



Velcro, Not Teflon *A Coach's Guide to Making Learning Stick*

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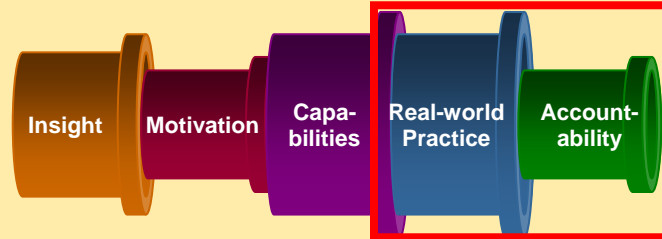
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Follow-through, Transfer, Application of learning, Making learning stick...

- ◆ Key question
 - Do people put into practice what they have learned?
- ◆ Why is it important?
 - Build and sustain momentum to keep people engaged through the whole coaching process
 - Ensure people really change and that those changes last
- ◆ Why is it difficult?
 - Change is hard: Habits, distractions, fears, etc.
 - Many coaches don't know how to do this well or miss the point
- ◆ How do we do it well?
 - Seven recommendations

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The Development Pipeline: Necessary conditions for development



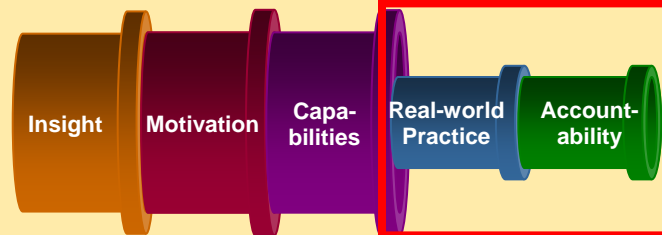
- **Insight:** Does the person know what areas they need to develop?
- **Motivation:** Are they willing to invest the time and energy it takes?
- **Capabilities:** Do they have the skills and knowledge they need?
- **RWP:** Do they take advantage of opportunities to apply those capabilities where it matters?
- **Accountability:** Do they feel accountable for getting good at this?

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Key elements of RWP and Accountability



- **Real-world Practice (“Transfer & Generalization”)**
 - Try it (fear of failure, old habits, lack of opportunity)
 - Stick with it (boring, distractions, disappointments, takes energy)
- **Accountability – May be internal or external**
 - Is anyone paying attention? (Metrics, informal conversations)
 - Does it matter? (Meaningful consequences)

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Thought questions: What are the barriers?

- ◆ For your coaching clients:
 - What makes it most difficult for your coaching clients to really change?
 - Where do they lose momentum?
 - What are the barriers to getting them to stick with it?
- ◆ For you:
 - Where do you get stuck, lose interest, or lose momentum?

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Barriers and challenges identified by coaches

Insight

1. Don't really understand what's expected of them, priorities are confusing, messages are inconsistent.

Motivation

2. Too many demands on their time, not enough mental/emotional space and energy to focus on change.
3. Make a little progress, are satisfied with that, and stop working it.
4. No strong case for change. Sent by someone else so they're not bought in.
5. Asked to make changes that others around them aren't.
6. Short attention spans; if they can't find a quick fix they move on.
7. Emotional attachment to current behaviors; don't want to let go of their view of the world and what's worked for them in the past.

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Barriers and challenges identified by coaches

RWP

8. Lack opportunities to apply new skill.
9. Not prepared to do the real work. After a few quick wins, progress becomes more difficult and they give up.
10. Fall back into old habits.
11. Going too long in between coaching sessions.
12. Initial feeling of discomfort with new skill/behavior.

Accountability

13. Constant change – bosses move around, people move around; focus and accountability are both hard to sustain.
14. Lack feedback, attention, encouragement from others.
15. No consequences either way, changing or not changing.

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What can we do about it? Seven tactics

1. Start at the beginning

- ◆ The very first question to ask the participant:
“What would *you* like to get out of this? What will make this worthwhile for *you*?”
 - Tap into deep, personal motivation to sustain momentum
 - Keep the motivation salient

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2. Actually, start before the beginning...

- ◆ Be clear on *your* own goals and purpose
 - Intentional coaching: Clear goals, conscious choice
- ◆ What is your primary goal?
 - My goal: Find the quickest, most effective, and most rewarding path to help the person be more effective in what matters most to them and their organization
- ◆ What will it take to get there?
 - Knowing what matters
 - Knowing what effectiveness looks like in their context
 - Having a big tool kit of techniques and approaches
 - Good hypotheses about what will work best
 - Finding ways to care and stay engaged personally
- ◆ How will you stay focused on your goals?

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Be clear on why you're there

- ◆ What's your definition (in action) of coaching?
 - Giving feedback and advice? Intellectual discussion?
 - Helping people accelerate their development by being better learners and doing things differently?

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One of the biggest challenges to MLS...

- ◆ **Insight** is easy....
 - Relatively easy, quick, tangible
 - Something the coach can directly impact and get credit for
 - Ultimately of little value without action
- ◆ ... **RWP** is hard
 - Often slow, tedious, awkward, frustrating
 - Rarely directly attributable to the coach
 - May be boring for the coach, too
 - No guarantee of better results
 - Absolutely necessary for real change

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Another big challenge...

- ◆ It's easier to focus on facilitating learning (i.e., acquisition of insights, skills, knowledge) than on performance (i.e., application)
- ◆ Druckman & Bjork (1991)
 - "The crux of the problem is that learning and performance are not the same..."
 - "Procedures that enhance performance during training may or may not enhance long-term retention and transfer to altered contexts;
 - "Conversely, procedures that introduce difficulties for the learner and impair performance during training may foster durable and flexible posttraining skills" (pp. 24-25)

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So be clear on your purpose...

- ◆ Otherwise it's very easy to:
- ◆ Be seduced by the cool, quick fixes of insight, etc. rather than the hard work of real change
- ◆ Focus on what happens *in* the coaching conversation more than what happens *after*

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3. Recreate the realities of their world

- ◆ Practice messy, complex situations that replicate the real world they go back to (Druckman & Bjork, 1991):
 - Multiple agendas
 - Hidden agendas
 - Emotions: Impatience, aggravation, etc.
 - Interruptions
 - Constraints; never enough time
 - Unhelpful people
- ◆ Keep throwing new challenges (variability, complexity, interference) at them, even before they fully assimilate the previous lessons

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4. Focus on what happens *after* the coaching conversation

- ◆ Keep asking: What are you going to do differently?
 - Where?
 - When?
 - How will you remember?
 - What will get in your way? What will you do to avoid or overcome that?

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5. Teach them how to learn for themselves

- ◆ Development FIRST strategies (Peterson & Hicks, 1995)
 - Focus on critical priorities
 - Implement something every day
 - Reflect on what's working and what you need to do differently
 - Seek feedback and support from others
 - Transfer to the next level
- ◆ Do they know how to identify where development will make a real difference? (E.g., do their own GAPS analysis to enhance insight)
- ◆ Do they have a process for working on:
 - Clear goals, what matters
 - Conscious choice
 - Effective action?
 - (aka Kilburg's Discernment, Decision making, Action)

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6. Make sure they build in time for reflection

- ◆ Build it in to their existing routine & personal style
 - Get it on their calendar and to do list
 - Find the natural opportunities
- ◆ Four basic tasks of reflection
 - Look inward...
 - What am I really trying to accomplish?
 - What matters to me
 - Look outward...
 - What matters to others?
 - What will it take for me to accomplish my goals?
 - Look back...
 - What new things have I tried?
 - What worked?
 - What didn't?
 - What else have I learned?
 - Look ahead...
 - What will I do differently?
 - What do I need to do to keep learning?

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A calendar for reflection

1. **Daily** (one minute): What new thing did I do today? How did it go? What one thing will I do differently tomorrow?
2. **Weekly** (5 minutes): What kind of progress did I make last week? What do I need to focus on this next week?
3. **Monthly** (10 minutes): How am I doing on my learning objectives? What do I need to do to keep learning? How will I get meaningful feedback?
4. **Quarterly** (15 minutes): How am I doing on my development? What is most important for my success going forward?
5. **Annually** (1 hour):
 - Where do I stand relative to what matters to me? What really matters to me? Where do I want to be a year from now and how do I get there?
 - What do I need to do to manage my learning more effectively? What do I need to do to make sure I'm not missing something important?
6. **Decadely**: Every 5-10 years (one day):
 - Who do I want to be? What values do I want to live by? How am I doing?
 - What do I need to do in the next 5 years to accomplish what matters most?

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7. Increase accountability

- ◆ Typically viewed as external, but the real leverage is fostering internal accountability

External works when:

- ◆ Clear expectations
- ◆ Established from the beginning
- ◆ People feel capable of making the changes
- ◆ Consequences are not perceived as punitive
- ◆ Focus is on process/actions more than outcomes

Or else people:

- ◆ Defensive bolstering:
Rationalize, blame others,

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Insight on accountability

- ◆ Individuals who are better suited to holding themselves accountable tend to:
 - Have a realistic perspective on their performance
 - Have a high need for control
 - Be comfortable with uncertainty
 - Be resilient in the face of failure
 - Enjoy stretching their abilities
- ◆ Individuals lacking these characteristics may need assistance cultivating personal sense of accountability

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Increase accountability

- ◆ Pay attention: Just ask. And ask again.
 - But get all behavioral and stuff: Have them describe what they did and how it was different from what they would have done in the past
- ◆ Reinforce progress, not performance (see Dweck, 1986, 2000).
 - Accountability for trying new things, not necessarily results
- ◆ Use guilt and shame (subtly and deftly, of course)
 - Don't judge people or try to create guilt; let them bring their own
 - Don't make it easy for them to escape
 - Don't take responsibility: "Are you going to do what you say or not? That's your issue to decide. I don't care what you choose, I just want to know."

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Stick with Velcro...



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