

## Coaching Tip: How to be More Masterful at Coaching

Welcome to my coaching tip of the week on how become a more masterful Coach!!

A few years ago, I read a book that changed the way I think about my abilities as a coach and helped me feel much more confident. I remember when I had to coach my tribe mates during my practicum classes in life coach training and how scared I felt right before... and how absolutely shitty I felt immediately afterward because I thought I missed the mark – I either didn't do it right or more plainly, I did it all wrong. I felt so deflated after those calls which naturally carried over into my private practice. Although I often received feedback to the contrary, that pesky little part of my brain just loved to point out what I missed or how I could have done better. I was what I refer to as a “hole-poker”. Always looking for what wasn't working rather than what did work. I knew this intellectually but I couldn't seem to get out from underneath that emotional rubble that I found myself buried in. Even worse, it completely sucked the joy out of coaching. I felt like my big and bright red balloon which was once so full of energy and passion slowly deflated with every punch I threw at myself for not being good enough.

Until I read the book *Succeed* by Heidi Halverson. Although I spent a lot of time self-coaching and getting coached, chipping away at my crappy self-beliefs, what I neglected to see was the culprit of my persistent self-doubt and lack of motivation... and it all had to do with where I focused my lens. In other words, I was too concerned with what Halverson refers to as “being good” rather than “getting better”.

Let me explain. When you choose a goal like training to be a coach, for example, you have two choices. “Psychologists who study achievement say that differences arise in people when they focus on performing well to demonstrate ability (‘being good’) vs. focusing on progress, growth or gaining mastery (‘getting better’),” says Halverson. Those differences will determine whether you succeed or fail at achieving your goals.

Holy shit, that was me. Bingo!! I have bingo!

My goal was so wrapped up in my proving that I was smart, that when it came to new or challenging coaching situations, I felt completely overwhelmed. I was stuck in this emotional straightjacket with no room to move or breathe.

Can you relate?

If you’re like me, and believe that your desire to be a good coach is motivated by “being good”, to show that your talented, smart or capable, you have what is referred to as a performance goal according to Halverson. Your energy is directed towards a particular outcome – getting certified, attracting readers, paying clients, being noticed by your partner, mother or neighbor. Sadly, performance goals are often closely tied to our sense of self-worth, says Halverson. We think that if our clients have an “aha” moment, make a shift in their life, lose weight, get that raise, or realize their WIG than that will validate us as a coach – making us feel and look smart, gifted or desirable. But if our clients don’t have a shift, don’t feel immediately better or don’t make progress, we make that mean something about our abilities... we’re simply not intelligent, insightful, or talented enough to effect change. With performance goals, all you really care about is being good – almost good or mostly good is not a consolation, says Halverson. To make this even deeper, Carol Dweck suggests that we either have a “**fixed**” or a “**growth**” mindset. People with a “fixed” mindset believe that their basic qualities, like intelligence or talent, are simply fixed traits. They believe that talent alone creates success – without effort. In the **growth mindset**, people believe the opposite. Those basic qualities can be developed through hard work and commitment. Brains

and talent are just the starting point. This perspective creates a love of learning and a resilience that is key for accomplishment.

I can't tell you how many coaches I know who just assume that Martha and all the other coaches they admire were born this way or woke up one day magically knowing how to be masterful at coaching. I've been a target of that assumption which is why I keep telling my story every which way so you guys can see that I developed my skill set the old-fashioned way... with hard work, self-reflection and persistence. My IQ is average and my talent is home grown.

Back to performance goals. As you might imagine, performance goals are not motivating because look at what's riding on success... your client's progress (substitute an A on a test, getting into grad school, or getting that raise). The downside of performance goals is that when you run into a speed bump, your agility as a coach is stunted. You freeze, and you have limited or no access to the creative part of your brain. You aren't adaptable because your self-worth is tied to something external. Case in point, you market your very first workshop to prove you've got what it takes (talent, smarts, some unicorn type gift that is magical) and 2 people sign up. Or no one signs up. You can't help but think that you did something wrong or you're missing an essential ingredient (one that's hard to identify but you know you don't have it). This, of course, has negative consequences. First and foremost, you feel like shit... perhaps you feel foolish, shameful or just bleh. Your self-esteem or self-worth goes straight into the toilet and you're left feeling plain old disappointed. You wonder if it's worth continuing to try. Even if you do muster up the will power to go forward, you are at a loss on how to sell the workshop because you're too wrapped up in what you're making this mean about you... maybe you quit, or you consider quitting. Either way your confidence has taken a blow.

Now, this is what changed things for me. **What if your goal instead was to get better?** Whoa. What if you focused on growth and improvement instead of your ego trying to prove its worth? You know those people... they're the ones in your high school or college classes who ask all the questions – not because they want to get an A on the exam, but because they're genuinely curious and they have the desire to learn.

They care about getting better, developing or enhancing their skills and abilities. Halverson calls it a **Mastery goal**. She says when people pursue mastery goals; there is less negative self-judgment. They evaluate themselves in the context of making progress. They ask “Am I improving? What did I learn? Am I making progress?” **Getting better goals are about self-improvement rather than self-validation.** It’s about becoming the best and most capable coach you can be rather than proving that you already are.

And the upside to this is that when you adopt mastery goals, you are less likely to blame your quality of coaching or mistakes on your lack of ability. Think about it, if you have “getting better” goals, you already know that you lack ability... you haven’t mastered it yet so you’re probably not going to beat yourself up for that. Halverson says that “be-gooders” don’t take action; they tend to get depressed and feel helpless. If you’re interested in “getting better”, you will find yourself much more agile and able to pivot more quickly. You might think of someone who has more experience marketing workshops and ask for their advice, or you might ditch the tool you’re using and grab something else.

Bottom line? Getting better goals can often lead to the greatest achievement because people who focus on getting better rarely give up prematurely.

Next time you don’t get the results you want, instead of telling yourself you’re not good enough, ask yourself:

Am I getting better?  
Am I making progress?

And for those of you who want are truly sick and tired of nagging self-doubt and want to feel more self-assured, please join my Confidence Club Book Club. Deets are here: <http://jackiegartman.com/book-club>.

Cheers,

Jackie