

## Detecting Low Quality Coaching

- Dr L. Michael Hall

When I got a call this week from a senior manager who wanted to talk about Coaching, the conversation turned to *the quality of coaching*. He mostly wanted some ideas about how to flush out low-quality and incompetent coaches. Now he really didn't know about Meta-Coaching, but upon seeing the website (which someone in his organization recommended to him), he was immediately impressed with several things: the rigorous training, the academic background in Meta-Coach training, the extensive materials about Meta-Coaching, and the benchmarking process for measuring competency.

When I asked him what problems motivated him to call me, he said, "There are two. First, there is the extreme levels of variability between coaches, some are competent, most are not. Second, many of the incompetent ones seem to know how to market themselves in a way that suggests they are competent, but they are not. So I want to know how to flush them out so we can get the good ones in."

Then he added, pretty much as an after-thought, "How would you?" And I immediately blurted it out. "I would challenge them to coach me on the spot. Yes, I'd ask them to show me what they can do. I'd give them a problem that I really have and see how they would handle it. If they are skilled, that should be no problem for them."

He thought that was a great idea. Then he had some doubts. "But how do I know if they really know how? What do I look for?" That gave me another idea. So I asked him to do it with me and I would show him. So he presented a problem, he said he needed to confront one of his top managers about being too flirtatious with some of the women. So I took him on, "How real is this problem for you? How important?"

*"Very important, very real. It's something I need to do, but I keep putting it off. I hesitate to deal with it, he's a good friend, and I don't want to offend him and ruin our relationship."*

"So that's your frame!?! You'd bring it up if you didn't think it would bother him or offend him and that would not affect your relationship?"

"Well, yes."

"So you're putting your feelings of comfort and relationship with him above dealing with something that could become a sexual harassment issue and affect the business, his ability to keep his job, and all of the consequences that would occur?"

*"Well ... uhhhhh ... I had not thought of it like that."*

"And now that you are?"

*"I need to deal with this."*

"And are you going to?"

"Well, yes."

"When?"

"Well ..."

"Do you know how to begin the conversation and deal with your friend and manager while things are still small and manageable rather than wait until they become large and unmanageable?"

"I think so..."

"Is that something for us to talk about ... equipping you to be able to handle this critical conversation in an effective and fluent way?"

"Yes, I'd like that."

"Great. Now how was that exchange for you?"

"Well, it felt strong, it felt confrontative, it felt real."

"Great, that's what coaching is designed to do—to get to the heart of things, to find the frames of mind, the frames of meaning that's creating an experience, and to unleash new possibilities and potentials."

*"That's great. I felt that you were holding my feet to the fire in a way that I haven't experienced in a long time. No one around here ever talks to me that way. And I was thinking that's how I need to be talking with some of my reports."*

"Okay, so do you now have a sense of what real coaching is like and can you distinguish it from low-quality, pussy-footing coaching?"

He said he was and thanked me for the experience. He also wanted to know more about Meta-Coaching and ended up saying that Meta-Coaching sounded more like a management training for true leadership which I confirmed and said many who attend the *Coaching Mastery* training use it specifically for that.

He then said that he now realized that the low-quality coaching that he had seen and experienced was "low quality" because the coaches so often colluded with the reality created by the coaching client, accepting whatever they said without doing any reality testing or reality checking. The coaches didn't have the balls to challenge their clients.

*Dr L. Michael Hall, Ph.D. lives in the Rocky Mountains of Western Colorado. As an author, Dr. Hall is known as a prolific writer with 40 some books to his name, more than 100 published articles and is recognized as a leading NLP Trainer and developer of many models, most notably the revolutionary Meta-States model and more recently the Matrix model. In 1996, Michael co-founded with Dr. Bob Bodenhamer Neuro-Semantics® as a field of study and as an International Society.*

*Today Michael spends most of his time researching and modelling and training internationally.*

