



## **Observational Coaching – an overview**

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*Team player: One who unites others toward a common destiny through sharing information and ideas, empowering others and developing trust.  
-- Dennis Kinlaw*

Leadership is a team sport. Coaching leaders to develop and be the best team player they can be lies at the heart of successful coaching.

Life is a stage. Anyone who has played a team sport, or in an orchestra or performed on a stage knows the value of receiving real-time feedback from your coach, or your teacher. The thought of having your coach *only* work with you one-on-one, without the value of directly experiencing your performance – the way you interact with your team mates, where you habitually yet unknowingly stumble and fall, where you find synergy with others – is akin to asking a blind man to teach you to drive.

Observational coaching takes the premise *we don't know what we don't know* and focuses a leader's attention on his or her key developmental needs. A good coach offers the leader an opportunity to reflect on his or her performance, calibrating for self awareness and checking for blind spots, and then through the Socratic method of ever deepening questions, helps develop attentiveness to others and a knowledge of self that lies at the heart of great leadership.

A good coach is also working themselves out of a job, by modeling the method that the leader can use with his or her peers (Peer Coaching) on a regular basis. This practice helps ensure that the leader's development is in sync with the team's immediate needs, sustainable for the long haul and hopefully integrated as part of the organization's embedded value of life long learning and continuous improvement.