Becoming a Master Coach
Developing Advanced Skills and Expertise

David B. Peterson

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Coaching Psychology: the science of achieving your goals
Becoming a Master Coach

Developing Advanced Skills and Expertise

David B. Peterson

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Exercise: L
Debrief

• What happened?
• What was your experience of that?
• What did you learn?
  – Be curious
  – Ask questions
  – Be fully present
  – Question assumptions
  – Step into leadership as needed

• How will this help you:
  – Learn more in the next 3 days?
  – Become a better coach faster?

*Be curious first, vote second.*
There are only three important questions in life.
Who am I?
What am I doing here?
Who the hell are these other people?
— Eric Berne (allegedly) —
1. Who are you?

2. What are you doing here?

3. What the heck is going on? [Pick just one…]

   - What is the most profound lesson you’ve learned about coaching? How does it show up in your work?

   - What is the most significant way your coaching has changed in the last 2-3 years? What led you to make that change?
Agenda: Process and content

How?
- How do we learn?
- How can we be better, more intentional learners?
- How do people become experts?
- How can we best develop greater expertise?
- How will I become the kind of coach I want to be?

What?
- What differentiates competent vs. expert coaches?
- What are the most effective things we can do as coaches?

Who?
- Who do I want to be as a coach?
- How do I want to live my deepest values authentically as a coach and as a person?
Five stages of expertise (Dreyfus & Dreyfus, 1986)

1. **Novices**: Focus on accomplishing immediate tasks, based on clear rules.

2. **Advanced beginners**: Use rules as guidelines, applying them in new situations, but not able to handle exceptions or unforeseen problems.

3. **Competent** performers: Form conceptual models of what they do; can handle more complex situations based on experience; typically rely on heuristics or surface features. ("good")

4. **Proficient** performers: Have experienced a wide variety of situations and challenges; see the big picture, monitor their own performance, and interpret underlying principles to adjust behavior based on the context; can handle relatively novel or complex situations.

5. **Experts**: Identify and solve problems intuitively, with little explicit analysis or planning; see underlying patterns effortlessly and adapt principles to generate and apply appropriate solutions, even to complex and unique situations, in such a way that they generate consistently superior performance. ("great", "mastery")

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Advanced Beginner</th>
<th>Categories</th>
<th>Expert</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-focused</td>
<td>Self-awareness</td>
<td>Self-aware</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Client-aware</td>
<td>Awareness of the Coaching Client</td>
<td>Client-focused</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hopeful</td>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>Free</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explored</td>
<td>Role of the Coach</td>
<td>Known</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning / Weaving</td>
<td>Acquisition of Coaching Skills and Abilities</td>
<td>Experimenting / Reflecting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compassionate Thought Partner</td>
<td>Application of Coaching Skills and Abilities</td>
<td>Reflective Sage</td>
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Competent → Expert?

**Competent**
- Effective with variety of clients
- Confident in capabilities
- Experienced: At least 3 years, 30 clients

**Expert**
- Mastery, deep expertise
- Versatile; large, diverse tool-kit
- Put the learner in the foreground
  - Customized, adaptive approach
  - Teach clients how to learn for themselves
- Effective with difficult, complex, challenging engagements (resistant, narcissistic)
- Highly experienced: At least 10 years, 300 clients
The field cannot well be seen from within the field.

— Ralph Waldo Emerson —
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>C0</th>
<th>Not coachable at present</th>
<th>Identified psychological issues</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>C1</td>
<td>Extremely low coachability</td>
<td>Narcissistic personality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Very low coachability</td>
<td>Resists or defies feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C3</td>
<td>Fair coachability</td>
<td>Is complacent/unmotivated to change</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C4</td>
<td>Good coachability</td>
<td>Assessment comes as a wake-up call</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C5</td>
<td>Very good coachability</td>
<td>Shows an earnest desire to improve</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C6</td>
<td>Excellent coachability</td>
<td>Has an intrinsic need to grow</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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I often hear coaches and supervisees talk about particular clients being “uncoachable”. This can be based on an accurate assessment of the coachee’s material, but also, at times, on a discounting of the part shame might be playing in informing the quality of relationship between coach and coachee. When faced with a client who appears defensive and resistant, it can be tempting to deflect away from our own feelings of shame by labelling (and potentially shaming) our clients as “uncoachable”.

When supervisees talk of “uncoachable” clients, I often suggest they experiment with reframing their experience as “right now I don’t know how to proceed”. Where they feel sufficiently supported by my open and inquiring attitude, they can usually find the support to go on thinking about themselves and their coachees in ways that either further the work, or support a more detailed assessment of what is going on in the coaching relationship. (Cavicchia, 2010, p. 883)
Coachability or coach ability?

- The “uncoachable” are often the people who need coaching the most
- Some coaches can coach successfully on these challenges
  - The right type of coach for the need
  - The right experience and expertise, e.g., some expert coaches are well-qualified to work with narcissistic, defensive, distrustful, and difficult people (Ludeman & Erlandson, 2004; Mansi, 2009)
- There is great value in coaching the “uncoachable”
  - High-visibility success for you
  - Even incremental improvement often has real value; moving from unacceptable to barely acceptable
Novice: Guided by models and tools
- How do I do this?
- What do I do next?

Competent: Guided by experience
- What do I think would be helpful?

Expert: Guided by the client
- What does the learner need?
- What will be most useful to them?
Clutterbuck’s coaching maturity (2010)

Models-based: How do I adapt my technique or model to this circumstance?

Process-based: What’s the best way to apply my process in this instance?

Philosophy-based (a specific theoretical framework): What can I do to help the client do this for themselves?

Managed eclectic: How do we allow the issue and the solution to emerge in whatever way they will? How do I select from the wide choice available to me?
True eclectics (Clutterbuck, 2010)

- Emphasize understanding a technique, model or process in terms of its origins within an original philosophy
- Use experimentation and reflexive learning to identify where and how new models fit into their philosophy and framework of helping
- Judge new models by “Will this enrich and improve the effectiveness of my potential responses to client needs?”
- Use peers and supervisors to challenge their coaching philosophy and as partners in experimenting with new approaches
- Have developed their own philosophy, which continually expands and adapts, and evolves
Clutterbuck’s advice (2010)

- Seek wide exposure to different philosophies and perspectives of coaching and related disciplines
- Frequently try out new ideas in coaching, with clients as partners in learning
- Individual and collective reflection on those experiments, engaging clients and colleagues in thinking about how tools work in practice
- Cultivate a deep honesty about one’s own motivation in learning and about how and why we select new areas of knowledge to explore
Development Pipeline

Necessary conditions for systematic development (Peterson, 2010)

**INSIGHT**
Do they know what they need to develop to be more effective?

**MOTIVATION**
Are they willing to invest the time and energy it takes?

**CAPABILITIES**
Do they have the skills and knowledge required for success?

**REAL-WORLD PRACTICE**
Do they take advantage of opportunities to use their skills where it matters?

**ACCOUNTABILITY**
Is someone paying attention to the person’s progress and results?
Are there meaningful consequences?
Development Pipeline + 1

Necessary conditions for successful coaching and development (Peterson, 2010)

**PARTNERSHIP**
- Do they trust you and believe that you understand what matters to them?

**INSIGHT**
- Do they know what they need to develop to be more effective?

**MOTIVATION**
- Are they willing to invest the time and energy it takes?

**CAPABILITIES**
- Do they have the skills and knowledge required for success?

**REAL-WORLD PRACTICE**
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**ACCOUNTABILITY**
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Constraint models increase efficiency  (Peterson, 2006)

Clear Goals
• What are your goals? What are you trying to accomplish?
  — Goals drive behavior - There are always multiple goals
• Where are you stuck? What is keeping you from achieving your goals?

Conscious Choice
• What are your options? What choices do you have?
  — Generate list of options
  — Select the option that best meets all the criteria; what matters

Effective Action
• What’s the most effective thing you can do right now?
  — Practice exactly what they will do
  — Create an action plan
  — Visualize acting on it step-by-step

Constraint models
• Identify the bottleneck or limiting conditions
• Focus on expanding capacity where it has immediate impact
We learn more from reflecting on our experiences than from experience itself.

— John Dewey —
1. Approach each critical task with an explicit goal of getting much better at it.

2. As you do the task, focus on what’s happening and why you’re doing it the way you are.

3. After the task, get feedback on your performance from multiple sources. Make changes in your behavior as necessary.

4. Continually build mental models of your situation – your industry, your company, your career. Enlarge the models to encompass more factors.

5. Do those steps regularly. Occasional practice does not work.
1. **Repetition.** Practice of specific, designed tasks so that the behavior can be repeated and improved.

2. **Focused feedback.** Performance is evaluated during performance against some specific target.

3. **Immediacy of performance.** After corrective feedback, immediate repetition so the task can be performed again to better match the process of experts or some other desired standard.

4. **Stop and start.** Because of the repetition and feedback cycle, a series of short performances rather than a continuous flow.

5. **Emphasis on difficult aspects.** Explicitly focuses on more difficult aspects of the performance, which might be encountered rarely in the real world.
6. **Focus on areas of weakness.** Practicing on one’s weaknesses in a safe environment at appropriate level of difficulty is easier than in actual performance contexts, where people may (appropriately) gravitate toward relying on their strengths.

7. **Conscious focus.** Expert performance is characterized by many aspects being performed with little conscious effort. Once behavior reaches a level of automaticity, it is difficult to improve it without significant conscious effort. Focusing on specific aspects allows one to modify and adapt mental models one aspect at a time.

8. **Work versus play.** Feels more like effortful work than casual performance, generally driven by serious commitment to improve.

9. **Active coaching.** Typically easier to engage in deliberate practice with a coach who monitors performance, assesses adequacy, provides feedback, and controls the structure of the practice.
Exercise: $P^2$

- Demonstration and practice

- Three roles:
  - Client: What do you want to get better at?
  - Coach: Engage in deliberate practice
  - Coach to the coach
    - Help them to engage in deliberate practice
    - No feedback!
Metacognition: Learning about learning

Types of knowledge needed to employ metacognitive process:

1. Procedural knowledge: an understanding of how to perform various activities
2. Conditional knowledge: when and why to apply a strategy

• (Woolfolk, 2008).
To go faster, slow down. Everybody who knows about orbital mechanics knows that.

— Scott Cherf —
Reflecting on reflection: 4 directions

Look inward
• Who do I want to be?
• What am I trying to accomplish?
• What values and principles guide me?

Look outward
• What does it take to be successful?
• What matters to others?
• How do others see me?

Look back
• What new things have I tried?
• What’s worked well? What hasn’t?
• What have I learned so far?

Look ahead
• How is my world changing?
• What will I do differently?
• What do I need to do to keep learning?
1. **Daily** (1 min.): What new thing did I do today? What did I learn? What one thing will I do differently tomorrow?

2. **Weekly** (5 min.): What progress did I make last week? What do I need to focus on next week?

3. **Monthly** (10 min.): How am I doing on my learning objectives? What do I need to do to keep growing? How will I get meaningful feedback?

4. **Quarterly** (15 min.): How am I doing on my development? What is most important for me going forward?

5. **Annually** (1 hour):
   - Am I living my life the way I want to? Am I on a path to become the person I truly want to be?
   - Where do I stand relative to what truly 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 personal and professional development more effectively? How do I make sure I’m not missing something important?

6. **Decadely** (One day every 5-10 years):
   - Who do I want to be? What values do I want to live by?
   - How do I connect to my deepest mission and purpose?
   - What do I need to do in the next 5 years to accomplish what matters most?
1. Make your future bigger than your past.
2. Make your learning greater than your experience.
3. Make your contribution bigger than your reward.
4. Make your performance greater than your applause.
5. Make your gratitude greater than your success.
6. Make your enjoyment greater than your effort.
7. Make your cooperation greater than your status.
8. Make your confidence greater than your comfort.
9. Make your purpose greater than your money.
10. Make your questions bigger than your answers.
The End...

…Or just the beginning of a new journey??

It does not matter how slowly you go as long as you do not stop.

— Confucius —
References & Readings


References & Readings


