

October Musings - Exercising the Coach Within

“The coach within? I’m no coach” I hear you say! “I don’t run up and down sidelines roaring instructions at a team!”

What exactly came to your mind when you read the word *Coach* in the title above? Did you think AFL, luxury buses or Cinderella by any stretch of the imagination? Now supposing you instantly thought footy or sport of some description, let’s hold that thought while we checkout 3 responses to a simple question below:

When asked “What are you doing?” the first AFL team player replied, “forward crumbing”; the second answered, “20 more than I did yesterday”; while the third said, “I’m getting ready to put us in next year’s top 8”.

Those varied responses give us some clues as to how the mind works in a myriad of ways and how differently we all process information. They highlight how some of us are focused on tasks, others on details, yet others on the big picture. How we think relates directly to how we behave, which directly impacts our results.

Do you give much thought to how you think, how you communicate or what your personal behavioural style is (whether you are Dominant, Influencing, Stable or Conscientious) and how it affects those around you?

How would *you* have answered that same question if asked of you and by the same token, what kind of results are you getting in your life? Are you happy with where you are at, and what’s all this got to do with the word ‘coach’ anyway?

Well, if we look at the original definition of a coach being a horse-drawn carriage, it suggests a vehicle that takes us on a journey from where we are now to where we want to go. So the question is this, what vehicle is currently taking you on the journey through your life, towards goal posts, destinations and results?

The answer is most definitely YOU. In the same way that you catch a taxi and tell the driver where you wish to go to, so too are you deciding the course of your life journey on a moment-to-moment basis, telling yourself where to go, either consciously or subconsciously. Like it or not, you are a leader! Leadership starts from within.

The good news is that you are unique and perfectly equipped with an infinite number of resources to help you on your journey down roads that may be filled with potholes, cracks or dangerous bends and steep slopes, not to mention blind alleys!

Coaching can facilitate you on a journey of self-awareness in which you begin to live the well-known dictum of the ancient Greek philosophers, "Know thyself".

Once you begin to understand yourself and those around you better, you'll come to agree with the famous NLP* presupposition that the element in a system with the most flexibility is the greatest catalyst for change, i.e. that person has the best chance of achieving what they want.

Seek therefore to exercise and flex the coach within. It's ready and waiting. To get the ball rolling, grab a piece of paper, ask yourself the following questions and see what you come up with:

1. What should I START doing?
2. What should I do LESS of?
3. What should I STOP doing?
4. What should I CONTINUE doing?
5. What should I do MORE of?

Now ask 3 people in your network the same questions and before long you'll have gathered some valuable nuggets and a bit of a roadmap for you to follow.

As for falling into potholes and ending up down blind alleys, accept that its par for the course (call it course correction, feedback or that other 'F' word...failure). At least it signals progress and movement towards your destination. Stand still in the middle of the road and you're likely to get run over by a truck!

Till next month

Grab a whistle and get cracking!

* Neuro Linguistic Programming (NLP), a form of applied psychology, is a widely applied modality used by coaches to effect personal change.