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*We Help You Focus Clearly,
Organize Effectively,
And Act With Courage*

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Coaching Tip

Try using the “sandwich” approach the next time you coach someone. As compliment/critique/compliment, the approach provides balanced feedback.

- *Compliment:* “The work that you did to present the financial report was very timely.”
- *Critique:* “Next time let’s work some graphs into it.”
- *Compliment:* “For the first time through this, I thought your presentation was very complete.”

The speaker showed appreciation for the work done, made a statement about work quality, and got the message across about what was wanted in the future. The speaker did this without making the person feel as if the whole project was problematic.

Counseling Tip

Prepare by reflecting on the following:

- *Data:* What have you seen or heard about this person’s actions or behavior?
- *Thoughts:* How do you interpret what is happening?
- *Feelings:* What is the impact of this behavior on you and others?

Discuss your concerns with the person by first relating your data. Then state your interpretations and check for accuracy. Finally, let the person know how his or her behavior impacts you and others in the organization.

Whatever the response, you now have an opportunity for either assisting the person in examining his or her own motivations, or coaching him or her to match intentions with behavior more effectively. □

Coaching and Counseling *The Leader as Guide*

Leadership doesn’t mean being out in front as much as guiding from behind. But sometimes leaders operate like an errant guide. They may even say, “If you don’t hear from me, everything is fine.” Then when it isn’t fine, stand back! As guides, leaders need to help others navigate the perilous paths of modern business life by constantly naming reality and providing coaching and counseling in support of organizational goals.

Coaching: *To give advice or instruction about a specific task.*

Counseling: *To influence one’s judgment or conduct.*

Coaching involves giving instruction or advice along with support and encouragement to take the action needed. Coaching often revolves around a specific task or skill development. Counseling involves providing feedback about the impact of someone’s behavior or helping that person make a better decision by talking things out more fully. Counseling may be needed if someone’s behavior is incongruent with their words, or their judgment does not support the intent of the organization.

We always need coaching and counseling. It’s not something that we outgrow, just as we don’t outgrow our need for care and support. As we join teams, take risks, and take on new jobs, we continue to need guidance and encouragement. Coaching and counseling can be done with departments, teams, and individuals. The combination of both ensures that there is direction *and* feedback. Coaching and counseling need to be done routinely, clearly, and honestly.

So imagine yourself blindfolded, walking down a narrow path with thorny bushes on one side and a surging river on the other. Your guide describes the lay of the land and assures that together you can do it and make it safely down the path. Your guide describes the twists and turns, and talks with you when it is hard and you want to quit. Occasionally you go too fast and your guide hurries to catch up, explaining the pitfalls if you are not together on this. After awhile the two of you agree on speed and a pattern of interaction, and before you know it you are down the path.

Coaching and counseling are the life supports of organizational learning and growth. Use these tools as foundations for developing yourself and others. □

This issue was co-authored by Janet Unga, president of Business Fundamentals, and Cathy Perme. Janet is our newest associate and provides management and supervisory training as well as consulting in business operations.