

Christian Coaching [Book Review]

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About the Author

Gary R. Collins is a licensed clinical psychologist with a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from Purdue University. He earned Professional Certified Coach (PCC) credentials from the International Coach Federation and is author of numerous articles and almost 60 published books. These include *Christian Counseling: A Comprehensive Guide*, *How to be a People Helper*, *The Biblical Basis of Christian Counseling*, and *Christian Coaching: Helping Others Turn Potential into Reality*. Gary was general editor of the thirty-volume *Resources for Christian Counseling* series of professional counseling books mostly published in the 1980s, the *Word Christian Counseling Library* of cassette tapes, and the twelve-volume *Contemporary Christian Counseling* series of books that appeared in the early 1990s. In December 2001 NavPress published Gary's book *Christian Coaching*, a book that was revised and updated for publication in 2009. The third edition of *Christian Counseling* (revised, expanded and completely updated) was published by Thomas Nelson publishers in 2007, followed by an accompanying *Casebook of Christian Counseling*, also published by Nelson.

Christian Coaching

Gary Collins (2009) has written an outstanding book entitled *Christian Coaching: Helping Others Turn Potential Into Reality*. Reading the front page of the book can give one a understanding on what Collins is trying to do for people, which is, among others things, to get unstuck. Why does a person goes to coaching in the first place? They go to change something about them. Even with the simplest example of coaching, say a sports team, this can be seen clearly. No one is forced to play on a team (sports, business, family, or otherwise). Each

individual has the ability to quit, to walk off, to simply say ‘I don’t want anything to do with this person.’ The same holds true for Christian coaching.

The word coach described a horse-drawn vehicle—a stagecoach that would get people from where they were to where they wanted to be. A modern bus does the same thing, and often these vehicles are called coaches. Most often today, coaches are people who help athletes and teams more from one place to another that is better and where they want to be.

Coaching helps people who want to:

Get unstuck

Build their confidence

Expand their vision for the future

Fulfill their dreams

Unlock their potential

Enhance their skills

Move through transitions

Move forward toward their goals

Good coaching helps people to know what they could become, overcome self-defeating habits or insecurities, manage relationships, develop new competencies, and build effective ways to keep improving.

Coaches help to stimulate vision. Many individuals and churches have no clear vision. They keep doing what they have done for years, without much change and with little expectation that things will be different. Coaches work with individuals and organizations as they think beyond the present, more clearly envision the future, and plan how to get there.

The next 3 chapters of the book describes about the leadership, relationship, and the listening which a good coach should have. After reading all the chapters, it has come into light that coaching is beyond having good leadership qualities. I personally feel the coaching is far beyond then coaches involved games.

A good leader is the one who has a clear vision about his goal for his/ ministry and who is willing to go above and beyond to reach his people. As 1 Timothy 3:1-4 Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task.

Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him, and he must do so in a manner worthy of full respect. Based on the above, quotes these are the true qualities which a coach must have.

Good leaders are people who know how to think, see situations clearly, and be creative even as they are flexible. And their ultimate success as leaders is to be known by both their ability to produce new leaders and the effective performance of these leaders when they are on their own.

As coaching grows in influence and as more people understand what coaching involves, how will we see coaching and leadership tie together more closely? The following are a few observations.

1. Coaching and leadership are about experience.
2. Coaching and leadership are about relationships.
3. Coaching and leadership are about character and competence.
4. Leadership and coaching are about community.

First, the coach must take the lead in building a partnership that will persist and keep the client engaged over time. Second, he needs to be clear about the assumptions that him and his client bring to the relationship. This includes clarifying what coaching is and what it is not. Coaching is guaranteed to stall if they try to move forward with unclear or different assumptions.

Third, in the beginning it can be helpful to explore the issues that the client wants to discuss. All of this will enable to evaluate the client, including the pros and cons of working together. Finally, at some time the coach will need to have an agreement about how the coaching will take place. Together these five issues become the core of the coaching relationship

Coaching is an alliance between two equals that exists for the purpose of meeting the client's needs and goals. This coequal, coactive focus is what sets coaching apart from counseling, mentoring, consulting, and other more top-down relationships.

Coaching begins with the development of a trusting relationship characterized by mutual respect and commitment. Good leaders are people who knows how to think, see situations clearly, and be creative even as they are flexible. And their ultimate success as leaders is to be

known by both their ability to produce new leaders and the effective performance of these leaders when they are on their own.

Client Fulfillment

Clients come to coaching looking for some kind of fulfillment in various areas of their life, but it is not always clear what fulfillment for a client actually means. How the coach helps the client define fulfillment is discussed in this chapter. So areas such as fulfillment and purpose, fulfillment and life purpose and fulfillment and the gremlin are touched on.

Tools such as the Wheel of Life which can help the client define what fulfillment means to them are explained. Overall this chapter is about understanding what fulfillment means to the client and how the coach works with the client to work towards fulfillment.

Client Balance

A key area in the client's life that coaching helps with is trying to discover balance. The chapter defines a seven-step approach designed to lead clients from powerlessness to possibility and finally into action to create a more balanced life.

ASSUMPTIONS ABOUT COACHING:

Coaching...

- Is collaborative partnership between the coach and person being coached
- Involves dialogue rather than advice giving, disciplining, or therapy
- Is built on trust, integrity, self-discipline and accountability

- Is results-oriented, focused on reaching goals
- Discusses weaknesses and obstacles but emphasizes strengths and positive change
- Assumes that people are resourceful and able to set goals and reach them
- Lets clients define and move toward their goals with God's help and coach's assistance
- Helps people reach their peak performance
- Assumes that life is integrated – we cannot assume that one's work, family life, personal history, spirituality, or lifestyle can be put into neat compartments
- Embraces change as something that is always occurring, sometimes confusing, often positive, and usually growth producing (88-90)

It's a core assumption of coaching that the client sets the agenda and that the coach is nonjudgmental and as nondirective as possible. (91)

Coaches use at least three kinds of listening skills: informal listening, active listening, and intuitive listening.

- Informal listening. This is most common. It's the way we listen in our everyday conversations. Often it involves listening for facts or information.

- Active listening. Active listening is different because the listener concentrates on what is being said, pays close attention, shows awareness of the speaker, and sometimes makes brief comments or asks clarifying questions.

- Intuitive listening. This entails a high level of concentration and awareness. The coach listens for inconsistencies that the client may not notice in the conversation, attitudes and emotions that come out with the words, topics that resurface at different times, values and beliefs that can be discerned from what is being expressed, dreams for the future, frustrations, and self-sabotaging behavior that prevents progress.

Coaching Process:

AWARENESS: Where are we now?

VISION: Where do we want to go?

STRATEGY AND ACTION: How do we get there?

OBSTACLES: What gets in the way?

One of your greatest tasks as a coach is to help others uncover, face, and get past the self-defeating behaviors and mental self-talk that hinders progress. Every coach and everyone who comes for coaching has a mind-set. Some call this a life perspective, a mental model, or a worldview. This is an inner set of beliefs and assumptions about how the world works. Values are difficult to define and hard to identify. They are the foundational beliefs that anchor our lives, the things that matter to us, the non-negotiable characteristics that most clearly define our identities. The same is true for effective coaches. You will never reach your maximum effectiveness as a coach until you are aware of your values.

People being coached will never move forward until they deal with the issue of values. A clear awareness of values can help in determining one's vision for future and can guide the process for achieving goals. Most coaching is not about changing values; it is more about

clarifying values and helping people recognize values, live with them, and then build on their values as they move toward their goals.

As a personal inner force, passion drives us forward. But most people also need a mental picture of where they are going. They need a vision of what can be possible. Vision pulls us forward. Once that vision clearly is in mind, we can deal with the practical strategy steps of getting where we want to go. Even so, there are general characteristics that coaches are likely to discover in their cross-cultural coaching with next-generation, postmodern leaders: Values and experiences are more important than vision casting and reaching goals.

Images and stories are more valued than words and facts. Building community may be more important than building individual success. Active participation and ownership are preferred over passive submission to authority and professional expertise.

This book has reopened my desire to ensure that I am living a focused, balanced life so that as I coach others my life (presently) can be used as an encouragement for others. Collins refers to this as someone who may be a “Protean” or those who are “constant learners, open to new experiences, resilient in the face of transitions, future oriented, and not afraid to initiate new challenges.” Coaching is not just for someone who is stuck it is for those who want to get to that next level. For the Christian that next level may be to fully submit to the leanings of the Lord. I have learned how to use my own experiences to demonstrate to others how God has worked in and through my life to bring me to where I am. Vulnerability is important to the Christian coach to be able to create authenticity between the coach and a client.

Collins concludes with the statement “in times of radical change, it gets progressively harder to anticipate the future” This is a freedom for me, knowing that I cannot see the future

helps remind me that God is in control. This brings great relief when I am coaching someone. This perspective helps keep me (and hopefully my clients) grounded in truth. That truth – that we cannot anticipate the future – should help stabilize us in those times of ‘radical change.’ I applaud Gary Collins for creating a breath of fresh air that has solidified where my foundation lays, and where the foundation of my clients should be. Coaching is a way to become open to your clients to create authenticity which will allow for God to do His work