

The Coach's Play Book

Stakeholder Centered Coaching

**by
Frank Wagner
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Marshall Goldsmith**

www.StakeholderCenteredCoaching.com

Name: _____

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Prism Ltd. offers a stream of services that are designed to help leaders achieve positive, measurable long-term change in behavior: for themselves, their people and their teams.

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Preface

This Guide is based upon years of experience working with successful leaders who were willing to do what it takes to becoming even better leaders in their future. Marshall Goldsmith developed the underlying concepts, philosophy and methods found in this guide while working with exceptional leaders who had risen to the most senior levels. Without question, anyone who follows the process found in this guide will improve in his or her leadership. Also, this guide is not for everyone. Ask yourself if any of the following conditions exist for you:

- **Lack of Commitment** – You are not willing to make a sincere effort to change. What is described here will work only if you are willing to implement the disciplined process described in this guide.
- **Wrong Background** – If you lack the intelligence, experience, or functional skills to do your current job, don't expect the material in this guide to help. The focus here is on improving leadership behavior.
- **Written-off** – You have been written-off by your company. If that is the case, don't bother going through this process in an attempt to save your job. It may, however, help you a great deal for your next job.
- **Wrong Mission** – What is described on these pages is a “how to get there” process, not a “where to go” process. If you have the wrong focus and are heading in the wrong direction, this guide is not what will help you gain the knowledge or cognitive skills required.
- **Ethics Problem** – If you have an ethical or integrity issues, what we will teach you will not help. This guide is only about improving behavior, not ethics or beliefs.

If none of these conditions exist, you will benefit from this guide. It is written in simple, short sections. Each section deals with what to do. Equally important, each section deals with what “not” to do. Developing into a more successful leader is a matter of both starting and stopping certain behaviors.

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INTRODUCTION

In its simplest form, this is a guide about “Do’s and Don’ts.” It is about an understanding that we are all successful largely because of ourselves and also in spite of certain aspects of how we behave. A recurring theme of this book is that we are successful because of certain beliefs and in spite of those same beliefs. We are successful because of certain behaviors and in spite of others. Equipped with this understanding, we will explore a 7-Step process that offers dramatic results in developing leaders.

What you find in reading this Guide is very similar to the practice of any of the martial arts. To succeed you will have to follow a disciplined practice. This practice promises to be simple to understand and difficult to perform. The desired end result from this regimen of applying a specific set of leader skills, in a specific sequence, will be higher levels of success achieving a positive, long-term change in behavior. When this sequence of skills becomes a genuine practice, the leader you have coached will have internalized a method that will help this leader improve every single year, the rest of his, or her, life.

The disciplined practice described in this Guide will be of value to anyone whose goal is a positive, long-term improvement in any leadership behavior. It is of special value to leaders who have already achieved a high level of success and their current success is not coming as easily as it has in the past. What this guide offers is a clear methodology to proactively move forward to a new level of ability.

This guide is organized in a building block fashion. First, we will lay out for you a set of beliefs that are commonly held by successful people. It is not too difficult to recognize that our thought patterns and core beliefs have a major impact on our success. What we add to this is the realization that these same beliefs can have a strong influence on keeping us from becoming more successful. In simple terms, we are successful

because of a set of core beliefs and may be in danger of limiting our future success because of this these beliefs.

Our approach is tailored to take advantage of the positive aspects of successful people's beliefs and to overcome the negative aspects that can interfere with further development. Once we have examined these beliefs we will be ready, in building block fashion, to add a set of principles that allows us to build on the positive nature of these beliefs and avoid the inhibiting side that keep success people from moving forward. Principles serve as guideposts to the actions that we will prescribe later.

The principles may seem a bit counter-intuitive at first. A few of them break with many of the traditional viewpoint of how people change. Later these principles will seem to you as self-evident and nothing more than "organized common sense." Arriving at such a perspective will only come after you have experienced the magic of applying a 7-Step process in a skillful and disciplined manner.

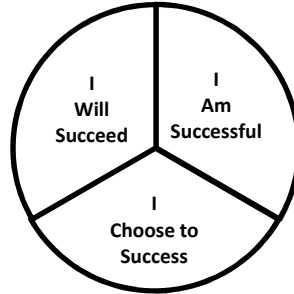
Prepared by an understanding of the impact of the beliefs of successful people and armed with powerful set of principles, you will be ready to learn a well proven 7-Step process for achieving a lasting, positive change. Consistent with the theme of this Guide, we will again provide a balanced view that recognizes there are better and worse ways to behave along the path to getting better.

Our efforts are designed to illustrate where to weaken those tendencies that are holding leaders back from future success, as well as strengthen those actions that will ensure future success. The approach presented here is largely based upon helping leaders avoid a set of habitual "Do Not's" and incorporating a set of helpful "Do's" in one's behavior.

Everything described in this book comes from Marshall Goldsmith's, Chris Coffey's and Frank Wagner's experience working with highly successful people who improved their leadership, some to an amazing extent. So, let's start at the

beginning by looking at three interrelated and reinforcing beliefs that will affect everything that follows in this Guide. These three beliefs can be summarized as:

BELIEFS OF SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE



All three of these beliefs: “*I am...*” “*I choose...*” and “*I will be...*” **successful** all deal with the relationship between the person and an elusive concept often correlated with winning, achievement, and victory.

Belief # 1 - I AM SUCCESSFUL

The good news for successful people is their copious quantity of self-confidence. The “*I Am Successful*” belief is positively correlated with a willingness to take needed risks and to do “what you think is right.” If one carefully considers what most leaders are tasked with doing, it becomes readily apparent that courage is a necessary ingredient. The self-confidence to act as a leader is bolstered by this essential personal belief. There are a number of what we like to refer to as *pluses*, or *positives*, connected with the “*I Am Successful*” belief. (A few of these are captured in the table that follows.)

The challenge a leader faces when strongly agreeing with “their own press” and the resulting feeling that they have the universal “keys to success” is also captured in the table below. The CEO of one Fortune 100 Company (who has had many ups and downs on the admiration scale) noted, “Success can lead to arrogance. When we become arrogant we quit

listening. When we quit listening we stop changing. In today's rapidly moving world, if we quit changing, we will ultimately fail." You have to be willing to avoid succumbing to the negative side of believing you are successful.

Plus (+)	Minus (-)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have an overall positive self-image; "winners" in the game of life 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Consistently over-rate their performance
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have the courage to apply their ability and strengths 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Have difficulty accepting validity of feedback inconsistent with self-image
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Possess "contagious confidence" 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ May discount opinions of people who do not match their level of success

One of the most important lessons found in this book is the willingness of successful people who want to become better to honestly seek and learn from the input of others. When the minuses associated with the "*I Am Successful*" belief take precedence over the pluses, a leader severely limits the possibility for this learning to take place. They only listen to others who fit the description of being a peer who has achieved the same level of success of the leader. And, this is a very small group.

In the extreme case, the person will only listen to himself, or herself. In other words, they become arrogant. No one else is allowed the chance to help. No one else is considered worthy of providing helpful feedback or suggestions. Since most of the useful information about us comes from others acting as a mirror, the sense of superiority gives credence to the phrase: "successful *in spite of*, instead of *because of*..." our unwillingness to listen to others.

The good news about this belief is the inherent sense of self-assurance required to do the tough things needed to truly improve as a leader. The bad news is the accompanying arrogance restricts the number of people whose feedback they

take seriously. Their unwillingness to seek out, or hear, input on their leadership cuts them off from those who may be their best source of constructive data.

Belief # 2 - I CHOOSE TO SUCCEED

Along with the belief that the leader you are coaching is a successful person, there is another key belief that relates to that sense of mastering one's own fate and controlling one's own destiny. We refer to this belief as "*I Choose to Succeed.*" With this belief the leader has a strong need to initiate what to work on to improve. No one else is going to make the choice for them.

Most people resist being told what to do. Especially when the subject matter deals with who they are and what they will become as a person. What we have found is the amplitude of this belief seems cranked way up the more the person sees herself, or himself, as a highly successful person.

The good news is that if the leader you are coaching *chooses* to work on something, the leader will also bring a very strong personal commitment, determination, and ownership to the goal that is set. You will not have to spend a lot of time convincing the leader why this goal was the right choice, as it was a personal choice and not imposed on them by someone else. Successful people live by a code of personal responsibility. They truly are as good as their word.

Plus (+)	Minus (-)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ High need for self-determination ▪ Do what they do because of personal commitment ▪ Possess a strong sense of ownership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Can be too superstitious about their choices ▪ Need for control may cause resistance to change ▪ In their head and heart may not feel the "real me" can change

The challenge you will undoubtedly face with the downside of this belief is a nagging fear by the leader who made this choice. This fear is that if they change any behavior this will break the “string of success” that has gotten them to where they are today. For example, take a real leader who saw himself as “hard working, dedicated, smart, ethical; and a poor coach.” For a long time they had, in various forms, received feedback that he should improve in his coaching skills. He didn’t deny this assessment. And, everyone else agreed with it too.

You would think it would be easy for him to choose to improve as a coach to his direct reports. It is hard to argue against the benefits of good coaching. Yet, this executive had been playing a game on himself. A game steeped in the depths of superstition. It begins with a simple truth. He is a highly successful businessman and he has never been a good coach. Confusion sets in. There just might be a correlation? If pushed to change by others to improve in his coaching, the fear can escalate to pure self-delusion.

The belief now takes on the potency of causation. This otherwise smart and logical executive finds himself believing that he is successful because of his past behavior; which includes being a lousy or non-existent coach. For all his confidence in most things, here there is little to no courage. His ultimate conclusion is “I am successful because I’m a bad coach. If I start working on this I might become too soft or unfocused on what I should be doing.”

So, we begin to see the dilemma. The strong sense of being in control and taking ownership may lead to not choosing to take on what is truly important to improve as a leader.

There is good news with this true example of an executive who had not been a good coach. After eventually choosing to work on this leadership skill, his thought processes and behaviors changed over time. After becoming a good coach, he admitted to fooling himself for a long time. And, he could laugh at

himself for his misplaced cleverness at hiding this fact from himself and all the misspent energy to delude himself.

Remember, just as our beliefs are among our strongest gifts, they can also be our Achilles heel. We need to be mindful that we are powerful enough to play a good game of self delusion with ourselves. We don't want to admit that we might fail, or even worse, are not even capable of doing something well. Here is where we need to come back to the "positive" side of choosing to succeed. Coupled with the positive elements of their beliefs, we bet that successful people will get better at whatever they choose to improve.

Belief # 3 - I WILL SUCCEED

Along with the "*I Am Successful*" and "*I Choose to be Successful*," the third belief is possibly the most important one of all. The first belief deals with the past. The second one deals with the present. The third one deals with the future. The best news for possessing this belief is that the believer will continue to succeed in the future. Obviously, the overriding attribute associated with this belief is optimism.

Successful people tend to see a bright future. They are not content on retiring based upon what they have achieved. They are convinced the future holds a promise of even higher levels of success. And, the major reason for this optimism is that they will control their own destiny and future, as they have clearly demonstrated up to this point in time.

As true believers in themselves, they are not the type to "give up", even in the face of extremely difficult odds. They are not likely to view outside circumstances as a reason to quit. In its pure sense, this belief leads to a "no excuses" approach toward reaching their goal. The virtue of persistence is legendary. The ability to never quit on what they choose to succeed is one of the major reasons for gaining a reputation for being a successful person.

Plus (+)	Minus (-)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Do not believe that external forces control their destiny ▪ Unflappable sense of optimism ▪ Persistent even in the face of difficult odds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Face the danger of over-commitment ▪ Having to win at all cost; winning too much ▪ Can have a hard time “letting go” of failure

One challenge the leader you are coaching faces with this belief is a real danger of over-committing and drowning in a sea of opportunity. The leader’s optimism, at some point, becomes a genuine liability. There is an overload point, and a burnout point, for everybody. Even if one thinks differently, there are no supermen and superwomen. Knowing when to say no, when not to make a commitment, is hard when you have a strong belief that one will succeed on whatever one takes on as a challenge.

There is a line we all cross when persistence takes on the air of foolishness. In life there are times when the right choice is to stop putting out the effort and cut one’s losses. Letting go is painful for everyone. For successful people it can be downright excruciating. Successful people can have an incredibly difficult time admitting defeat. When faced with impending failure, successful people may have a tendency to become even more committed and work even harder instead of re-channeling their energies into more profitable pursuits.

One of the darkest clouds connected with this belief, is a need to win at all costs. This is the saving grace for a successful person when winning at something is critical and important. The exact opposite occurs when winning really leads to losing. An example would probably be helpful here to understand this point.

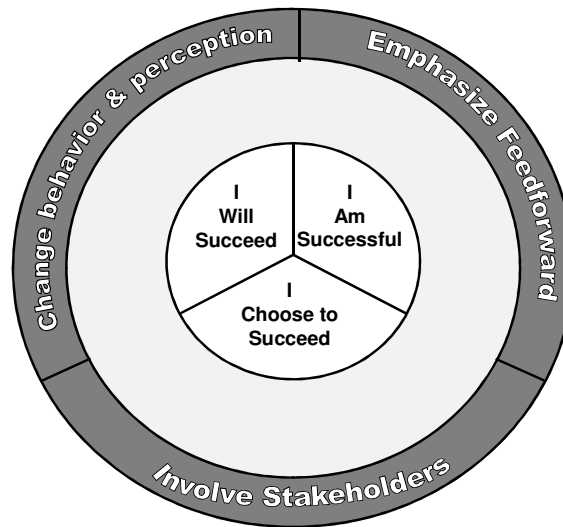
A common example would be getting into an argument with one’s spouse over what to do and losing the argument. After doing what your spouse had wanted to do, re-engaging in the argument to show them they were wrong is an example of trying to win where there is no real win.

Letting someone else win is the right approach in some situations. Unfortunately, a person with an unhealthy addiction to winning and success interprets any situation where they are not the winner as “I am the loser.”

In conclusion, the “*I Am Successful*” “*I Choose to Succeed*,” and “*I Will Succeed*” beliefs are wonderful gifts the leader you are coaching possesses and can equally inhibit further improvement. Your role as a coach will be both capitalizing on the pluses (+) and orchestrating around the minuses (-) of these beliefs. This *Guide* is intended to help you navigate around these beliefs. Building off of the upside of these beliefs and managing the downside of these same beliefs is at the heart of the work you have in store for yourself.

As you are beginning to understand, the Stakeholder Centered Coaching approach is grounded in an understanding of the beliefs of successful people and the power of the reinforcing cycle of encouraging development. It is also guided by three fundamental principles. These principles come from years of executive coaching experience working with successful people who have been working on personal behavioral change.

Principles of Stakeholder Centered Coaching



First Principle: ***Place the attention and focus on your stakeholders***

The true leverage points in behavioral change are the people who are interdependent with and work with the leader you are coaching every day. Our approach is to turn these stakeholders into the true coaches of the leader who is improving.

Our experience has validated that those around the leader, those who interact with the person you are coaching on a frequent basis, are the best “experts” in how the leader’s behavior can improve with them. This approach employs a systems perspective by including stakeholders actively in the process as a vehicle to increase the likelihood that improvement in the leader’s behavior becomes habit. Our coaching approach is different from most other types of coaching in its emphasis on making the stakeholders the true coaches for the leader undergoing development. The coach’s role moves more into the background as an orchestrator, cheerleader, and integrator.

Second Principle: ***Emphasize FeedForward***

Most coaching and leadership development has focused on a process of feedback as the key to improving. There can be great value derived from receiving constructive and well-timed feedback. The approach proposed here breaks with this long tradition by placing significantly more focus on FeedForward over feedback. FeedForward is a technical term for a very simple process, namely suggestions for the future.

A perfect analogy for what we propose here is the windshield of a car. Sitting in the driver's seat, looking over the steering wheel we see two things. Strategically placed in the top center of our field of vision is a rear view mirror. This is akin to the mechanism of feedback. It allows us to look behind us, where we have already traveled. The rest of our field of vision is directed through the glass to what is in front of us. This view is akin to the FeedForward process. In the racing world the sage advice is to focus on the speedway in front of you, not the dangerous wall within inches of your vehicle or what is behind you.

We have found it is much more effective to be focused on the future versus the past. We cannot do anything about the past. The future is dynamic and unrestrained. FeedForward is a process of asking for suggestions for future action. Remember it is the leader's internal belief set that largely affects action. Successful people want to have influence and control over their situation. We all can do something about the future. This takes advantage of the positive components of the three belief sets held by the leader you are coaching, namely, I am and will continue to succeed. Leaders can do something about their future.

Additionally, most of us tend to resist when we are being judged. Do not misunderstand our emphasis on FeedForward as an indictment of feedback. Feedback is an important part of the process described in this guide. It is still needed. The amount of feedback needed, remembering our example of the windshield of a car, is proportionate to the size of the rearview mirror to the windshield.

As you learn and use the 7-Step process for encouraging development on a monthly basis, feedback will focus on the immediate prior month's actions the leader has taken. Remember, the future holds unlimited possibility. The past cannot be changed and is therefore stagnant. The principle here is to focus on the future. Focus on what can be done.

Third Principle: ***Change behavior and perception in parallel***

It is useful for the leader to work in parallel on changing a behavior and the perception of that behavior by the leader's stakeholders. It is very interesting to note, that those around the leader also need to change. Their perception of the leader's behavior has to change. All of us suffer from having perceptions that are incredibly resilient. People do not readily give up their prior assumptions, opinions, and beliefs. Thus, a key aspect of improving as a leader is to change the perception of stakeholders regarding that behavior.

These three principles serve as the foundation for the 7-Step Involving Stakeholder Process that is described next in this Guide. As previously stated, our experience suggests that the steps in the process must be rigorously practiced for at least a year before there is certainty that the change will be rooted in enough experience to become permanent. A year is our minimal standard. Success in modifying some behaviors can take even longer.

This is not theory. This Guide is about action. Success in this process does not have to take up a lot of your time. In fact, using the methodology in this Guide is very time efficient. As you help a leader put in practice the 7-Step process, you can focus on a specific section of this Guide that is relevant at that time.

7-Step Process

The practical, and sometimes counter-intuitive, nature of the Involving Stakeholder Process is based on an understanding of the principles that underlie this process and the beliefs (+) and (-) of successful people. Each step is specifically organized to build off of the positive nature of these beliefs and render the negative aspects less likely to hold you back.

STEP 1. ASK – The best, and in some cases the only, way to get the gift of others' perceptions is to ask for it. If you are committed to becoming more successful, you will be willing to ask for both suggestions and feedback. When done properly, asking is communicated in the spirit of self-improvement and in a way that the opinion of the person asked is valued.

STEP 2. LISTEN – This is far from easy when the topic of conversation is something so dear to our hearts. Here your commitment requires avoiding some common pitfalls. You have to avoid defending any past actions. And, in listening, you will need to accept others' opinions as their perception of reality. In other words, you will avoid judging whether the input you are hearing is "right" and "wrong."

STEP 3. THANK – As this process will be an ongoing one, successful people understand the value in reinforcing the process as others provide their feedback and suggestions. Just as it takes courage to ask, it often takes equal courage for others to give us their feedback and ideas for improvement. Genuine commitment to improve is shown by expressing your appreciation for the help others provide.

STEP 4. THINK – It is the mark of a wise person to consider what others say before reacting. For one thing, it helps avoid a tendency many people have for over-reacting. This reaction may be too negative or too positive. You do not want to build a reputation or over committing and setting yourself up to under deliver on your promises. Being thoughtful is a valuable way to be seen when it comes to hearing what others have to say.

STEP 5. RESPOND – A successful person, committed to improvement will always respond to all who provide feedback or suggestions. When others have taken the risk to provide you with input, they deserve to know what you plan to do about it. In communicating about your own behavioral change it is wise to keep it simple and positive.

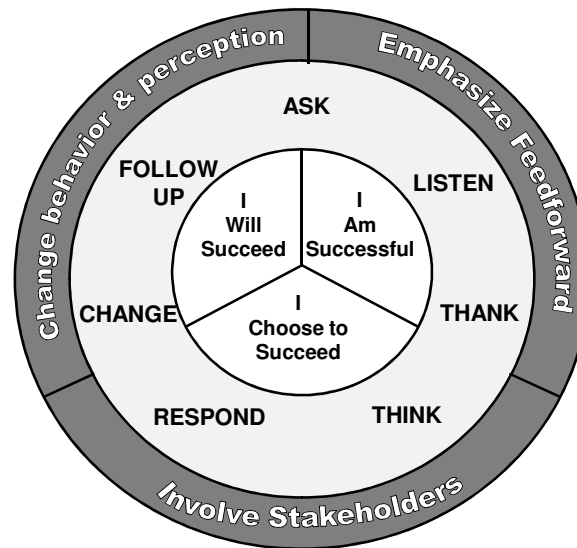
STEP 6. CHANGE – The purpose of the first six steps is to *do something*. Behavioral improvement necessitates doing more of something, less of something, or something entirely new. The mark of a successful person is keeping the change process alive and moving forward. You will monitor yourself relative to what you are doing to improve.

STEP 7. FOLLOW-UP – This step is really a reminder to use the previous seven steps on a regular basis. This means checking in with others in a regimented, disciplined manner. This follow-up step is, by far, the most important step in the process. It is the best way to demonstrate to others that you are serious about change.

Our experience suggests that the steps in the process must be genuinely practiced for at least one year before there is certainty that the change will be rooted in enough experience to become permanent. A year is a realistic minimal standard. Success in modifying some behaviors can take even longer.

The more powerful benefit for the leader is when the process itself becomes a habit. Truly successful people are committed to getting better every year. The greatest gift you give as a coach is when this 7-Step process becomes an ongoing discipline for the leader.

7-Step Involving Stakeholder Process



In summary the Stakeholder Centered Coaching approach is a discipline that underlies how successful people get even better over time. This discipline is found in a reinforcing cycle of seven skills the leader uses with his or her stakeholders. By repeating these steps with individuals who are impacted by the leader's behavior, the leader will achieve the long-term, positive change and will receive recognition for this from the stakeholders.

What we have found is the most successful people recruit others to help them change. This is more of an interpersonal process than a solo activity. Changing both behavior and perception becomes significantly more likely with stakeholder involvement. When it comes to behavioral improvement, the greatest source of insight and support are those who are impacted by someone's actions. Effective people include others as the best measure to ensure their future success.

THE BEHAVIORAL COACHING SKILLS

Finally, as a Coach, there are a number of specific skills that will serve your role of being a catalyst to speeding up the process of helping leaders improve in their behavior. Most of the seven skills described below will be used numerous times throughout the flow of coaching a leader.

Behavioral Goal Setting

The ability to help leaders assess *what* to develop in their leadership behavior using 360° assessments, interviews, and/or observational skills.

Select the Right Behavior/Stakeholders	
FIT TO LEADER'S NEEDS	CONNECT TO LEADER'S WIDER WORLD
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep diagnosis balanced (pluses and minuses) • Support AND challenge leader's "self diagnosis" • Iteratively clarify the benefits of change 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Familiarize yourself with the leader's strategic context • Link goal to future challenges / opportunities • Help select relevant stakeholders to recruit

Your first step as a coach is to facilitate the behavioral goal setting process to help the leader choose a goal and a set of stakeholders that she, or he, considers important and meaningful. Successful people are much more comfortable with the feedback and FeedForward processes that will follow if they feel it is coming from the right people on the right behavior. Remember the leader's need to be the one choosing what to improve and who will play the role of stakeholder.

The second step as a coach is to ensure the leader's manager also agrees that the "right" behavior and the "right" stakeholders are involved. At the end of the assignment and after the leader has improved, you do not want the manager saying: "the leader picked the wrong behavior;" or, "what the leader worked on was not that important." To the contrary, you want the leader and manager to feel the positive change in behavior was observed and recognized by the right people, and that the change was important.

Behavioral Rehearsal

The ability to demonstrate how to interact/communicate with a stakeholder through demonstration, leader practice, review and re-rehearsal of the interaction (if needed).

Practice Until "Good Enough"	
PREPARE	SHOW AND PRACTICE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange the conversation the leader will follow • Check against Do's/Don'ts (Encouraging Development) • Know the lines cold by practicing yourself 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate/model the skill • Check for understanding (retention) • Have Leader practice until "good enough"

In every profession, the very best practice what is important to do before executing. Time is invested up front to ensure the performance is flawless. You want the conversations that leaders have with stakeholders, around their own improvement, to come off effortlessly and gracefully.

Most people are far more comfortable talking about what they are going to say than actually rehearsing. When leaders say they are going to communicate something to a stakeholder, have them practice it with you playing the stakeholder. Even what may appear to be a straightforward conversation can be fumbled through quite ineffectively.

If ineffective communication is going to occur, you want it to happen with you where clumsy or awkward communication doesn't count. You want highly effective communication to occur with the stakeholders.

Action Planning

The ability to help leaders come up with a course of action to achieve their behavioral goal by translating Stakeholders suggestions into clear desired effects and concrete actions.

Plan for Action	
INCREASE THE FOCUS	ACCELERATE THE EXECUTION

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Distinguish objectives/ends from the actions/means • Define success (Identify success measures) • Help construct specific, actionable suggestions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help identify and tap hidden resources/assets • Push the schedule • Keep emphasis on the desired effects
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In today's working climate, leaders are excessively busy. Helping build an executable plan with success clearly defined is essential to get off with a smart start. A good plan, by itself, will enhance any leader's confidence that he or she will pull off the desired improvement in behavior.

To change behavior requires doing something different or new. The old adage of "*insanity being a state of doing the same things over and over again and expecting different results,*" is the logic behind preparing for new actions. Keep the plan simple by only including actions that will be implemented. Whatever is in the plan, make sure it gets started soon. Never let actions that can be taken this week slip into the next week.

Behavioral Reinforcement

The ability to help leaders by spotting improvement and providing appropriate levels of recognition for progress in a timely, specific, and genuine manner.

Provide Positive Support	
ACTIVELY SEEK DATA ON RESULTS	ACT AS AN "ANGEL" ADVOCATE (vs. a devil's)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Look for approximations of success • Focus on the matches (not mismatches) to desired effects • Seek out positive news from stakeholders/others 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular doses of reinforcement work best • Always tie to some specific action taken/result achieved • Encourage others to provide positive feedback

Another byproduct of our busy lives is how readily we miss the positive things going on around us. You cannot slow things down enough so that everyone (the leader and his or her stakeholders) sees the good that is happening. What you can do is pay special attention and capture positive examples that the leader is improving on his or her behavioral goal.

Many years ago Ken Blanchard, when he wrote *The One Minute Manager*, reminded us of the power of reinforcement for achieving improvement. If you could only remind individuals when they were off course, or could only remind them when they were on course, positive reinforcement when "on course" leads more quickly to improvement. That is why Ken coined the phrase: "*catch people doing something almost right.*"

After Action Assessments

The ability to help leaders debrief and gain insight into their actions through questioning skills, enforcing openness and candor, and keeping the conversation on track.

Learn After Doing	
BE THE ACTION PLAN CONSCIENCE	KEY ON THE FUTURE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure assessments take place in a timely fashion • Make process easy and comfortable as possible • Provide reminders of key learning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep the conversation future focused • Do not allow guilt, shame, or blame into discussion • Use learning to re-plan the Action Plan

As the world becomes more busy and complex, we seem to rarely find the right time to learn. We have a tendency to move on quickly after doing anything, tackling the next action item on our “to do” list. Such behavior robs us of the wealth of learning available from the actual events we experience.

After Action Assessments, or Reviews, takes a structured approach to capturing, digesting, and capitalizing on our learning. This applies equally to successful experience as it does to failure. Analyzing and understanding at a deeper level what went right is necessary to ensure new behavior becomes a habit. Just as useful is analyzing and understanding, at a deeper level, what went wrong. This is necessary to determine what to do differently next time. The main benefit of practicing After Action Assessments is they are powerful tools to speed up the learning curve.

Story Telling

The ability to help leaders in their development by having a teachable point of view and the skill to convey this knowledge through clear and compelling narrative or anecdote

Make a Point	
MAKE MESSAGE OF THE STORY CLEAR	MAKE MESSAGE OF THE STORY COMPELLING
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a specific “point to the story” • Keep your stories simple and brief enough • Tell the story so the “moral” is unambiguous 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use a grabber • Hard data > Soft data • Pull emotional strings

Never miss an opportunity to find another story to add to your repertoire. The history of the human race is the transference of wisdom through story telling. Even after the invention of the printing press, stories maintain their appeal and special place.

Stories are found in our own experiences. We also can learn the stories told by others (creative stealing of stories is well practiced in the fields of coaching and leadership development). Stories are easy to find by reading newspapers, periodicals, and books (sometimes one book can give you a dozen unique stories). Entertainment is another treasure trove of material.

As a coach, one of the most powerful roles you play is storyteller. It is here you can help a leader understand something he or she needs to know in a short, yet memorable way. And this is the point; your job is to keep certain ideas, or thoughts, conscious enough to influence the behavior of the leader you are coaching. Stories are the apparatus you use to implant the necessary wisdom.

Modeling the 7-Step Process

The ability to personally use the 7-Step Involving Stakeholder Process yourself while avoiding the “Don’ts” in your own behavior

Model the Process	
SET A GOOD EXAMPLE	IMPROVE AS YOU MOVE
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the 7-Steps yourself • If a “Don’t” is pointed out to you, say “Thank You” • If a “Do” is pointed out to you, say “Thank You” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow-up on your coaching • Be willing to change how you are coaching • End a better coach than you started

Setting an example, by practicing the 7-Step process yourself with the leader you are coaching, may be the most useful skill of all. This provides the leader with a personal experience of what it is like to be a stakeholder and be on the receiving end of the behaviors practiced in the 7-Step process. An underlying message you convey is: “If this is good for you to do, it is also good for me to do as a coach.”

As humans, we gather information through our senses. For the majority of leaders in Western culture the preferred sense for inputting information is the visual sense. What this means is *seeing something* is a more powerful medium for learning than hearing something. Showing is a more effective vehicle for learning than having a conversation. Yet, we often seem to rely on verbal exchanges to impart learning.

All seven skills described here will be used numerous times throughout the flow of the year. The more you use these skills, the more they will become second nature to you. Some already are. Others will have to be further developed while you are coaching. The goal for you as a Coach should be the same as the person you are coaching, namely, be successful and get even more successful.

FINAL THOUGHT

Everything we lay out for you is based on a practical, real-world perspective of the task to help a leader achieve positive, long-term change in behavior. Our approach takes into account you, the people you coach, and living in a world of complexity and time constraints. Applying the methods in this *Play Book* will not take up a lot of precious time for anyone involved. Our purpose is to help you gain leverage through the monthly application of a well-defined process made up of a few simple actions that provide a huge payoff.

There are blank pages in your *Coach's Play Book* for you to keep notes on how you will personalize the process to your own experience and style. Treat the *Play Book* as a notebook for your own use. The material found inside is far from complete. It serves as a guide to the proverbial 20% that will provide 80% of value when coaching for behavioral change. What you add will provide additional value to you becoming an invaluable resource as a manager and coach.

