

SUMMARY

LEAD LIKE A COACH

KAREN MORELY



QuickRead
FREE BOOK SUMMARIES

Summary of “Lead Like a Coach” by Karen Morely

Written by Lea Schullery

How to Get the Most Out of Any Team

Introduction

5

The Main Goal of Leaders in the Workplace is to Motivate Employees

6

Leaders Not Only Need to Meet Physical Needs but also Emotional Needs

8

Coaches Feel Less Stress While Getting Better Results

9

Coaches Can Better the Company Culture

10

Engage in Coaching Conversations

12

Reframe the Way You Think About Feedback

14

Structure Your Workplace Like a Video Game

16

Final Summary

18



**DO YOU WANT THIS BOOK
AS AN 20-MINUTE AUDIOBOOK?**



**Get the key insights of non-fiction books
in minutes instead of hours. Listen to
our free audiobooks while you workout
or on your commute to work.**



**DOWNLOAD
OUR FREE APP**



Introduction

In today's world, life seems to move faster than ever. And as the pace of life increases, we have higher expectations of what we should do with our time. Our expectations are rising, and leaders are feeling the pressure. They are expected to get more done, be available 24/7, and respond as if all the information is always at their fingertips. Even more, leaders are expected to help their team members be the best they can be and are responsible for their resilience and happiness - talk about pressure! Luckily, author Karen Morely has an approach to help you lighten the burden you may feel and give you more energy. She states, "By refocusing the way you engage with your team members you can double their engagement and get more and better work done." If you care about the people you lead, care about their success, and want to make a positive impact on their stakeholders, families, and communities, then this approach is for you. So what's the secret to being a great leader? Becoming a coach!

When it comes to being a coach, your job is to give up control which is likely one of the hardest things you can do. Many leaders believe that if your team is doing all the work, what will be left for you? How will you add value? Well, you will be the coach, of course! Unfortunately, organizations today don't always make it easy to adopt a coaching culture. Instead, they operate using an early 20th-century theory when organizations saw humans as machines and the job of the boss was to create order. Today, we understand that the role of authority needs to shift, which is where the value of coaching becomes obvious. By adopting a coaching style in your leadership, your team will feel more inspired, committed, and satisfied.

The Main Goal of Leaders in the Workplace is to Motivate Employees

Workplaces of the 21st century are vastly different from the workplaces of the past. At the beginning of the twentieth century, employment typically consisted of agriculture and manufacturing. Men and women worked in factories and on farms, completing manual labor that was arduous, repetitive, and dull. As a result, humans were viewed like the machines they used, and companies followed strict hierarchies with leaders at the top and labor workers at the bottom.

This hierarchy led to a controlling management style, which may have worked for the time when the main job of employees was to perform the mindless tasks assigned to them. In the 21st century, the workplace is no longer such a strict, clearly defined place. Today, the jobs of employees are much more abstract and hierarchies are far less rigid and strict. Instead, the modern workplace involves organizing people and time, building relationships among staff and customers, completing copious amounts of research, and creating unique content. Unlike the dull labor of the past, employees aren't more productive simply because someone barks orders at them to work faster, harder, or longer. In fact, just the opposite is true, and employees find intense pressure to be more stressful, making them less motivated.

In today's workplace, the main objective of authority is to motivate workers to do their best. This is why we no longer need managers - we need leaders. A 2016 study by Gallup researchers Nink and Robison proved that employees perform better when they are happy and motivated. The study showed that highly motivated teams have lower staff turnover, less absenteeism, fewer safety incidents, better customer satisfaction, and greater overall productivity. Unfortunately, a 2017 study by Gallup showed that only $\frac{1}{3}$ of the workforce is motivated to work. So how can leaders motivate their employees? By coaching! The coaching model of leadership

works to motivate people because it is about treating people with respect, emphasizing learning and development, and distributing power and freedom in the workplace.

Leaders Not Only Need to Meet Physical Needs but also Emotional Needs

Modern managers of today feel the constant pressure to produce results, after all, their performance depends on it. To deal with the pressure, managers often focus their energy on the work that needs to get done. This approach may be productive in the short term but will have detrimental effects in the long term as team members burn out and forget why they were working so hard in the first place. But when managers adopt a coaching approach to their leadership, they focus on keeping their team members motivated in the long run.

This means that leaders must provide their team members with the time and resources they need to effectively get their work done. Additionally, leaders must also meet the emotional needs of their team by providing them with the freedom to plan their own work priorities, and by fostering a genuine connection among staff members. Team members must feel like a valued member of the team to feel motivated to continue to work hard and be successful. To meet these emotional needs, a leader must model the desired behavior. For instance, showing warmth to your team members will result in them being warm in return. You can also demonstrate that you trust your team by giving them responsibility and freedom to make decisions about their own work. When you give them freedom, they will return the freedom by seeking direction from others, not you.

Lastly, employees must feel psychologically safe at work if you want them to do their best. Psychological safety is about the ability to express oneself without fear of repercussions. For example, when a team member needs help with a task, they should feel confident to approach a fellow team member. Team members should also feel confident to speak up in meetings by voicing concerns or contributing ideas. Ultimately, people should feel like they can be themselves at work. After all, if they can't bring their entire identity, they won't be able to bring their full motivation either.

Coaches Feel Less Stress While Getting Better Results

As we mentioned previously, one of the most difficult things a leader can do is give up control. With so much already on their plate, taking on the role of coach might seem overwhelming, and learning how to give up control might be difficult for some. But when you delegate tasks and give responsibilities to your team, the coach will eventually have less pressure and less to worry about. Instead, a coach is tasked with ensuring the team is prepared to complete the tasks and fulfill the responsibilities given to them.

This is where the traditional model of leadership is flipped on its head. Instead of taking full control and exerting your power over your team, coaching is all about sharing power equally among the team and giving them the freedom to exercise that power however they please. Even more, when a coach delegates responsibilities, they free up their time and energy which allows them to focus on more important tasks. Even more importantly, sharing the power and responsibility lets team members feel as if they are valued and trusted. In turn, they will value and trust you as a leader and become more motivated to show up and do their best each day.

Take Jackie, for example, a manager at the e-commerce company Next Jump who was motivated to rise in the company as quickly as possible. Unfortunately, she was too focused on her own goals and her career stayed stagnant. After speaking with author Karen Morely, Jackie adopted a coaching approach in her leadership role. She focused not on herself but on the needs of her team. As a result, she was able to get to know them individually and delegate tasks that worked with their strengths. She understood how to make her team succeed, and in turn, they became motivated to succeed.

Coaches Can Better the Company Culture

Study after study reveals that the most common reason an employee leaves a company is because of a bad boss. On the other hand, having a really good boss is the most common reason employees stick around. With this in mind, it is easy to see how bad leaders can lead to the loss of talented workers, causing the company to lose money hiring and training new employees. And the biggest mistake companies make is setting strict hierarchies between senior management and junior staff. These rigid divisions make junior staff feel isolated and disconnected from the senior staff, making them feel intimidated and less likely to voice concerns or contribute valuable ideas.

A coaching approach, however, bridges the division between leaders and their teams. Coaches understand the importance of building relationships with each team member, no matter their status in the company. Additionally, they spend time communicating face-to-face with their team instead of delegating tasks from a distance. By doing so, they cultivate strong relationships with their team members and position themselves in a place to provide the support and encouragement team members need to be at their best.

For example, author Karen Morely once worked with a mining company to transition its management style to follow the coaching model - a decision made by the company after an internal survey revealed the low morale and lack of team spirit among team members. After making the switch, a company executive reported witnessing a wave of energy sweep across the company; furthermore, communication between staff and managers become normalized, and the staff found their managers to be less intimidating.

So why is coaching so successful? Well, company culture is infectious. This means that when a company puts coaching and support at the center of

their actions, staff and leaders will adopt a supportive spirit in everything they do.

Engage in Coaching Conversations

What if I told you that being a coach is like being Michelangelo? You see, Michelangelo once explained that he simply saw the Angel in the marble and carved it to set it free. Michelangelo saw the potential of what the marble could be, and as a coach, it is your job to see the potential in your team members and “carve” them out to unleash it.

One technique coaches use to help them discover the potential of their team members is scheduling coaching conversations with each individual. Unlike an ordinary work meeting where employees are subjected to hour-long presentations on quarterly figures, a coaching conversation allows team members the opportunity to voice concerns and offer up ideas to their boss. During such conversations, a coach should do two things: ask questions and actively listen.

When you ask team members questions, you begin to form a connection with that team member. It shows you’re interested in what they have to say, and they feel valued and heard in return. Additionally, one-on-one conversations are the best way for a coach to learn about the challenges each person faces in the workplace. It is also important in these conversations that you actively listen. Your instinct, as a leader, may be to immediately offer up advice and solutions; however, giving in to this temptation is a mistake. When you provide solutions, you are depriving your team member of finding solutions for herself. Instead, you should demonstrate patience and watch your struggling team members take initiative and learn to not be so dependent on you.

This doesn’t mean that you should simply stop offering up help. Your job as a coach will be to guide the person’s thinking by listening carefully and asking leading questions. For instance, asking questions like, “How do you think that went?” and “How could you have done that differently?” will help guide your team members to reflect on past decisions and behaviors. Furthermore, questions like “What are your options?,” “What steps could

you take to get there?” and “How could you implement this?” will help guide your team members to think about possible solutions. Ultimately, actively listening and asking leading questions will allow team members to resolve their own problems, allowing them to become self-motivated to find solutions.

Reframe the Way You Think About Feedback

As a coach, you'll certainly need to do more than just listen and ask questions. You'll also need to provide feedback to your team members to let them know where their strengths are and where they need to improve. Unfortunately, a 2017 study at Gallup revealed that only one in five people think the feedback they receive from their boss helps them improve. The other 80% either receive no feedback at all, find it useless, or even find it discouraging. Perhaps this is why the mere thought of feedback is frightening for many.

It is this aversion to feedback that causes many managers to avoid giving feedback altogether; meanwhile, team members are uncomfortable asking for it. As a result, team members miss out on receiving effective feedback that will allow them to grow and thrive. The problem is that people often feel that feedback is too often presented as criticism or judgment for when things go wrong. This is because managers forget that giving feedback about things done well is equally important. When good behavior is reinforced, employees know what they are doing right and understand what is expected of them.

More importantly, positive feedback is exactly what employees need for a motivational boost because it shows people that they are a valued team member. In fact, managers should give more positive than negative feedback. In the book *The Progress Principle*, motivation researchers Amabile and Kramer asked 238 employees from seven different companies to keep a daily diary of their work experiences. Their results showed that negative events and feedback had a far greater impact on motivation than positive events and feedback. This is because people spend far more emotional and cognitive energy processing negative information. Therefore, negative feedback should be sandwiched between positive feedback or even reframed as a positive opportunity for growth and development.

According to coach and author Marshall Goldsmith, we should rethink the way we think about feedback altogether. Goldsmith suggests that we see feedback as *feedforward*. He explains how feedback often focuses on what someone did wrong in the past; feedforward, however, highlights the things a person can do better in the future. So don't be afraid to give "feedforward" to your team members and use it as a powerful motivator to help them work hard and improve themselves.

Structure Your Workplace Like a Video Game

All too often managers use promotions or pay bonuses as a motivational tool to keep team members working hard. Many studies, however, have proven that extrinsic motivations aren't necessarily the most effective. One study, in particular, conducted by Gallup's Amabile and Kramer asked almost 700 managers to identify the top motivators in their workplace. The most frequent answers were extrinsic motivators, like extra pay. Research suggests, however, that employees are more motivated by intrinsic rewards - those that make them feel that their work is meaningful and enjoyable.

So how can a leader simply make work more meaningful? Well, leaders can't do this but coaches can! As a coach, your job is to encourage a person to interpret her work as more meaningful, and the best way to do this is to set goals and regularly remind team members of their progress. Think of this framework like that of a video game. Video games are so addictive because they usually construct a clear, elaborate progress system within the game. To get to the next level, the player is given clear objectives and is then given rewards after successfully leveling up. Similarly, coaches should implement a similar structure in the workplace.

Coaches should discuss and define personalized objectives with individual team members to give them something to work towards. The key, however, is that these objectives should be achievable. An achievable goal could be something specific like, "My goal is to receive 10 positive reviews from clients this month." Or it could even be something more general, like "My goal is to gain the confidence to speak out in meetings." And similar to a progress bar in a video game, a coach needs to regularly identify the progress people are making toward their objectives. But how can you do this?

You don't have to schedule progress meetings into your busy calendar; instead, telling your team members about their progress should come

naturally in your day-to-day interactions with your team members. A simple gesture of appreciation is all it takes to make an impact on a person's motivation. As a coach, you should make the most of every little encounter with a team member and give positive encouragement. So, whether you run into someone in the hallway or bump into another in the elevator, take the small opportunity to make it a positive interaction.

Final Summary

The traditional managerial role no longer works in today's modern workplace. Instead, modern workplaces should adopt the coaching leadership model, which prioritizes building strong relationships and fostering a culture of development, learning, and support. When teams are coached instead of managed, team members will become more motivated to get their work done and generally happier people. So to become a coach, you'll need to implement three useful techniques: coaching conversations, constructive feedback, and the use of learning objectives. Once all three techniques are utilized, you'll be on your way to coaching your team to success. Good luck!



**DO YOU WANT THIS BOOK
AS AN 20-MINUTE AUDIOBOOK?**



**Get the key insights of non-fiction books
in minutes instead of hours. Listen to
our free audiobooks while you workout
or on your commute to work.**



**DOWNLOAD
OUR FREE APP**

