

LEADERSHIP MASTERY COACHING



The Anatomy of a World Class Coaching Conversation

Welcome Eastern Region. I'm Jon Berghoff and we've got a lot planned for this call. I'm going to take a few minutes to share with all of you what to expect from these calls and how to use them because there are multiple ways you can use these calls. Then we're just going to jump right in.

First of all, just so that all of you get an idea of why these calls are happening. Many of you were at your training earlier this fall where I ran a training event. We did some crazy things in that training and one of the topics was about developing a culture of personal growth. What happened was that Amar and Scott came to me afterwards and said that all their managers take pride in wanting to grow themselves. So they asked me to partner up here and deliver these monthly calls. So we're going to put these calls on going into the future and hopefully no one gets injured and we keep them going. And then this becomes a way we can all learn together.

So that's the short story of why we're here. The way this works is you'll get a call every single month. On the call I'm going to share ideas. Then we'll open it up to Q&A. Before the call if you want to send questions to me or you are a leader and you see the topic of the call in advance and say, "Hey, Jon, make sure to mention this", write this down now. Send it to jonb@gecresults.com.

The last thing I'm going to ask for, and this is very important to me, is I'm going to ask you for feedback. Sometimes you might assume that a call went well but I don't always know that. So I'm going to ask that if a call goes well, send me a testimonial. Tell me how great it was and tell me what specifically you liked. That's actually the most important to me. Send it to that same email address: jonb@gecresults.com.

On the other hand if there's something you need clarification on, send me an email to jonb@gecresults.com. What I would ask is that in the subject line you always have the phrase **Eastern Region Leadership**. If you do that, it will be very helpful. If you don't do that, I cannot guarantee I'm actually going to see your email or get to reply to it.

One last thing, a housekeeping thing, is the **next call is going to be November 12th, that's a Thursday, same time, 10 am EST**. The title of the call is **Leadership Peak Performance**. We're going to be talking about some principles to getting yourselves to operate at a peak level and some of the common patterns of the top leaders and managers, not just in Vector, but in general. You're going to get some great information on that call.

Now, let's get right into the topic of today's call which is **The Anatomy of a World Class Coaching Conversation**. Now I know you hear me say this and think I'm saying this because I'm supposed to say it. But at a very deep level I am really looking forward to sharing all this information with you today. I haven't shared this with you as a group before. But you, as a group, as managers, whether you are a region manager, district manager, it doesn't matter the level you

are at, all of you in a sense are coaches, right? That's the topic of the call. What does it mean to have a world class coaching conversation? We'll get into what that means and all the things you're going to learn. But the first thing you're going to **learn is your role as a coach**

The word coach is originally derived from being used when referencing a stage coach. So the original definition of a coach is quite literally to help somebody get from point A to point B. You hear that and think that makes sense. For all of you, it doesn't matter if you've been around a while or are brand new, you realize that your ability to help somebody, to keep it simple, to get from point A to point B, it makes all the difference. It means everything. That's one of the reasons I'm thrilled to do this call to kick this program off.

What I've experienced as a coach, and at this point I think I've had over 4500 coaching conversations where people are paying for the coaching conversation, I think that one of the things I've learned the hard way is that getting people from point A to point B isn't always easy. Sometimes we make mistakes. Some we learn. Sometimes things go really well. But at the end of the day I think we all realize that if we can develop our skills and ability to realize and master what it means to have a high quality, world class coaching conversation, then that can make or break your whole career as a manager. I'm not just saying that to hype up this topic; I'm saying that because it's really true. When people say being a manager is being able to influence, when does that influence take place? It takes place one conversation at a time.

I hope you're now as excited about this topic as I am. I'm going to put out a couple of fair warnings though. What I'm about to share right now, as we get into this content, you're going to walk away like you're going to get a black belt in communication. I'm using that phrase very intentionally because some of the topics we're going to get into are going to be very eye opening. They are not going to be complicated but we're going to get very deep into why it is we have problems sometimes when we communicate with people. Some of the things you're going to learn will deepen your relationships. But you're also going to get some techniques from me and you're going to realize that there's a lot of power in this. You're going to discover you can have mastery over a coaching conversation much more quickly than you thought. You're going to learn how to get people to really open up.

The most important thing I think you should get out of this call is *you're going to help other people arrive at their own solutions*. And you'll understand why that's so important.

But here's the warning I'm going to give. This isn't light stuff; this is hard core. You're going to get a lot of good information. I'm going to give it to you in a way you can use a lot of it right away. Again, this isn't light stuff. This is heavy duty. The reason I'm going to give you a warning is this. I'm going to say that the strategies I'm about to unload, as great as they might seem, they don't matter if what's beneath the strategies is not the right intentions. Some of these things as you learn, you'll realize you can influence people very quickly and easily. It's important to me because I truly believe your ultimate ability as a coach, leader, manager, all the strategies in the world don't mean anything if your intentions are not pure and good. So I'm going to ask as a favor to me that you use these with the underlying intention that you never forget that your job is to serve people. If you get disconnected right now, that might be the most important thing you learn about having quality coaching conversations, that if you just go into it and you care about helping and serving people you'll be blown away by how much that can serve you. So that's my little warning there before I hand over the ancient Chinese secrets of black belt communications.

First what is a world class coaching conversation? How would we define that? To me, a world class coaching conversation is when both parties involved, so just imagine there's you and somebody else, *when both parties involved clearly understand the problem, the solution and the plan of action.*

If I were to ask you, what's the hardest thing to figure out when you're trying to coach or mentor or teach or manage somebody? Is it harder to figure out what the solution to their problem is or what actually is their problem? I want you to think about that for a minute. One of the things I've found to be true is that the solutions aren't very complicated. Imagine you're working with a sales rep of yours. Most solutions to their problem you could fit on one piece of paper. They're just not that complicated. The hardest thing often times is helping somebody understand what their real problem is. Have you ever had this happen where you're working with a manager or rep of yours and you as a manager can see what their problem is but you realize they can't see it? What we're going to do on this call today is help you understand why is it that people when they try to communicate they can't always figure out their own problems and how you can really help people to coach themselves. There's a lot of power in that.

Here's what we're going to start with today. We're going to talk about how any time we communicate there's something that happens. This is the structure of communication. This is my own phraseology. Don't get hung up on the words I use to describe this. Just get the idea. It's very simple.

Whenever two people communicate you have two things happening at once. When two people communicate, on one hand you have what I call what's *above the surface*, what somebody's saying. On the other hand you have what's *below the surface*. This is the truth, what's really going on. Before we get into why is it that people can't communicate clearly, do you get this example when I say that sometimes when we talk to people what we're hearing from them isn't what's really going on? You might even think about this in terms of relationships. Let me give you an example. I was just on the phone with Isaac Tolpin and I just so happened to be looking at my notes when I was on the phone with him. And I remember getting off the phone thinking that Isaac is the type of person, at least when I connect with him, it's like everything I get from him is *below the surface*, it's the truth, like I'm getting a real person.

So the point is a big part of learning how to be a great coach, leader, manager and have high quality coaching conversation is learning how to get *below the surface* to what's really going on. You can look at it the other way around and look at people you know who every time you talk to them you don't actually feel like you're connecting. You feel like what you're getting is the surface, the show, the front or a face they're putting on. But you don't feel like you're really getting them. The core of what they're all about, what they're feeling, what they're concerned about, what they care about. So that's a big part of what we're about to discover is why does that happen and what can you do so you can help get *below the surface* so that your conversations are real with people.

Because here's what I'll promise you. When you use this info and your conversations are real with people, you can help people get results and go from point A to point B much, much faster.

There are 3 things that happen whenever people communicate. These are basically the 3 reasons why there is some sort of gap between reality and what ends up getting communicated. **One reason why is because anytime anybody communicates, they delete information.** There are 3 things that happen whenever we communicate. One of them is people delete. Let me give you an example. Someone walks up with you and shares with you they are really upset. What's

interesting is often, when somebody says that, in their head they're saying a lot more than *I'm really upset*. They're saying *I'm really upset at so and so because they did this*. But they only tell you they're really upset. What you've got to realize is that someone might say something to you and they think they actually said the whole thing when what they actually said is *I'm really upset*. So as a coach you learn to ask, *what is it you're upset about?* The mistake we make as coaches and managers sometimes is we try to solve the problem without really listening to the underlying problem that's really going on.

So you ask *what are you upset about?* They say *I'm upset at Jim*. But they still haven't told you everything. So you ask *why are you upset at Jim?* And they say *I'm upset at Jim because Jim sucks*. Well, *what is it that Jim sucks at?* *He sucks at the interview*. Well, *what does it mean to you that Jim sucks at the interview?* So see what I mean we I say people can delete, delete, delete and not realize they're just not giving you the whole story. By the way we all do this. This isn't like a morally or ethically wrong thing. You don't want to hear this and say oh, my people are evil. No, we all do this, we delete.

Here's the second thing that happens when we communicate. We distort, we distort information. Classic example. Somebody has a bad result in their business. By the time they've interpreted that bad result and communicated with themselves as to what meaning they give it and then they share it with you it goes from a bad result to *I suck at this*. That's distortion. We distort things because we get emotional. so a big part of being a coach is figuring out when someone is sharing something are they giving us the real deal or are they a little bit distorted because they're emotional, attached or being subjective.

Here's a classic example. This came up for me with a division manager. He came to the call and told me this story of how he used this lesson to solve a problem. Here's what happened. He had gone to one of his managers who said they had a bad phone jam last night. So he comes to me and I'm trying to help coach him and he learned by making a mistake. His guy said *I had a bad phone jam* and so he said *well, what does that mean?* His pilot manager said *we only set 30 demos* and apparently the goal was to set 100 demos. He realized the problem is that the manager doesn't know how to drive a phone jam. So he started coaching him on it. At the very end at the conversation he asks, *how many people were there?* The pilot said, *three*. So now the DVM is realizing my pilot might be the best person in this whole company at driving demos. I was having the wrong coaching conversation. What their manager was calling a bad phone jam was actually bad attendance. But when people try to communicate they don't always choose the right words to describe the problem.

You're going to learn some very simple strategies so that when people delete information or distort it you can help get the real story. Don't get overwhelmed because you're thinking this is deep, below the surface. When we get to the solutions in a second you're going to realize how simple they are. But by you getting this background of what human beings do when they communicate, this will help you out. If any of you are curious where I got this, it's studying hypnotists and therapists in how they get people to open up and real things and learning from other coaches and of course observation.

Here's the third and final thing that happens whenever people communicate. They generalize. You've all seen this happen. A rep has one bad appointment and they run around your office telling everyone this job doesn't work. They're not trying to screw you up. They've generalized in their heads and now when they communicate they generalize it.

Now that you know the deep black magic of communication and what's going on and why it is we have problems and why when people communicate, what we're getting is above the surface, not always the truth because people delete, distort and generalize. So **what's the solution? It's a combination of two very simple tools** I'm going to give you here.

The first one is what I call deep listening. What does it mean to listen deeply? Very simply, in order to be able to listen deeply, you have to learn how to *cut the chatter in your head when you're with somebody*. That just comes down to being present. That's another topic.

I'll give you a real example. I had a coaching client about a month ago, I'm just going to call her Jane, and Jane's on the phone and I ask Jane, *what's challenging you right now?* Jane says, *Jon, I'm being challenged by this, this and this*. But what she said didn't really matter because what happened is as she was sharing with me what she said her challenges were I was listening deeply. I realized that the emotion that was attached to what she was sharing, there was some incongruency. Have you ever had that happen to you? Someone you work with, a rep or someone on your team, they are saying something to you but there's some part of you that thinks, this doesn't match up? They're not telling me the whole story. Something's wrong here.

Now Jane had said she was overwhelmed with stuff. Think about how easy it would be, by the way, as a coach, to think that's a legitimate problem. But there was an incongruency because the way she was saying she was overwhelmed and feeling unorganized it was with emotion as though she had a puppy that just got run over by a Mack truck. It didn't match being unorganized. So I used a certain coaching technique where I said to Jane, *you know I wouldn't be doing my job if I didn't say this. I can only do a great job if I'm really open and I share with you how I'm really feeling*. That by the way is called a **subliminal invitation**. If you want somebody to do something, one of the easiest ways to make them do it is to show them you're doing it. That's called a subliminal invitation.

So instead of me saying, *Jane I wish you'd just open up to me and tell me what you're really feeling*, think of what that's going to do. It's going to cause defense. So instead I say *Jane if I didn't open up with you and share with you how I'm really feeling*, I'm inviting her to do the same. I said *I could be totally wrong here and please, tell me if I'm wrong*. You should always tell people in advance that you could be wrong. If you come across with this is what I think is happening and don't give yourself an out, then it makes people even more uncomfortable. The last thing they want to do is say, no you're wrong. So I told Jane that in order to be able to help you, I've really got to tell you how I'm feeling. *So tell me if I'm wrong but I feel there's a problem you might be dealing with that's much bigger than what you just shared with me? Is there any truth to what I just shared with you?* I learned that from the psychics. They tell you 97 things about your life and then they ask is there any truth to any of that? That makes it easier now for Jane to come out and acknowledge there might be something else going on. So Jane said *yeah* and told me what was really painful for her was very big in her life. She was literally on the verge of dealing with divorce, her business was failing and she'd already been really successful. It was only because I was listening deeply. I'm not telling you I knew how to solve her problem. We had to get to it first. We'll see what happens. To be continued...

That's a great example of listening deeply in and of itself to help you get *below the surface*. There are some tools you may have noticed I used. It's one simple tool that when combined with listening deeply all of your coaching conversations will become immediately world class. And what is that tool? It's using **quality questions**. That's what we're going to talk about here, is how to use quality questions.

Why is it that questions are so powerful? First of all, **whenever a question is presented, you're guaranteed to shift somebody's mental focus**. It doesn't mean they're going to verbally out loud answer your question. But they are going to shift their focus. If I just jump in and ask, what's your name? At some point you have to say in your head your name. Because **a question causes the brain to go looking for the answer**. It's one reason why questions are powerful.

Another reason why they are powerful is because when you use questions in your coaching process you can really **predetermine where somebody's focus goes**. It's not just about having them distracted or making them think about something else. You can help them think about what direction you're going to bring a conversation. If you want to get even deeper than that, you can pay attention to how you want people to feel. Which might be one of the most important questions to ask yourself before any type of conversation. **Ask yourself, how do I want somebody to feel when I'm done with this conversation?** And you can learn to ask questions, like **what's challenging you right now**, and realize that's going to put them in a different emotional state than if you say, *hey I'd just love to catch up? What are some things you're excited about? What's exciting in your life?* And don't be surprised if that catches people off guard because they aren't used to getting questions that put them in a positive state.

Another reason questions are so powerful is because when you, the manager, are coaching or working with somebody, it is not uncommon that you can see what their problem is long before they can see what their problem is. One of the biggest, *biggest, biggest, biggest* mistakes that we make as coaches is we try and offer a solution instead of helping the person draw the solution out from within themselves. And the way to do it is by using questions. Because **questions allow people to draw something** out versus us trying to stuff it down their throat. Which might work but I can promise you people will be defensive. They're not going to listen. If you're saying it, well, you're the boss. If they're saying it, it's the truth.

So what are some example of questions? I'm going to rattle off a whole bunch of examples here. Now you might write these down and say I can just use one of these every time I talk to someone. Or I can use a couple of them. You don't have to use all of them. I'm giving you a full menu. Because the purpose of these calls is to give you more than you'll need in the coaching call right here. But you can pick and choose and over time you can add all of this to your menu of coaching tools.

Let's talk about what I would call **diagnostic questions**. Why do I call it a diagnostic question? Think about if you go to a doctor. What does a doctor do? Actually you don't usually meet the doctor first. You meet an assistant or nurse and they ask you a whole bunch of questions. They give you answers. Then the doctor comes in and they've looked at those questions and answers and what do they do? They start asking you even more questions. So what are they doing? They are diagnosing. Think about how afraid you would be if you walked into the doctor's office and said, *I've got this big forehead pain* and they said, *Oh, I already know what it is. We're going to inject this into you, we're going to cut off this leg, and we're going to put you into this treatment*. Even if that's what you actually needed, how would you actually feel? You'd be freaked out because they didn't take the time to find out what your problem was.

I'm sharing this with all of you because if you're wondering is it going to be weird if I start asking questions, I can tell you that **on a deep level, subconsciously, the people you work with will appreciate and respect and even trust you more if you ask more questions because at a deep level they realize it's a way of showing that you care**. So diagnostic questions to me are kind of like, and don't get hung up on my labels. That doesn't matter. But I have what I call diagnostic

questions to kind of look into the past or the present and just kind of figure out what's been happening. This is where I figure out what are they deleting or distorting or generalizing.

So someone comes to me, for example, saying they've got a problem. I'm giving you very simplistic examples here so you can get an idea of how this works. So I may ask, **what specifically is the problem?** They say, *I've got a problem with my interview.* So I say **tell me more about that.** Then they say *I just don't feel good.* Then I say **is it you don't feel good because you don't know the material or is it a general lack of confidence.** Do you notice how there's almost no end. I could lead a two hour coaching session and never do anything other than ask questions. Because once you learn to ask questions you realize that you can literally walk people right down the path most of the time to solving their own problem. *Oh, well, I'm not doing well at the interview because I'm just lacking confidence.* So I say, *Jim, I feel like I know what you need to do.* **What do you think you could do to increase your confidence?** Or I could say **why do you feel you lack confidence?** Well, *I guess I don't feel prepared.* **What could you do to feel more prepared?** *I guess I could rehearse the thing.* Yes, **is that something you think would be a good idea?** *Yes.* Let me ask you this, **is this something you can commit to do?** *Yes.* **When are you going to do that so I can follow up and help you?** *I'm going to do that tonight at 7 pm.* **Great do you mind following up with me as soon as you do that so we can see how it went?**

I'm giving you one example. You can take an entire conversation using questions. **What specifically is your challenge?** Another great question is **tell me more about that.** Or if someone says they are feeling a certain way, which by the way, **how do you feel** is a great question. If they say they are feeling upset, frustrated, scared, I might ask **what's making you feel a certain way?** **Why do you think you're feeling that way?** I'm trying to help people draw it out Or I might say **what do you mean by that or tell me a little bit more or can you paint a picture for me of what it is you're talking about?** Again, I'm trying to just get people to draw something out.

If someone's having a challenge I might ask **what's challenging you** or **tell me what is it that's holding you back?** **Tell me a little bit more about that.**

Now it's not even a diagnostic question. Someone's telling me about their plan for the future and I might ask, **what do you think might hold you back?** The reason that's a great question is sometimes someone might put together a plan and as coaches we look at it and go, oh my gosh! This is a disaster in waiting. We just want to tell them it's a disaster. But how valuable is that if instead you could say, **hey Jim one of the things I've learned is that it's great to ask questions about what might get in the way of a plan.** So **what do you think we could come up that might stop us from executing this plan?** It's important to ask questions and not say I know the answer but I'm going to ask a question so you can show me that you know the answer. No, you're a team. So you say, *Jim, let's talk about this.* **What are some of the things that could get in the way and maybe we can solve some of the problems together?**

Let me give you another example of another type of question. Some of these overlap which is why I say don't get hung up on is this a diagnostic question. That's irrelevant. You can call it whatever you want. Here's what I call a **future focus question.** If somebody makes a mistake of some type I might say, *hey, let's just learn from it.* **What can you do to avoid this mistake in the future?** They might say, *this or this or this.* That type of question I almost always will come back with, **cool, and what else? What else can we do to avoid this mistake?** Because what I want to help people see is there's really an infinite number of reasons they could be avoiding a mistake. I might ask **who else can you learn from?** This is a little sneaky trick you can use. But

if you're coaching somebody and let's say they're having a problem on getting recommendations, what you can do is say, *hey, you know, Jim, our assistant manager, he'll be able to really help you out getting recommendations.* Of course you could ask, *who do you think it might be good to learn from?* Let's say they pick one of your assistant managers. So you say, *great, can you commit to going to Jim and learn this?* *Hey, Jim, can you teach Bobby here your rec approach?* *Cool! Then, Bobby, when you're done, why don't you come back and share with me what Jim taught you.* Now you'll find out if Bobby actually learned the rec approach and it's a really intelligent way to find out if Jim actually knows the rec approach.

Who else can you learn from? That's just a type of focus question. What I want to do is leave all of you with a very simple little formula. What I hope you've gotten so far is this. Whenever people communicate you have what's said and then you have the truth. The gap between the truth and what actually comes out doesn't have to be overcomplicated. Sure people are emotional and people have things going on in their lives. But people **delete, distort, and generalize**. You don't even need to worry about that when you talk because if you listen deeply and you use questions to find out a little bit more then you'll pull out what's been deleted. You'll clarify what's been distorted. You'll help someone see that they're kind of generalizing a problem and then they can get specific with what they need to do to solve it. And you find that getting to the solution is the most important part. And then the solution is something you've already told someone in the first place. It's something they've already learned, or their manager has already taught them.

So you help them see what their problem is in a clear way. When other people see their problem more clearly they are also much more likely to be able to arrive at a great solution and then solve the problem by taking action.

If I had to take everything that's been said so far and say hey, here's the only thing you should do, it's this. A great example is baseball. I used to play baseball when I was a kid and one of the things they always taught us was if you're playing in the outfield and the other team hits a pop up or a fly ball, they taught us that one of the natural mistakes that a baseball player might make is that as soon as the ball's hit, they run towards it. So one of the reminders they taught us was whenever a ball was hit up in the air, first thing to do ever time, no matter where it looks the ball is going, is to take a step or two backwards. Because that helps to eliminate the problem we had most of the time where we'd step forward and then we'd misjudge it. The same is true as a coach. **If there's one thing you need to remember, and it will anchor everything else you've learned, just remember when you get into any situation where you're coaching somebody, ask a question or two every time before you move forward by trying to give advice.** If that's all you remember, you're going to be in a really good place.

What I'm going to leave you with is something cool I came up with. Here's how I came about this. I had a group of coaches in the DC area who invited me about a year ago to give a talk on what I was doing as a coach. I kind of made this thing up on the spot and they said afterward that was really great. I realized I had essentially made it up. The question somebody asked me was Jon, **if you met somebody and had two minutes to create a world class coaching relationship, what are the five questions you would ask them?**

What I came up with was based on my experience. These are what I call the **Fab Five Questions**. Any relationship you have you need to make sure you know you have the answers to these questions. **These are the five most important questions you need to have an answer to in order to have a powerful coaching relationship.** You can use these to start or re-ignite a relationship with people that you lead. But you can also pick and choose certain elements of these

because you might have some of this figured out but realize a particular question you need to ask more often. So you can pull from this however you want.

Here are the **Fab Five Questions to Create A Powerful Coaching Relationship**. They are all pretty obvious; but when you put them in this order, it's pretty cool.

1. What is it you want to achieve? This is a regular conversation you're always having with your people. What do they want to achieve? What's the goal? How much do they want to sell? What do they want to get better at? Very simple. You need to help people set a goal and get clear on what they want.

2. Can I get your permission to help you in achieving that? There might be some of you that might wonder if you need to ask for their permission if I'm their manager? I have people myself today who are paying me to coach them but if I can see I'm about to give them a solution, I still always ask for permission. How does that sound? *Okay, Jeff, I've got a couple of ideas. Do you mind if I share those with you?* The reason why it's powerful to always ask for permission no matter what stage the relationship is at, is because when somebody says, go ahead and help me, they are lowering any possible barrier to being defensive to getting advice or coaching. It doesn't matter how well you know the person.

3. Why do you want this? *Bobby, you've told me you want to sell 10K next week and I appreciate we're going to team up and work together. Here's the next thing I want to know. Bobby, why do you want this?* It's so important to know right up front why somebody wants something. So what's the outcome, can I have permission to help you, why do you want it?

I've got to make sure I share this with all of you, when you ask somebody why they want something, you know you're going to get a whole range of answers. You're going to have to be prepared to coach your people on what it means to have reasons to succeed.

You're working with someone who is relatively younger, less mature. You ask why is it you want to train right now to be a branch? They might not come up with anything better than it looks really cool or Bob did it and he gets a lot of dates now. You're going to get reasons that are all off the wall. You might get somebody that comes up to you and says, well for the financial and personal growth and who I'm going to become in the process. Don't you wish they all said that?

So you want to coach people on what it means to have reasons. So here's what that might sound like. *Bob, so what's important to you right now that we can work together on? I want to be a great branch candidate. You know Bob, it's my job to help you. So I just got to check in with you. Is it cool with you, can I get your permission to really help you be the best branch candidate? I can help you but I really want to make sure it's okay with you to step up my support for you? Yeah!* By the way, if someone says no to that, then you've just discovered early on that they're going down the wrong path. They need a new goal if they aren't willing to give you permission to help.

Then I would say, *Bob, one of the things I've learned is that the people who always do the best as a branch candidate, they always have really clear reasons of why they want to do well.* So I'm actually teaching while I'm asking a question. I'm helping him, giving him clues, so that by the time I ask what are your reasons, he's already thought about it. So I ask, *what are some of your reasons Bob?* They might be external, financial goals or achievement goals. But they might also be internal, build your confidence, resume experience that may help you in the future. What are

some of your reasons? Notice I already gave him a whole menu to help him out? He might go, *well this, this and this*. So you coach people.

Now, there's a catch here. Anytime you're having a coaching conversation, person to person with somebody (I learned this from Dan Casetta), anything that they commit to by way of here's what I want to achieve (the first question) or here's what my reasons are, you **always right that down and let them see you writing it down**. You already know you're going to write it down because that way when you follow up with people you can refer back to it and say here's the original goals and the reasons driving you and you get into it. But you also write it down because **when someone sees you write it down it increases the accountability that's now involved in the whole relationship**. They go, *oh my gosh. He put it on paper. I guess I'd better actually run these 400 miles. I didn't think I was going to do it. But I told a trillion people and now I've got to do it*. It's called **forced accountability**.

Now here's the other thing. If you're on the phone you say, *hold on one second Bob, okay cool, I've got that written down. We can move on*. So let them know something's being written down. Get from somebody what is their reasons why. That will become your fuel later on when they fall off track, because everybody does, you've got to know why they wanted to be on track in the first place. And as a coach *one of the most valuable things you can do from time to time is remind people what it is that's in it for them, why they are struggling through this to begin with*. Sometimes we have to remind ourselves.

Quick review: What is it you want to achieve? Can I get your permission to help you? Why do you want this? What's driving you, what are your motivations? Now, what's your plan?

4. What's your plan? It's so simple but so important to ask people, show me your plan. Because sometimes we go great and we might tell them what their plan should be or we might ask them for their plan. But we've got to see if people actually know how to plan for something.

Remember the example I gave you earlier of how you can figure out how good your leaders are at helping somebody how to plan? Let's say you're working with somebody and say *what's your plan look like to be the best branch candidate?* And they say, *I don't know*. You go *hey, it might be good to go interview Mustafa or Kate or Jim over there and have them just share with you how to put together a good plan*. What you're really doing now is not only teaching this person how to plan but also seeing if you're people know how to teach somebody how to plan. Which is different from knowing how to plan. It's a cool little tool you can use to conquer multiple things at once. Of course when you ask somebody what's your plan, you should always be ready to help them create a plan quickly and keep it simple so they understand it right then and there on the spot.

Now, it's time for the last of the Fab Five Questions and in my opinion, this is the one that will help **eliminate 90+% of all problems that will arise**. Many of your candidates are going through a time when they drop out of the funnel. You're recruiting, training, developing people. One of the reasons why people fall out of the funnel, and you might kick yourself when you hear this, is because they *fall out of communication*. That's it. So the fifth question that you want to clarify with somebody is:

5. What is our communication plan? This is a little secret amongst coaches that makes a huge difference. Because 90+% of all coaching problems where you can't get your people to do something or follow through or stay accountable or make it to the finish line happen because people simply **fall out of communication**. Now what does it mean to fall out of communication?

There are actually two things that means. Number one is it might not mean they stop talking to you. It might mean that the conversations went back to being surface level. You might say I'm talking to my people every week. But are you talking to them from the surface or are you getting *below the surface* to the truth of what's happening for them?

The other example, which is more common and easier to solve, is when you literally, physically stop communicating with somebody. And you sure can't solve somebody's problems when you're not talking to them. So when you ask somebody what's our communication plan, you might be thinking, this all makes sense but what does that look like? It's really simple. You can make it up and you'll do fine.

You say, *Bob, you've got a plan to make more phone calls and you start tomorrow night. So, Bob, let me ask you a question. When's the next time we're going to connect? When's the next time we're going to talk?* A communication plan is no more complicated than making sure you've agreed together how frequently you're going to talk. Some of you may wonder, why do we need to do that? We have PDI. Are you telling me that everyone calls in at PDI and tells you exactly what's going on? No. You might have PDI scheduled in your office. But how much better is it instead of saying *we'll talk at PDI tomorrow*, you say, *let's make sure that tomorrow by this time you've called me to let me know how it's going.* Some of you may be thinking this sounds good but what happens when people fall off the wagon. I've tried this stuff before but something goes wrong or they get a bad result and they are afraid to talk to me or avoid me. What do I do there? It's simple. What you do to alleviate those types of problems ahead of time is, you've gotten their plan and you say, *let's talk about how we're going to communicate together so we can keep working together as a team.* You might say *when are we going to talk next? When we talk next, what are we going to talk about?* They make sure they know what they are checking in about. So *when we talk next I'm going to have you tell me about this, what was the result.* The last thing you say is this, *hey Bob, one of the things I've learned as a manager, the most important thing for you and I to work together or the most important thing for me to be able to help you is not the result that you're getting but that we stay in communication.*

Some of you might think this is blasphemy that it goes against everything we've been taught. You've got to understand something. It doesn't mean results are not important. The point I'm trying to make here is that what you want to convey in coaching is that them staying in communication with you is more important as you go than whatever results they're getting.

If somebody's getting a bad result and they are afraid to connect you cannot solve their problem. But if they get a bad result and they remember you said that all that matters is that at least we communicate and he's not going to get mad at me and it's always going to be fun and make sure you get people to smile when they connect with you so they are always anchored with positive when they connect with you, you can solve a problem if you're talking with someone. You can't do it if you're not talking to them. So you plant that seed early on in the relationship. Hey we've got to stay in communication.

I wanted to get all of this out there so you have some tools to help you have world class coaching conversations. Hopefully you realize you've got some ways to get below the surface.

Q&A

Q: As a new manager, what would you say is the best way to get practice with this? Is there anything to be conscious of in terms of how to create proficiency in the ways you ask questions to pull out what you're looking for?

A: First of all, one of the best ways to practice this is at your next prep meeting or next key staff meeting, have your people pair up and coach each other only asking questions. You can use the example I gave you earlier. *Hey, what's challenging you? What about that is challenging you? What do you think would help with that challenge? Will you commit to that? Can we follow up?* Have people actually practice conversing only asking questions.

The other thing is I would encourage people to take those five questions, **have them written down on a note card and have them at their desk** and whenever they are PDIing make sure they are covering their bases. They are all simple enough that it's nothing that anybody new is not going to get. Make sure before getting on a call you know what someone's goals are and every once in a while check in a remind them of why they want to achieve something. Put little reminders up. Remember the example I gave of look, when in doubt, go into any conversation and ask a question or two before giving advice. If that's all somebody tries to do, they will naturally ask questions, they'll learn how to ask good questions if they just force themselves to try that out.

Q: Feedback. I thought it was a great call. The main thing I think that helps our DMs especially is when you gave those specific examples. So your goal is 10K for the week or you have a problem with recs. I think DMs especially can see themselves when they are facing the challenges that they face every day.

The other thing I really liked and I wanted to ask you a question on is *above the surface and below the surface conversations*. My question to you is **how can we know as leaders when we're being too much above the surface and do you have any strategies or tips on making sure we're being more real with our people and they don't see us as being above the surface?** Because I think there's a natural almost distrust that goes on going into a relationship with a manager and a representative. They may be skeptical or get some negative feedback. There might be some natural things we're battling at the beginning of the relationship. So **how can we make sure we're below the surface and how can we make sure they know we're being real with them?**

A: That's a good question. Thanks for the feedback. The way I'll answer that is by referring back to something I said earlier. Do you remember when I shared this technique called a **subliminal invitation**? Which is just a fancy way of saying, look, if I want one person to be a certain way, the best thing for me to do is to be that way. What I do personally, and I work on this quite a bit, really hard, I ask myself **how do I want people to be around me? Then I go inside myself and ask am I being that way 100%?** If I want people to be relaxed, I'd rather err on the side of being relaxed versus trying to be polished and professional because I know that them relaxing is more important than them thinking I'm perfect.

The other thing and I don't want this to get all new agey, light some incense type of thing. But I have a coach who taught me how to feel energy. It's actually very practical stuff. One of the things she's taught me is how when I'm communicating to feel my gut. There's a place we feel inside of us where we feel when we're being incongruent and this coach has me pay attention. If I feel like I'm being incongruent then I'm being on the surface and it means I'm *either afraid or I'm not prepared*. A lot of the times I've found I'm incongruent if I'm not prepared which means I'm

not confident which means I'll do something to compensate for that which means I won't fully reveal things to people.

This is counter-intuitive to what a lot of people might teach. But the old school, hey you've got to be perfect, don't be emotional, I think people are discovering **that the more you reveal how you feel and what you're feeling and you're direct with it, the more people will open up because they want people who can feel what they're feeling.**

Q: I'm reviewing here where you said people distort their information. It seems like that's just automatic. When it comes to guys and girls, girls are extremely different. It's a whole other ballgame with them. **What are some keys that you've figured out from coaching girls and guys to make it easier for girls to keep the point central and open instead of distorting it all the time?**

A: What you're talking about is how there is **feminine energy** and there is **masculine energy**. Men and women can have both. In my coaching this is something I've studied quite a bit. Your question of **how do I approach them differently**, one thing I'm careful of, I don't want to try to turn a girl into a man by making them pragmatic, logical and to the point. That might make them even more uncomfortable or less likely to open up. But if I'm talking to somebody, and it may not be a woman or a man necessarily, just someone whose feminine energy is causing them to go on different tangents, in different directions and distort things, and this isn't a good or bad, right or wrong. One of the things that I do is I try to go into that conversation knowing that that could happen. So I might **prep somebody who I'm coaching by sharing with them at the beginning of the conversation what I want to accomplish, what the agenda is, what we're going to try to get done. That's one way to try to keep people more focused** versus just giving them an open floor to open up.

Q: As you have conversations with managers, assistants, reps, if you could pick one, maybe two, **resounding themes that you always have in your head as you have these conversations**, with regard to the topic, the challenge, the level of emotion, if you had one or two resounding themes you try to keep in your head the whole time, do you have an answer to that?

A: It would probably be something along the lines of **what are they feeling**. I say that knowing very specifically what all of you deal with. The problems and solutions are practical, simple stuff. But people fail because of how they are feeling. So that's what I want to know. **How can I help them feel better? Is it encouraging them? Is it helping them choose different types of reasons?** You don't need to be number one, just be excited that you're growing yourself.

Q: Is there a point in time where you, not necessarily give up, but you know this conversation is not going the way I want it to or maybe even this conversation is not going to help this person. I feel like sometimes I have conversations, and it's probably because of me, but I feel sometimes it's just not going the way I want it to go. **Is there a point where you could just fix it or forget it?**

A: That's when I usually say, I'm going into a tunnel. I'm just kidding. I hope everyone heard when you said it's probably just me. In every conversation the problem lies on both sides. So there's probably something you can do. If I find that's a recurring pattern, then I tell myself I'm doing something wrong. I'm being very direct with you. If it's a recurring pattern.

If you're also asking from the place of once in a while I have a conversation and it's just not going anywhere, what that tells me, let's say it's not everyone you talk to. Let's say it's just one person

and you just can't break through. What that tells me is that they are in a pattern, they are running a pattern, they are in a trance that's pretty deep. When I say it's pretty deep it doesn't mean they are explicitly or overtly emotional about something. It just means if I'm not able to crack through and get deeper using the stuff we talked about today, it tells me they're **running a pattern** that's pretty deep and I might have to do something to interrupt that pattern. I don't mean hit them on the head.

Maybe what I'll do if I can't break through, if I was face to face, I would walk outside. I'd say let's go for a little walk. I'd **change the location**. I'd turn on a little music. I'd sit in a different seat. **Something that breaks their pattern**. I know this might sound weird to some of you but it's incredible how it can work. If someone's in a pattern that can't be interrupted, do something that just **changes the physical environment and it interrupts their train of thought**. And it opens a window through which you can ask a couple of questions and delve a little bit deeper. And you don't have to tell them why you're going on a walk, or going across the street to the coffee shop with them, or whatever.