

#3 Making sure your coachee is ready (pp.78-79)

Excerpt from: ISBN 0-89106- 187-8

Bacon, T. R. & Spear, K.I. (2003). *Adaptive Coaching: The Art and Practice of a Client-Centered Approach to Performance Improvement.* Mountain View, CA: Davies-Black.

Part 4 The Real Issues: Coachability

As we are assessing clients' real needs, we should also assess how coachable they are. The plain fact is that not everyone can be coached, and both the coach and client should know that up front. A number of factors affect a client's coachability, including the following.

- The client's ego strength (sense of self, pride, humility vs. arrogance)
- The client's feelings of vulnerability-the more vulnerable the person feels, the greater the ego defenses are likely to become and the less coachable he or she may be
- Openness to feedback (the client's willingness to hear and accept messages that disconfirm his or her self-image)
- The client's self-assessment of need, along with a sense of urgency; also, extrinsic indicators of the need for change-such as poor performance numbers, the results of 360-degree feedback, observations from others
- The client's perception of value of the process and the likely outcomes
- The client's trust in the coach
- The client's experience with coaching (favorable, neutral, or unfavorable)
- The client's awareness of the need for change
- The client's fear of consequences if he or she does not seek and accept help; the executive's excitement about the positive outcomes if he or she does change; in short, risk vs. reward
- The client's responsiveness to extrinsic pressure (from boss, peers, or subordinates, the environment)
- Finally, the presence or absence of serious psychological problems

These factors combine in complex ways to determine how willingly a client enters into a coaching relationship and how motivated the client is to change. Helping clients change is the principal purpose of coaching, so it's important to know at the outset of coaching how coachable a client is.