

Levels of support for learning and change

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Guiding and Caretaking

Guiding and Caretaking have to do with providing support with respect to the environment in which change takes place. Guiding is the process of directing a person or group along the path leading from some present state to a desire state. It presupposes that the “guide” has been there before, and knows the best way (or at least a way) to reach the desired state. Being caretaker, or “custodian”, involves providing a safe and supportive environment. It has to do with attending to the external context and making sure that what is needed is available, and that there are no unnecessary distractions or interfaces from the outside.

Coaching

Traditional coaching is focused at a behavioral level, involving the process of helping another person to achieve or improve a particular behavioral performance. Coaching methods at this level derive primarily from a sport training model, promoting awareness of resources and abilities, and the development of conscious competence. They involve drawing out and strengthening people’s abilities through careful observation and feedback, and facilitating them to act in coordination with other team members. An effective coach of this type observes people’s behavior and gives them tips and guidance about how to improve in specific contexts and situations.

Teaching

Teaching relates to helping a person develop cognitive skills and capabilities. The goal is generally to assist people to increase competencies and “thinking skills” relevant to an area of learning. Teaching focuses on the acquisition of general cognitive abilities, rather than on particular performance in specific situation. A teacher helps a person to develop new strategies for thinking and acting. The emphasis of teaching is more on new learning than on refining one’s previous performance.

Mentoring

Mentoring involves guiding someone to discover his or her own unconscious competencies and overcome internal resistances and interferences, through believing in the person and validating his or her positive intention. Mentors help to share or influence a person’s beliefs and values in a positive way by „resonating” with, realizing, or unveiling that person’s inner wisdom, frequently through the mentor’s own example. The type of mentoring often becomes internalized as part of a person, so that the external presence of the mentor is no longer necessary. People are able to carry “inner mentors” as counselors and guides for their lives for many situations.

Sponsorship

“Sponsorship” is the process of recognizing and acknowledging (“seeing and blessing”) the essence or identity of another person. Sponsorship involves seeking and safeguarding potential within others, focusing on the development of identity and core values. Effective sponsorship results from the commitment to the promotion of something that is already within a person or group but which is not being manifested to its own fullest capacity. This is accomplished through constantly sending messages such as: You exist. I see you. You are valuable. You are important /special/ which others can act, grow and excel. You are welcome. You belong here. You have something to contribute. A good “sponsor” creates context in which others can act, grow and excel. Sponsors providing conditions,

contacts and resources that allow the group or individual being sponsored to focus on, develop and use their own abilities and skills.

Awakening

Awakening goes beyond coaching and sponsorship to include the level of vision, mission and spirit. An awakener supports another person by providing contexts and experiences which bring out the best of that person's understanding of love, self, and spirit. An awakener "awakens" others through his or her own integrity and congruence. An awakener puts other people in touch with their own mission and vision by being in full contact with his or her own vision and mission.

This complementary group of competencies – caretaking, guiding, coaching, teachings, mentoring, sponsorship and awakening – defines the skill set of **large "C" coaching**. These are essential skills, regardless of whether one is coaching a little league baseball team, a coworker trying to improve his or her ability to communicate, a project group in a company, a person making a life transition, or the Chief Executive Officer of a multinational organization. Each of the different levels of support requires a different quality of relationship on the part of the coach and a different tool set. The tools of mentoring, for instance are distinct from those of teaching guiding or awakening. Many situations will require a combination or sequence of tools skills and types of support.