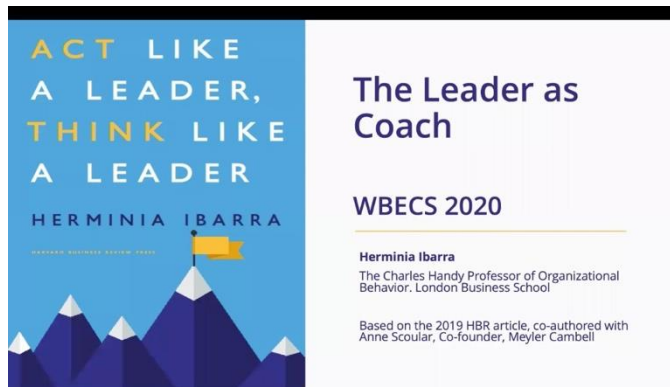




Master Coach : PART 4: Research Around Coaching and Related Neuroscience

Herminia Ibarra



People want the coaching skill set, but there is a gap between aspiration and practice. We fail to practice behaviours that are not habitual. They feel inefficient and inauthentic.

In a directive coaching approach, you are **putting in information but not necessarily pulling out information**. You **assume that you know and that they do not know**. On the non-directive side, you forfeit control of what input gets given to the individual but what you get is ownership of it.

Leaders are often good at the directive kind of coaching. **What is extremely difficult is shifting towards the non-directive side - asking questions without judgement and being driven by the ambitions of the person in front of them.**

The styles that we used are often a product of what we have seen from role models, what our own leaders have done and what our organisation has encouraged.

Role modelling is critical, but it is not enough. **You need to build that training capacity in a large enough set of people so that it starts to stick.**

There is no organisation that doesn't go through a bit of a crash. There will be processes of procedures that communicate: "don't make a mistake", "cover your butt", "be the smartest person in the room". **You have the residual of a different style of leading.**

Senior leaders have to supplement everything they know with a more general **capacity for learning** and they have to develop that in their people. **That's why the coaching skill set is increasingly valued as a way to create and sustain a learning organisation.**

A school needs to be very intentional about the culture that is being created. What signals the senior people are giving and what are they valuing and how are they behaving.

Most schools understand that they need to be more innovative and future proof themselves. They don't always have the processes in place that [allow people to innovate](#) and allow people to do what they actually know how to do.

Observation 1: People want the coaching skill set, but there is a gap between aspiration and practice. They are not naturally good at it.

Observation 2: Everyone is trying to move their schools to be more agile, innovative to be a true learning organisation. On this journey, they eventually get to coaching as a fundamental pillar as a learning organisation.

This hinges on a fundamental shift from monitoring employees to coaching to facilitate their development. As we adapt to more technology, smarter tools, leaders are having to help their managers learn the very human and non-machine skill of developing performance in other people.

Coaching training can be seen as a pillar, a tool, a means to this digital transformation that everyone is going through. As Sir John Whitmore wrote in his book "Coaching for Performance." He adopted a non-directive coaching style.

How we define coaching

Coaching is unlocking people's potential to maximize their own performance. John Whitmore

An effective manager-as-coach asks questions instead of providing answers, supports employees instead of judging them, and facilitates their development instead of dictating what has to be done.

The majority of schools have some coaching capacity [but need serious skill-building](#). The skill deficit Herminia identifies was mirrored in what the attendees attending her live session recorded.

This is part of a "what got you here, won't get you there" phenomenon. People have not been rewarded and promoted for the skill set that we are going to be talking about. It is going to be necessary if they are to [learn and adapt to the current times](#).

The gap is between people's sense of how good they are as coaches and an external assessment by professionals or by coaches.

The bad news: We're not as good as we think

- People grossly overestimate how skilled they are at coaching
- We fail to practice behavior that feels "inauthentic" or inefficient at first
- Leaders report preference for "faster" ways of getting results



Why is this?

They see themselves as good mentors, good advice givers, good coaches in the little league sense: "Let me help you figure out how to grip that baseball bat".

Plus, we fail to practice behaviours that are not habitual. They feel inefficient and inauthentic. They know they should be asking questions, but they don't feel like they are getting anywhere. [That drives them back to being directive.](#)

[Older studies expressed a preference for faster ways of getting results. This is all part of the skill deficit.](#)

People learn fast if they have:

- A reason why
- A sound method and tools
- Practice and feedback
- Organisational support

Coaching Styles: Daniel Goleman talked about coaching as a style that is different from other styles. [The shift Herminia would like to see is in thinking about different styles of coaching.](#)

Some (styles of coaching) are more directive or less directive, with the aim of getting people to the point where they can be situational: where they have the right mix of directive and non-directive that is suitable for the person in the moment in which they need the coaching.

In coaching, there are decisions that need to be made:

1. Content - how much info do you put in.

Are you in the expert role ("here's what works well", or "other people in this situation have done x y z" or "in this organisation what has tended not to work is...". This is putting in info.

2. The energy you pull out.

Can they find their own solutions, do they have ownership of the solutions they are coming up with, do they have their own answers, how do they feel about them?

In a more directive or "little league coaching" approach, you are putting in information but not necessarily pulling out information. You assume that you know and that they do not know.

The boss isn't necessarily the font of all information. There are lots of different pieces that need to be "pulled out" of the people who have it.

Different styles of coaching

More info put in	Directive	Situational
Less info put in	Laissez-faire	Non-directive
	Less energy pulled out	More energy pulled out

On the non-directive side, you forfeit control of what input gets given to the individual but what you get is ownership of it.

Leaders are good at the directive kind of coaching. [What is extremely difficult is shifting towards the non-directive side - asking questions without judgement and being driven by the ambitions of the person in front of them.](#) They are creating a space where they can work it out for themselves.

The work that Hermina does is pull them away from that directive style of coaching towards the non-directive side and force them into practising such that over time they become more at ease with it and more authentic. She uses the GROW model. It allows them to see the power of open-ended questions.



In this live poll attendees were asked:

Poll 3:

What is the biggest barrier keeping executives from becoming better coaches?

- They perceive coaching as being "too soft"
- A perception that it's an "HR fad"
- No role models for how to do it
- Lack of training & practice to build capacity
- A corporate culture that does not support coaching

Attendee results:

a: 15%

b: 6%

c: 16%

d: 29%

e: 34% A corporate culture that does not support coaching.

FROM "KNOW IT ALLS" TO "LEARN IT ALLS"

- ✓ **Fixed mindset:** you believe competencies are intrinsic
*Stick to activities that **utilise** skills you've mastered, rather than risk embarrassment by failing at something new*
- ✓ **Growth mindset:** you believe competencies improve with effort
*Look for opportunities to **learn** new things, even if you won't succeed at all of them*



Nadella had read Carol S. Dweck's book Mindset and immediately drew the link between the fixed and growth mindsets in children's learning, to learning inside the company.

They went from saying "here's windows" to "how can we learn about your needs".

After a period of ten years flat share price, Microsoft had been 'written off.' In 2014 Satya Nadella took over, and the stock rise has been a huge success. Satya Nadella's "why" was "we need to become a learning organisation". He could see the opportunity but knew the company's culture was preventing them from capitalising on it.

Psychological safety - the shared belief the team is safe for taking risks

A necessary condition for members to:

- ✓ Disclose private information
- ✓ Challenge each other on the facts
- ✓ Reach better decisions

What they found was that psychological safety was the biggest predictor in the performance of the team. This was the silver bullet. But in many companies, (schools) these conditions don't exist.

Amy Edmondson's PhD found that the best teams had the highest error rates. The results were the opposite of what she had expected.

The reason for it was that the best (hospital) teams talked about their mistakes rather than covering them up. The error rates were not showing up in the bad teams because they were not divulging them.

Role Model and Build Capability:

At Microsoft, Nadella was going to be a different CEO and by nature, curious, seeking to learn, asking questions.

When Nadella took over the company, he bought all the members of his senior leadership team a copy of the book "Nonviolent Communication" by the psychologist Marshall B. Rosenberg.

Step 1: Who your leaders are and what behaviours do they model?

Step 2: How does that filter through to other people?