

*Who's responsible for your performance and effectiveness, anyway...  
you or someone else???*

# Developing Your Own Inner Coach

By Leo M. Tonkin

When most people think of coaching, they think of teams, sporting events or maybe certain figures. Coaching also plays a critical role in the performing arts as in the theatre, movies, dance and opera. Describing coaching one might say that it is when one person is interacting with another, often to influence one's behavior and actions. Recently, coaching has been entering the workplace. Unfortunately, coaching is frequently confused with counseling. And even if "true" coaching is present at work, it usually only takes place in certain situations like performance appraisals and reviews.

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## **The most effective leaders are those who can lead others to lead themselves**

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More related to coaching is leadership and in today's organizations the most effective leaders are those who can lead others to lead themselves. True leadership comes mainly from within a person, not from outside forces. At its best, external leadership provides a spark and supports the flame of the true inner leadership that dwells within each person. At its worst, it disrupts this internal process, causing damage to the person and the constituencies he or she serves.

The challenge for organizations is to understand how to bring out the wealth of talent each employee possesses. Many organizations still operate under old paradigms that encourage conformity and adherence rather than emphasize how leaders can empower others to innovate, generate and continuously grow.

Organizations have increasingly experimented with innovative work designs. Widespread introduction of modern organizational development techniques have led to the inherent dilemma of trying to provide strong leadership for workers who are being encouraged to self-manage.

The result is a major gap between new leadership/management approaches under conditions of increasing employee participation and initiative. The "Management by Coaching" and the "Inner Coach" approaches by Leo Tonkin, president of CTI, are designed to meet these kind of challenges.

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The traditional management approach is a hierarchal structure that assumes that the manager is responsible for the employee's performance. From this perspective, the manager controls, directs and motivates the employee. The employee takes instructions and does the task.



The concept of the Inner Coach recognizes the distinct responsibility of the individual to direct and activate one's own performance. The individual's external manager can now focus on empowerment---as in giving individuals the responsibility and skills to manage themselves to achieve optimal performance.

Performance is the interaction between three major factors; training, practice and feedback. All three are necessary. One cannot do a job without being appropriately trained to do so. By the same token, all the training in the world, not practiced, produces nothing. And without proper feedback, one will never know where to focus and leverage to maximize opportunities, growth and development.

## **Performance & Effectiveness = Training x Practice x Feedback**

The training phase is the prior-to-action phase. It is in this phase that objectives and goals are established; the skills and resources needed to get the job done are identified and put in place; and a structure for managing accountability is defined.

The next phase of the cycle is the practice stage--the on-the-job, in-the-line-of-action phase. This phase represents the actual performance--the opportunity to activate one's abilities in pursuit of objectives. It is in this phase that whether the job gets done or not, is determined.

The final phase occurs when the performance is completed (or not) and is evaluated and feedback is given. Specific feedback that is discussed in an atmosphere that is developmental rather than judgmental, provides for continuous improvement and growth.

It becomes clear that the external manager must have primary responsibility for providing the functions of management during the training phase of the cycle. The external manager plays a large part in delivering to and often times in determining the long term objectives for the managee. Through preparing and training, management attempts to ensure that the skills and knowledge necessary to achieve those objectives are met.

The external manager is also primarily responsible for providing the management functions in the feedback phase. He/she monitors and evaluates the performance, determines the effectiveness of efforts, and empowers the performance to promote future development and growth.

Concentrating on the training and feedback phases of performance allows the external manager to focus on the the continuous improvement of his/her people--on quality of performance. The external becomes a coach and his or her staff become a team of valuable players.

## **Whether you're on stage, on the field or at work, the performance you give is up to you.**

Most people have to be coached. No matter one's skills, knowledge, talent, energy level...unless one's resources are being coached effectively and right now, they cannot possibly bring about anything close to optimal performance.

On a minute to minute, hour to hour, day to day basis, who is the only one in a position to provide this coaching function? Who has the opportunity to direct one's immediate activity and fine tune the performance on the spot? Who's responsible for influencing and motivating each person to put forth the necessary effort to accomplish our tasks and projects?

You got it....ourselves. Look around....there is no one else.

We have two separate functions, that of performer and that of self-manager--the "Inner Coach." Often we have to not only do the performing, but we must take responsibility of coaching that performance as well. Most of the time we are the only ones available. How we carry out that responsibility goes very far in determining the degree of our successes and accomplishments.

Coaching is a shared responsibility...shared between the "inner coach" (self-manager) and the coach (external manager). It is only when both coaches are in place and functioning effectively that we can achieve optimal performance.

The external manager has already been stated to be primarily responsible for the training and feedback phase of the performance cycle. Let's look more specifically at what it is "Inner Coaches" are responsible for.

The most critical factor is the practice phase. It is those people who put in time and energy to practice that makes the difference in virtually all areas of achievement. And it is the "Inner Coach" who has the primary responsibility for impacting and influencing this phase. The "Inner Coach" must effectively activate and integrate the training, knowledge and skills if optimal performance is to occur.

You may recall a time when you were playing a sport or performing on stage and you began talking to yourself---getting yourself "pumped up" or "psyched up." This is part of the "Inner Coach" at work.

For example, let's say you were playing doubles in tennis and you missed a shot. Your partner then makes a comment to you about it. Regardless if it's critical or encouraging, it has little or no effect. But what you say to yourself, makes all the difference in the world.

And it's not just what we say to ourselves, but also our attitude, how we perceive a particular situation, and the reactions and choices we make. The only problem is that many of us have not been trained to be an "Inner Coach"--that is, how to integrate the training and knowledge we already received (or will receive) and maximize our abilities and effectiveness.

Most training addresses technical areas and the "soft skills" areas--communication, sales, time management, leadership. But few curriculum addresses being a self-manager, a self-leader, or an "Inner Coach."

To develop the "Inner Coach," one needs to build and strengthen the habits of effective self-management and self-leadership. There are three critical areas to develop; the coaching of self-direction (immediate action and initiative), self-commitment (motivation) and self-confidence (attitude).

The Inner Coach system focuses on growth and continuous improvement. While strengthening weaknesses in self-management is a benefit, the highest leveraged activities focus on consolidating and building on strengths. To build these strengths takes self managing specific critical skill areas.

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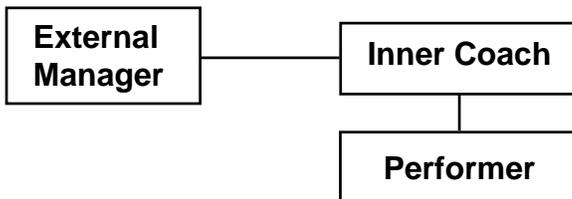
## **The Inner Coach = Self-Direction + Self-Commitment + Self-Confidence**

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Self-direction involves the day-to-day directing of one's competencies, job skills and activities. This area develops habits of proactivity, self-starting and initiative, completion, managing decisiveness, self-communication and putting new training, knowledge and information to work

Self-commitment puts into place the accountability to produce the desired actions and results. One enhances your Inner Coach by intrinsic rather than extrinsic motivation, managing by personal and organizational missions, generating energy, seeing the bigger picture, being trustworthy, and creating freedom through personal leadership.

Self-confidence establishes a strong and positive attitudinal foundation upon which job skills are based. This area impacts one's ability to manage change, complacency and criticism. One is strengthened to handle risks, challenges and build relationships with power and confidence.



The question is not, are you a good activator? In all likelihood, you are. The question is, can you be taking greater systematic control over this area? Can you more effectively self-manage, inner coach, so that the good continues to grow, to become better and better?

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## **"Everybody wants to be on a Championship Team, but no one wants to come to practice"!**

**Bobby Knight**

Basketball Coach University of Indiana, Former US Olympic Basketball Coach

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The more effective you are at activating your abilities, the greater will be your accomplishing of objectives both in your personal and professional life. When performance and effectiveness are viewed from this vantage point a clearly defined cycle is seen where management functions are distinguished into practical and accountable roles. From this new paradigm an inside-out shift occurs in relationships throughout an organization where the results are true leadership, partnership and empowerment.