

You show me a leader that is visionary, capable, focused,
diligent, creative, intelligent, and helpful,
and I'll show you a leader that might be...

...an *obstacle*?

It's true. The things that help someone to become a leader—confident decisions; bold creativity; compelling vision; untiring perseverance; rapid learning—can be the very things that prevent that leader's people from reaching their full potential. What's more, this pattern is often masked by the leader's desire to be helpful.

Clouding the mirror. Ever seen kids play their first tee-ball game? There are usually a few helpful parents allowed on the field as “escorts,” because you never know when a batter will run to the pitcher's mound instead of to first base! Kids at that age are comically unaware of what they do. But add ten years to those same kids, and their games look a lot different...their athletic performance has vastly improved because they have become aware of their behavior in the moment and can make immediate adjustments during the game.

Now add ten (or twenty or thirty) more years. Those “kids” are in the business world, and it's a whole new game. They may know their leader's vision & strategic plan by heart, but if they don't receive relevant, real-time feedback, they won't become self-aware...they won't make the immediate, in-the-moment adjustments they need to win the big game. And periodic performance appraisals won't cut it...the leader is the only person close enough to the action to be the mirror the players need in order to grow.

Teaching people not to think. Ever seen young children at an Easter Egg hunt? They start off walking right past hidden treasure...and it's all you can do to resist filling their baskets for them. But some powerful things happen when they find the treasure themselves: they come to believe there's treasure to be found; they remember where they found it; and they get new ideas of where to look.

Now think of leaders. Earlier in their careers, leaders were the people who thought clearly, creatively, and quickly...they “got it” before everyone else in the room. But if they, now as leaders, keep “being the answer,” they unintentionally shape their people into being more skilled at listening and executing and less skilled at creativity and problem solving. And it won't work to send their people off to a “critical thinking workshop”...the leader's style directly determines the thinking patterns adopted by the team.

“Because I said so.” Ever heard this one when you were young (or used it yourself)? Then you know that it is more likely to create compliance (doing the right thing because you

believe someone's watching) instead of commitment (doing the right thing because you believe it's the right thing).

Now think of leaders. Because they wield power, they can order a person to act by “lighting a fire” under his/her...um, you get the picture. The problem is that behavior change tends to be short-lived when it does not connect with the goals and values and reason of the person. Leaders who learn how to uncover the unique motivators of a person will “light a fire” in that person's heart and launch continued growth that lasts.

So what's a leader to do? Remember those teeball players? They got better over the years (and they probably had more fun) because their coaches were involved, progressively “working themselves out of a job” by transferring their own skills, confidence, and in-the-moment awareness to each player.

Now think of leaders one more time. They were great players...maybe even naturally great. But if they don't now become great *coaches*—if they don't master the skills of cultivating self-awareness and self-sufficiency in their players—they will be walking away from greatness that could have been. Higher performing teams. Higher morale and motivation. Players that could have ascended to leadership. Maybe even terminations that didn't have to happen.

It's not rocket science. It doesn't take a doctorate degree or a foreign language. In fact, if you're smart enough to spell “COACH”—and diligent enough to practice some proven skills—we'll guarantee your success:

C.O.A.C.H.™ Training

- C = Collaborative Relationship:** How to establish trust and understanding to increase your influence with your players.
- O = On-Target:** How to discover what motivates your players; to identify meaningful development goals; and to inspire continued growth.
- A = Ask, Don't Answer:** How to help your players discover their own answers so that they become self-sufficient.
- C = Coachable Moments:** How to provide clear and frequent feedback that maintains your players' insight and momentum for growth.
- H = Healthy Environment:** How to foster a culture of continuous personal growth.

Ready for the big leagues?

Let's talk. Drop us a line at CoachTraining@thealigngroup.com