

# 14 STEPS FOR GETTING THE MOST OUT OF YOUR LEADERSHIP COACHING: TALENT GUIDE

While coaching is a highly effective way of accelerating your development as a leader, it also represents a significant investment of time and money.

Here are fourteen ways to get the most out of your leadership coaching experience. Go through the list and check off each item as you commit to each exercise.

## 1. Craft a bold new future.

- Spend time early in the process to craft a picture of the most ambitious future possible for you as a leader. This should:
  - a. Excite you
  - b. Scare you
- Expect great things from yourself and the process.

## 2. Drive the process.

- This is your show. Take charge. Set your own:
  - a. Objectives
  - b. Session agendas
  - c. Coaching schedule

## 3. Steel yourself for a rocky road.

- Prepare mentally for the rigorous tasks of self-assessment, learning, and personal change.
- Think about what you are willing to learn, invest, risk, and sacrifice to become a better leader.
- Recognize that leadership development is impossible without personal development.

## 4. Seek out new sources of feedback.

- Invite the perspectives of others, especially the stuff that is hard to hear.
- Pick six people who regularly see you in your role as a leader, tell them that you are involved in a leadership development process, and ask them how you can better use your leadership talents to have a larger influence on others.

## 5. Prepare well for each session.

- Before each coaching session, spend 15 minutes in quiet private contemplation creating an agenda for the coaching dialogue.
- Ask yourself:
  - a. What are the most important leadership issues facing you at this moment?
  - b. How have you fared since your last coaching session?
  - c. How can you best use your time with your coach?
- Spend another 15 minutes quieting your mind from the frenetic pace of day-to-day organization life.
- Do what you need to do to get yourself ready to explore new territory, challenge your current thinking, and experiment with new leadership practices.

**6. Be at your best.**

- Schedule your coaching sessions for times when you are rested and prepared to engage in difficult conversations.

**7. Focus on outcomes.**

- Repeatedly ask yourself: “What can I do to help others on my team or in my organization become more aligned, engaged, committed, productive, and innovative?”

**8. Hold on to the important stuff.**

- Use the coaching process to get clarity on the principles and aspirations that are the most important in your role as a leader.
- Jot down these principles and keep them in a place where you will see them.
- Resolve to hold onto these principles at all cost.

**9. Let go of the unimportant stuff.**

- Use the coaching process to identify assumptions, behaviors and habits that no longer serve you well and are best left behind.
- Commit to aggressively pruning away these behaviors over time so that you can blossom into a much stronger leader.

**10. Always move forward.**

- Leave every coaching session with at least one specific action that will advance your leadership in some way.
- Commit to completing this action before the next session.

**11. Reflect on and generalize your learning.**

- After each session, take 15 minutes of private time to:
  - a. Reflect on your progress.
  - b. Crystallize your new learning and insights.
  - c. Determine how you can apply these insights to other areas of your work and leadership.

**12. Use your coach well.**

- Don't waste time trying to impress your coach.
- Expect your coach to challenge you, encourage you, confront you, affirm you, and provoke you...always in the service of your learning and development.

**13. Develop the habit of being direct and candid.**

- Let your coach know what is working for you and why.
- Let your coach know what isn't working for you, and what you'd like changed.
- Give feedback and constructively confront others within your network to expand your abilities.

**14. Celebrate your performance breakthroughs.**

- Take time at each session to talk about your wins, no matter how small.
- Set aside time each week to jot down any insights about your progress.
- Allow yourself to revel in your progress.