



**The Heart of Coaching**  
**Using Transformational Coaching to Create a**  
**High Performance Coaching Culture**  
**Third edition – January 2009**

**Notes by Frumi Rachel Barr, MBA, Ph.D.**

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**Author's Bio:** Tom Crane is an experienced OD consultant, international speaker and facilitator who specializes in working with leaders and their teams to build feedback-rich cultures that create and sustain true high performance. His passion is in sharing the Transformational Coaching Process as contemporary applied leadership.

Author's big thought: Managers and organizations know that coaching is critical. The Heart of Coaching outlines a process that allows bringing "insight to action" and shifts the organizational dynamic from Boss/Subordinate/Competitor to Coach/Coachee/Partner.

**Introduction:**

What if people in your organization:

- Knew the mission of the business and their role in creating success?
- Knew the organizational priorities and acted with a sense of urgency?
- Were committed to give their personal best efforts and did not hold back because of fear of failure?
- Freely contributed to organizational goals without worrying about who got credit?
- Consistently achieved the results that they were capable of achieving?
- Valued one another's thoughts and ideas and treated their teammates with respect and compassion?
- Openly shared feedback with one another without fear of reprisal?
- Sought out and responded appropriately to performance feedback?
- Had fun at work?

These are conditions found in high-performing teams. As coaching becomes a predominant cultural practice, it will create a performance-focused, feedback-rich organization capable of creating and sustaining a competitive advantage.

Here is the vision for what is possible: In a COACHING CULTURE, all members of the culture courageously engage in candid, respectful coaching conversations, unrestricted by reporting

relationships, about how they can improve their working relationships and individual and collective work performance. All have learned to value and effectively use feedback as a powerful learning tool to produce higher levels of personal accountability, professional development, high-trust working relationships, continually-improving job performance, and ever-increasing customer satisfaction.

### **Part One: The Heart of the Transformational Coaching Process**

Part One discusses the business and human case for coaching, presents the Transformational Coaching methodology and illustrates its application to enhance the performance of both individuals and teams.

#### **Why Coach?**

This book is a valuable textbook regarding the business case for coaching and it is full of empirical data. It would be minimizing the significance of this valuable book to summarize the data included.

The Transformational Coaching process provides a useful framework to guide performance coaching discussions in ways that open up communications and build trust. It also creates a powerful commitment to mutual learning and a partnership for discovering the best next steps.

#### **Transformational Coaching Defined: What it is and Its Connection to Leadership**

The working definition of Transformational Coaching is:

- “The art of assisting people enhance their effectiveness, in a way they feel helped.”
- To accomplish this outcome, coaching must be a comprehensive communication process in which the coach provides performance feedback to the coachee.
- Topics include all work-related dimensions of performance (personal, interpersonal, and technical or business skills) that affect the coachee’s ability and willingness to contribute to meaningful personal and organizational goals.
- A coach acts as a guide by challenging and supporting people in achieving their personal and organizational performance objectives. If this is done as a trusted learning partner, people feel helped by the coach and the process.
- The coaching process becomes the foundation for creating the true “high-performance, feedback-rich” culture that is supported by feedback flowing in a full 360 fashion – down to direct reports, across to peers, and up to one’s supervisor.

#### **An Overview of the Transformational Coaching Process**

The 7 Key Elements of a Transformational Coach’s Job Description

The coach must:

1. Invest time to get to know people as people
2. Understand people’s roles, goals and challenges on the job to be helpful
3. Set clear context and GRRATE expectations
4. Observe people’s work closely enough to have relevant and substantive feedback
5. Provide timely, candid and specific feedback regarding what you observe and interpret the impact on yourself, other people and performance
6. Stimulate learning growth and performance improvements by asking effective learning questions – offer suggestions as necessary
7. Leave people feeling supported and empowered to act

## The Three phases of Transformational Coaching

1. **The Foundation Phase**, in which you create a coaching relationship and in which you prepare for a particular coaching conversation
2. **The Learning Loop**, in which you share balanced feedback and engage in dialogue to learn from the exchange, and
3. **The Forwarding – the –Action Phase**, in which you create positive momentum and a commitment for change.

### Phase 1: The Foundation Phase

Transformational Coaching requires a foundation of trust and shared expectations, laying important groundwork for all of the conversations to follow. The foundation phase consists of four steps:

1. **Connect**: In this step, you establish an explicit two-way coaching relationship, whether with a direct report, a peer, or one's supervisor. It occurs in a series of interactions between you and your prospective coachee.
  - Use this time to establish rapport, clarify your expectations of each other, view the Transformational Coaching process, and make a commitment to using the coaching process in your working relationships.
  - It is also important to identify what job related challenges you would like to address, especially with one's peers or supervisor.
2. **Set Organizational Context and GRRATE Expectations**
  - After the ground rules, coaching roles, and an effective connection have been established, the second step for coaching relationships between a supervisor and direct report is being clear on direction.
  - Setting organizational context is the process of clarifying the background situation for the person you are coaching. Organizational context is composed of the following five elements: organizational vision, mission, strategy, key objectives, and the core values for the organization.
  - The acronym "GRRATE expectations" provides the framework for discussing important areas between people that most frequently need clarification:
    - G = Goals - Clear goals are re difficult to establish than most people think.
    - R = Roles - who is going to be involved?
    - R = Resources – resources include people, equipment, information, ideas, books, websites, etc.—and, importantly, how to access them.
    - A = Accountability – who "owns" what part(s) of the process or action steps?
    - T =Timeframe – all expectations need a timeframe to calibrate all parties inking and coordinate planning.
    - E = Empowerment – Perhaps the most critical element of having clear expectations is the all-important feeling of empowerment. While the term may have accumulated negative baggage in the last decade, without deep feeling of empowerment, people are not able to do their best.
      - In coaching situations where you are working with direct reports, the operative word is delegation.
      - Effective delegation between a supervisor and their direct report systematically addresses these areas: dimensions of the task or project you are handing over, including its purpose, its importance, the details of the work itself, what success will look like how the results will be measured, and questions your coachee may have.

2. **Observe** – Observe your coachee’s performance. How he or she interacts with others, and your perceptions of outcomes and results.
  - Coaches need data on which to base their coaching. The challenge is to gather it with as little subjective distortion as possible to set up the optimal conditions for learning.
3. **Prepare.** This is your internal and independent work of the coach. Become conscious of your thinking (the assumptions, beliefs, interpretations, and judgments) that may be influencing your perceptions.
  - With this heightened awareness, collect your thoughts and develop the information and strategy for the coaching conversations. This self-awareness pays huge dividends in helping you to be objective and self-responsible in the exchange that follows.

### **Phase 11: The Learning Loop**

- This is of central importance to the Transformational Coaching process. Its purpose is to create mutual learning, and deepen insights and respect for one another. Although the other two phases of Transformational Coaching are slightly more linear, The Learning Loop is purposefully circular, thus more “organic.”
- Continue to iteratively use this part of the coaching process as long as needed to clearly communicate and “get on the same page.”
- It consists of five steps:
  1. Be present, state your topic, share your positive intentions, and request permission for this conversation to take place at this time.
    - Focus your conscious attention on the person and the situation hand.
  2. Set the context for the coaching conversation and share perceptions of the results cycle
  3. Ask learning questions to explore beliefs and implications
  4. Reflectively and emphatically listen
  5. Explore roles in co-creating outcomes of the situation that has been just discussed

### **Phase 111: The Forwarding-the-Action Phase**

- In this phase, the coach moves the action forward in several ways. How this occurs depends on the situation and who you are talking with.
- Regardless of whether you are working with a direct report who is on the verge of being fired or a star employee who is meeting all expectations and then some, or your peer or supervisor, you will forward the action by some combination of the following six steps.
  1. Revisit the vision for success (to add focus)
  2. Options are: Solicit and suggest options or Request specific changes or Require changes and clarify consequences
  3. Clarify the action commitment and a follow-up plan
  4. Reinforce progress and offer support

**Recommendation:** This book is a terrific textbook and one of the most useful I have read to implement coaching in an organization to teach leaders and their team coaching skills OR to use this robust toolkit to create a High Performance Coaching Culture. I have just skimmed the surface of its contents in this brief summary. Chapters 4, 5, and 6 describe each phase and each step of the process in detail. In chapters 7, 8 and 9 you will find specific guidance about what you might say during a coaching session and how you might say it.

In Part Two, Tom explains what makes Transformational Coaching unique among coaching methods and how the coach can bring the most helpful gift into the coaching process – him/herself.

Part Three addresses the application of Transformational Coaching throughout the organization for the purpose of creating high performance in individuals, teams, and organizations.

Here is the complete coaching model – framed as a “Roadmap for an Emotionally Intelligent Coaching Conversation.”





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**About the reviewer: Frumi Rachel Barr, MBA, Ph.D**

Frumi is a trusted advisor and leadership coach. She has a passion for helping business leaders, especially accounting and finance professionals. She helps them find clarity out of chaos, communicate effectively with their teams, and accelerate their business results. Frumi is a former CEO and CFO herself and has an MBA and a PhD in business administration. She is known as a catalyst for change and when Frumi shows up with dynamite and band aids, change is bound to happen!



Dear Fellow Reader,

I know how much time it takes to read a book and how many books are sitting on the pile, ready to be read. I don't know about you, but after a while they started to make me feel guilty. I wondered when I would read all the books that I knew would make me feel better informed.

There was also another challenge that I encountered with reading a lot - all the books I read started to blend together in my mind and I couldn't remember what I read in which book. That's why I thought book summaries were a good idea. I could read many more book summaries than I ever could books. I started writing summaries on the books that I read so I could revisit them and remember what I read and where.

Then I started sharing my book notes with all the people I knew. My clients love to hear about what I have read so that they too can learn. That's how a joint journey of learning about leadership, making difficult decisions, knowing how to have tough conversations and many other things began.

I was inspired to start a community of learning and that's when sharing my book notes and starting a book club by teleconference was born.

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