

CONTRIBUTIONS

Leadership Coaching

For around 12 months, I've been liaising with clients, contacts and academic colleagues in the coaching space to respond to NGO CEOs' identified increasing need for a practical forum in which to discuss and learn from the experiences of their particular role.

Founded on the commitment of a number of such CEOs, I am now facilitating an Auckland-based Action Learning Group. The ALG provides a reflective and confidential space where the unique and priority concerns of the NGO CEO role can be shared. Reflecting upon and discussing "live" issues, participants broaden and deepen their options to engage with strategic and other sector-related challenges.

In continuing to network and explore cost-effective development options for current and aspiring NGO leaders, I acknowledge the support, in particular, of: [Andrew Bell](#) (ED, Fred Hollows Foundation), [Prof Stuart Carr](#) (Dir, Profnl Trng, Massey Univ), [Trish Hall](#) (Dir, Thought Partners), [Scott Miller](#) (formerly of Charities Services, now CEO Volunteering NZ), [Barbara Myers](#) (Snr Lect, AUT).

LEARNING POINTS

Leadership Coaching

When I first started coaching I was unsure how to define my coaching model succinctly. I emphasised that my approach was informed by psychological theory. However, I noticed that people related more easily to [Sir John Whitmore's GROW model](#) (Goals, current Reality, Options, Wrap up/What next). Whilst I believe that GROW is the easiest frame for a coaching interaction (despite subsequent and more complicated acronyms), it works best with some further mylenation.

[Tony Grant](#) emphasises the importance of Review and Evaluation (= REGROW). [Eric de Haan](#) points to the importance of the relationship. [Carmelina Lawton-Smith](#) found that coachees engage best when coaching provides a supportive thinking space for them to enhance their self-belief, as well as learn about themselves, others, and their personal strategies.

Learning Point? Be careful not to minimise the complexities of coaching. With this in mind, I say that my model involves change, commitment and:

1. A "Fit" Meeting – Coachee (& Sponsor if possible). Clarify work context, parameters (expectations, goals, reporting, confidentiality, focus)
2. A Written Proposal – for Coachee (& Sponsor). Indicating my understanding of what we've agreed
3. A First Coaching Meeting – Elicit and assess more of Coachee's context, aims and expectations; establish baseline from which to measure change
4. A Written Initial Summary – for Coachee. Indicating my understanding of what they've said
5. Subsequent Coaching Meetings – application of approaches informed by my theoretical and experiential background, including ongoing review
6. Last Meeting – comprehensive review; Coachee's ongoing plan for the future (Sponsor report if nec).

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Thanks for your referrals and recommendations – always appreciated.

CONTRIBUTIONS

Psychosocial support

- In-field support to National and Expatriate staff working in Papua New Guinea
- Support of individual clients based in New Zealand.

LEARNING POINTS

Psychosocial support

It is very difficult for psychosocial support professionals fully to anticipate what is needed from them when they visit teams working in psychologically and physically demanding, and risk-rich humanitarian environments.

Experience of working within diverse cultures and contexts is a given: flexibility in knowing how and when to apply this is as important as theoretical acumen. Chocolate, cheese, politically-balanced and well-written newspapers; the ability to make coffee, and be alert and listen for long periods are also necessary. An infectious sense of stability, hope and enthusiasm is essential.

Some days, the team has no need of you. Others they do, but don't want to acknowledge it. Invariably, some staff: miss, or are having problems at, home; struggle with the nature or amount of work; are too tired to know when to rest or remember how to communicate the best of themselves; need ideas about stress management; want to engage a different perspective; want to know their organisation cares for them.

Learning Point? Read up on relevant context history and organizational interaction with the local community; ask and observe regularly before and during trips to be informed about what is needed; clarify expectations. Never under-estimate your impact (good and not so good). Be proactive in modelling open communication, trust and collaboration.

Supervision

- Ongoing provision of supervision for individual professionals

Supervision

I enjoy the opportunities that peer and hierarchical supervision create. Earlier this year, I sought to improve my contributions as a supervisee within the latter. I decided on two things: taking a leaf from peer supervision, I now write an overview of a particular situation with which I'm working, describe what I'm noticing, and clearly state what I want to understand further; secondly, from time to time and for my own self-reflection, I use a formal, structured template to review aspects of my work in more detail.

Learning Point? Regularly reviewing current practice within a more formal structure; and, utilising well-established and simple processes are highly effective in enhancing purposeful work. I think I will suggest the same opportunity to my own supervisees!



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