Chapter 6
To What Extent Is Culture Change Possible Through Coaching and Mentoring?

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ABSTRACT

The Human Resource (HR) world has adopted both coaching and mentoring activity as important parts of its learning and development and change strategy. Both mentoring and coaching have been employed within organizations for individuals for various purposes. There is a logic for the idea of creating a "coaching culture" or perhaps a "mentoring organization." However, the concept of culture is as elusive and varied as coaching and mentoring! One use has been attempts at the complexities of culture change, but this is part of a managerialist discourse where simplification of complexity is a norm. Much coaching and mentoring literature focuses on individuals and only on the organization by implication, and while many claim that coaching and mentoring do enable change across organizations, this is ambiguous. Therefore, this chapter explores the issues surrounding the question, To what extent is culture change possible through coaching and mentoring?

INTRODUCTION

The Human Resource (HR) world seems to have adopted both coaching and mentoring activity as important parts of its learning and development and change strategy, (Bachkirova, Cox & Clutterbuck, 2014; CIPD, 2016; CIPD, 2017; Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Passmore, 2007; Peterson, 2007; Ridler, 2011; 2013; 2016). In the case of mentoring, there has been a growth of activity since the late 1980's. In the case of coaching, its rise started around the early part of 2000 (Garvey, 2011).

Mentoring has been employed within organizational contexts for individuals as part of, for example, an 'on-boarding' process (Eisner, 2015), performance improvement (Srivastava & Thakur, 2013) and talent development (De Long, Gabarro & Lees, 2008). It has also been employed to assist with culture change in SME's (Peel, 2006), staff retention in schools (Parker, 2010), support for people in changing

environments in Higher Education (Cureton, Green & Meakin, 2010) and it is argued by some (de Vries et al, 2006) that mentoring is a "critical part of culture change" (p. 573)

Coaching has also been employed for leadership development and managing talent (Baron, Morin & Morin, 2011; Wilson, 2007) it has been considered as an alternative to current, more traditional, learning and development initiatives (Bachkirova et al., 2014; Kilburg, 1996;). Stelter (2014) views coaching as "process of social and personal meaning making" (p.191), whereas others (Passmore & Fillery-Travis, 2011; Yu, Collins, Cavanagh, White & Fairbrother, 2008) suggest that it is a facilitated conversation that enables reflection and change. In recent years there has emerged a number of commentators (Clutterbuck & Megginson, 2005; Jones & Gorell, 2016; Sherman & Freas, 2004) who argue for the creation of 'coaching cultures' within organizations.

There is little doubt that coaching and mentoring for individuals has become important to organizations and the logic for the idea of creating a 'coaching culture' or perhaps a 'mentoring organization' in order to further the interests of the business are alluring. However, the concept of culture is as elusive and varied as coaching and mentoring!

'Culture change' is a common managerial mantra (Huy & Mintzberg, 2003) and both coaching and mentoring are increasingly seen, mainly by practitioners and consultants, as vehicles for culture change. However, culture change itself could be viewed as "bad for the health of both company and staff" (Stern, 2005, p. 40). Additionally, "there can be no such thing as successful change management" (Griffiths, 2002, p, 298). Griffiths (2002) argues that often the desired outcomes are laudable but managers seek to manage both the 'process and the outcome' by sloganizing the change process with expression such as 'buy-in'. He continues, "what seriously disables people is being treated mechanistically and instrumentally, while being told they are being treated humanistically" (p. 303). A clear case of say one thing and do another!

Alternatively, Huy and Mintzberg (2003) argue that change can come about as a result of inadvertent rejuvenation through "messy little experiments" (p. 83), "imperative rejuvenation" (p.83) that come about as a result of organic initiatives sustained through middle management or "steady rejuvenation" (p.83) again as an organic process which balances "chaos and inertia by applying steady pressure". (p.84).

Change then is an ambiguous subject with differing opinions about outcomes and processes. Change appears to be part of a managerialist discourse (Western, 2012) where simplification of complexity is a norm.

With regard to coaching, many claim (Baron et al. 2011; Evers et al. 2006; Grief, 2017; McGovern, Lindemann, Vergara, Murphy, Barker & Warrenfeltz, 2001; Smither, London, Flautt, Vargas, & Kucine, 2003; Thach, 2002) that coaching helps individuals to, for example, learn, improve performance, develop as leaders and achieve goals in various ways and despite criticisms (Smither et al. 2003) of the methodologies in, for example, McGovern et al. (2001) and that many of these authors cite the same studies as each other, there is a body of belief that coaching is an effective method of learning and development in business.

Within the mentoring literature, there is a wealth of evaluative research going back more than 30 years that suggests that mentoring relationships help to develop performance, change, personal growth and learning and development among many other benefits (Allen, Eby, Poteet, Lentz, & Lima; Bisk, 2002; Brown-Johnson & Scandura, 1994; Roche, 1979). However, much of this literature focusses on individuals and only on the organization by implication and whilst, many claim that coaching (Baron et al. 2011; Evers et al. 2006; Grief, 2017; McGovern et al. 2001; Smither et al. 2003; Thach, 2002) and mentoring (Allen, et al. 2007; Bisk, 2002; Brown-Johnson and Scandura, 1994; Roche, 1979) do en-

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