

A Study on Executive Coaching – An Indian Perspective

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ABSTRACT

When we hear the term 'coaching', the immediate thought that comes in our mind is either it must be related to academics or must be to some sports. Let's say, it is something related to academics or sports. The Oxford dictionary of English defines a 'coach' as an 'instructor' or 'trainer' in context of sports and as a 'private tutor' in context of academics. Coaching is defined normally as a more specialized form of training. But what is coaching when it comes to business executives in organizations? Does it involve the same kind of specialized training? Is it a training activity in the first place, or something more? The answer to such questions will come when we try to understand executive coaching process. This particular study tries to understand coaching, few coaching models that are practiced in business organizations and also tries to bring out an Indian perspective of coaching.

Keywords: Executive Coaching, Coaching models, Coaching process, GROW model, Powerful questions, Ideal Coaching, Guru Shishya Relationship.

INTRODUCTION:

There are many definitions of coaching given by many authors and coaching institutions. (Warner, 2013) According to Eric Parsloe "A process that enables learning and development to occur and thus performance to improve. A successful coach requires knowledge and understanding of the process as well as the variety, skills and techniques appropriate to the context in which coaching takes place". (Whitmore, 2002) Coaching is "the process of empowering others". From the viewpoint of professional executive coaching, ICF defines coaching as "An ongoing relationship which focuses on you taking action towards the realization of your visions, goals or desires. Coaching uses a process of inquiry and personal discovery to build your level of awareness and responsibility, and provides you with structure, support, and feedback".

After going through the above definitions, it is clear that coaching needs to follow a good process which enables better learning. Coaching involves helping and empowering others. Coaching involves transformation by bringing about a change in behaviour. The coach acts as a support function. Also, it's a long-term relationship to make coachee better in something which the coachee wants to improve. In Indian context, this understanding had been since time immemorial because 'Guru' and 'Shishya' system of learning was similar to this. This particular study is qualitative in nature. It is directed towards understanding the essence of executive coaching by studying the literature, recent coaching models and Indian context of 'Guru' and 'Shishya' system of learning. In the end the researcher tries to bring out whether coaching as an activity is possible in an ideal situation.

LITERATURE REVIEW:

Coaching as a practice came up to corporate executives mainly because of its popularity in the field of sports. In (Gallwey, 1974) the author states that as a sportsman a player plays two games- outer game, inner game. The outer game is the one which is visible to the audience whereas the inner game is played inside the mind of the player. Though inner game is not visible to us but it is the reason why a player succeeds or fails. He coined the term 'attitude' of game. Secondly, he talked about the relationship between a coach and player which is more of instructive in nature. The behaviour of the player becomes more like 'should' or 'should not'. This pattern of doing things makes the player more predictable of his actions. He also found that how players interfere with their learning by judging and criticizing themselves. There are two such interferences- Self 1, Self 2. In 'Self 1' the player sees the tennis ball as a 'threat' whereas in 'Self 2' the player just takes things naturally. Self-2 is more about discovery rather than thinking about doing because 'experience' is important. To tackle the Self-1 issue Gallwey said a player should be made aware about three things- "Awareness about the present situation", "choice of moving in appropriate direction", "Trust in own self as a natural person". There are some qualities that help in bringing the shift, example, acknowledging people, accepting things and not to keep thinking about old habits rather start doing new things. He used the acronym STOP which stands for 'step back', 'think', 'organize', 'proceed'. In (Gallwey, 2000), the author went on to explain that how the inner game discussions which he had mentioned in his book "The Inner Game of Tennis" are very much visible in working environment too. He not only talked about the importance of coaching executives but also how managers can be useful in this coaching exercise. He mentions about a coaching experiment in which managers will be asked to break into three and do a role play in which one manager will be a coach, one as the client and the third one the observer. The coach has to only listen to the client. The coach has to be in the same way until the client feels retrieved. The third person has to only see if the ownership of the problem has shifted. This is one of the prime responsibilities of a coach. He further emphasizes on the thinking process of a manager which influences the decision making. He mentions it in a way "eavesdropping on a thought process". He also tells that how a coach or the manager acting as a coach needs to 'transpose' where he needs to imagine himself in the position of a coachee and try to find out "what am I thinking?" "What do I want?" and so on. These thoughts make a coach more effective.

(Press, 2004) "Coaching is an interactive process through which managers and supervisors aim to solve problems or develop employee capabilities". Coaching is not same as mentoring, training, counselling, or teaching. All these are useful in appropriate situations. Teaching involves giving some knowledge without having any understanding whether the person is able to grasp anything. Training involves helping the person learn something which the trainer knows. Counselling is more about dealing with feelings. Mentoring involves helping the person using prior experience. But coaching involves benefitting the person by something which he already knows. It is done by making him realize the solution which lies within him.

(FME, 2013) The managerial level people need to develop those who report to them. This is done by the means of coaching, training, mentoring, and counselling. Coaching has to happen one to one and there is no specified content pre decided. The interaction is two ways where the coach controls the whole process through his questions. In training, there is always a pre decided agenda i.e. what is going to be the key learning, therefore there is a content ready. The whole process is only focussed on appropriate learning. Coaching and training work well together. A mentor always tries to share his experience. Here the focus is on career development of the executive which makes it completely future oriented. In coaching the coach is focussed on current issues faced by the executive. There is a well-designed time frame with structured meetings. Coaching doesn't involve sharing of any experience. Coaching as a profession is different from counselling because counselling involves going deep into the causes of the issues which tend to become long term. Coaching will deal with only issues which affect the work. In counselling there is a lot of discussion which ends up as an agenda set with the counsellor whereas in coaching the coachee sets the agenda. There are certain responsibilities to both the coach as well as the coachee. The coach has to see to it that the focus is always on a clearly defined goal, the coachee's thinking process is well directed and also deliver a well-constructed feedback. The coachee's responsibility is to generate ideas, take appropriate actions to reach the goal and to report the progress to his coach.

In (Whitmore, 2002) the author says that there are primarily four kinds of management styles that a manager follows. There are some important qualities like empathy, integrity, detachment etc. required in a coach but there are also 'polarities' of management which include- 'Dictate' i.e. the boss controls the subordinates the way he wants. The problem here is 'recall' i.e. people tend to forget when things are imposed upon them. 'Persuade' i.e. the boss tries to be democratic by trying to convince the juniors to do something. The approach which follows is 'debates' where in there is discussion between both boss and subordinates to pool their resources and skills in order to get a proper direction. Then, comes 'abdicates' where the managers intentionally leave their jobs in the

hands of the subordinates. The issue here is if the subordinates don't have the required knowledge than he may not perform as per the expectations but many times it is done with a good intention so that subordinates can learn on their own. After all of the above mentioned points research has shown that most of the managers lie between the extremes. 'Coaching' is totally on a different plane. In coaching style, the manager's intention is only to listen from the subordinates. In the process of questioning both develop clarity about the action plan. It leads to a situation "Boss knows what is going on" and "Performer chooses to take responsibility". The constraints that today's managers talk about are "time to coach", "how to enhance quality", "how to facilitate learning". If a manager starts being like a coach, then no need for him to send the staff for training rather simultaneous discussion will let it happen. Coaching will lead to high awareness which in turn will lead to 'better quality'. Coaching also facilitates learning. As the author says- "Getting the job done well for 250 days a year, developing people for 250 days a year, and a lot of self-belief".

(Berard, 2005) "The practice of coaching is often confused with performance counselling. In reality, the two are very different. Coaching involves a collaborative relationship between the employee and the manager". It has also been found that, coaching with training adds more value and helps in overall organizational growth. Many organizations are adapting to this trend. To have a successful coaching process run, there has to be a good coaching environment created in the organization. It can be done by the following ways-

1. "Gain executive and upper management commitment".
2. "Establish training in effective coaching techniques for managers"- This is done by problem solving, dialogues with employees and balanced feedback.
3. "Incorporate a recognition and reward system"- This has to be done to keep the employees motivated.
4. "Create a system for tracking and measuring results"- The results which have to be achieved should be linked to the business strategies.
5. "Make people responsible and hold them accountable".
6. "Communicate details of the initiative"- Every new initiative has to be communicated within the employees.

(Robert Hicks, n.d.) There is always presence of virtual organizations where individuals come together to exploit each other's skills for achieving a common strategic objective. Coaching and leadership go hand in hand. Good coaching develops the attitude and behaviour necessary to lead a group. Some of the important characteristics which coaches need to have include-

1. Inspiring others by reminding the employees of the purpose of the organization.
2. Showing compassion at times necessary.
3. Integrity is something which each and every individual needs to have. It will always keep things within the ethical barriers.

Therefore, a continuous coaching process will always lead to transformational leadership.

(Goldsmith, n.d.) The author says that it is important for leaders to follow up by discussing with co-workers and do regular progress. It is very critical for leaders to look inside their hearts. Therefore, when they decide to go for coaching, they should take it as a necessity for change, otherwise it becomes a waste of time and money. It is not important for leaders to respond to everything that their co-workers ask for. It is not about being popular by that way but important to 'listen'. In coaching lot of sharing of idea happens between the coach and the coachee. The coachee needs to use only those ideas which he can work upon with his subordinates and review the behaviour change. There has to be strict guidelines regarding leadership development. It should not be a formality, rather a compulsion for those who decide to be leaders. Therefore, for a leader it is important to practice their understanding. This practice can be reviewed by setting numerical targets which makes them likable to achieve, example, how often are we rude to people, mentoring colleagues etc.

(Goldsmith, 2003) The author gives some basic checklist that a coach needs to do. They are-

1. The person you are going to coach has to be committed.
2. The company should not have intentions to get rid of the person.
3. The person may lack required job skills i.e. a bad programmer will not turn into a good programmer.
4. The person's vision may not be appropriate i.e. he doesn't know where he has to go.
5. The person may have been involved in some unethical activity. In such cases, people should be sued rather than coached

Recent coaching models:

A model refers to the set of activities that have to be performed in order to reach the end goal. There are many coaching models which have been coined by authors around the world. Before discussing the various models, there is actually one model which became more popular worldwide in terms of its application. That's the GROW model. In his book, Coach John Whitmore brings out the importance of using GROW model of coaching. In (Whitmore, 2002) the author says GROW stands for "Goals" i.e. setting for short and long term, "Reality" i.e. know the current situation, "Options: i.e. alternative actions and "What to be done", "When to be done", "by Whom to be done", "Will to do it". Coming to the individual acronyms the author explains-

1. "Goals"- There are two kinds of goals, 1- "End goals", 2- "Performance goals". End goal for a person can be to become a market leader or best sales person etc. Performance goals are identifying the most adequate level of performance which varies. Example- for someone 90% may be the best but for other it might be 95%. It is important for people to take ownership of goals in which they will decide the rules to perform. Goals need to be "SMART" i.e. 'specific', 'measurable', 'agreed', 'realistic', 'time phased', "PURE" i.e. 'positively stated', 'understood', 'relevant', 'ethical', "CLEAR" i.e. 'challenging', 'legal', 'environmentally sound', 'appropriate', 'recorded'.
2. "Reality"- The foundation to reality check is objectivity which is generally filled with distortions. To remove such distortions a coach needs to detach and frame questions. A coach would do this by following the coachee, tapping into his emotions, assessing attitudes and going deep into his awareness level.
3. "Options"- It is about creating alternative actions that are possible. One of the most important factors that acts as a barrier to options is 'negative assumptions' example, "it can't be done", "they would never agree" etc. A good coach will always ask 'what if' to give more way such as "what if you had more staff". Another important factor while assessing the options is 'sorting option' which is done by asking the coachee to analyse the benefits and costs of his actions. When coach has certain options, even he can ask the coachee to assess coach's options and take action. This is by asking "What do you think about" and further.
4. "What" "When" "Who" "Will" - This will involve the coach asking questions of the following kind- "What could you do", "What are you thinking of doing", "When are you going to do", "What obstacles you might meet", "Who needs to know", "What support do you need", "How and when are you going to get the support", "What other considerations do you have", "Rate on a 1-10 scale the degree of certainty you have that you will carry out the actions agreed", "What prevents it from being 10" etc.

Coaching sessions are not at all straight forward. The reasons for being coached can be small as well as big. Therefore, a coach needs to be a good listener, aware and very responsible. The other models that are present are based on each author's own perspective. Whatever be it, the coaching models have to help the coachee to come out of his issue. The models need to follow only the basic guidelines like, coachee is the one who has to lead, a coach is just a support function. Some other such models are-

The four-step model as mentioned in (Press, 2004) includes-

1. "Preparation"- Understand the situation by a good preparation. A good preparation is required from both the sides. The coach requires a good direct observation. A direct observation will always help in identifying strengths and weaknesses better. A series of steps involve here which include, listening carefully, creating hypothesis, estimating the scope of improvement.
2. "Discussion"- It has to be with a plan which is by a mutual agreement between the coach and coachee. Together both the parties have to decide a plan to achieve the standard performance in a systematic way. For a coach it is important to be an active listener as many times he has to listen to the emotions behind any problem.
3. "Active coaching"-After understanding and agreement, the coaching sessions begin. This will involve sharing of ideas by each of them. Then, an action plan is created.
4. "Follow-up"- It's about monitoring the progress, which includes positive feedback and adopting to appropriate approach.

In (Goldsmith, 2003) a behaviour coaching has to be in the following manner-

1. "Involve the person you are coaching in identifying desired attributes for a person in his/her role."
2. "Involve the person you are coaching in determining who can provide meaningful feedback".
3. "Collect feedback" i.e. which may involve asking some anonymous stakeholder to write and give suggestions.
4. "Analyse results" in which the coach may not disclose the name of people but specify the key strengths that the coachee possesses.

5. "Develop an action plan" in which the coachee may identify the important behaviours that he needs to improve upon.
6. "Have the person respond to stakeholder" in which the coachee will try to understand some stakeholders and find out some additional suggestions.
7. "Develop an ongoing follow-up process" i.e. within a period of six months conduct a survey to find out if the behaviour of the person has changed.
8. "Review results and start again" i.e. based on situation of improvement.

According to (Downey, 1999) the TGROW model of coaching includes-

1. "Topic"- It covers the issue that has to be addressed. This can be something which the person being coached has aspired for a long time.
2. "Goal"- This is the end point that has to be achieved.
3. "Reality"- Understanding the current position and situation of the person being coached.
4. "Obstacles"- Identify the hidden constraints and create options.
5. "Wrap-up"- Bring clarity about the issue then make action plans, with proper commitment and support from both the sides.

According to (Paul Z Jackson, 2006) the OSKAR model of coaching includes-

1. "Outcome"- It is very much similar to many models which say about 'goal'. Outcome refers to what the coachee wants to achieve. It is the difference that he wants to see after his problems are vanished.
2. "Scale"- A scale is setup from 0-10 where 10 is the outcome to be achieved and 0 is completely opposite. Small outcomes happen occasionally. That is why the coachee's rating generally lies between 0-10.
3. "Know-how"- It refers to the desired skills that is wanted by the coachee. In this stage many coaches stress upon asking questions. It involves more of drawing out knowledge from the coachee.
4. "Affirm and Action"- Affirm refers to reflecting upon the strengths of the coachee. The coach will affirm the positive qualities of the coachee. This will enhance self-belief. Action refers to determining what's next? It has been seen that small actions on a consistent basis move thing in the right direction.
5. "Review"- We see here that whatever we are doing to build things is working or not. This is also done in the form of 'follow-up' sessions. We also go back to the scale in the beginning and compare it with the current rating.

According to the STEER model of coaching (Anon., n.d.) which stands as-

1. "Spot" the requirements to be met.
2. "Tailor" to the individual what is to be learnt.
3. "Explain" the methods to be used.
4. "Encourage" the coachee to follow your advice.
5. "Review" the progress in coachee.

This particular model is useful only in those situations where tasks require involvement of the coach. Therefore, this model uniquely provides the liberty to the coach to actually demonstrate to the coach the experience and expertise he has.

According to the POSITIVE model of coaching which was brought out by Vincenzo Libri as an addition to the GROW model of Whitmore, the acronym stands (Anon., n.d.)-

1. "Purpose"- This a coach has to know from the coachee by asking questions about what the coachee wants to benefit. The questions can be such as- "What is your goal?" "How do you think coaching will help?" "What do you want to achieve in each coaching session?"
2. "Observations"- After identifying the purpose the coach needs to analyse the current situation from different angles. Questions can be- "What is happening now?" "How do you feel now?" "What's going well for you?" "What's not going so well?" "Why is your goal so important to you?" "How do you think you can reach your goal?"
3. "SMART"- The goals have to be 'specific', 'measurable', 'attainable', 'relevant', 'time bound'. Questions to be asked- "How important is your goal?" "How clear are you on it?" "How long do you have to reach this goal?"
4. "Insight"- The coach needs to understand if the coachee has the confidence to achieve whatever he mentioned. If the coachee feels that the goal is over ambitious, then the coach needs to take coachee back and help in making it more realistic. The questions that can be are- "How excited are you about this goal, on a scale of 1-

10?" "How confident are you that you can achieve this goal on a scale of 1-10?" How challenged do you feel about this goal?"

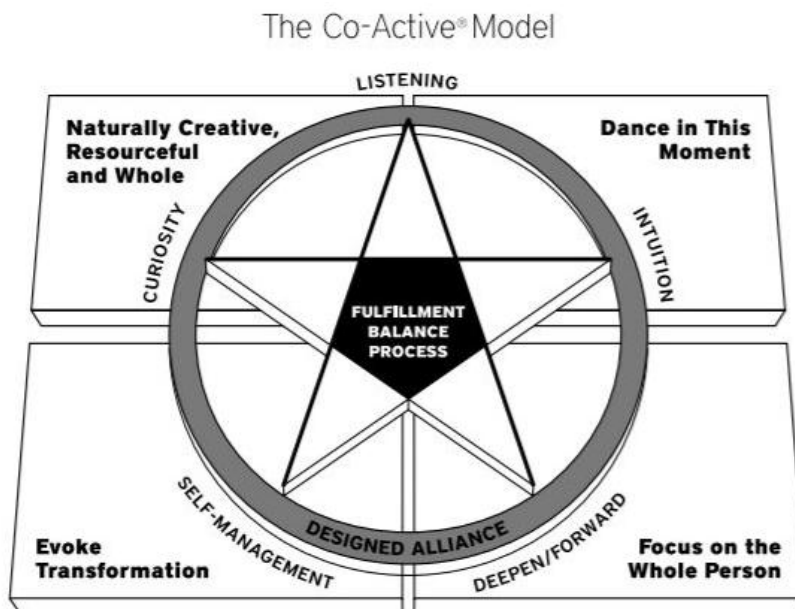
5. "Team"- The coachee will have more enthusiasm if he has good number of people around him. Therefore, the coach needs to make the coachee identify, who can be the people who will support him. Questions- "Who do you feel comfortable sharing this goal with?" "Who has supported you with past goals?" "Who or what inspires you when things get difficult?"
6. "Initiate"- Now the coach needs to make the coachee work upon the goal which is already identified and the coachee also has good support. Questions- "When will you get started with your goal?" "How will you begin?" "How often will you work upon this?" "What will you do if you run into an obstacle or difficulty?"
7. "Value"- The long-term goals need to be broken into smaller goals like daily, weekly, monthly for long term value. Questions- "What preparation work do you need to do before you take specific actions?" "How will you recognise progress?" "How will you celebrate your successes- big or small?"
8. "Encourage"- This encouragement has to happen from the side of a coach in order to keep the coachee motivated. This has to be through good feedback sessions. The questions can be- "How are you progressing towards your goals?" "How can I help you along the way better?" "Have you experienced any difficulty?" "Is the plan we created working well for you?"

According to (Fielden, n.d.) the 'six-step model' for team coaching as prescribed by Zeus & Skiffington happens in the following steps-

1. "Management meetings"- In this step the coach needs to assure the number of team members which is preferably six to eight, needs of the team and also the required resources. This will also help in deciding the format which will follow.
2. "Individual meetings with team members"- There has to be a brief intro session with each of the members separately where the team members may not only introduce but also share some of the barriers faced.
3. "First team meeting"- In this the coach has to meet the team and try to develop a good rapport by conveying the purpose of his coming. He should also try to set the objectives of coaching.
4. "Second meeting"- Here the coach will tell the review of assessments, and try to motivate the team for being better.
5. "Begin formal coaching sessions"- The appropriate method is that of a workshop which can be one coach for six to eight members and two coaches for ten to twelve members.
6. "Management feedback"- Regular feedback has to be provided by the coach to the team.

According to (Henry Kimsey-House, 2011) In "Co-Active coaching model" there are "4 cornerstones" after which there are "5 contexts". They are-

Figure 1: Co-Active Coaching Model Source: (Henry Kimsey-House, 2011)



1. "The client is naturally Creative, Resourceful and Whole"- The client knows everything and does not require any fixing.
2. "The agenda comes from the client"- The requirement for coaching is going to be told by the client.
3. "The Coach dances in the moment"- The coach needs to deal with only what comes at the moment. It is not necessary that he has to follow only one way because by keeping his patience the coach will slowly understand what's their underneath.
4. "Co-Active coaching addresses the client's whole life"- The method tries to see from every aspect of life which can help the coachee.

The "5 contexts" are-

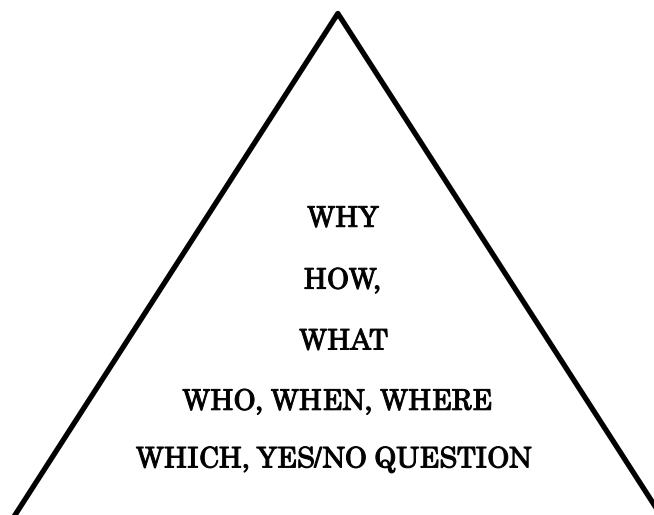
1. "Listening"- This is important from every aspect. Not only what the coachee tells but also non-verbal communication like tone, body language etc.
2. "Curiosity"- The coach needs to ask questions but with curiosity. It should appear that the coach is willing to know the coachee and explore him, whatever be it.
3. "Intuition"- In context of "Co-Active coaching" intuition is not about trying to understand the client by coach's insights rather try to pick up signals and sense them right.
4. "Self-Management"- This point is from the coach's perspective that he needs to manage his stuff properly before dealing with anyone.
5. "Forward the action"/" Deepen the learning"- As per this point the coach needs to ensure that the coachee is progressing. It is because the coachee's idea to be coached is to move forward. This happens through 'learning'. This 'learning' is not about any technical skills but to learn the tactic to improve existing learning ability.

From the above models it is clear that in coaching a lot of matters in the way a coach asks questions to his coachee. There have been lot of writings on what kind of questions influence more to answer. In (Eric E Vogt, 2003) a powerful question can shape the direction. A powerful question-

1. "Generates curiosity in the listener."
2. "Stimulates reflective conversation."
3. "Is thought provoking."
4. "Invites creativity and new possibilities."
5. "Touches a deep meaning."
6. "Evokes more questions."

The authors give three dimensions on asking good questions. They are 'construction', 'scope', 'assumptions'. If we see it in 'linguistic' form, then the importance goes like this-

Figure 2: Powerful Questions Source: (Eric E Vogt, 2003)



We can see that 'why' always allows more possibilities. It doesn't mean that, by constantly pondering over 'why' we get good answers, other questions are also important when we need specific information. This 'why' can deliver better answers when it is asked with 'curiosity'. Example- "I wonder why that happened". In 'scope' we need to define the perspective so that we have clarity, for instance by asking questions we want to know about the

individual, work group, company etc. We also need to be clear about the assumptions. This can be by the following examples- "What did we do wrong and who is responsible?" assumes error and blame and trying to be defensive. "What can we learn from what's happened and what possibilities do we now see?" is a question which is trying to encourage learning and collaboration. Some example questions which can be applied by management people to their subordinates are- "What's emerging here for you?", "What surprised you?", "What challenged you?", "How can we support each other?" etc.

Indian context:

When we look back, we came across the views of various authors who tell about modern executive coaching, we also came across some coaching models that are being used by coaches. Now, it is important that we understand the evolution of 'coaching' with respect to Indian context. To understand in detail about the Indian context we need to understand first who is a guru? What role he has to play in the life of a shishya, what makes an ideal relationship between a guru and a shishya and what is the role of a shishya.

Who is a Guru?

In (Anon., n.d.) "Guru is a Sanskrit term that connotes someone who is a "teacher, expert, guide or master" of certain knowledge or field. In Pan-Indian traditions, guru is someone more than a teacher, traditionally a reverential figure to the student, with the guru serving as a "counsellor", who helps to mold values, shares experiential knowledge as much as literal knowledge, an exemplar in life, an inspirational source and who helps in the spiritual evolution of a student". The term also refers to someone who primarily is one's spiritual guide, who helps one to discover the same potentialities that the gurus already realize". It is clear from the definition that a guru is a reverential figure in Indian context. A guru is not just a teacher but is also the one who is going to bring out the necessary capabilities in his shishya to face the worldly duties.

Guru as an example:

In (Baba, 2002) it is mentioned that a guru has to be a self-sacrificing personality who has all the equanimity, leads a very simple life and who is filled with strength giving thoughts. A guru is the one who has to set example to his disciple and people in society by his way of living which includes abstaining from ill and materialistic desires. If a guru shows anger, greed for material fancies then there is no objective of he being a guru. When a guru is exemplary then it is the duty of his disciples to take this as a great chance and learn. If they let go then, they lose the opportunity.

Ideal relationship:

Paramhansa Yogananda quoted "One may have many teachers, but only one guru, who remains as one's guru even in many different lives until the disciple reaches the final goal of emancipation in God. You must remember this once that relationship is formed". That is the importance of a guru which Indian mythology gave. In (Baba, 2002) the author has clearly said that a relationship between a guru and his shishya should be an ideal one as that of Krishna and Arjun in Mahabharata. In Mahabharata, Krishna being an ocean of love always ensured transformation by keeping Arjun close to him, by teaching him how to be holy. Arjun as a disciple was great too because he took the words of Krishna as his command which showed his complete faith in Krishna. There was always a strong rapport between them which was clearly visible by their bond. Swami Vivekananda also quoted "So long as you have faith in your guru, nothing will be able to obstruct your way". This is the kind of mindset a disciple needs to have on his guru. It is also important for the disciple to understand the importance of his role which is again clear by the following Swami Vivekananda's quote "No one was ever really taught by another, each of us has to teach himself. The external teacher offers only the suggestion which rouses the internal teacher to work to understand". It is evident that in Indian context, the primary aim was a 'Guru' or the 'teacher' leading to a direction. The 'Shishya' or the disciple needs to have blind faith on the instructions of the guru. The guru has to lay the foundation and rest lies on the practice of a shishya based on what he learned.

Darkness and light context:

“गुशब्दस्त्वन्धकारः स्यात् रुरुशब्दस्तन्निरोधकः ।
अन्धकारनिरोधित्वात् गुरुरित्यभिधीयते ॥ १६ ॥”

(Anon., n.d.) Here 'Gu' means darkness and 'Ru' means who removes them. Therefore, a 'guru' is one who has the power to dispel darkness. The definition does not say that a guru has to be a guide from the beginning. A guru can also be the one who comes to rescue when someone is in hardship and tries to remove it. A good mythological

example to this can be the conversation between Yudhishtira and Bhishma in the battlefield of Mahabharata. In (Anon., n.d.) while lying down on the bed of arrows Bhishma advised Yudhishtira on how to be a good king, the nine human qualifications, kingly duties, public acts, duties for women, duties for salvation and relevance of pure devotional service to god.

Ideal qualities:

In (Baba, 2009) the author has talked about some undesirable as well as desirable traits when it comes to a manager being a leader. The undesirable traits include- 'Bad words' example- Manthara to Kaikeyee which lead to bad influence. 'Bad deeds' example- Ravana, 'Bad company' example- Karna, 'Bad looks' example- Keechaka, 'Bad thoughts' example- Duryodhana. Today, in this modern world there are lot many leaders who suffer with habit of 'bad looks' i.e. disrespecting women, 'bad thoughts' i.e. thoughts to harm others. These are the qualities which have to be kept apart. The desirable traits include- 'self-awareness' i.e. one should try to be aware about his own perceptions, feelings by keeping himself detached from the services rendered. 'True love' i.e. unbiased concern for others, maintaining friendship only to the extent required, doing duty with devotion towards God. "Adherence to self-discipline", "control of senses" with respect to unnecessary gossip, being true to the conscience etc. There has to be right 'balance' which is by a mix of 'good hearing', 'good sight', 'good speech', 'good action' that will lead to better knowledge and skills. Therefore, all these qualities, give rise to a thought or more importantly a necessity that a 'coach' firstly should be a good human being, then only he can coach a coachee to be ideal.

There are two kinds of leadership mentioned i.e. 'WATCH' as a transformational leadership and 'MAHAVAKYAS' of leadership. The 'WATCH' theory is based on the fact that every individual wear a watch to remind himself of time, basically to be aware. A transformational leadership is one which is known by a person's ability to bring some change in employees and then the system. Therefore, if a person has to transform his surrounding then he has to bring that change first in himself, which is dependent on the personal values and beliefs that he possesses. The acronym 'WATCH' stands for, 'W' i.e. words which refers to being aware of the speech, 'A' i.e. actions which have to be good, 'T' i.e. thoughts are very influential factor as Maxwell Maltz said "It is no exaggeration to say that every human being is hypnotised to some extent, either by ideas one has uncritically accepted from others, or ideas one has repeated to oneself or convinced oneself as true". From the definition it's clear that 'self-image' influences the personality. Breathing has been regarded as one of the factors which influences one's thoughts. 'C' refers to the character which can be individual as well as national i.e. adhering to the nation's needs. 'H' refers to heart which is physical as well as spiritual. A physical heart remains healthy with good diet and a spiritual heart remains healthy by good mental health. The 'MAHAVAKYAS' of leadership as the author says are "To be" i.e. a trait known by the values and the beliefs of a leader, "To do" i.e. practicing what the leader believes, "To see" i.e. the realities present in our environment, "To tell" i.e. to convey what the leader wants his people to do. Both 'WATCH' and 'MAHAVAKYAS' have to be followed by an individual in order to be an ideal leader.

METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN OF THE STUDY:

Nature of the study:

Coaching as an activity involves a lot of discussion, questioning, answering and feedback. Since the process is very subjective in nature, the researcher decided to follow a qualitative method to study and analyze coaching activity.

Research Objectives:

The study aimed to understand the following questions -

1. Does Executive Coaching follow a process practically?
2. Does coaching really benefit?
3. Is Coaching possible in an ideal situation?

Hypothesis:

The hypothesis formed for this study was "Executive Coaching process needs to follow a specific set of steps in order to benefit the Coachee in long run"

Data Collection:

Both primary and secondary data were used for the study.

Primary data:

For primary data the researcher conducted interviews with four professional executive coaches who do coaching for executives in leadership roles. All the four coaches were external coaches. Out of the four, three were certified coaches. One of them being a Marshall Goldsmith Stakeholder Centred Coaching certified coach and the other two being certified by ICF i.e. International Coach Federation. One of the coaches interviewed was not certified. The Coach due to his significant experience in leadership positions, had become a practicing Coach. Other than interviews with four coaches, the researcher himself went through a complete one to one coaching session with one of the ICF certified coaches interviewed in order to get direct coaching experience.

Secondary data:

The secondary data used for analysis included the literature available related to coaching. This has been divided into three parts-

1. Understanding other researcher's views on the coaching process.
2. Understanding the different coaching models taken in the study.
3. Understanding coaching from an Indian perspective.

Treatment of data:

Both primary and secondary data were analysed using 'content analysis'. The key concepts identified in the summary responses of the interviewed people were analysed with respect to the hypothesis formed.

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS:

Primary data analysis:

Interviews with the coaches:

According to the coach who has certification from Marshall Goldsmith Stakeholder Centred Coaching, there is no patented coaching process. Coaching happens in a very confidential manner with the coachee. It generally happens at the top level because it is done for people who are identified as potential leaders. Coaches have hourly charges. The charges vary with experience of the coach. Mentoring is different from coaching. Mentor is an internal guide who just throws solutions. Example- You don't like pizza but pizza is required for your success, so you have to start liking it. In contrast a coach throws options for achieving milestones. Example- You don't like pizza, then what else, if burger or sandwich or any other, there is a way through it. Coaching involves a lot of observation. The reasons for coaching can be for "developing certain behavioural aspect of a person" or "developing specific skills". Some of the behavioural aspects include- "people don't smile", "people don't listen", "people have lot of pride", "people don't give credit to others". Coaching may also happen for specific skills like a marketer learning to be a better marketer. The only difference in this case is, the coaches themselves need to have prior experience in that particular field. The process that generally follows-

1. Identification of people with high potential using 360-degree feedback.
2. External coaches are hired, if the change needed is identified then coaching starts straight away, but if it is unidentified then psychometric assessments are used like, MBTI, NLP, Transactional analysis etc.
3. Once the coaching starts it may involve following a model like GROW or may just go on as a discussion.
4. Sometimes even storytelling, role modelling, role playing is also used as methods of coaching.

According to one of the coaches with certification from International Coach Federation, the coaches are required to follow a model while coaching. The coach explained about the GROW model which he practiced. There are many reasons why people are coached. The coach mentioned that there are people who required coaching because they were fed up of traffic. As per the coach, in this traffic scenario, a coach will try to understand that this person is upset with traffic, so after he reaches office, how does he deal with people. If he is getting upset with traffic, then how does he deal with other difficult situations in the work place. There is an underlying assumption that the person who is being coached has crossed the first three stages in Maslow's need hierarchy i.e. physiological, safety and belongingness.

A coach need not be spiritual to be effective. It is completely based on the fact that what kind of training as for being a coach he or she has undergone. It is on a coach how effective he or she can be. The coach also gave example of a lady who was born Brahmin ironically a complete atheist but also a good coach. Coaching for specific skills is something which generally won't happen. Specific skill development can be part of a mentoring process in which a more experienced person who has worked for the same organization may come and do. Coaching is mainly focussed towards improving the behavioural aspect of a person.

According to the other coach who is also a certified ICF coach, coaching process varies with people on the way

they have been trained. A coach may follow, Marshall Goldsmith guidelines, or ICF guidelines or any other, in fact some coaches don't even have certification. It all depends on what they follow. A specific expertise unique to a coach is always a value addition. Before a coaching session starts there is always a connection session with the coachee. This discussion is to understand the knowledge level of coachee in terms of his understanding about coaching. The assumption is that the solution to the problem is always within the person. The coachee is always resourceful enough. A coach helps coachee get his own answers. This happens by listening, questioning where the coach travels into the coachee's world. The coach in the process also understands the value system that the coachee follows. He also develops clarity about what the coachee wants. The coach applies the coaching method into which he is trained, in almost all the scenarios i.e. in whatever situation the coachee comes to the coach.

The coach who said that he doesn't hold any certification of coaching but uses his leadership experience pointed out the difference in leadership coaching and life coaching. In leadership coaching the coach has to make the coachee prepare for leadership roles by trying to develop the required attributes or the leader in him. In life coaching leadership may be a facet but not the objective. The objective is to bring fulfilment for the person in life, a sense of satisfaction. Coaching may not involve following a certain model. It is because people come up with various issues and situations. Fitting them into a specific model is not always going to help. There were two real case examples given by the coach which were based on his coaching experience.

Case 1- A law firm owner was a lot disappointed when he approached the coach. The coach with initial conversations found the primary issue was that the law firm was not able to recover money from their clients. The staff was stressed and they were leaving the firm because irrespective of their efforts, there were no results showing up. As a helping aid, the coach first studied how a law firm functions. Then, as an aid he asked the owner if he could standardize their system through discussion. Another issue which the coach identified with regular conversations that within the law firm there were issues regarding work stress, low engagement within them. The coach immediately understood that first the employees need to have a strong bond. He asked the coachee i.e. the law firm owner if they as a group can indulge into group cooking, poor feeding on a weekly basis. The coachee saw something fruitful in the suggestion, so he decided to implement it immediately. Soon, the coachee came back to the coach saying that he was happy now because the employees were willing to work together, the firm also started recovering from the debt and they were able to serve their clients better.

Case 2- One of the senior executives of a company approached to the coach with an issue that he was unable to focus in his work and life. The issue that came up in conversation with the person was the company in which he was working had been suffering with labour union issues very recently. In fact, the union leaders were threatening the company officials to lock up the office. Now there was a need for negotiation. The coach as a suggestion asked the coachee if in their next meeting with union leaders, he just quietly listens, smiles without any reaction. The coachee took the suggestion and as he did that, the union leaders didn't even react much because even they had to behave in a decent fashion.

Therefore, if there has to be a coaching model then it can't be anything other than, "making the coachee happy and satisfied". Coaching is when you bring about a change in the thought process of the coachee. When you provide ways, it becomes training. Coaching in today's context happens in a niche market which is why people who coach also do training. In lower level of organization, an employee is given targets to achieve, but as the employee moves higher into leadership roles, he has to create jobs, understand the needs of the company. The person won't have any fixed holidays so having dinner party or playing golf becomes part of their thinking process. At leadership position people lack the ability to take out time for themselves and think which is why they require a coach's assistance.

Coaching Experience:

After understanding theoretically about coaching, the researcher as part of the study wanted to have an experience on how coaching happens. This was fulfilled by one of the ICF coaches who was part of the interviewed coaches in this study. The coach followed the GROW model of coaching. The experience of the researcher was as follows-

1. The session started by the coach asking what was it that as a coachee the researcher wanted to achieve, which was a very fundamental question. The coach in order to create a friendly environment asked simple questions, for instance, likes and dislikes.
2. Then, with the coachee opening up, the coach tried to become a friend and asked questions regarding the issues faced by the coachee. The coach also tried to find out if the coachee had any solution in his mind. If that was not then, the coach tried to create scenarios and make the coachee think about the solutions.
3. The coach also tried to see if the discussion was focussed towards an objective. In the process, the coach made notes on the mindset of the coachee.

4. When the coachee started throwing solutions, the coach tried to look if the solution is appropriate or possibly there can be better solutions.
5. Lastly, the coach tried to find out if from the beginning there had been any change in the coachee's thought process. Also, if the solution the coachee decided for him was for short term benefit or long term.

Secondary data analysis:

Understanding other researcher's views on the Coaching process:

It is important to bring out the points given by various authors from the literature in a logical order to help us understand the coaching process needs better. They are-

1. Coaching is not same as teaching, training, mentoring and counselling.
2. The 'self-1' and 'self-2' wherein 'self-1' is about the issue faced and 'self-2' is about discovery and experience.
3. Coaching is a collaborative relationship. To establish coaching as a system, there is need for upper management commitment, effective communication and a reward system.
4. Coaching and leadership go hand in hand. Coaching style of leadership in which the manager listens to his subordinates and makes them accountable for leading their tasks needs to be present in today's dynamic organizations.
5. Coach should follow a checklist regarding a coaching session.
6. Coach needs to ask good questions so that the coachee is able to deal with the issues, and also coach has to provide constructive feedback.
7. Empathizing and listening to ensure ownership of problem is realized by the coachee is an important aspect of coaching.
8. Coach needs to be committed, compassionate and follow-up with coachee regularly.

Understanding the different coaching models taken in the study:

The recent coaching models are primarily based upon 'questioning skills' of a coach as described in the literature. These approaches have come up with the experience of various authors while working in the corporate world. The basis of coaching is same in all the models. The only thing that differentiates them is their reason for use. Example- models like GROW and STEER coaching are more focussed towards performance, which makes them applicable in corporate scenarios. Behaviour approach, POSITIVE, TGROW, are focussed towards individual growth holistically. OSKAR because of use of scale rating is more solution focussed. Coactive coaching is more into creativity of the coachee. Some of the common points which can be identified from all of the models are-

1. Coaching needs to happen in an open environment which the coach has to create initially. It should facilitate rapport building.
2. The coachee, knows the issues and solutions but is clouded by his own judgements. Therefore, the coachee needs someone who can be a support function.
3. The primary objective of coaching is to build awareness in the coachee.
4. The awareness is built to make the coachee realize what is that he has to achieve.
5. Coaching as a process primarily involves the coach asking quality questions. The coachee will keep answering between which the coach makes the coachee reflect upon the overall objective by stopping. It also involves discussion at times. This happens on a regular basis, in which the coachee gives feedback of how well the discussions are helping in attaining what the coachee wishes to.

Understanding Coaching from an Indian perspective:

1. The definition 'Guru' clearly states that the duty of a 'Guru' is not only to teach but also to mold values, provide experiential knowledge and help in spiritual evolution.
2. A 'Guru' is someone who leads a simple life, leads by an example. The 'Guru' needs to possess good qualities which makes the 'Shishya' inspired. The ideal qualities, WATCH and MAHAVAKYAS mentioned in the literature talk about the 'self-awareness' level of a 'Guru'. These are some of the necessities that today's coaches need to have because they help them to become a good human being.
3. The words of Paramhansa Yogananda and Krishna, Arjun relationship depict the importance of trust and faith on a 'Guru'. This is something which even a modern coach needs to develop in the coachee by his qualities. The words of Swami Vivekananda tell about accountability that a disciple or in today's context a coachee needs to realize with the help of his 'Guru' or 'Coach'.
4. The context of 'darkness' and 'light' can be connected to a role which in this modern world a 'coach' plays. It is because the definition does not say that a guru has to be a guide from the beginning. A guru can also be the

one who comes to rescue when someone is in hardship and tries to remove it. The role of a modern coach is not necessarily to lay foundation from the beginning but come and help at times of need.

Key findings:

1. Coaching is essentially a development activity which identifies and prepares potential leaders to next level and doesn't happen to develop specific skills. It is different from mentoring, training, counselling, teaching because it doesn't ask the coachee to follow something rather it gives the choice to the coachee to follow the desired path.
2. Literature and data validated that coaching came up as a concept from self-realization to sports and then to management with focus towards the top executives who at one point don't need additional training, but just clarity of things.
3. The various models on coaching represent the kind of process that a coach should follow. These models, procedures vary as per practitioners, institutes, organizations etc. Literature and data also validated the fact that a necessary model following, depends on a coach and the context. It is in context of profession that certifications based on trained models, have come up. Value addition always depends on the expertise of a coach. Ultimately, a coaching agreement should satisfy the coachee as one of the coaches interviewed commented, "If there is any model that has to be followed then, it can't be anything more than making a coachee happy who in turn will spread that happiness".
4. In real scenario, coaching is an activity leading to self-discovery, helping people to find their ways. It is a very subtle activity. In India, such an activity already existed as the real genesis of 'Guru' and 'Shishya' was existing from time immemorial. India has been a land of yogis and gurus like Swami Vivekananda, Paramhansa Yogananda. The quotations made by such gurus clearly state that an activity of self-discovery is India's gift.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS:

In this study we understood what is coaching, how is it different from other concepts like mentoring, training, counselling and teaching. We got to know in brief about the growing importance of managerial level coaching. The study brought out some important coaching models specified by institutions, authors who practice them around the world. Importance of questioning skills in coaching is brought out. Coaching as a subtle activity already existed in India. It is important for a coach to be a good human being, who is selfless, helping in nature, an example of simplicity and humility for becoming a coach. A profession like teacher, doctor who can make or save human beings share a huge responsibility to the society. In today's scenario a coach also shares the same responsibility. Ramana Maharishi a great Indian guru is an example to this fact who was known for his silence. People use to come to him and speak out their issues. Very simple gestures and statements by the guru use to give people clarity of their problems. A coach needs to be a person who has to bring out this age-old guru shishya principle of making people discover their true potential in this modern world.

Coaching has become a professional activity and it involves a lot of expense from coachee in terms of time and money. Coaching has to be considered as a sacred activity not only for executives but also for people of any profession. As a sacred activity, coaching doesn't require some standardized process. It has to be primarily done with love and care. Since, to a larger extent this study is focussed towards coaching process, there can be more of talking and discussion not only from the side of a coachee but also a coach. It should not burden the coachee with only questioning which most of the coaching models focus on. The coaches should also involve themselves in trying to find solutions for coachee and do justice to coachee's investment. This can be for instance, a coachee is facing difficulty in dealing with some situations. Instead of only focussing on coachee bringing out the solution for himself, the coach can also try to find out how people in similar situations deal, what is an appropriate way to deal, how he would deal if he is on the same shoes based on which, he can suggest. There is a need to understand coaching in an ideal situation which is possible if in organizations managers act as a coach. It gives scope for every individual to be a leader.

Ideal Coaching:

The researcher would like to recommend guidelines for "Ideal Coaching" as a challenge to some of the assumptions to modern coaching. Some of the questions that the researcher wants to raise are, why there has to be a specified model itself for coaching, why a specified time period, why experience-oriented fees to the coaches, why only listening from the point of a coach etc. These things that are challenged in the context of "Ideal coaching" i.e. coaching as a true helping activity. Practically, this is possible if such coaching happens as part of HR practice inside the organizations i.e. manager developing subordinates into leaders. The guidelines are divided

into two stages. The first stage talks about how to develop a potential coach and second one being ideal working as a coach.

Development of a potential coach:

Here there are three foundations necessary for the coach. They are-

- i. **Mental foundation-** According to this the potential coaches have to be prepared mentally first before teaching any formal process of coaching. Some of the ways to this are, inspirational talks, class room group activities, training on mental peace i.e. meditation or yoga, case study discussions on societal issues.
- ii. **Relationship foundation-** It is a very important stage because if a potential coach's own relationship situations will be bad than how can they be good coaches. Here, the primary activity is to make coaches understand their own relationship scenarios, and how to make it better. This has to be experiential i.e. to engage the potential coach spend more time with their family, learn more about them by outings, picnics, more get together with friends and colleagues etc.
- iii. **Selflessness foundation-** The potential coaches need to be taught about the WATCH and MAHAVAKYAS. After that they need to be asked to practically apply those principles by making them lead some charitable activities. They need to assess themselves honestly as they do the activities. The scale of charitable activity is not of importance rather the kind of love and care they show in their leadership is of value. The coachee needs to express this learning. It is only when the potential coach feels and expresses that 'acceptance' as a coach, that he becomes an ideal coach.

Ideal working as a coach:

- a. The researcher wants to recommend that let the basic assumptions for a coach i.e. patience, listening be there but not as a necessity. The coach also needs to have appropriate conversation with the coachee otherwise psychologically there will be a feeling in the mind of the coachee that the coach is doing nothing.
- b. The coach should showcase simplicity, humility rather than showing professional duty. It reflects coachee's thoughts.
- c. The coach should try to start the conversation with an ice breaker which is different than the usual introduction which will take place in case the coachee doesn't know the internal manager who is going to coach. It can be any current issue around the world which would be of the coachee's interest. This particular factor is optional to the coachee. The coach should than use his experience from the 'relationship foundation' to build a strong relationship.
- d. In the initial few sessions itself, the coach should be able to understand if the coachee is able to develop the required bond. If the coachee is unable to do that than, the coaching engagement has to be brought to an end.
- e. There should be conversations from both sides. The emphasis should be on coachee bringing the key points and both coach and the coachee discussing it.
- f. Even the coach should try to study on how the coachee can be helped. The coach has to make his notes and also try to come out with solutions which he can suggest to the coachee. The rest is on coachee if he wants to go with coach's suggestions.
- g. With regular feedback from the side of a coachee, even the coach should give feedback on what he learned as part of the engagement in order to encourage the coachee.
- h. The discussions continue till the day the coachee feels to have achieved the desired goals.
- i. A coaching programme can be said to be going well if the coachee learns not only work-related skills but also life skills in the process.

Future scope for research:

1. The usefulness of guidelines for ideal coaching can be assessed if organizations decide to make coaching as an HR activity within the organization. The success of a coaching programme as well as its effectiveness has to be defined by the organizations first because it is on them how much they want from their coaching programme.
2. From the standpoint of HR training and development activities, there is a lot of scope for research in bringing out principles from ancient India and implement in today's organizational training activities.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY:

1. The study could have involved interviews of coaches from more coaching bodies, for instance, CFI i.e. Coaching Foundation India Limited.

2. The study doesn't have response from any executive who had gone through coaching engagement. This is because there is a confidential agreement between the Coach and Coachee not to discuss anything outside the Coaching session.
3. The interviews were more discussion oriented because coaching can happen for numerous reasons. It is a very subjective topic. It is difficult to specify the reasons objectively and ask the Coach to answer accordingly.

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