



LEADERSHIP, COACHING, AND NOBLE INTENTION

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Leaders who coach effectively understand that it is not about them; it's all about the other person.

Great coaching starts with self-sacrifice. The great coach chooses to temporarily subordinate his or her interests, needs, wants, and aspirations and, instead, directs all the attention, space, and energy to another person in order to advance this person's agenda.

This is particularly difficult in Western cultures that are deeply invested in self-advancement, self-promotion, self-determination, and self-everything. The great coach is skilled at shifting the focus entirely to the other person.

At Bluepoint Leadership, we call this having "noble intention." This may sound simple enough, but in reality, we can have many motives for coaching someone. A leader will almost certainly be driven by concerns about productivity, employee engagement, and so on. He or she might also have specific frustrations with a team member that he or she seeks to address through coaching or organizational needs he or she hopes to meet by improving that person's performance.

Some coaches may be seeking acknowledgment for being helpful, insightful, and caring. Others may simply enjoy the one-on-one engagement and the challenge of this role. Many professional coaches do what they do because they get great personal satisfaction from knowing that their work is making an indelible, constructive mark on people. All these are honorable motives, but the great coach is prepared to put all these aside if the coaching is to be truly powerful.

The primary motive of leaders who have mastered coaching is only this: to help other people unlock their abilities, triumph over their challenges, find their own solutions, and pursue their aspirations. True coaching is focused solely on the other person. Even though coaches need to freely subordinate their motives for coaching an individual, they need to be committed to this work at a deeply personal level.

The burning desire to be a positive, creative force in the lives of others is an essential requirement for being a good coach. Coaching is a rewarding but often difficult and arduous journey. Without this clear desire to make a real difference, that journey will be devoid of meaning.

Great coaches not only possess the will to coach but also have no doubt about their motives. They are clear that their reason for coaching is, above all, to catalyze growth and development in others. This is the oil that fires their internal furnace—it's what fuels their power to be influential. It's easy to spot these coaches. Their noble intention is unmistakable.

"What nobility of feeling! To sacrifice your own pleasure to preserve the comfort of others! It is a thing, I confess, that would never occur to me."—Susanna Clarke, *Jonathan Strange and Mr. Norrell*.



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