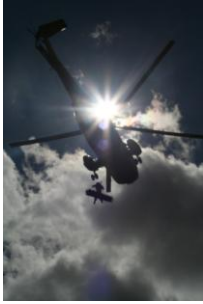


## Do We Need More Leadership or More Coaching? Or Maybe Both?



Coaching and leadership are common terms in contemporary Organisational Development (OD), but is the meaning of each clear? Are they equivalent, and are the outcomes of coaching and leadership the same? A review of OD literature reveals a common belief that coaching **and** leadership are 'good for' individual, team and organisational performance. However, do we really understand the relationship between coaching and leadership<sup>1</sup>? Is there a relationship?

**What's Leadership?** Who knows! A really "*Slippery Phenomenon*" that is difficult to pin down. Unlike coaching, leadership can be directive or participative, but never truly passive. Does it exist within certain people and/or between people as an intangible relationship? It appears to have an influence on motivation, and like coaching, includes 'visualisation' of 'shared goals' and 'future good'. Unlike coaching, authentic leadership actively role models 'doing the right thing', demonstrating competence and integrity. Outcomes include the development of trust (through fairness and integrity), robustness, commitment and well-being. A key element is in relationships (**people**). Leadership is associated with formal authority, however, not necessarily!

**What's Coaching?** Not much by way of empirical evidence to go on, but it's largely non-directive, non-judgemental, detached, possibly even aloof, focussed on developing self-awareness and responsibility in others. It seeks to achieve mastery of the challenges (**tasks**) accepted by individuals, teams and organisations in pursuit of their shared goals. Outcomes include greater role-clarity, ownership of the shared goals and, significantly, self-confidence, through stretch goal attainment.

**Coach as Leader.** Can coaches lead? Perhaps not so easy, because coaches should not normally, themselves, provide the visualisation of 'the answers', or actively demonstrate through "*Mastery Modelling*" the solutions. Focussed on developing the coachee, coaching is powerful in the way it can develop autonomy, awareness and responsibility. It plays an important part in achieving the highest levels of performance, but maybe, if used alone, as a manager's tool, limits full potential.

**Leader as Coach.** The leader who coaches has the advantage of being able to provide a vision of 'idealised' (values based) behaviour, whilst at the same time engaging interdependent co-workers in the awareness of goal clarity and responsibility for the processes necessary for goal achievement. In short, a leader should also 'get stuck in' by role modelling appropriate leadership behaviours (including reward and punishment), given context, augmented by coaching tools, where this is appropriate to the level of the leader/follower relationship's development.

**Maybe then, coaching and leadership are different.** However, coaching augments leadership.

**Maybe coaching is in itself a valid leadership tool to be utilised appropriately when the context allows and interdependently alongside the other 'stuff' as part of an authentic leadership culture.** I think we need more leadership - that includes coaching.

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<sup>1</sup> For the sake of this blog we will bundle *leading* and *leaders* under the generic term *leadership*, but there lies another discussion.