

Basic Coaching Skills for Teams and their Partners

a half-day to two-day workshop with optional coaching dojo
with Deborah Hartmann Preuss, CPCC of abiggergame.today and agileambulance.com

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<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1hh0Qn5pFmyMyNOO99TqSeykkr0Jdl7hVyKRSTJFV-x0/edit?usp=sharing>

We love to fix things! We're good at it! But here's a twist: there's also power in *not fixing*.

The shift to an agile way of working introduces new patterns into the workplace: no longer do a few “command” and others “execute”. The move to shared leadership requires everyone to develop new skills - and coaching skills are arguably among the most versatile and powerful, being useful in all aspects of the organisation’s work, from test-driving software to strategy and planning meetings!

The workshop is not intended for any particular job role, instead the focus is on accessing the wisdom of everyone involved in innovating and problem solving. I recommend you invite those with whom your team collaborates, be it internal managers, other departments, or even clients.

In this workshop you’ll get guidance and tips from a certified coach, and practice new skills in an enjoyable and low-risk way, using your own real-world examples, together with colleagues. You’ll leave with a new awareness of the “no fixing” coaching stance: how to tell if you’re doing it, how it can apply in your work, and how to use it respectfully by coaching the problem, not the person.

Organisational agility is a journey, not a destination, and it is important that such a workshop be adjusted fit your stage of the journey. So, consider the following as a sort of menu, which we’ll adjust to create a day that resonates for you, a vibrant and valuable experience. (Timings are approximate, and will be fine tuned while discussing the desired structure of your workshop.)

Workshop Elements to choose from - Outline

** starred elements are always recommended*

Personal Reflection prior to the Workshop

Culture Shift: from “stay in control” to a “shared learning” model of leadership

Creating Safety and Engagement *

Powerful Questions*

Levels of Listening

Live Coaching Demo *

The “No Fixing” Coaching Dojo

Applying PQs in Your Own Collaborative Work Roles

So what? Implications for your workplace*

Designing Next Steps

Final Group Debrief

One-on-one Coaching (post-workshop)


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Workshop Elements – Details

Personal Reflection prior to the Workshop

Self-study (up to 4 exercises): The effectiveness of this workshop will be multiplied for participants who are in touch with their own values, goals and challenges. Some may wish to prepare with my free self-coaching workbook prior to the workshop, downloadable at abiggergame.today

Culture Shift: from “stay in control” to a “shared learning” model of leadership

Introduction and discussion (45 minutes): Many of us came to our current roles from traditional jobs bringing along our passion to create good stuff, and our ingrained work habits. Using ideas developed by Roger Schwarz in “Smart Leaders, Smarter Teams”, Deb will lead a discussion on how these old habits stunt team effectiveness by sending subtle mixed messages that undermine collaboration.

Creating Safety and Engagement *

Exercise (30 minutes): Much of the workshop will happen in small groups. To prepare groups for this, Deborah will use two simple “safety” and “engagement” exercises, which participants can later reuse in their own meetings. This section could optionally also include the cultureQs game (120 minutes), to bridge intra-team divides and accelerate teamwork.

Powerful Questions*

Exercise (one hour): You will learn to spot questions that reinforce power and control, and practice constructing Powerful Questions that foster innovation and change. You will become aware of subtle factors that can support or undermine collaboration.

Levels of Listening

Exercise (30-45 minutes): work in teams is rich in both verbal and non-verbal information. But we may have lost the ability to hear what’s there due to our beliefs about communication. This surprising exercise is an experiment in deep listening, and invites participants to refresh a skill they may not be using to its fullest at work. This is the first step of setting the stage for the later Coaching Dojo.

Live Coaching Demo *

Coaching and discussion (30 minutes): To prepare for the Dojo, I will do a short demo with a volunteer “client” with a real issue, to show how a coach can work from a “no fixing” stance.

The “No Fixing” Coaching Dojo

Workshop (60-90 minutes): in the Powerful Questions exercise, you developed a new awareness, but be assured that it will fly out the window immediately if you do not practice!

We use the Coaching Dojo format first developed by Rachel Davies, which you may already know. It is inspired from Coding Dojos but there are differences. For one thing, there are no kata... coaches deal with real problems brought by the seeker.

It works like this: in each small group a “seeker” brings a real-world problem with which they’d like help, and the “coach” uses Powerful Questions to help them move forward on it, *without* trying to solve it. Several “observers” then share what they noticed in the coaching session. Then everyone rotates roles and there is a new “seeker” and a new “coach”. We will allow time enough that everyone can try out the coach, seeker and observer roles. At the end is a whole-group debrief.

As this is a dojo, the goal is not excellence but experimentation. It is hard work, but fun!

Applying PQs in Your Own Collaborative Work Roles

Exercise and discussion (one hour): we’ll explore the various “hats” worn during your work, using a variation on the Agile Coach Competency framework of the Agile Coach Institute. (The model is adapted to apply to both team members and other roles). Then we will brainstorm in pairs on where Powerful Questions could bring each participant the better outcomes they want.

So what? Implications for your workplace*

Structured discussion (30 minutes to a full day): a discussion with the whole group or in smaller thematic groups, on the implications of the workshop for your own work place.

This could vary from an hour of Lean Coffee to a whole day of Open Space where you redesign your culture collaboratively. If there is a burning need for change, or you want a rich opportunity to jump-start a more collaborative culture, this step is recommended.

Without this step, the workshop’s learning are likely to fade quickly as daily urgency returns.

Designing Next Steps

Facilitation (30-60 minutes): a facilitated session, for you to plan concrete next steps to bring the benefits of this workshop forward into your workplace. You may want to plan future conversations, create a standing work group or recurring event, or make plans for personal development and get advice on resources. This could be an Action Step after an Open Space.

Final Group Debrief

Circle feedback (30 minutes): Since much of the day will have been spent in small groups, this is a chance to hear from one another what was surprising, significant, useful or puzzling.

One-on-one Coaching (post-workshop)

An outcome of the workshop may be a desire by some for more coaching. In this case, I’d gladly return on another day to do confidential sample coaching sessions with all interested. Phone coaching is also possible: it offers schedule flexibility and cost reduction, if you prefer.

Lunch

The focus on this day is on the participants, and this extends to the lunch hour, which is both a rest and a chance to discuss informally with colleagues. Please arrange for a place where people can sit together and do **not** have to stand in line to pay. An in-room hot buffet would be acceptable.

Space and Materials:

It would be helpful to have everyone in one large space. If possible, with carpet to dampen the voices that escalate when everyone coaches at the same time. This space should have a door... being coached is a confidential activity: keeping strangers out is important once coaching starts.

We'll need tables for some activities, and space to move the tables aside for the dojo, which uses only small circles of chairs. We need plenty of space between these circles, for noise reduction.

Flip charts and markers – one flipchart for every 5 participants, and two for the trainer. If there are insufficient flip charts, whiteboard “static sheets” are a good substitute.

If the group is very large it will be important to have amplification, and a projector.

I look forward to co-creating *your* version of this workshop! Talk to you soon!

-- Deb