

Coaching Others

-adapted from the book "Leading Leaders" by Mac Powell

-additional information provided by Mountain West Church

"My leaders just aren't committed."

"I wish my leaders would take more initiative?"

"That leader didn't follow through, again."

"For some reason, they just don't seem to understand."

In my work with churches all across North America I have heard these comments, and many like them, from staff members of all types of churches big and small and every type of denomination. At times, all leaders are faced with leading others who struggle to get the vision or do good work. This challenge is compounded when we are leading volunteers, and we don't have the carrot of pay to reward the performance we desire. We're often left to privately lament the flaws of others and wring our hands about the things we would change if we could.

So what do the statements above have in common? Each one reflects a coaching problem within the ministry. It's easy to see the weakness in others, but it's another thing to admit that there are weaknesses in our leadership. If we don't know how to help other people get better at the work God has called them to do and we've appointed them to, then we may need to learn the skills of coaching-Most of those on our team will know when they are missing the mark and likely they want to change.

And, no doubt, you'd like to see things improve as well. Most ministry leaders are stressed because there is so much to do and not enough people to carry the load. We get discouraged because those on our teams are often not following through, making mistakes, or causing issues that create more work for us. We know that if they got better at their roles, it would make life easier for us as leaders, for our churches and for those we're called to serve.

Instead of coaching their team to help them grow in their leadership competencies, many ministry leaders shrug their shoulders and accept this reality as their lot. They are either unaware of the difference coaching can make, or they feel they are too busy to provide the coaching their team needs.

Many ministry leaders default to doing so many ministry tasks themselves rather than developing their team through coaching.

One of the things I admire about Jesus is his patience in coaching his disciples. This group of twelve young men had the privilege of watching Jesus do amazing miracles

and hearing him teach outstanding lessons. Yet, as I was reading through Marks Gospel recently, I noticed how slow they were to learn. Check this out...

.In Mark 4 the disciples woke Jesus up from a nap because they were afraid a raging storm was about to bring them all to an early death. Jesus spoke the word and the storm ceased. He then looked at these young leaders and said, "Why are you so afraid? Do you still have no faith?"

Just two chapters later, the disciples watch Jesus miraculously feed five thousand people from a meager five loaves and two fish. Afterward, Jesus told them to get in the boat and go ahead of him

Once again they find themselves in a storm, the next morning Jesus walks out to them on the water, and again calms the storm. Adding an editorial comment, Mark points out their lack of faith, saying, and the wind died down. They were completely amazed, for they had not understood about the loaves; their hearts were hardened" (Mark 6:51-52).

Two chapters later, in Mark 8, after Jesus has just miraculously fed four thousand people, he and his disciples again get into a boat. He senses they are still lacking faith. So he asks them a series of questions. Then in verse 21, Jesus remarks, Do you still not understand?" It seems every time they were in a boat with Jesus, he had to coach them because they lacked understanding. By this point, these men have been with Jesus for over two years, and yet they still need coaching in their faith.

Jesus shows us that coaching leaders is messy, even if it isn't always that complex. And he was obviously the Master leader himself, yet he still had to invest in the painful work of coaching those on his team who were short-sighted or weak in faith. And Jesus didn't try to coach everyone. He chose twelve men and focused his efforts on this group. Jesus spent a disproportionate amount of time with these few in order to increase his impact on the many.

The same holds true for you. As a ministry leader you cannot give everyone equal time. You will likely have team members, leaders, and coach/coordinator levels under your leadership.' But no matter how many leaders you choose to invest in, it's important to recognize that the work will always be messy. You'll quickly find that no matter how great the team you lead, they will still need coaching to tap into their full potential as leaders.

As you move through this material, consider your current ministry team and think about some of the areas in which they need coaching.

Deepen Your Character: Genuine Love

In the broader world, love and leadership are not two words that are typically connected. But leaders who love their people will develop a team of people who are loyal, give their best, and give love in return.

In ministry, it's often assumed that you love people well if you are a leader. After all, why else would you get into ministry if it weren't for a genuine love for others and a desire to pursue their greatest good?

However, many leaders unfortunately fall into one of the following two traps.

Either they fail to equate leadership with love, and use people, or even take advantage of people, to get the work of ministry done. They might build big organizations or a seemingly healthy ministry, but in their wake are many broken relationships and painful, unresolved conflicts.

Or there are those leaders in the church who signed up for ministry out of a genuine love for people, but somehow along the way they lost their focus. The goalposts moved from a genuine care for the well-being of others to something that feels sterile and institutional. Now they spend their time making things happen in a back room but see little impact in the real lives of people they know.

Paul's definition of love in 1 Corinthians is often used in wedding ceremonies, challenging couples to love each other as God, a selfless love. Although this passage is frequently used in regard to marriage, we must remember that Paul used it to speak of how we should love each other as believers. In fact the entire book is written to a broken church to help them grow in love and health. The principles certainly apply to marriage, but they hardly stop there.

As you read the following Scripture, meditate on what the author wishes to communicate, and answer the questions below. Allow the Holy Spirit to speak to you and challenge you as a leader on how you can develop your character so that you are growing in genuine love in your everyday life.

1 Corinthians 13:4-8

"Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails."

We can break Paul's definition of love into four categories, with several ideas in each.

First, we see Paul's love as a demonstration of care for others—its patient, kind, and rejoices in the truth.

Second, love is selfless—it doesn't envy or boast, and it isn't proud or self-seeking.

Third, love doesn't tear others down – it doesn't dishonor, isn't easily angered, doesn't keep a record of wrongs or rejoice in evil.

Finally, love acts in ways that help others- it protects, trusts, hopes, and perseveres.

Each category shows us that love is fundamentally others-focused.

We can apply these same categories to our work in ministry.

Often, we get so caught up in the logistics of the work, that we begin to value process over people. Process is important, but the goal of our ministry efforts is always to express and demonstrate the love of God. If we don't reflect that love, it is impossible for others to see Jesus in and through our leadership.

Which aspect of love in this passage do you most easily display?
Which is a challenge for you?

Now that we have examined the character trait of genuine love, we can begin to work through the core competency for this module.

Marks of a Great Coach

As I walked through the business leadership section in Barnes & Noble, a book title caught my eye and stopped me in my tracks. The book was titled *Why Employees Don't Do What They're Supposed to Do and What to do About It* by Ferdinand Fournies? I was a twenty-nine-year-old leader at the time, who only had volunteer leaders who reported to me, but the book title described the pain I was feeling. I immediately bought the book, took it home, and devoured the lessons it contained.

When I finished reading the chapters that describe sixteen reasons why people don't do what you want them to do, I made a photocopy of the table of contents. I posted it on the wall beside my desk.

For the first time, I realized that when people are not doing what they're supposed to be doing, it was often my fault, not theirs. That hurt, but it was a necessary wake-up call.

Placing blame on those we lead is like a built-in default mode for most of us. When a leader's performance is off, you can find yourself complaining, criticizing, or reprimanding without stopping to think about why their performance might be off.

Fournies book gave me a tool to help assess poor performance. This, in turn, equipped me to take the appropriate steps to help those I lead.

If you're curious about the sixteen reasons, here they are:

1. They don't know why they should do it.

2. They don't know how to do it.
3. They don't know what they are supposed to do.
4. They think your way will not work.
5. They think their way is better.
6. They think something else is more important.
7. There is no positive consequence to them for doing it.
8. They think they are doing it.
9. They are rewarded for not doing it.
10. They are punished for doing what they are supposed to do.
11. They anticipate a negative consequence for doing it.
12. There is no negative consequence to them for poor performance.
13. Obstacles beyond their control.
14. Their personal limits prevent them from performing.
15. Personal problems.
16. No one could do it.

When one of your leaders is missing the mark, your new default should be to ask: Why are they not performing well? What can I do to help them? It is your job to help coach and correct poor performance.

The easy thing is to point the finger and blame them rather than find the issue and coach them.

In this session, you will learn six marks of a great coach and see why each of these marks matters for those leading ministries in local churches.

Mark #1: Great Coaches Listen and Ask Effective Questions

My friend Dino Senesi is recognized as one of the best church-planting coaches in the country. In his training he draws a stick figure representing a church planter and asks the room, "What are the voices speaking into this church planter?" This brainstorm exercise rouses up answers such as their spouse, their pastor, their board, friends, etc. Then he asks, "What voice is missing?" People come up with a few more answers, and Dino adds them to the mix. Again, he asks, "What voice is missing?" After the group has exhausted their answers, there still one voice missing Dino points out that most of these voices are Telling Voices-meaning that they are the kind of voices telling the planter what he or she should do. Telling Voices give encouragement, counsel, resources, or advice. What the planter needs is an Asking Voice-one that is intent on asking good questions and drawing out of the leader the concerns, questions, ideas, and dreams that are vital for lasting health and change. Asking Voices ask questions like: What is your number one priority right now? What is the most important next step you need to take? What options do you have right now, and which option do you think is the best?

Why? Asking Voices challenge the individual to think and discover answers on their own.

I was meeting with one of my team leaders one day when she asked how I wanted her to handle a specific situation. In my mind I quickly assessed her ability to handle the situation and recognized she didn't need me to give her the answer. So I started using my Asking Voice, asking her questions.

- What do you think your options are?
- If you were to choose one of those options, which would you choose? Why?
- What are the potential drawbacks of that option?
- How does choosing that particular option reflect the values of our organization?

So then I asked, "What are you going to do?" She said, "What do you want me to do?" "I'm not going to tell you," I replied. "You know me, you know our values, and I trust you to make the right decision. So, make the decision, and I will back you up no matter the outcome."

It was fun to watch her go from depending on me for an answer to a new level of confidence in her own decision on how to handle the situation—all in fifteen minutes!

Most leaders are hardwired with a Telling Voice. Your team will benefit greatly if you increasingly use an Asking Voice. They will:

- sense that you genuinely love them and care about what they have to say
- be increasingly willing to be vulnerable about their hopes and fears
- gain insight into the types of questions they should be asking of others
- be motivated to engage in the work you are asking them to do
- be loyal to you in hard times because you've cared about their well-being.

When we always lead with a Telling Voice, our team becomes dependent on us for decisions. But when we lead with an Asking Voice, it equips them to make decisions. And sometimes team members will find the right answer or solution by just allowing them to talk it through out loud without any input from you!

Mark #2: Great Coaches Agree on Performance Goals in Advance

When I was a kid, I lived across from a large, open field. It was typical for a gang of five or six of us to meet up there. Bored, with nothing to do, someone would start bragging about being the fastest among us.

Then as the bravado and tension would heat up, someone would say, "Let's race!" So we would line up, and one of us would yell, "Go!" We would all take off running, but the problem was we never defined a finish line. Some would run hard for a while, but others settled into a jog or walk. Why because we had no idea where we were running to. It was hard to measure and hard to stay motivated when we didn't have a finish line.

Unfortunately, that's how many people are operating in their work or volunteer roles. The new year comes, and maybe the senior leader or senior pastor gives a stirring vision for the year ahead. In a sense, the gun sounds. Everyone is excited to get a fresh start. But after a short time, they get confused, tired, or discouraged because there's no sense of progress or significant contribution. So they slow to a walk or drop out of the race altogether.

I was in my mid-twenties when I first started using goals to lead my team. It didn't take long for me to get some pushback. One of the volunteer leaders on my team confronted me and explained that goal setting is a business principle and has no place in the church. Over the years, I've encountered this objection more than once.

These individuals typically point to James, which says, "Instead, you ought to say, 'If it is the Lord's will, we will live and do this or that'" (James 4:15). However, James is not talking to believers who are pursuing God's will; he is talking to those who arrogantly plan their future with selfish ambition. James is not telling us to avoid goals. He is advising us to make plans as God leads, but to hold them loosely.

Some feel goal setting is presuming we know what God wants us to do; and that if we write down goals, it keeps us from listening to the Holy Spirit. I agree; we need to remain open to where God is moving.

But we also need to recognize that God involves us in the direction he is going and can communicate his direction ahead of time to us through prayer, his Word, and others' counsel.

In Luke 14:28, Jesus said, "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?" Jesus is illustrating the importance of disciplining ourselves to think through what God is calling us to do. Anything less is unwise and irresponsible.

Goal setting is an essential element of getting results. When done correctly, goals give us motivation and a mark to run toward.

So let me get practical. Here's how I approach goal setting with my team.

Ask each of your direct reports to identify three to five priority goals they would like to accomplish in the upcoming ninety days. (By the way, I have used this with both volunteer and paid members of my team. Don't avoid goal setting for someone just because they are a volunteer.)

Many churches ask staff to set goals, but typically they are annual goals rather than quarterly. Annual goal setting has several challenges:

- Circumstances and priorities change considerably over a twelve-month period of time.

- Annual goals are rarely adjusted, adapted, or removed once they become irrelevant. As a result, you are judged at the end of the year based on goals that are no longer important.
- Many people struggle to think that far ahead, and as a result their goals are vague.

This is why I prefer quarterly goal setting. It's much easier to identify the top five priorities you'd like to accomplish over ninety days, than it is over 365 days. The shorter time frame also helps the person prioritize what is most strategic right now.

Now, I know what you're thinking, People hate setting goals. I've found the same thing. But goals challenge the team member to identify what they are trusting God to do in and through their ministry over a ninety-day period of time. When I ask team members to renew their goals for the upcoming ninety days, I like to say, "Write down three to five things you are trusting God to do in your ministry." That's a powerful question, because I don't want my team just functioning in their own strength. I want them to pray and ask, "What am I anticipating God wants to do through me?" That makes goals exciting. That makes goals relevant. It means I'm now depending on God to see these things happen. And so that's why I like statements of faith in conjunction with goals. In fact, many times I refer to goals as "statements of faith."

I prefer this language because a goal is birthed out of a conversation with God. It aligns with a passion he's put in a person's heart. As they listen to the voice of God, they're asking him what he wants to accomplish in and through them over the next three months. His answers become their goal; his answers become statements of faith ... things they are trusting him to do in and through them.

Review the goals together. After a team member has submitted their three to five goals, the next step is to sit with them and review those goals. This gives you the opportunity to affirm their goals and adjust them by making them bigger or smaller. Sometimes you may need to feed back that one of their goals is not really a priority at this time, and they need to identify an alternative goal. As you review the goals, you can work together to align your expectations.

Make sure the individual doesn't confuse a goal with a task. I've seen this in teams I've led, and I've seen other leaders experience the same thing. When a team member shares their goals, it might look something like:

Goal: I'm going to recruit five new leaders.

Or something even more nebulous like:

Goal: I'm going to recruit more leaders.

Write a goal paragraph, not a goal sentence. A paragraph describes a little more what it really is they're trying to accomplish, and why they're trying to accomplish it. I try to structure these paragraphs around basic what, why, who, how, and when questions.

So the example above would sound more like this:

Goal: I will recruit and train five new leaders to my team (what), in order to achieve a healthy one to five ratio, which will provide greater levels of care for my team members (why). I'll use the existing leaders on my team (who) to identify a list of twenty prospects and empower the existing leaders to have recruiting conversations (how), so that we can have these new leaders in place by September 6 (when).

This is a much more robust goal. I can see what it is they're trusting God for and why they think this goal matters.

Think about success indicators. Underneath that goal paragraph, I ask them to add success indicators. Success indicators are like milestones that show progress along the way. Ask the person to list marks that would indicate they are heading in the right direction.

Success indicators for the volunteer recruitment goal might look something like this:

- Spend time praying about who to invite.
- Meet with my team to brainstorm a list of names we could potentially recruit.
- Meet with our communications team to develop a recruiting tool we can put in the hands of prospects.
- Read four articles (or videos) to develop my ability to recruit well.
- Make a list of twenty prospects.
- Enlist three of my existing leaders to help recruit the new leaders.
- Along with the three existing leaders, talk to five people each week over the next four weeks.

By using this process of goal setting, you've intentionally created a process of shared ownership. You've not just told team members what you expect of them, but you've allowed them to seek God and craft their goals based on what they feel God is saying to them. And, by presenting these goals to you as the team leader, they've invited you into the process of refining the goals, making them better, and agreeing that they are important.

When it comes to goal setting with your team members, there are three scenarios for you as a leader: First, you might look at the goals and agree with the team member on everything they've written down. Second, you might help the team member dial up or dial back the goal by telling him or her that they've either aimed too low or too high. Such a discussion helps align expectations and presses the team member to consider how they might walk out of the conversation knowing exactly what you expect. Or, third,

it might be that the goal the team member has set is actually not what's important right now, and you help them reprioritize for more strategic work.

Mark #3: Great Coaches Discuss and Agree on the Type of Input They Will Provide

Now that you've agreed on your team members goals, it's time to agree on the type of input you will provide on each of their goals.

One of the things I learned early on in ministry is you cannot lead all people the same way. In fact, you cannot even lead an individual the same way all the time. Wise coaches adapt their approach based on the individual and the situation.

When someone on your team sets goals, there are two factors you need to consider as they work toward accomplishing them. First, how much direction you should provide. Second, the level of competency they have that will enable them to accomplish their goals.

Once you agree on the goals, it's time to discuss the type of input you will provide as their supervisor. This is accomplished by discussing their level of competency with each goal and the level of direction they need you to provide. Once again, this is not something they decide by themselves; it's something you discuss and agree on. our team member will fall under one of three levels of competency:

The first level of competency is **Learning**. Learning means they do not have much experience or the skills necessary to fully carry out this goal.

The second level of competency is **Growing**. They may have some experience and have some of the skills but still have a gap in skills to fully accomplish that which they are trying to achieve.

The third level of competency is **Mastering**. Mastering means they have the full scope of competency needed, as well as plenty of experience that will enable them to effectively accomplish that particular goal.

Once you have agreed upon their level of competency, it then becomes clear what level of direction you need to provide.

If their competency falls into the Learning level, you need to be a **Guide**. A Guide is highly directive, telling the individual who, what, when, where, why, and how. Knowing that their competency level is low, you can give them the guidance they need to be successful.

For example, taking the goal of recruiting five new leaders mentioned above, if the individual described their competency as Learning, I would provide a high degree of direction (a Guide). In this case I might be a Guide by doing the following:

- Meet with them to help them build a list of prospects.
- Help determine who on their team would be the best recruiters.
- Invite them to follow me and watch me recruit some potential leaders.
- Send them a video on effective recruiting processes and then sit and discuss it with them.

Does this sound like micro-management? Yes, it might. And it would feel like micro-management if their competency was at the Growing or Mastering level. But it's not micro-management in this case; it's development. Because they identified themselves as Learning, they are inviting you to be highly directive.

If a team members competency falls into the Growing level, that means you will provide **Coaching**. With Coaching, you ask questions to help them process and learn.

For example, when I meet with them one-on-one, I ask questions like:

- How is the recruiting going? What is going well? How many people have said yes? What did you do well that helped lead to that yes?
- Who has said no? Why do you think they said no? What did you learn from that experience?
- Where are you struggling? Why is that a struggle for you?
- What do you need to do to overcome that struggle?

I ask questions to help them reflect and learn. I try hard to not do the thinking for them but challenge them to discover for themselves. But in time, in areas where I see they are struggling, I will provide insights from my experience.

When you are providing this type of Coaching approach, your goal is to see their competency as well as their confidence grow. If I am always giving them the answers, they become dependent on me, and it ultimately cripples their confidence.

If they identify their competency as Mastering, then you need to function as a **Champion**. A Champion provides recognition and affirmation but not direction. They don't need your input because their competency is high. Of course, you can provide it if they ask for it, but only if they ask.

For example, if I were meeting they my leader whose goal is to recruit five new leaders, and they've identified their competency as Mastering, here's what I would say in those one-on-one meetings with him or her.

- Celebrate with me how the recruitment is going.
- Would you allow Jim to go with you next time you recruit a leader? I'd love for him to see you in action and learn from you.
- You're really good at recruiting others. Is there anything new you're learning about recruiting recently? I'd love to learn as you learn.

Because they identified themselves as Mastering, and I agree with that assessment, they do not need me to provide direction. Needlessly giving direction would only serve to frustrate them and make them question if I truly believe in their abilities. Sometimes I wouldn't even ask them about their goals and would instead focus on other things.

Mark #4: Great Coaches Meet Regularly With Individuals for Progress Updates

No one likes to meet just for the sake of meeting, but now you've done the hard work of developing a clear plan with each of your team for ninety-day goals, your one-on-one progress update conversations get much easier.

When I meet with an individual for a progress update, there are three results I typically see. They've made good progress, they've made little or no progress, or they are stuck because they don't have everything they need.

If they've made good progress, I want to recognize what they've done well and ask questions to help them learn from their progress.

For example, I might ask questions like:

- Which of your strengths did you use to get this accomplished?
- Who observed you as you executed this goal? How did you leverage that for them to learn and grow in their leadership?
- What is the most important next step you need to take?

If they have made little or no progress, I want to redirect them to help them get back on track. In this case, I might ask questions like:

- What has been the biggest challenge you've faced with your goal?
- If you were to evaluate your efforts so far, what would you say you needed to do differently?
- How do you need to adjust your schedule over the next two weeks, so you can make progress on this goal?
- What is the most important next step you need to take?

If they are stuck because they don't have what they need, then I want to resource them. So I would ask questions like:

- What has prevented you from making progress with this goal?
- What do you need from me to help move this goal forward?
- Who do you know (or who can I introduce you to) who can help provide the information, wisdom, or advice you need to make progress with this goal?
- What is the most important next step you need to take?

Mark #5: Great Coaches Take Advantage of Spontaneous Development Opportunities

Is someone on your team feeling frustrated? Good!

It can be good that they are frustrated. That tells you a lot about them. It tells you they're not content with the status quo. It tells you they're a person with a sense of drive. It tells you they're a person who sees things as they should be. They don't settle. They're not content.

As I work on my craft, my wife sometimes laughs and says, "You're never satisfied, are you?" And I'm not. Life's too short. There's too much to experience. Too much to accomplish. Of course I'm frustrated. I want more! Not more for selfish reasons.

Not more for me. I want to make a better contribution. I want to make a difference for the kingdom. I want to see things move forward.

Forward progress does not happen without frustration.

In seminary, Dr. Howard Hendricks would give us challenging homework assignments that stretched our thinking as well as our abilities. Once we came back to class, he would ask, "Are you sufficiently frustrated?" We would reply with a collective, "Yes!" That's when he would smile and say, "Good, you're learning." That's when I learned to put a high premium on frustration. Frustration can help you forge a path forward. It can push you past the common to the uncommon. Frustration can be the forerunner to discovery. If you're not frustrated, it's likely you're not learning. If you're not frustrated, you're probably sitting in a comfort zone that ultimately turns into a danger zone.

Let your frustration fuel you. Discontent can be the driver of new discoveries.

One of the ways frustration fuels you is by pressing you to consider the ever-present opportunities for training that happen around you all the time. If you get frustrated with something that someone on your team does, rather than throwing up your hands in despair or venting about them in private, why not turn that frustration into a prayer that the Lord would open a strategic chance for you to speak truth and provide training for this person.

This is much like parenting. Anyone who has parented kids through adolescence knows that they are not always positioned to hear what they need to hear in order to make sense out of life. We can say the very same thing at two separate times and find two very differing responses. We might get frustrated with our kids for their rebellion or failure to listen. We can either react with scorn, or we can turn this frustration into a chance to speak words of grace and life to them. At times, God seems to open a unique door of receptivity in their hearts that allows us to share truth in a way that resonates.

The same is true for those on our team. We need to seek out the times when they are uniquely positioned to hear what we have to say. Often, this learning happens at the point of their own frustration. They get exasperated with a situation or circumstance and throw up their hands in despair. It's often in these moments that we can intersect their frustration with truth. However, this is usually only fruitful if we've been praying for God to give us the right opportunity to do so, and we've carefully considered what needs to be said.

Mark #6: Great Coaches Approach the Work as a Relationship Rather Than a Project

Let's play a game of word association. What word comes to mind when I say goal setting?

When I ask that question to a group of people, I get a variety of answers. Excited, motivated, inspired. Those are some of the positive responses. But I also get frustrated, hesitant, fearful, apprehensive.

Goal setting is an extremely valuable process for forward progress. However, each January when it's time for goal setting, many employees enter the process with fear and trepidation. Though most people would agree that the concept of goal setting is smart, the common application and expression of it is negative. Employees are told to write their goals and turn them in, but they never actually have a discussion with their supervisor about what they've written. They never receive encouragement or coaching around those goals, so the whole process feels like a box-ticking exercise rather than an active effort to help, based in the context of a loving relationship.

There are people out there who love goal setting because they have had a positive experience. They had supervisor who worked with them to establish practical, relevant goals that were aligned with the mission of the organization as well as with the strengths of the individual. That supervisor then had regular conversations to help coach, encourage, and champion the leader toward progress of those goals.

One of the best ways to put goals in the context of a relationship is to connect the work to the persons overall sense of purpose and meaning in life. Why write a goal if the person has no desire to accomplish it, or if they don't feel excited to pursue it? My guess is that so percent of the goals people write for their work are an exercise in futility rather than an expression of their passion.

One of the most important questions we can ask someone writing a goal is, "Why do you want to accomplish this goal?" At the top of each of my personal goals I answer that question.

For example, one of my goals is to create a new training tool that church leaders can use in staff meetings. My why is because pastors can struggle to use staff meeting time to help their staff continue to grow. Providing this tool will solve that problem, and it excites me to expand my development influence as the author of this type of tool.

Leading and goal setting in the context of a relationship would be much easier for us and those we lead if we follow a few simple rules:

Demonstrate a high confidence in your people. I've discovered the higher the confidence I have in people, the higher the confidence they have in themselves. When people have a high confidence in themselves, they're more likely to take greater risks and innovate in ways that add greater value to the ministry.

Praise progress not perfection. Imagine the difference it would make if leaders stopped looking for what people are doing wrong and started looking for what people are doing right-and then praised their progress. Team members would begin to discover and maximize their strengths. And that's always a win for an organization.

Establish shared expectations resulting in performance outcomes.

If you don't establish shared expectations, you'll experience shared frustrations. One of the wisest things you can do is talk to your people about what their performance will look like in the future, through goal setting, not just what it looked like in the past.

Give people the tools and resources they need to do their job well. Tools and resources will not only help your team be successful but also feel successful. Oftentimes it's not a lack of commitment or competency that creates poor performance; it's a lack of the right tools. And when you provide the tools they need, they will feel your support, and be encouraged.

Smile, laugh, and enjoy what you do. When you enjoy what you do, that joy spreads to the team. A simple smile is an expression that communicates that you love being there, and you love what you do. It's amazing how much smiling and humor can create a work culture people love. So, make sure you are enjoying meeting with your team members in a one-on-one coaching session. Lighten up, smile, laugh, let them know you enjoy being with them.

Lead from trust rather than from suspicion. If you lead from a position of suspicion, you create a tentative team. They will be guarded and operate out of fear. If you fail to establish a culture of trust, you've failed to establish a spirit of team.

Make it meaningful. Let's face it, sometimes the work our team does feels very menial. As a leader of a department, you know it all works together to make the mission move forward. But it can be easy for your team to forget. So make the work they do

meaningful by always pointing them to the big-picture vision, celebrating the wins, and showing them that their contribution makes a difference.

Conclusion

I hope this material will not only help you coach those you lead based on their performance goals, but also challenge you to set personal goals for your own life.

When I was a Dallas Seminary student, Dr. Howard Hendricks, who I mentioned earlier, had us write one-, five-, ten-, and twenty-year goals for our lives. It was a difficult assignment, but one of the most practical of my seminary career. I used that twelve-page document as a guide for my life for many years after I graduated seminary. Hendricks told us, "Show me a person with a set of well-defined goals, and I'll show you a person on their way to achieving results."

Since that time, goal setting has been a consistent discipline in my life, not just for my work but for my personal life as well. Every December, I spend the month praying and processing what God wants to do in and through my life in the upcoming year. While you may not use these exact questions, I encourage you to use these to help you process what God wants to do in your life in the next year.

- What one word do I want to characterize my life next year?
- What are three skills need to grow in to accelerate my dream?
- Where do I need to grow in my character/walk with God?
- What habits/rhythms do I need to tweak or revive to achieve greater momentum?
- What do I need to stop doing?
- What do I need to do more of?
- What does God want me to focus on physically, spiritually, relationally, and vocationally over the next year?