does not allow you to deny the truth of your potential. At the same time, he recognizes clearly that this is your challenge –not his. And, he will not be satisfied until you are doing your best work.

What would it be like to have this kind of person in your life?

Now, imagine becoming that person in the lives of others.

When the Leader Coach is able to appreciate the best in the Talent; confront him with his own talents, aspirations and potential; and hold him accountable to perform at his very best, the result is a relationship that is nothing short of

A Perfect Partnership.

A Perfect Partnership

A Perfect Partnership has three distinguishing features:

1. APPRECIATION – Identifying the very best in others and expecting their best. By so doing, we guide others towards seeing and expecting the same in themselves. The power of an appreciative approach is well documented by David Cooperrider, whose Appreciative Inquiry theory posits that organizations change in the direction in which they inquire. Organizations which look for problems to fix will find and focus on problems; organizations which look for what is already working well will focus on how they can do more of what is working. I believe the same is true of our regard for people – focus on what they do well and we tend to get more of it.

2. CONFRONTATION – Seeking out the truth, wherever that path may lead. Confrontation, in this context, does not carry any of the usual connotations of conflict. Rather, it means holding up a mirror so that the Talent can come face-to-face with his perspective on his current situation, abilities, aspirations and potential, and move beyond the limits he has set for himself.

3. ACCOUNTABILITY – Insisting upon personal responsibility for performance improvement. In coaching, we define accountability as **the authority to act**. This means that we hold the Talent fully responsible for his own behavior, the results of those behaviors and for his future and career development. As Leader Coaches, we can be a resource but not a savior.

Dangerous Conversations

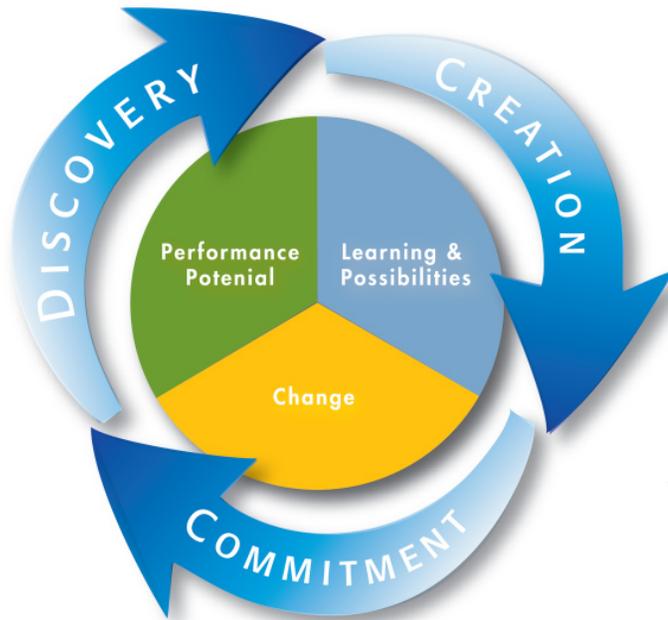
Most on-the-job conversations involve the exchange of information, instructions, advice, and opinions and have relatively predictable outcomes. While these conversations are quite suitable for normal business transactions, they are ineffectual in the coaching process.

Coaching conversations need to be much more potent. They are characterized by purposefulness, emotion, and awkwardness. The Great Expectations model challenges Leader Coaches to engage the Talent in an intense form of dialogue we call Dangerous Conversations.

Dangerous, because the conversation is risky and its outcome, unknown.

Dangerous Conversations

Coaching conversations tend to go through three distinct phases. We call these **The Flow:**



1. DISCOVERY – Here, the Leader Coach helps the Talent explore his own aspirations, values and current situation. The Talent is given time to dig deeper, to ask more of and for himself than he may have ever done before, and to reflect upon a current challenge or opportunity by gaining a greater understanding of himself through inquiry.

2. CREATION – During this phase, the Leader Coach enables the Talent to look at his situation and himself with fresh eyes. The result of this phase is new-found perspectives and possibilities which the Talent may have not previously considered.

3. COMMITMENT – When the Talent has adopted a new perspective on either himself, his abilities and/or the opportunity he is facing, it is time to identify new courses of action. The Leader Coach's role is to ask the Talent what he will commit to – and to hold him accountable for his promises. This is a much more profound process than simply making the decision to do something new. Commitment requires that the Talent take a first step towards change right then and there, and that he hold himself accountable for the decision.

The most effective coaching results are achieved when the conversation is given the space to move back and forth between the phases as necessary. Thus, the coaching process ends up being more adaptable to the flow of information that naturally arises.

On pages 18 – 20, you will find **The 60 Big Coaching Questions**. I offer these as a guide to coaching through the three phases of the Flow.

The Four Coaching Power Tools

Though I firmly believe that it is who you are, not what you do, that will make you a great coach, I also recognize that you will need some tools at your disposal in order to be most effective. In my experience there are **Four Key Tools** which are invaluable to coaching.

- 1. Acknowledgement**
- 2. Big Questions**
- 3. Intuitional Perspectives**
- 4. Silence**

1. Acknowledgement

Coaching is a difficult road to travel, and as Leader Coaches, we need to acknowledge the Talent for walking down it.

The 10 Big Acknowledgements

1. You are a very interesting person
2. I enjoy working with you
3. You have a wonderfully distinctive personality
4. You are obviously a very talented person
5. I see that you are having a very good/difficult time right now
6. I think you have great potential
7. I value your willingness to confront this issue
8. I see you as quite unique
9. Your fine work has not gone unnoticed
10. I like you



2. The 60 Big Coaching Questions

Coaching for Discovery

ABOUT YOU . . .

1. How would you describe your personality?
2. What matters most to you right now?
3. In which traits and characteristics do you take the most pride?
4. What important thing have you learned about yourself recently?

YOUR FUTURE . . .

5. What excites you most about the future of your organization?
6. What future achievements are most important to you?
7. For what do you want to be known?
8. What about the future scares you?

YOUR TALENTS . . .

9. Where have you achieved your greatest successes?
10. When you are at your best, what are you doing?
11. What would happen if you used all of your natural talents?
12. What can you do better than most everyone else?

YOUR JOB . . .

13. What consumes your attention these days?
14. What parts of your job do you particularly enjoy?
15. What inspires you?
16. Who do you most frequently blame for your problems at work?

YOUR PERFORMANCE . . .

17. Are you currently doing your best work?
18. Where are you currently being well received?
19. What distractions are influencing you now?
20. If your performance does not change, what will likely happen?

The 60 Big Coaching Questions (con't)

Coaching for Creation

CHALLENGES . . .

21. Which working relationships are affirming and which are degrading?
22. What one thing impedes your performance?
23. In your career going forward, what might be your greatest regrets?
24. What would happen if you really took your foot off the brake?

POSSIBILITIES . . .

25. How can you expand your world of work?
26. What is the most exciting outcome you can imagine?
27. What one personal change will result in the biggest benefit?
28. If you felt powerful and in control, what would be possible?

PERSPECTIVES . . .

29. What's an entirely different way to see your situation?
30. What would improve if you could see it through eyes of wonder?
31. How would others describe your performance?
32. How would others describe your potential?

RESOURCES . . .

33. If you had unlimited resources, what would you do in your job?
34. What additional resources would be the most helpful?
35. How might you use your greatest strengths everyday?
36. How can you get others eager to be involved?

CHANGE . . .

37. What thoughts and habits no longer serve you well?
38. What new skills will provide the biggest personal payoff?
39. What actions do you need to take but are avoiding?
40. How can you change your job so you do more of the things you love?

The 60 Big Coaching Questions (con't)

Coaching for Commitment

- EXPECTATIONS . . .**
- 41. What specific outcomes are you expecting?
 - 42. How important are these outcomes to you?
 - 43. What will be different this time?
 - 44. What do you need to do so you will have no regrets?
- COMMENCEMENT . . .**
- 45. Which difficult conversation needs to happen?
 - 46. What is the most potent first step?
 - 47. What short-term breakthroughs are necessary?
 - 48. How will you maintain momentum?
- INVESTMENT . . .**
- 49. What do you need from others?
 - 50. What sacrifices are you prepared to make?
 - 51. What talents will you rely upon the most?
 - 52. How will you provide the extra energy needed to create the change?
- ACCOUNTABILITY . . .**
- 53. Do you trust yourself to follow through?
 - 54. What specific commitments have you made?
 - 55. What promises will you make to others?
 - 56. What promises have you made to yourself?
- STEWARDSHIP . . .**
- 57. How will you know when you are on the new road?
 - 58. How might you use your personal power to best serve others?
 - 59. What will you do when you encounter unexpected obstacles?
 - 60. How will you ensure the changes are enduring?

3. Intuitional Perspectives

Intuitional perspectives are about blurting out what is obvious to you, saying what is really on your mind –and doing so without being attached to whether or not you're right. By doing so, you provide the Talent with something to react to and thereby dive deeper into his own best thinking.

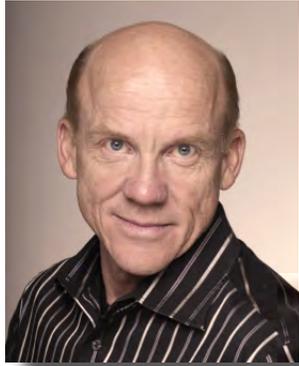
The 10 Big Intuitional Perspectives

1. I think you are capable of much more
2. I find that easy/hard to believe
3. I think you do not realize how talented you are
4. I believe you are being too easy/hard on yourself
5. I think you are avoiding the real issue
6. I see a completely different future for you
7. It appears that you are having a hard time letting go of this issue
8. I think you are afraid to try
9. I believe you give others too much credit/blame
10. I think you have great courage

4. Silence

In coaching, silence carries a lot of weight; just as the silence between notes allows us to hear music, silence between the Leader Coach and the Talent allow the Talent to hear his own voice (and thoughts) with clarity.

As coaches, our greatest effort goes not into asking or answering questions, but into providing space: a structured environment designated specifically for the Talent to identify and analyze his own thoughts. In this safe space, true reflection can take place and previously hidden solutions are discovered.



Author Bios

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