



Some Approaches of Our Executive “Coaching for Change” Programs

Some of the foundations of our “Coaching for Change” are well articulated from the *Harvard Business Review* May, 2004 article, "Coaching the Alpha Male," by Ludeman and Erlandson, exerted below. (Lest we forget: You can be Alpha and also be a woman, and you can be male and not be an Alpha.)

“Alphas think very fast – this rapid processing can prevent them from listening to others – especially those who don’t communicate in alpha-speak. Their impatience can cause them to miss subtle but important details. Alphas have opinions about everything; and they rarely admit that those opinions might be wrong or incomplete. Early in life, alphas realize that they are smarter than most people. Because their instincts have often been proven right, they put their complete faith in their instincts, and feel justified in focusing on the flaws in other people’s ideas or arguments. As a result, coworkers (and direct reports) get intimidated, which makes learning from alphas difficult. The more pressure an alpha feels to perform, the more he tends to shift his leadership style from constructive and challenging to intimidating or even abusive. Organizations become dysfunctional when people avoid dealing the difficult alpha and instead work around him or simply pay him lip service. Unemotional and analytical in their cognitive style, alphas are eager to learn “things”, but have little or no natural curiosity about people or feelings. They rely on exhaustive data to reach business conclusions, but often make snap judgments about other people. Because they believe that paying attention to feelings, even their own, detracts from getting the job done, they’re surprisingly oblivious to the effect they have on others. They’re judgmental of colleagues who can’t control emotions, yet often fail to notice how they vent their own anger and frustration, or, they dismiss their own outbursts, arguing that the same rules shouldn’t apply to the top dog. The more executive authority alphas achieve, the more pressure they feel and the more pronounced their faults.”

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ALPHA MALES/LEADERS Strengths & Weaknesses

<u>Attribute</u>	<u>Value to Organization</u>	<u>Risk to Organization</u>
Self-confident & opinionated	Acts decisively; has good intuition	Is closed minded, domineering, and intimidating
Highly intelligent	Sees beyond the obvious; takes creative leaps	dismisses or demeans colleagues who disagree with him
Action oriented	Produces results	Is impatient; resists process changes that might improve results
High performance expectations for himself and others	Sets and achieves high goals	Is constantly dissatisfied; fails to appreciate and motivate others
Direct communication style	Moves people to action	Generates fear and a gossip-filled, CYA culture of compliance
Highly disciplined	Is extraordinarily productive; finds time and energy for a high level of work and fitness	Has unreasonable expectations of self and others; misses signs of burnout or pain
Unemotional	Is laser focused and objective	Is difficult to connect with; doesn't inspire teams; problem with empathizing with others

Adapted by David Tulin from *Harvard Business Review* May, 2004 article, "Coaching the Alpha Male," by Ludeman and Erlandson

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Executive Coaching of the Alpha Leader

Two questions to consider and respond to are:

1. “Do you want to change?”
2. “Are you willing to do whatever it takes to meet and exceed these professional, leadership change and improvement goals?”

Coaching Steps

- a. Getting Her/His Attention** (Assessments’ ID of Strengths and Weaknesses,
- b. Expecting and Getting Her/His Commitment** (In word and deed, including growth and change through humility and discomfort),
- c. Speaking Her/His Language** (The real and hard impact on his/her and others' careers, and the real and hard, bottom-line impact on the organization’s values, legal liability, employee motivation, loyalty, collaboration, innovation, teamwork, high performance, and strategic business goals.)
- d. Hitting Just Hard Enough to Hurt** (Dealing with the Actual comments and experiences of others who may have been damaged and/or who may have witnessed previously deniable but now hard-to-deny examples of incompetency, arrogance, emotional volatility, intimidation, favoritism, miscommunication, interpersonal blunders, disrespect, discrimination, micro-management, egocentrism, inflexibility or retribution.)
- e. Engaging His/Her Intellectual Curiosity, Competitiveness and Personal and Career Survival Instincts** (As to how his/her own problems with **Defensiveness-Arrogance vs. Openness-Humility**, have or may be sabotaging others and him/herself).

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Coaching Goals

The goals of this Coaching for Change Evaluation process are to drive the executive's leadership growth and change by:

- **Admitting Vulnerability** - "I am imperfect and flawed, need to grow and change, and am afraid and uncomfortable, particularly if and when others see it and know it because of the open nature of this change process".
- **Accepting Accountability** - "Although I always hold others to high standards of accountability, I have difficulty accepting my own accountability/responsibility for how I have had a negative impact on other people (their performance, motivation, loyalty, self-respect and dignity) and on the organization, and how I have exploited my power or my pattern of blaming others in order to avoid my own responsibility to engage in self-reflection, self-criticism and change."
- **Connecting With Underlying Emotions** - "Being out of touch with my own unacknowledged emotions, (be they fears of making mistakes, being exposed as not being perfect, disappointed, challenged for control or being unpopular), and not valuing or paying attention to the needs or emotions of others, have all hurt my ability to notice the signs when my own feelings may be beginning to get the better of me. I may then erupt into anger, defensiveness, unprofessional-unethical-disrespectful treatment of others, and intimidating behavior that shuts down collaboration, innovation, teamwork, motivation and loyalty. This damage may occur either without ever realizing my mistake, or simply too late for me to prevent or repair it."
- **Understanding the Motivating Power of Positive Feedback and the Damaging Impact that Mainly Critical Feedback Has on Motivation, Change Resistance, Ownership of Problems and Solutions, Collaboration, Innovation and High Performance.**
- **Becoming Aware of How My Personal Feelings and Needs, (Ego Function vs. Role Function), and Family Roles-Personas May Have Contributed to the Transfer of Unhealthy Family Dynamics on Those Who Work For/With Me)**
- **Creating and Implementing a Strategic Leadership Action Plan for Change**
- **Holding Oneself and Being Held Accountable by Others for Advanced and Consistent Emotional Intelligence Leadership Competency**

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