



COVER POINT

Ethics is the Key Differentiator in Coaching

By Sarita Bahl

Coaching is multi-faceted and can also be used to aid the macabre as this article shows using analogy from a Netflix series. Ethics makes all the difference.

I have just finished watching the series *Murder Mindfully* on Netflix. It is based on the best seller by Karsten Duse.

The series, a dark comedy thriller, follows Björn Diemel, a successful lawyer who represents gangsters and is struggling to balance his demanding career with his family life. To find a better work-life balance, he attends a mindfulness retreat, where he unexpectedly discovers a new way to achieve inner peace: murder.

In this series, the protagonist discovers that his newfound mindfulness techniques can be applied to more than just stress relief—they can also be used to eliminate obstacles in his life, including those who threaten his peace and happiness.

Björn delves deeper into his mindfulness practice and begins to see the world in a new light. The series is a humorous and thought-provoking exploration of the dark side of mindfulness and the lengths that one man

will go to achieve inner peace.

As coaches, we are no strangers to mindfulness. By fostering a mindful approach, coaches support clients in identifying their true goals, managing stress, and making empowered decisions.

The series made me question though – can there be a macabre side to using mindfulness? Can there be a dangerous interpretation to it? Can mindfulness be used to justify violence? The techniques used by Björn to practice mindfulness are eerily similar to what coaching espouses – deep listening, breathe in-breathe out, focus only on the present moment, non-judgemental observation, and reflective thinking.

That there can always be two sides to a coin becomes abundantly clear in this series. That brings me to the importance of ethics in our profession. When used ethically, mindfulness practices can promote compassion, understanding, and inner peace. By embedding mindfulness, coaches can create a transformative experience for clients, fostering resilience and self-awareness in any journey.



The Vestibule: Coaching's Sacred Space

By Neha Gupta



In my years of work with senior leaders, what I have become aware of is the criticality of the coaching container – the vestibule.

A space of deep calm, safety and reflection, a kind of interim space, where both the coach and coachee step in from their worlds, work together and take a step forward in the larger arena of life.

The quality and spirit of this vestibule holds the key to the depth and effectiveness of the work that happens during the coaching session. The coach designs and holds this vestibule by her presence and her communication. This invites the coachee to bring in themselves to the space where the emergence of the shape and form of the vestibule happens. An ethos of being of service, seeing as clearly as possible, sharing authentically and bravely, trusting the client's resourcefulness, and not attaching to outcome help in forming a vestibule that holds without limiting. In such a space, both the coach and coachee get an opportunity to connect to their authentic selves. There is an exchange which helps both evolve.

I see the leader - the coachee as a sage being, bringing in years of life experience, meaning-making and wisdom to this crucible, and the coach bringing in her experience as well as rootedness, these elements together allow for work to happen. The coach uses her skills and presence and the coachee uses his experience and vulnerability to let transformation happen.

The awareness of this metaphor, allows me as a

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coach, to make adjustments in the here and now - in my presence, in the way I communicate, in the way I invite the coachee into the space, so that the most effective work possible in that session can happen ■

Ditch the Notepad!

Coaching with Presence and Connection

By Sonnal Pardiwala

The stereotypical depiction of a coach scribbling away in a notebook, intensely analyzing the client, is far from the reality of transformative coaching. Such habits can create an unintended divide, making the client feel scrutinized rather than supported.

As a coach, I never use a notepad or pen during sessions—neither in person nor online.

Why?

Because the simple act of not taking notes allows me to be fully present with my clients, meeting them with undivided attention and an open stance.

A notepad, while seemingly harmless, can introduce a subtle imbalance in the dynamic. It may make the client feel like a passive subject being **studied or judged**. This perceived inequality can inhibit vulnerability, causing clients to hold back the very thoughts and feelings they need to explore most deeply.

Instead, I focus entirely on my client's verbal and non-verbal cues, letting them know with my full attention that they are the most important person in the room in that moment. This connection fosters safety, trust,

and authenticity. My clients feel seen, heard, and valued—not analyzed.

How do I remember the important details, you ask? Simple: I take the time after every session to write a comprehensive summary. This practice allows me to document key insights and action points without compromising the flow or intimacy of the session itself. These session summaries aren't just useful for me; they've become a cherished resource for my clients. Many tell me, *"Your summaries bring your voice back to me when I need it most."*

This approach aligns with insights shared by Marcia Reynolds, PsyD, MCC, who highlights how note-taking can distract from vital non-verbal nuances.

"My clients feel seen, heard and valued – not analyzed"

True coaching requires no props or pretense. It's about showing up as your whole self, holding space with empathy and humanity, and inviting the client to do the same. ■



Explore the Strength of Diversity

By Nirali Bhukhanwala

A recent article published by the Economic Times showcases a simply worded email by a GEN-Z employee for annual leave. It reads:

'Hi Siddharth, I will be on leave on 8th nov 2024. Bye'

While this has gone viral in the digital landscape, it brings into focus the intergenerational complexities of modern work life:

- Millennials and Gen Zs like to have flexibility at work whereas Gen X and Boomers enjoy a structured approach to work.
- Millennials and Gen Zs like to have rapid career growth and upskilling opportunities.
- Gen X and Boomers prefer more formal communication whereas Millennials and Gen Zs are more comfortable with an informal tone.

But then Millennials are different from the Gen Zs too. As a young organization of India, what are your options? -- Leverage strength in diversity and get intergenerational

teams to work as one!

How? Here are some tools and approaches:

1. Practice coaching at all levels – individual, group and leadership – can foster openness and unlock the potential of entire workforce
2. Build a culture of respect and inclusion to reduce biases and stereotypes
3. Embrace clear communication and bridge generational divides
4. Promote cross-generational mentorship
5. Adapt your leadership style to factor in different generations
6. Test and learn approach and relook into managerial styles that are not working
7. Have shared goals and values

To conclude, a multi-generational organization can go a long way by tapping into the strengths of each generation. ■

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THOUGHT

"Shift from 'managing' to 'coaching' people in order to cultivate a coaching culture for growth. Managers focus on tasks and results, while coaches focus on development and potential. In a coaching culture, leaders ask more questions than give answers. They empower their teams to think critically and grow so that growth becomes a shared journey."

- John C. Maxwell

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