



## MOTIVATION

JANINE EVERSON

# Coaching out your best

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**Y**ou might be wondering how somebody in a small franchised estate agent team, or an entrepreneurial property developer could benefit from a coach. Well, regardless of the business, a coach can help you explore important questions, such as how can I contribute, what is my role, how do I overcome challenges and what is my style of leadership? Hard questions we should all be asking ourselves occasionally.

A coach is not there to give you direct advice or to rescue you. A coach is there to listen really carefully and to focus on you – your thoughts, how your emotions play out and how your patterns of behaviour may or may not be helping you. A coach then helps you see how your behaviour and habits contribute to the challenges you are facing in the office.

Finally, a good coach will work with you to develop new capabilities to notice your own – previously unconscious – patterns of behaviour and habits, to self-correct and to eventually come up with action plans and solutions to your problems without the coach needing to be there. We call this “self-generating”. You should end up feeling more capable, fulfilled, confident and successful too.

## SIX TIPS TO BECOMING A BETTER, HAPPIER EMPLOYEE

### 1 BECOME A LEADER

It may not sound like it, but the more leadership capacity you develop, the less you will need to do. Start by making your requests clearer and as specific as possible, and do it with a posture of confidence.

### 2 WE ALL LEAD DIFFERENTLY. OWN THIS

Discover your unique “something”. You were not hired because you resembled a previous leader but because your particular skills and talents are what are required for the job.

Regardless of your sex, within each of us we have masculine and feminine types of energy that we tap into. Depending on what you are trying to accomplish, you will utilise either your masculine or feminine energy (doing v being, aggression v surrender, analytical v intuitive, rushing v nurturing, concrete v abstract, and so on).

#### → HOW TO DO IT

Ask yourself which energies are the most easily accessible to you. Which do you struggle to connect with? Which do people around you seem to respond to best? Become curious and you'll see how it can impact your leadership style and choices.

### 3 CLAIM YOUR SPACE

If you have been given an area of responsibility, accept it. If you are surprised by a leadership role, that uncertainty could make you feel it is undeserved. By claiming your space you will have a sense of belonging. And the people around you will also know that you belong.

### 4 LET GO INSIDE AND OUTSIDE OF WORK

The dynamics around roles for men and women have changed dramatically over the past few years, so working effectively is often about playing to each other's strengths. If you tend to hang on to a particular task or role, ask

yourself what might happen if you just let go a little bit. In particular, start noticing what you are not so good at, or what you enjoy the least.

Look around to see what might open up if you didn't insist on such extremely high standards, or who might be the opposite to you and actually enjoy doing it, or who has the potential to develop into that space (forget the traditional male/female gender roles here). Very often people try to hold on too much. This can result in everything suffering through overcommitment.

### 5 SEEK OUT AND USE MENTORS

Your support structure will be stronger when it's linked to a mentor. That is someone who has gone through what you are about to go through. If you're in a leadership position and don't have a mentor, you are missing out on a valuable support network.

But even those who are not in appointed leadership roles need mentors. It's a good time to seek out a mentor – formally or informally – at any time when you are facing lots of new challenges and situations. The first five years in the working world can be incredibly challenging, for instance. Learning the ropes,

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and getting to understand the ins and outs of a complex industry such as the property field is an ideal time to build a network of support.

→ **HOW TO DO IT**

Look around. Whom do you admire? Who looks or feels like you would like to look and feel? Who seems on top of their game? Who seems most knowledgeable? Make a list, no matter how out of reach that person might seem to you. Once you have a shortlist of one to three people, consider how you might approach them to ask if they would be willing to mentor you. It is a fact that many successful people are only too happy to share their tips and secrets of success. A mentor also gets a lot out of a mentoring relationship, so don't hesitate to ask somebody. At worst they could say no – but even then, they will remember you.

**6 NOT EVERYBODY CAN BE THE BOSS**

Sometimes leadership is not about being the boss at all. In a small entrepreneurial environment in particular, everybody should be a leader in his or her own right. Sure, there might be some areas requiring direction, but a small office needs people to be able to think for themselves, to roll up their sleeves and do things together or separately.

Take a look around and see what it is that you can get working on. Which areas can you take the lead in, show initiative and add value? A small office team thrives and grows when each individual behaves as if they are their own boss. And like all good leaders, those individuals can then start looking out for those around them. This can create a really vibrant, supportive, dynamic office environment of leaders all aiming for the same overall goals.



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Janine Everson is a director at the Centre for Coaching. This training institution at the University of Cape Town's Graduate School of Business uses coaching as a tool to develop a transformational culture shift and to implement powerful leadership in business.

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