



# Sharpening your EDGE

EDGE Coaching Services

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**Senior school leaders** are in positions where their behaviors, words, actions, and relationships are on constant public display. As a result, their lives are under constant public scrutiny, bringing a unique set of pressures.

School leaders have to learn how to manage both their private and public personas; in a manner that ensures they can maintain high levels of authenticity and a deep connection with their core values and what they stand for. When faced with challenging circumstances, school leaders typically respond automatically to these situations with perceived expertise and aplomb.

Responding to stress, responding to a small and large crisis that are not a part of the planned daily routine soon become an accepted part of a school leader's everyday life. However, left unchecked and without time to reflect on causes, impact, and consequences of actions taken, these automatic behaviors can result in leaders becoming disconnected from themselves and, in extreme cases, disconnected at various levels from those they lead and manage. And so, the following questions arise:

**With whom can a senior school leader, have a conversation that simply allows him/her to breathe?'**

**When can they have a conversation that allows them to gain deeper levels of self-awareness and personal understanding?'**

**When can they have a conversation that allows them to marry both the personal and professional aspects of what it means to be a congruent and effective leader?'**



These are not areas that school advisors, consultants, etc., are trained in, but if we are to have effective schools, establishments in which both children and staff fulfill their potential, then appropriate training is needed. There has to be the space for the type of professional relationship that facilitates school leaders being able to reflect openly and honestly on the inner struggles and triumphs of leadership.

The business world has long recognized that top executives benefit when they have such a relationship in place. It is very much the norm to employ a coach to help senior leaders become the best they can be.



**Much of this is because it is recognized that there are three critical aspects within a coaching relationship that differ from other professional associations and help determine its success as a useful model of personalized support, they include:**

- 1. The relationship enables the individual to own the Agenda**
- 2. The relationship is built on mutual trust**
- 3. The relationship connects individuals with their values**

## **1. The relationship enables the individual to own the Agenda**

Research has shown, time and time again, that individuals flourish when they have a sense of autonomy and feel they are able to determine future outcomes for themselves. In scenarios where individuals have no sense of ownership regarding meeting agendas and related outcomes, their performance is often not what it could be. Coaching avoids this pitfall by ensuring that, at all times, the coachee sets the agenda.

The coach has no agenda other than being fully present for the coachee and enabling him/her to 'get from where they are now to where they want to be.'

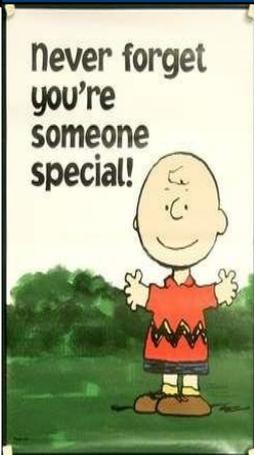
## **2. The relationship is built on mutual trust**

Where no trust is present, there is neither openness, honesty, nor an ability to look deeply at oneself, and as a result, there is no room for growth.

From the author of the world's number 1 Coaching book, Sir John Whitmore states in his glossary that coaching relies on a deep and trusting connection between the coach and coachee, built on intimacy, mutual respect, and the genuine concern for the coaches welfare and future.

***“Right now you are one choice away from a new beginning—one that leads you toward becoming the fullest human being you can be.”***

***-Oprah Winfrey***



### **3. The relationship connects individuals with their values**

A central tenant of the coaching relationship rests on the fact that the coach knows when an individual's behaviors are aligned to their values. They are far more likely to experience a deeper sense of congruence between their public and private selves, thus greater fulfilment within the role.

Through coaching, individuals are encouraged to reflect and ask, 'why and 'what' questions of themselves: 'Why am I doing this?' 'Why have I responded in this way?' 'What does this mean to me?' 'What are the implications for my future actions?'

In searching for answers and sharing solutions, the coachee becomes aware of how their values shape their leadership and how their behaviors reflect the degree to which they hold their values to be true. A coach, though, may not ask "why" questions, as they may be construed as judgmental.

#### **An Opportunity to Experience the Coaching Relationship**

Becoming a Principal invariably means that whatever the problem, people trust and believe that you can fix it!

It can often feel as though you are carrying the full weight of everyone's expectations on your shoulders. Amidst this pressure, I believe it's vital that our leaders are appropriately supported; strategically, operationally, and emotionally to ensure they can keep going.

Social workers have supervision to help them process their most challenging cases, and corporate executives have space for "lessons learned" and continuous improvement between projects.

However, even though the business world has now embraced the benefits of coaching for leadership development, few in our education system have been afforded the opportunity to reap the rewards of this form of support.



***“I have found these coaching sessions invaluable. I am a very experience head teacher, and as such have not had the opportunity to have a platform where I am able to examine my vulnerabilities and really think about why I do and think the way I do in work, and pull***

***apart the possible impact of doing things differently. Richard's style is the perfect blend of reflecting my thoughts back and asking open questions in a way that gently challenged my first instinctive response or train of thought, in such a way as the answers would seemingly come out of nowhere, and at the flick of a switch I went from wrestling with a problem, to mapping out a fully formed solution!***

**Maureen B. Headteacher Manchester England. Full testimonial here [www.edgebarbados.com/education.html](http://www.edgebarbados.com/education.html)**

#### **Top 5 reasons to consider a coach to support an educational establishment.**

1. This article: Coaching will support senior managers in their sometimes lonely role, offering a combination of challenge and support
2. Coaching is great at generating staff accountability and responsibility in their position and in the classroom
3. Coaching will enhance the personal and professional development of staff, including performance management
4. Coaching can be used to support the students in dealing with the different challenges they have on their own. Also helping them manage their workload, meeting deadlines and preparing and revising for exams
5. Coaching is effective for helping staff to adapt to new roles or tasks, including team management

**So what now:** As stated in the accompanying email, I'm now offering a completely free online or in-person Coaching call. These are being offered to give leaders a chance to experience first-hand the coaching relationship's benefits and its role in supporting both their well-being and personal performance. The calls provide a confidential, safe, non-judgmental space to spend 60 minutes exploring ways to, amongst other things:

- Achieve a greater sense of clarity about your direction as a school leader
- Gain a clearer perspective on any challenges that you may be facing
- Identify positive steps for moving forward

**Let's Connect -**  
**Edge Barbados**

If you would like to book a call like this or perhaps know someone who would, please follow the above link using control and click. I look forward to supporting you and your educational establishment. **Richie Forde EDGE Coaching Services**