


EBOOK

GREAT LEADERS DON'T TELL  
YOU WHAT TO DO, THEY  
DEVELOP YOUR CAPABILITIES.

Hard to believe, but some managers don't understand how critical coaching is for development, growth, and a proactive work environment. When people get the coaching they need, they perform better. In fact, the ability to provide day-to-day coaching is one of the most important qualities of a great manager.





Coaching is an essential skill that allows managers to build trust, improve workplace positivity, and boost employee work passion.




## Regular communication using coaching conversations is essential.

In fact, the single most important managerial competency that separates highly effective managers from average ones is coaching.

When leaders coach their people, it has significant positive effects on employee development, performance, and productivity.

*(Source: Harvard Business Review, 2015)*

**73%** of organizations  
recognize coaching  
as a necessary  
leadership capacity.

A simple line-art icon of a desk and an office chair. The desk is on the left with three horizontal drawers. The chair is on the right, facing the desk.



## **Yet only 5 percent claim to have trained their managers in coaching behaviors.**

And in a study of 100 organizations, respondents said that getting their managers to be more coach-like was their number-one concern.

*(Study conducted by Arnott and Sparrow [2004] with 1,153 organizations and The Ken Blanchard Companies of 100 organizations)*

Nearly 50% of managers spend less than  
**10 percent** of their time coaching  
others, when that percentage  
should be much higher.

*(Source: 2014 study by the Conference Board)*

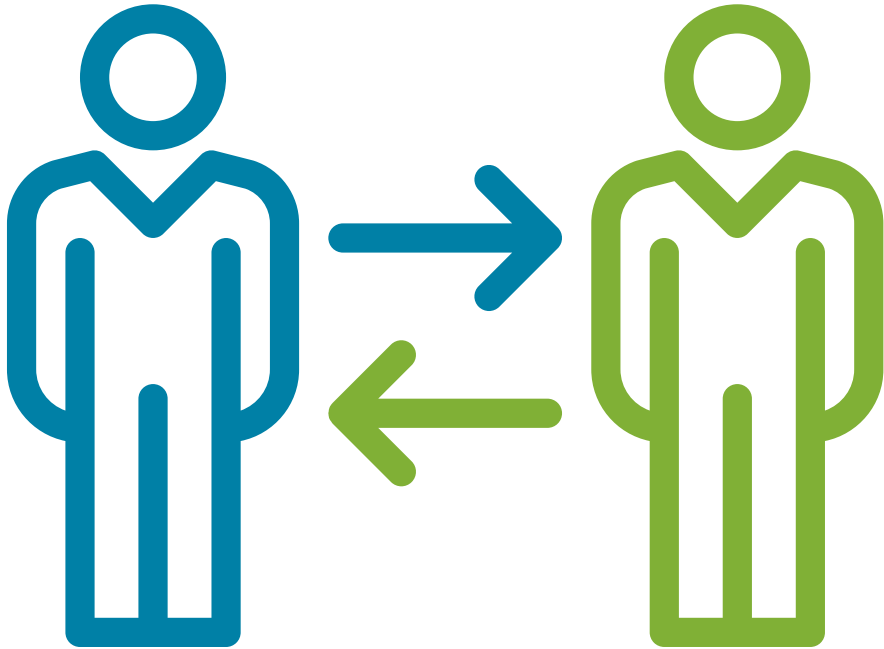


## Leaders who understand how to coach have people who are more likely to

1. Have HIGH levels of trust
2. Have positive feelings about their job and the organization
3. Remain with the organization
4. Create positive buzz about the organization
5. Expend discretionary effort
6. Behave in ways that support the organization







Coaching is a deliberate process using focused conversations to create an environment that results in accelerated performance and development.

When training managers to be more coach-like, organizations should consider four essential skills that are critical for activating a four-phased coaching process.

# FOUR KEY COACHING SKILLS

Coaching takes place through conversations. Through our research we've found that there are four essential skills managers use to help them interact with their people more effectively. These skills promote clarity and a positive sense of regard for the individual and are both people and results oriented.

- Listen to Learn
- Inquire for Insight
- Tell *Your* Truth
- Express Confidence



# Listen to Learn

Listening is one of the most important skills any manager can have, regardless of tenure. It makes direct reports feel valued and heard, and it builds trust. Good listeners avoid offering advice (unless it's solicited) and they don't derail the conversation by offering up a time when they were in the same situation (again, unless it's solicited). They know it's important to be fully present so they don't multitask during a conversation. They focus on what the other person is saying and respond in ways that make others feel heard and valued. In any interaction, it's important to

- Listen with the intent of understanding the other person
- Set aside distractions
- Focus on the person and give your undivided attention



# Inquire for Insight

Great managers draw their people out. They ask questions that allow their people to share insights and ideas that can benefit projects, tasks, and the team in general. And it helps the manager to understand the underlying motivations in regard to what drives behavior. When inquiring for insight, focus on the future rather than the past and avoid placing blame. It's also important for managers to

- Ask open-ended questions
- Emphasize what and how rather than why
- Encourage the direct report, once the conversation comes to an end, to recap in order to check for understanding





# Tell *Your* Truth

Because the goal is to create purposeful action through clarity, managers must learn that telling their truth is an opportunity to shift gears and give feedback when needed to accomplish the goal. Being truthful builds trust and authenticity and allows managers to share information that is needed to help move the person forward. Many managers are afraid of being honest for fear of hurting others' feelings, when in fact a truthful exchange can empower others. When telling their truth, managers need to

- Be brave, honest, and respectful
- Be open to other perspectives
- Avoid blame or judgment while they focus on forward movement



# Express Confidence

When managers express confidence in their direct reports, it builds the direct reports' self-assurance and enthusiasm. In conversations with others, it's important for managers to

- Highlight relevant qualities or skills
- Cite previous successes
- Offer support as needed



# THE COACHING PROCESS

An effective coach uses a variety of skills that, depending on the situation, can be used to different degrees and often simultaneously in order to match the needs of the person being coached. The four skills in the coaching process are

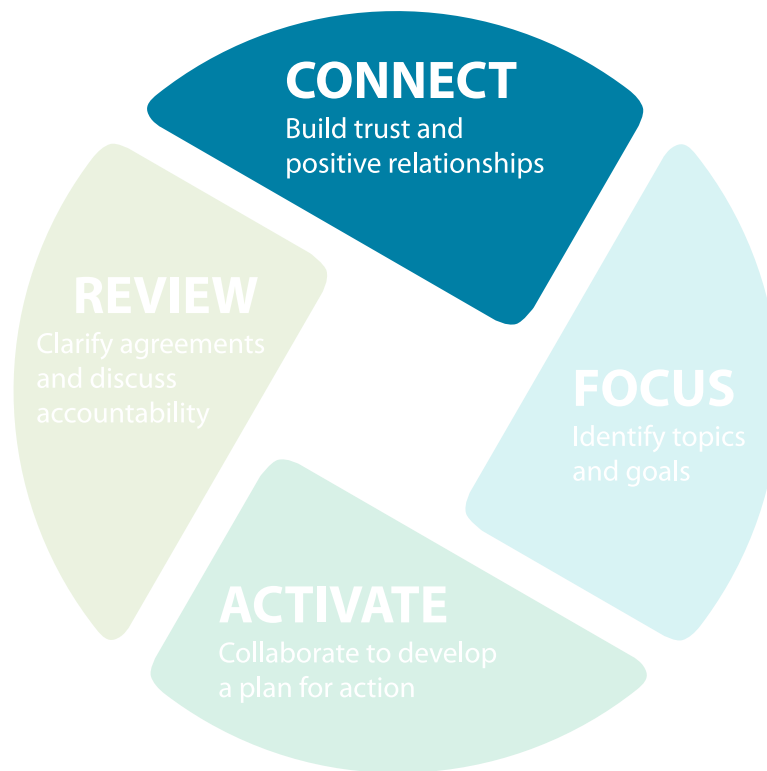
- Connecting
- Focusing
- Activating
- Reviewing



# Connecting

Connecting helps managers build trust and rapport with their people. It can be as simple as asking questions that demonstrate attentiveness and interest. Key qualities are to

- Be open
- Get to know your people
- Have a real desire to share about yourself
- Be present when connecting with others in order to make them feel cared for





# Focusing

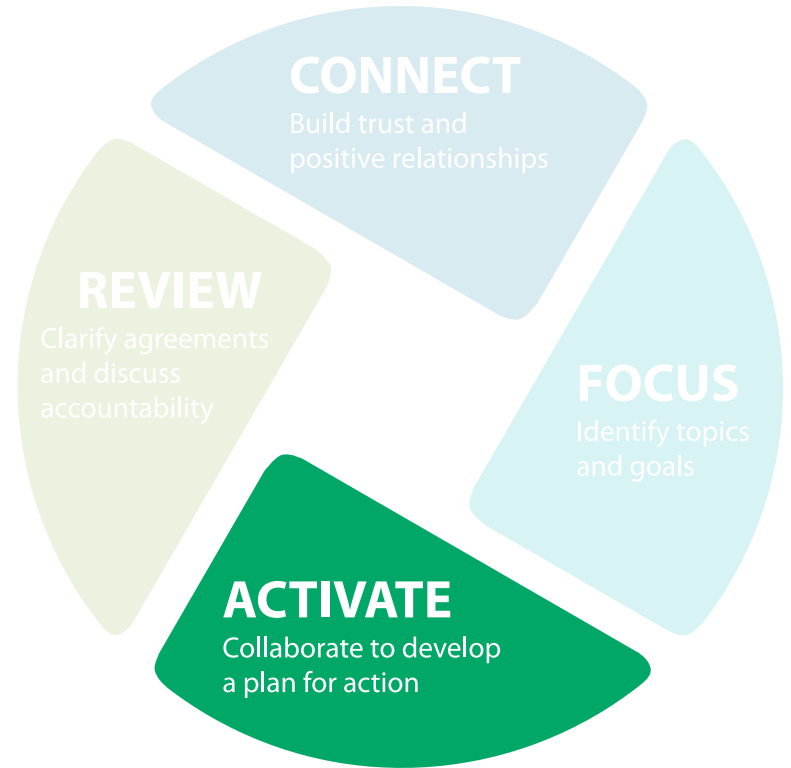
Focusing allows the manager to identify topics and skills to be discussed. By focusing, the manager is attentive and probes to establish the most important focus for the direct report. Focusing can and should take up to 50 percent of the coaching conversation.



# Activating

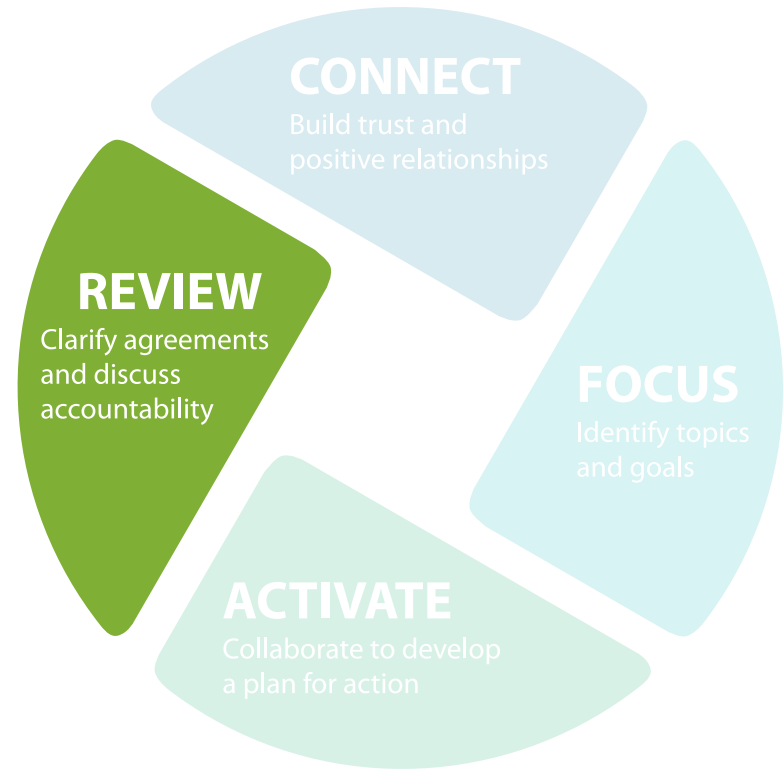
Activating allows the manager and direct report to collaborate to develop a plan of action. Coaching without intentional action is simply a conversation. Activating includes

- Determining specific actions that are suited to the project or goal being discussed
- Taking the time to think, observe from others, and determine strategy and tactics
- Asking things like “What will you do if you encounter an obstacle?” or “How will you move forward if the person you are counting on doesn’t cooperate?”



# Reviewing

Reviewing allows the manager to clarify agreements and discuss accountability. It also ensures that both parties agree on what the outcomes should be. However, this is one area in which the person who is accountable for the actions should take the lead and do the review. It empowers the person to state what they are going to do rather than being told by the manager what they will do and increases the probability for follow through.



To learn more about Coaching Essentials visit:

**[www.kenblanchard.com/coachingessentials](http://www.kenblanchard.com/coachingessentials)**

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