

CONFLICT SOLUTIONS

Expert Advice to Resolve Workplace Discord

Volume 8, Issue 6

Professional Coaching for Success

Kathleen Spike, MCC, CPCC

Although coaching is embedded in the fabric of the US workplace to the tune of several billion dollars a year, there is still some mystery surrounding how and why it works. Why does coaching receive such rave reviews and, so often, such unique and excellent results for clients, workplaces, and sponsoring organizations?

To answer these questions, consider the role that coaching plays in athletics. During the 1994 Atlanta Olympics, I was gifted front-row seats for all events. Track and Field became my favorite sport, and the athletes' talent, focus, and energy were palpable. I also saw that the coaches, standing on the sidelines, acted as safe containers and catalysts, holding the athletes' visions, dreams, and courage as they gave Herculean effort during breakthrough performances. In other words, I perceived the coaches' deep connections to their athletes' inner workings. I particularly remember Michael Johnson, the man with the golden shoes, who won the 400-meter race. After Johnson burst across the finish line to win gold, and before throwing his golden shoes into the crowd, he engulfed his coach with the hug of a lifetime, like there was no other person in the world. As a recent graduate of the Coaches Training Institute in San Francisco, witnessing this event crystalized that all "athletes" need coaches because coaches are essential for success.

Professional coaching was a new concept at the time, and the process had emerged because leaders, executives, and business owners—all of whom seek to cross their own personal Olympic finish line and achieve gold in both work and life—get the same benefits from coaching that athletes do. I vowed to be there as their coach, on the sidelines, supporting them through their best successes. Nearly 30 years later, workplace coaching is commonplace and thousands of professionals provide this service.

In 2022, I am still convinced that the coach's tireless support is what delivers results. Research shows that coaching benefits all areas of life and work. It advances emotional intelligence and agility, builds flexibility and reliability, develops trust and abilities, helps break down assumptions, and builds constructive conflict communication.

The International Coaching Federation (ICF), which governs and certifies coaches in 44 countries, has enhanced the industry by providing global governance. ICF ethics require that certified coaches follow standards of practice. Additionally, clients and organizational

(continued)





(continued)

sponsors verify their coach's credentials and learn how coaching works. This standardization both protects the public and educates people about coaching.

Maintaining confidentiality and providing a safe space for clients are fundamental to a coach's success. Coaching clients' organizational sponsors understand this agreement and honor employees' right to privacy with their coach. During the startup phase of an engagement, the coach, client, and sponsor can have an open dialogue about the vision and purpose of the coaching, and they can also establish outcomes and metrics for success. Once coaching begins, however, confidentiality comes into play. If the sponsor seeks information from the coach, it is important for the client to be aware and weigh in on what—if anything—the coach can share. This is because clients have to trust their coaches and be assured of confidentiality in order for coaching to be effective.

Confidentiality is the coach's core promise. This commitment helps the client and coach develop trust. It also allows clients the freedom to explore sensitive and challenging topics. During a coaching session, the individual can share concerns that would often be too risky to discuss with HR representatives, colleagues, or even friends and family members. The confidentiality of coaching generates a space for breakthrough learning that doesn't exist in other arenas. Because the workplace can involve fears, interpersonal conflicts, hurdles, and dreams; because there will be breakdowns and breakthroughs in confidence; and because there will be a learning curve as employees develop new people skills, confidentiality must be sacrosanct.

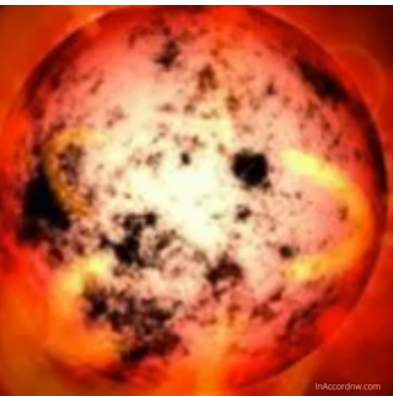
Coaches are fervently focused on discovering and holding their clients' deepest hopes or agendas. They also consider their clients' personal and professional reasons for seeking coaching. Coaches often ask questions such as "Is this your agenda?" or "Are we on the right topic for you? How about the sponsor?" Things can change quickly in coaching because agendas frequently morph, often as a result of answering these questions. Therefore, flexibility is essential for both the coach and client. Even sponsors can make requests for coaching to take on a new topic or skill to facilitate workplace success.

To coach holistically, a coach must know from the start the client's health status, sleep patterns, emotional stamina, and any medical challenges the client is willing to share. If clients function poorly, either physically or personally, this is likely to adversely affect their professional life. Coaching the client to notice and choose better self-care might be the first step to strengthening their work performance.

(continued)

Perspective:

Low mass red dwarf stars can burn for 10 trillion years.



READY TO SOLVE YOUR
WORKPLACE DILEMMAS!

Meet the In-Accord Team!

IN  ACCORD

Fixing Interpersonal Conflict at Work



(continued)

Another coaching belief and success strategy is to perceive the client as being full of possibilities, strengths, and capabilities—in other words, seeing the whole person. Furthermore, coaches ask their clients to be fearless during their sessions, asking for everything they need and challenging the coach on any topic, word, or coaching moment.

Coaches listen deeply to determine where their clients might be blocking talent, strengths, or confidence. Coaching also helps clients realize they have the courage to dig deep, take on more professional responsibilities and challenges, and get as much out of the coaching process as possible.

When I work with my clients, I want them to get every ounce of value from the experience. Sometimes, part of the journey involves learning that it is okay for

smart, seasoned professionals to accept support and input from others. If clients embrace the process and allow coaching to work its magic, they, too, can cross the finish line and feel like they have achieved their own Olympic win.

TIPS

FOR CONFLICT RESOLUTION IN
THE WORKPLACE

CLICK HERE!

IN  ACCORD
Fixing Interpersonal Conflict at Work

