LEADERSHIP COACHING GROUPS

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The objective of this freely available program is to develop critically thinking leaders, managers, supervisors, and administrators. In general practice, all of these titles and other functions have been called leadership. The author of The Handbook of Leadership said: "There are almost as many definitions of leadership as there are persons who have attempted to define the concept. Whatever the definition, research shows less than half are competent (www.HOUD.info/ruleofthumb.pdf).☞Needed: Better ways to learn leadership.

Learning is used and not teaching because leadership is not taught but learned by assimilation. Learning versus teaching is a difference with a distinction. Teaching implies that the art can transmitted in a lecture, workshop, or seminar by a teacher, trainer, or tutor — now often called a coach. Perhaps, one can be taught to be an adequate craftsperson, but leadership is an art. An artist brings something of himself of herself to each situation.

Nevertheless, business continues to look for ways in which leadership can be taught or trained by copying a set of codified protocols. To this purpose, many fads and fashions that have been tried since the Second World War, as shown in the table. By perusing, it is self-evident from this list that business has tried a succession of "cookbook" solutions.

One Hundred Management Fads and Fashions Since World War II

Acceptable Risk	Distributed Intelligence	Knowledge Management	Servant Leadership
Assessment Centers	Downsizing or Rightsizing	Learn Manufacturing	Social Responsibility
Automatic Factories	Diversification	Learning Organizations	Spin-Offs (Divestiture)
Baldridge Award	Diversity Training	One-minute Management	Stewardship
Balanced Scoreboard	Dress-Down (Casual) Friday	Organization Development	Strategic Planning Units
Benchmarking	Education Initiatives	Out-of-Box Thinking	Subcontracting
Broad-Banding	Electronic Data Processing	Outsourcing	Supply Chain Management
Business Ethics	Emotional Intelligence	Managed Health Care	Takeovers
Business School Offerings	Empowerment	Management by Objectives	Team Building
Cafeteria Programs	Ethical Leadership	Mgt. by Walking Around	T-groups
Centralization	Excellence	Matrix Management	Theory Z (and Theory X&Y)
Change/Creative Destruction	Experience Curve	Myers-Briggs Type Indicator	Time-Based Competition
Chaordic Organizations	Flat Organizations	Pay for Performance	Time-Motion Studies
Computerization	Flex Time	Portfolio Management	Time Sharing
Complexity	Free Information Exchange	Post-Capitalism/Co-Opetition	Total Quality Management
Computer Integrated Mfg.	Functional Teams	PERT	Training
Conglomeration	Internet	Project Management	Transactional Analysis
Convergence	Intrapreneuring	Privatization	Transformational Ldrship
Core Competencies	ISO-9000	Quality Circles	Value-Based Management
Corporate Culture	Issues Management	Reengineering	Value Chain Analysis
Critical Path Analysis	Japanese Management	Restructuring	Virtualization
Customer Driven	Job Enrichment	Sales Force Automation	Zero-based Budgeting
Data Warehousing	Job Sharing	Scientific Management	Zero Defects
Decentralization	Joint Ventures	Self-Managed Teams	Zero-Latency Enterprises
Demassing	Just-In-Time	Sensitivity Training	•••

Many people and organizations profit from advocating canned "follow-the-leader" programs. Nevertheless, no matter how good a core idea is, it is highly unlikely that it will work for all persons, in every situation, at all times, with each follower and boss. There is no one-size-that-fits-all. Various approaches, however, provide much "food for thought."

Solo thinking about a leader's alternatives is not always a fruitful activity. Nor something conveyed by a teacher, trainer, educator, handbook, or individual coach. Constructively, Leadership Coaching Groups promote critical thinking ability. Hence, this is freely offered.

Leadership Coaching Groups share peer-group thoughts to develop our own. Other group members, and not the group leader, are the source of knowledge. A coach, or whatever he or she is called, provides structure to the group to encourage everyone to get involved, to keep the discussion on message, exchange observations, and to protect scapegoats.

Initially, the group focuses on the critical examination of what others sold as the answer to leadership needs. Eventually, participants consider their own philosophy of leadership that is congruent with his or her personality, is appropriate to the unique situation at hand, satisfies job needs, has positive results—suitable for their boss, subordinates, and mission.

Leadership insight does not develop overnight or over a weekend or in a course. That is why this proposed coaching group meets every other week, for 18 sessions, during the fall, winter, and spring. Consistent attendance and participation are necessary. Homework is not tedious and needs to be done for the sake of the group. "Winging it" benefits no one.

An outstanding textbook by Gary Yukl, Leadership in Organizations, provides an excellent frame to study the many theories and methods that have been tried. Several provided some value and others failed. All were mainstream practices for a while, somewhere. The group has the benefit of hindsight, research, maybe personal experience, to evaluate them.

Articles will be provided from significant journals and business magazines that explore issues in depth. Some are classics and should be read. Others may have reasonable substitutions. All is not pleasurable reading but provide useful information. Knowledge does not always come predigested. Wading through academic studies can sometimes be useful.

A significant part of the work is the writing of a single paragraph on each of two articles for each group session. (Students write a page.) The paragraphs are short and not book reports or theses. Initially, there is a tendency to write reviews but as time progresses they evolve into critical summaries with personal implications. They are read to the group and serve as the basis for discussions. There is no school-type evaluation but each group member must do the work and go public with their thoughts to fuel the group's process.

Some good readings are chapters from a reissued older book (1989), by Abraham Zaleznik, The Managerial Mystique. The book contains many outdated short arguments on many subjects that interest leaders. The author is an eminent psychoanalyst who specializes in business. We now know what did not stand the test-of-time, since its original publication. Brilliance does not assure ongoing success or ability to predict what will work.

Leadership Coaching Groups are not for everyone. Some persons want concrete answers. If small groups of about eight like-minded persons are interested in serious analysis and discussion of leadership issues and personal development is desired, a Leadership Coaching Group can enhance one's uderstanding of leadership. Active participation and not passive observations or spoon-fed answers is more conducive to human development.

Leadership Coaching Groups succeed by bringing together persons seriously interested in leadership and personal development. Their synergy promises outcomes that increase self-understanding and assimilation with a personally satisfying and successful approach.

Link to www.HOUD.info/LCG-Syllabus.pdf for details on the group's structure and process.

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