SURPRISE!
Coaching leaders is DIFFERENT than coaching teams

Some people cross your path and change your whole direction.

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Introduction
Bob Galen

- Independent Agile Coach (CEC) at RGCG, LLC
- Principle Agile Evangelist at Velocity Partners

- Somewhere ‘north’ of 30 years overall experience 😊
- Wide variety of technical stacks and business domains
- Developer first, then Project Management / Leadership, then Testing
- Senior/Executive software development leadership for 20+ years
- Practicing formal agility since 2000
- XP, Lean, Scrum, and Kanban experience
- From Cary, North Carolina

Bias Disclaimer:
Agile is THE BEST Methodology for Software Development…
However, NOT a Silver Bullet!
Introduction
Coach: A Broad Definition

- When I say coach, I’m implying, you could be in one of these roles:
  - ScrumMaster
  - Formal Coach
  - Manager / Team Leader
  - Senior Leader
  - CxO
  - Project Manager

- Virtually anyone who is guiding an Agile Transformation…
Introduction

Agenda

- 10 minutes:
  - gather in pairs and write down Leadership coaching anti-patterns. What NOT to do...Collect & Review

- 10 minutes:
  - gather in pairs and write down Leadership coaching patterns. Things that HAVE WORKED for you...Collect & Review

- 25 minutes:
  - I’ll share some patterns that have worked for me.

- 20 minutes:
  - Leadership coaching DOJO

- 10 minutes:
  - Debrief - Close

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Vet your clients

- Assess
  - Organizational readiness
  - Leadership readiness
  - Team readiness

- Coaching style
- Experience & domain connection
- Are they “serious”?

“It’s just lunch…”
Meet them where they are

- Try not to coach too “far away” from their current context

- Empathy for the current landscape
  - Agile transformation, culture, skills, leadership dynamics, business dynamics

- Give them the “Truth” they can “Handle”
No Baggage!

- Leave behind your own baggage
  - The more travelled, the harder it is
  - It will influence your behavior and body language

- No marginalization of management or leadership

- Stop referencing Dilbert
  - Stop stereotyping
  - All "managers" are not the same
  - Be patient!
Experience counts

- And not your coaching experience. It’s YOUR leadership resume that counts
  - Acknowledge it, leverage it, share it
  - Horse whisperer
  - Storyteller

- Don’t fake it; as in you’re the CEO of a 5-person agile coaching firm

- If you don’t have it, get a “partner” to help
Be crisp with your language

- Velocity, Throughput
- Failure
- Agile
- Self-directed
- Servant Leader.
- Trust, buy Verify
- That’s not “agile”
- Testing
- Developer vs. Tester vs Business Analyst
- SAFe, DAD, Less, etc.
- Scrum, XP, Kanban, etc.

- Results
- Transparency
- Engagement
- Partnership
- Pivot
- Autonomy
- Team health
- Trust
- Predictability
- Quality
- Team member
- Continuous improvement
Don’t play games

- Be careful with the number of:
  - Games
  - Simulations
  - Workshops
  - Activities
  you try with executives.

- Instead, honor their time and share:
  - Case studies
  - Short video’s
  - Expert testimony
  With them…
Walk your talk

- Agile principles
- Be transparent
- Be courageous
- Take risks
- Tell truth
- Serve your client

Full-time (embedded) vs. part-time coaching
- Don’t follow the $$$
Try not to over-coach
- Coaching stance
- 5-why’s
- Powerful questions

Listen deeply
- Emotional Intelligence
- Empathy

Partner more; establish skin in the game
Have Models…
For example:

- Goleman – EQ
- Kotter – 8-steps of Change
- Crucial Conversations
- Strengths Finders
- Lencioni – 5 Dysfunctions of a Team
- Pink – Drive
- Joiner – Leadership Agility
- Change J-curve
- Collins – Good to Great
- Cain – Quiet (introverts)
- 9 Coaching Roles, Coaching Stance
- Shu-Ha-Ri or Dreyfus (skill acquisition & maturity)
I don’t have the “energy” for it…

http://rgalen.com/agile-training-news/2016/2/20/is-it-worth-the-energy
Final coaching points…
Agile Coaching
Context & Tactics

- Coaching contexts
  - What conversations have you had before?
  - Maturity – Shu-Ha-Ri?
  - Culture and norms
  - Role & Responsibilities
  - Business implications
  - Safety implications
  - Risk implications
  - Your skill & comfort zone
  - Self awareness
  - Coaching relationship

- Coaching tactics
  - Mentor
  - Leadership Coaching Circles
  - Storytelling
  - Sounding Board
  - Teacher

- Push vs. Pull;
  - Be ready to be asked
  - Be approachable
  - Provide value
## 9 Coaching Roles

**Derby & Gray**, (Douglas Champion, Davie Kiel, and Jean McLendon)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Counsellor</td>
<td>&quot;You do it. I will be your sounding board.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Facilitator</td>
<td>&quot;You do it, I will attend to the process.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflective Observer</td>
<td>&quot;You do it; I will watch and tell you what I see and hear.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach</td>
<td>&quot;You did well, you can add this next time.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teacher</td>
<td>&quot;Here are some principles you can use to solve problems of this type.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Technical Advisor</td>
<td>&quot;I will answer your questions as you go along.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partner</td>
<td>&quot;We will do it together and learn from each other.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modeller</td>
<td>&quot;I will do it; you watch so you can learn from me.&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hands-on Expert</td>
<td>&quot;I will do it for you; I will tell you what to do.&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Shu Ha Ri

Aikido – first learn, then detach, finally transcend

- Shu
  - Novice or beginner; narrowly following given practices

- Ha
  - Journeyman; following, but extending, perfecting, occasionally breaking the rules
  - Mentoring in specific strength areas

- Ri
  - Expert; perfecting to creating your own practices
  - Coaching; mentoring; ‘Sticky’ practices
Dreyfus Model of Skill Acquisition

- 5 stage model for skills acquisition:
  1. Novice – rigid adherence
  2. Advanced Beginner – limited situational perception
  3. Competent – some perception of actions in relation to goals
  4. Proficient – holistic view of situation; prioritizes importance of aspects
  5. Expert – transcends reliance on rules; intuitive grasp of situations based on deep understanding
  6. New stage – Innovation

While a three phase model is simple, you could easily replace it with a Dreyfus derived model...
In agile contexts, leadership feedback is essential
- Sprint & Release reviews
- 1:1 meetings
- Real-time opportunities

I have a view that pareto rules here in that only 20% of leaders are willing to give 80% of the feedback

And it needs to be honest…
The “One Thing”

When it comes to risky, controversial, and emotional conversations, skilled people find a way to get all relevant information out into the open.

That’s it. At the core of every successful conversation lies the free flow of relevant information. People openly and honestly express their opinions, share their feelings, and articulate their theories.

They willingly and capably share their views, even when their ideas are controversial or unpopular.

-- Crucial Conversations: Patterson, Grenny, McMillan, Switzler
Two-Thirds of Managers Are Uncomfortable Communicating with Employees

https://hbr.org/2016/03/two-thirds-of-managers-are-uncomfortable-communicating-with-employees
Workshop Dynamics

- You’ve been given a hand-out with ~20 coaching scenarios
- Break into groups of 3 (Triads – Coaching Dojo)
  - Coachee, Coach, Observer
- Pick 2 coaching scenarios OR create your own
- Adjust coachee roles as necessary
- Explore coaching strategy and / or conversation(s)
- Capture notes on the card
- Role play, Have FUN with it!
We don't meet people by accident. People are put in our path for various reasons, but it all comes down to helping each other learn and grow.

Leeza Donatella
Workshop Dynamics

- Let’s debrief some of the scenarios…care to share?
- Pick another 2…rinse & repeat

At the end…

- What are some useful strategies you heard?
- Any useful patterns you observed?
- How is “coaching up” different?
I’ll collect the results and share with You via Twitter and my website mailing list

Thank you!
Contact Info

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Podcast on all things ‘agile’ - http://www.meta-
cast.com/
Backup
References

- 9 Coaching Roles link: http://www.growingagile.co.za/2016/03/the-9-coaching-roles/
- HBR article: https://hbr.org/2016/03/two-thirds-of-managers-are-uncomfortable-communicating-with-employees
They are often:
- Truly open-ended
- Not asked with a “correct” answer in mind
- Invite introspection
- Reveal additional solutions
- Almost always lead to greater creativity and insight
- Send people into a realm of discovery

The are not:
- Leading
- Judgmental
- Imply solutions
- Closed
- Tricks
Powerful Questions

- What else?
- What is important about that?
- What would a simpler way look like?
- What would an experiment look like?
- What’s already working that you can build on?
- How does it look to you?
- What is stopping you?
- In the bigger scheme of things, how important is this?
- What is the lesson from that?
- When is it time for action?
- What part is not yet clear?
- Whose opinion matters on this topic?

- What have you tried so far?
- What is stopping you?
- What’s the worst part for you?
- What is your prediction?
- If you got it, what would you have?
- In the beginning, how did you want it to be?
- What other angles can you think of?
- How do you really want it to be?
- What’s the worst/best that could happen?
- Which part is confusing, surprising, annoying, etc.?
- What is at risk?
- What might “help” look like?
“Kotters Eight Steps of Change”

1. Increase Urgency
2. Build the Guiding Team
3. Get the Right Vision
4. Communicate for Buy-in
5. Empower Action
6. Create Short-term Wins
7. Don’t Let Up
8. Make it Stick

Engaging and enabling the whole organization

Implementing and sustaining change