PEOPLE DYNAMIX

Coaching versus Mentoring
choosing the right tool for the job

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The outline for today's session

- What is coaching?
- What is mentoring?
- Comparisons
- Coaching basics
- A coaching activity
- Which do you need as a project manager?
- When does an Agile Coach coach?
- Q & A

PEOPLE DYNAMIX

What coaching is not …

Rather, it's about ….

directing, showing, telling or teaching …

asking questions, listening, reflecting.

solving problems for the coachee …

helping the coachee to solve the problem for themselves.

sharing your experience…

conversation that leads them to achieve greater effectiveness.

always coaching …

one tool amongst many in the project manager's toolkit.

pure dialogue ……

awareness and development.

What is mentoring?

- Sharing your own knowledge and experience
- Asking for their ideas while advising and guiding
- Working in a field you're interested in
- Mentor has capacity and interest
- Anyone can be a mentor
- As a mentor you'll teach both skills and character
- Ability to open doors, willingness, commitment confidentiality
- Credibility (age, level, status, presence, teacher, street-wise)
- It's a long-term relationship, developing the mentee professionally and personally

The differences

Coaching is…

- A process that enables learning and development to occur and therefore improvement in performance.

- The Coach *holds the process* and uses *skills* and *techniques* appropriate to the context.

- Not necessarily a subject matter expert

Mentoring is…

- Off-line help from a more experienced person to a less experienced person.

- The Mentor has *content knowledge* and *experience* which they share with the mentee for the benefit of their learning.

- "Been there, done that"

- A subject matter expert

Similarities

- Person must want to be mentored / coached and willing to do the work
- Contracting (ground rules, duration, frequency, etc)
- Agreement of goals and objectives
- Seen as a developmental journey (personal & professional)
- Coachee/mentee does the work
- Future-focused
- Solution-focused
- Aims for significant transitions in knowledge, working habits or approaches
- Develops emotional intelligence

Subtle difference in approaches

- A Mentor can:
  - be more 'directive' and provide specific advice where appropriate, offer a recipe
  - share stories and experience
  - air time = 70/30
- A Coach:
  - helps the individual find their own solution
  - doesn't need to know the answers
  - asks probing questions and listens
  - finds it easier to not know what they're talking about
  - air time = 30/70

In which areas are you qualified to be a Mentor?

The challenges of the modern PM

- Creating overdependence
- Getting overwhelmed
- Becoming disconnected

Your comfort zone

Where the magic happens

Performance   Potential
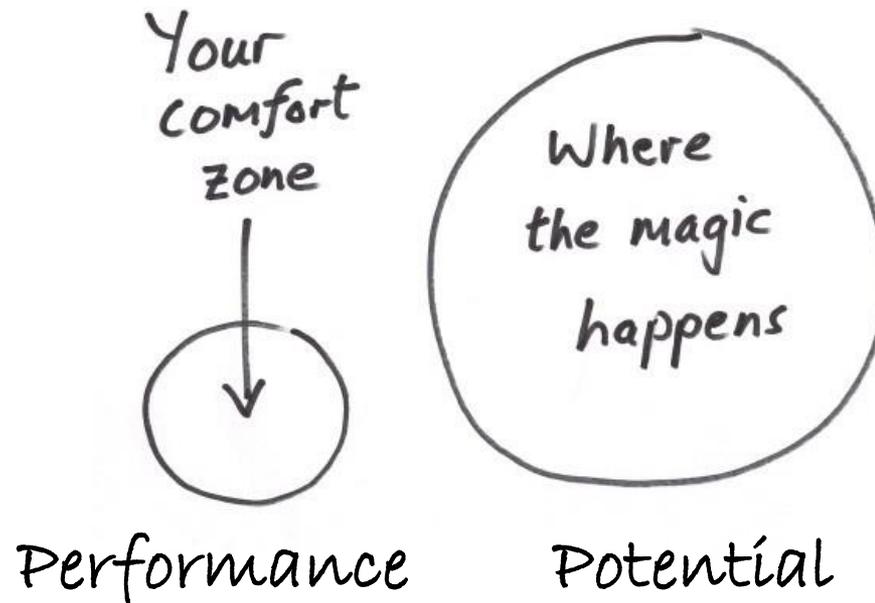
Why would a PM want to coach?

- It's simple
- It can be done in less than 10 minutes
- It can be a daily, informal act and feel natural
- It helps to develop your people
- It enhances creativity and innovation
- It generates insights to solve problems
- It takes the load off you
- It reduces dependency
- It nurtures human connection
- It makes people feel good about themselves

Coaching fundamentals

1. *Ask questions*

2. *Listen*

3. *Invite action*
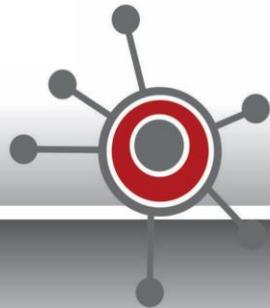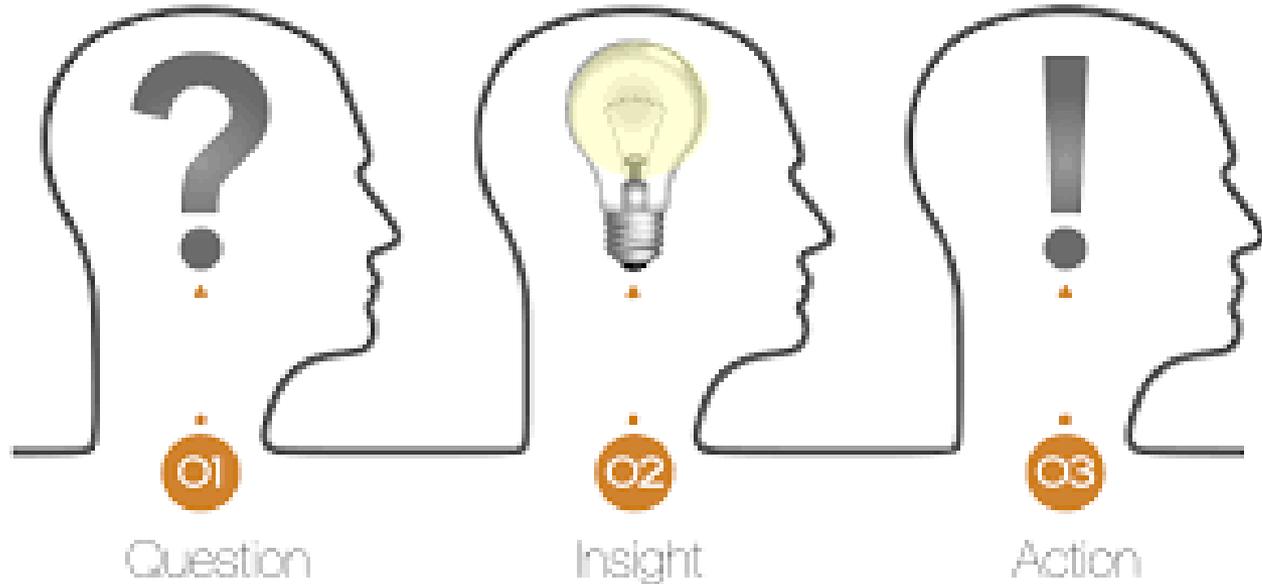
About questions
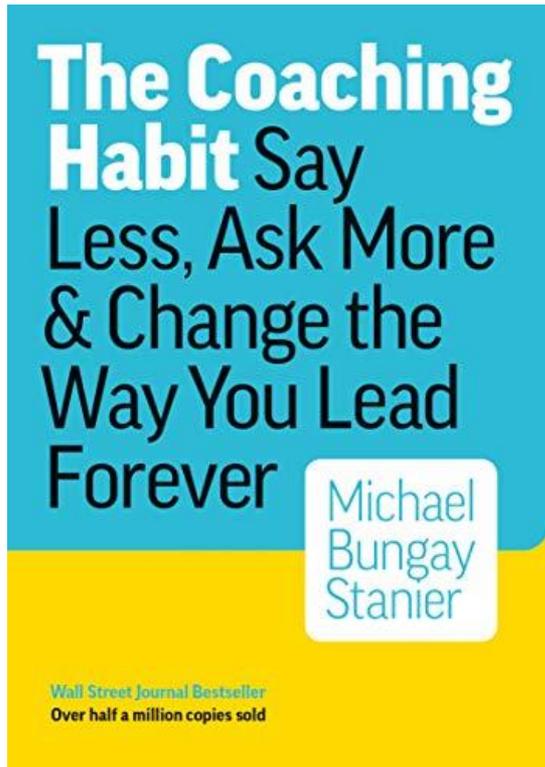
"Your advice is not as good as you think it is".

- Michael Bungay Stanier, *The Coaching Habit.*

To coach you need to spend less time telling people what to do and more time asking good questions.

Why's it so hard to ask a question?

- We've been rewarded for having answers without too much thinking.

- If we didn't answer fast enough, the teacher moved on to the next kid.

- Slow, deliberate thinking was not rewarded
- When you have the answer, it feels pretty damn good. I have control, status, adding value. We love certainty.

*How do you help people become comfortable with silence?*

7 Essential Coaching Questions

1. The kickstart question: *What's on your mind*?

2. The AWE question: *And What Else*?

3. The focus question: *What's the real challenge here for you*?

4. The foundation question: *What do you want*?

5. The lazy question: *How can I help*?

6. The strategic question: *If you're saying Yes to this, what are you saying No to*?

7. The learning question: *What was most useful for you*?

Michael Bungay Stanier, *The Coaching Habit.*

3 Levels of Listening
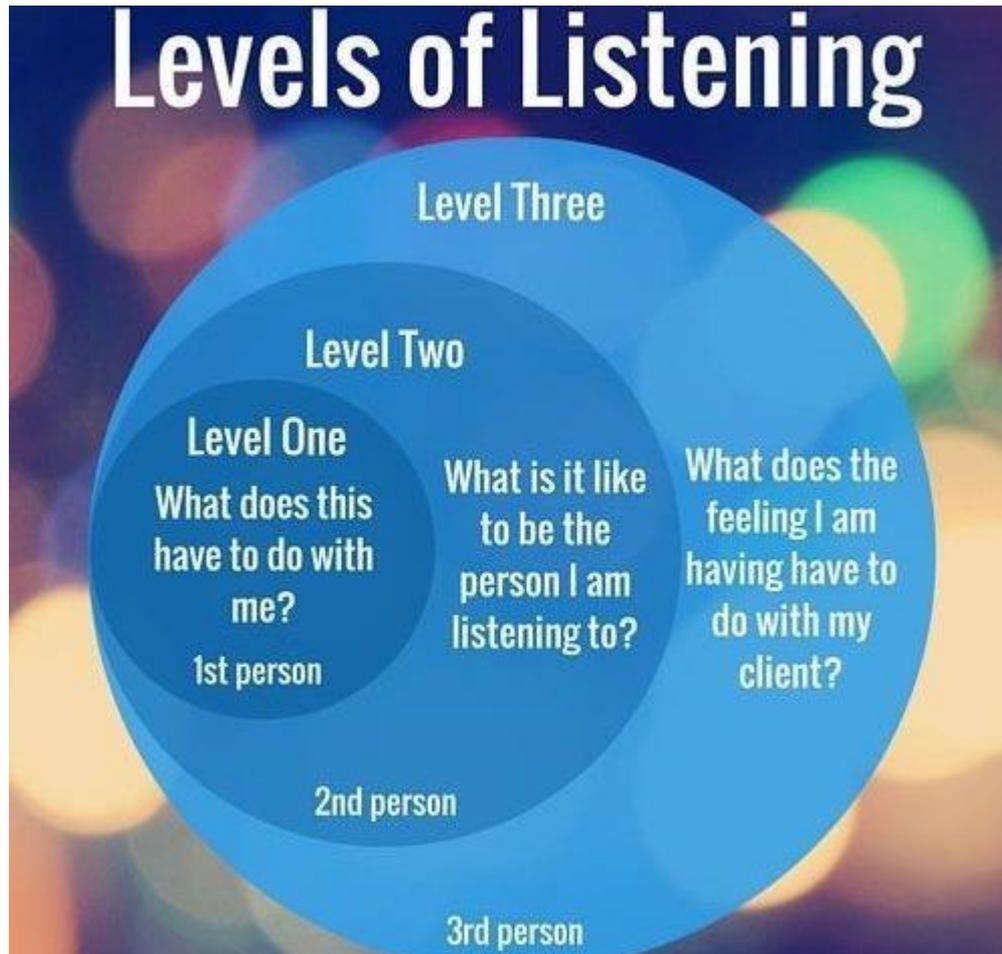
When do you coach / mentor as a PM?

- There will be times for each
- Manager as coach – sometimes asking, listening and encouraging action
- Sometimes telling, directing, managing
- Reverse mentoring is becoming popular – youngsters understand a lot more about modern world

When do you coach vs when do you mentor?

- Coaching will be more powerful:
  - if they have other experiences / expertise they can draw from, coaching would be more powerful.
  - where you can prompt them to find their own solution(s)
  - where they need a thinking partner
  - Where the person been trained in the skill in question and they know what they're supposed to do at work.

- Mentoring may be better:
  - If there are gaps in knowledge and information is missing
  - Where they don't know what is expected of them
  - Where they need to hear 'advice' from someone who's been there/done that

What does an Agile Coach do?

- Agile Coach is not a project manager, or a coach
- Agile Coach is:
  - Bulldozer of impediments
  - Servant leader – make sure that other people's highest priority needs are being served.
  - Enabler
  - Facilitator
  - Teacher
  - Mentor & coach
  - Invisible. May be doing many things but none puts them in the forefront.
  - Guardian of quality and performance

Agile Coaching Competency Framework
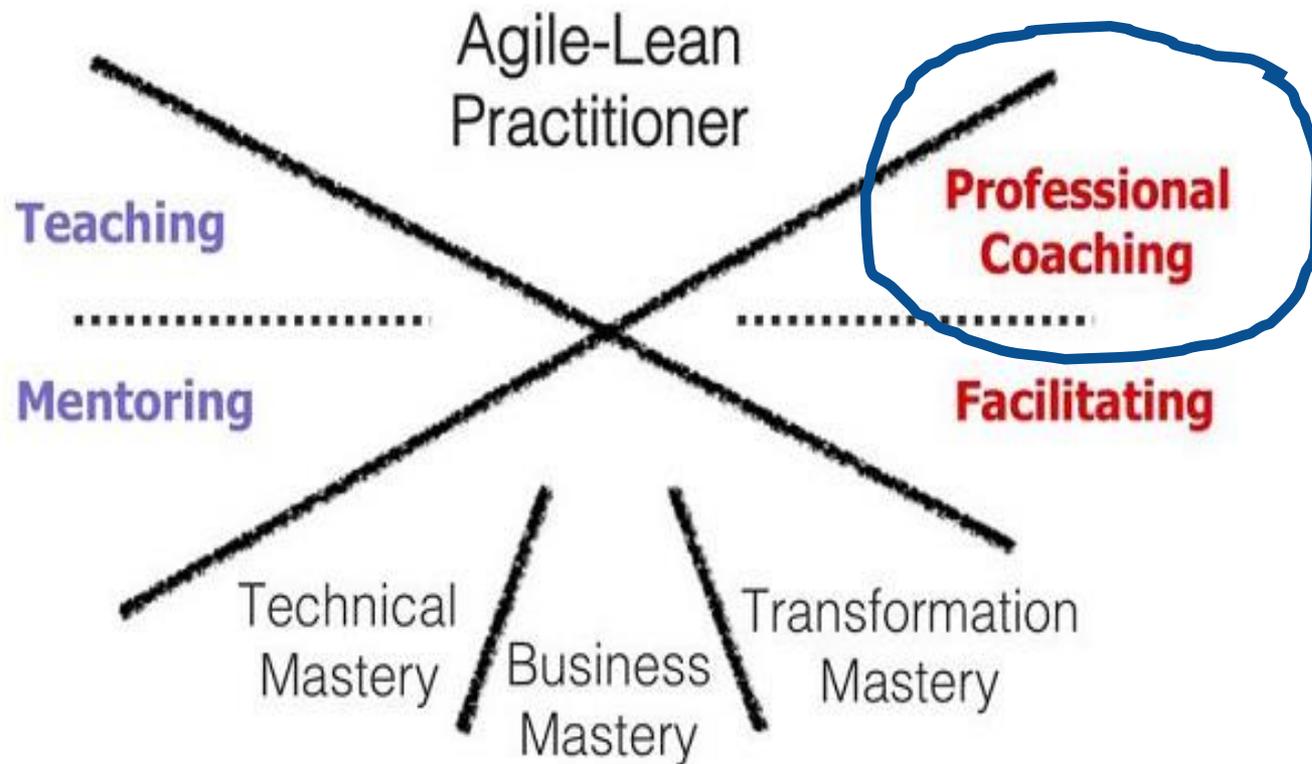
The Agile Coaching Competency Framework developed by the Agile Coaching Institute offers a roadmap for those wanting to transition to the Agile Coach role.

The Agile Coach as "Coach"

- Asks powerful questions

- Listens fully and with presence

- Manages the process

- Practices self-management (when wanting to give advice – rather help them explore).

- Follows the team's agenda not theirs

- The bulldozer who can move a problem

- Overcoming stuck points – coach the person, not the problem. They will sort out their own problem

The Agile Coach as Mentor

- In areas where you have experience and expertise
- Can still focus on their agenda
- In addition – offer advice, resources, experience, stories, models, selecting from options
- End with coaching question to check their engagement and ownership
- They're not always ready for your idea
- Need to catch yourself – do you want them to do it your way, or do they have their own way?

Agile Coach as Team Coach

- Agile teams need different things

- Be detached from outcomes – give them the space to come up with their best ideas about building the product. Focus on the team and they will do the work

- Take it to the team – you're not the best person to solve the problem

- When you think you're needed to solve something, stop! Raise your observations to the team and they will come up with the solution

- Be a mirror – reflect back to them without judgment. Simple state your observations

Core coaching skills?

- Listen like a coach:
  - Listen for resources
  - Don't be afraid of silence
- Think like a coach:
  - Everyone does their best with what they know.
  - All you have is now. How can I best serve the person in the next moment – a question, silence, feedback, a task?
- Speak like a coach:
  - Everything you say is in service of the person.
  - Adult to adult

Why would a PM want to coach?

1. The busy leader…
    1. struggling to get commitment/ownership
    2. overwhelmed
    3. the team too dependent on their direction
2. A little less advice-giving and a little more curiosity will enable them to lift their game
3. Work less hard and have more impact
4. What's the least I could teach that would make the most difference? ("be lazy")
5. Get paid more to say less

A good coach will …

- Walk with you
- Challenge you
- Encourage you
- Confront you
- Provoke you
- Affirm you
- Allow you to chart your own future
- Not give you the answers just to make it easy for you
- Not do it for you

Thanks for your time!

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