

Reproduced with the permission of choice Magazine, www.choice-online.com

Reproduced with the permission of choice Magazine, www.choice-online.com

choice

the magazine of professional coaching

Team & Group Coaching

The landscape of coaching many



GROUP & TEAM COACHING

The landscape of coaching many

What are the differences between team and group coaching? When and how do you introduce team or group coaching? How do you effectively measure the impact of team or group coaching? This issue uncovers the secrets of successful group and team coaching experiences for both coach and clients, including how to design and launch programs to create engagement, inspiration, motivation and accountability for participants.



Reproduced with the permission of choice Magazine, www.choice-online.com

Reproduced with the permission of choice Magazine, www.choice-online.com



THE ETHOS OF AGILE TEAMS

Five ways they make us better

By Pam Boney, MA, PCC, MTC

Disruption, as a word, triggers all kinds of emotions. It means we didn't see something before it happened. We didn't anticipate change before it impacted us. We were blindsided by our status quo.

Disruption catches us off guard and maybe even shakes us to our core before we are ready. Disruption wakes us up out of our comfy delusion of complacency, just when we were starting to relax and enjoy

the peace. Yes, change is sometimes downright uncomfortable to our emotionally-laden psyche.

Yet human beings are inarguably and profoundly resilient, too; especially evolutionary coaches who understand the importance of the destroyer archetype that loves to sneak up on us just when we were least expecting it.

We know when a destroyer shows up in our psyche, it's a good sign we are ready for change, so we're mostly

good with it. We might even invite it into our lives ourselves. After all, we are disruptors of a sort in our own profession, showing people how to unlearn the old in order to be open to the new; how to disrupt themselves in order to reorder their habitual patterns.

Indeed, we know the saboteur is a necessary part of change, rearing its temporarily ugly head just in time to help us raise awareness about an unexamined script we might be living.

We help our clients make space for a new order of thinking that hopefully is transcendent to the way our thoughts, emotions, beliefs and actions were organized previously. We are change agents and provocateurs. Our profession exists because we embraced our own journey of change, saw the enormous benefits and then decided to lend a hand to others.

For this reason, we are also prepared to help systems (enterprise) deal with disruption. Global diversity paired with escalating technologies means disruption extraordinary. Agile teams are looking for ways to disrupt literally every commercial and non-commercial enterprise. Any entity that's been around for a while would be wise to predict the variety of ways they could witness their own demise.

Those who are agile actually enjoy constraints, but not the ones you might traditionally think of.

And now the world appears to be ready in ways it wasn't even five years ago. The language is changing. The business world is saying hello to the saboteur of the good old days. The inevitable is here. It's time to focus on teams and culture, applying our collective skills to usher in a systemic response to rapid change. We want our clients not only to survive but also thrive and we have learned the skills to pave the way. We are uniquely ready to help them.

But where do we begin and how do we help them not only manage the stress triggering emotions, but welcome them as a sign of what wants to change? We need to be the calm in a sea of noise; the light at the end of the tunnel; and most importantly, an expert in agile methods, applied to people and team development. Even bureaucratic companies can change if they have

the right diagnostics and an agility coach helping them. So, what does this require of us?

First, we have to be positive. Show them a roadmap for how to shift culture swiftly. Research shows that teams can change swiftly and if they reach critical mass with enough influential teams leading the way in a large company, they will shift the culture, too. Their leaders must be agile, and this requires unlearning first. The agile method is quite different than what they may have been doing habitually for decades. We all know it's more difficult to unlearn old habits than to learn a new one. Tunnel vision competencies need to be replaced with continuously changing abilities in this new global economy. Champions ready for this are in every company somewhere. We just have

to find them and support them!

So as coaches, what can we learn from the ethos of agile teams? Well, first let's start with the word Ethos.

Aristotle wrote about the three most compelling persuasion methods: Logos, which is persuasion through logic; Pathos, which is persuasion through emotional storytelling; and Ethos, which is persuasion through ethical example. His view was that while Logos and Pathos are useful, the Ethos of a person or entity is far greater in its ability to create wholesale change swiftly. People are moved most through ethical meaning.

For this reason, I'd like to propose that we look at the ethical and moral influence of agile teams to create viral influence that quickly spreads across the globe. My theory is that there's something that delights us about these disruptors that force us to look at ourselves and make new choices.

What do they do naturally? What do they do that makes us all better? Here's what our research has observed:

1 THEY DISRUPT DOMINANT PREDECESSORS

Meta-Strength: Courageous Guts
Character Strengths: Boldness, Integrity & Confidence

There's something about this set of character strengths that keeps things in check. This is the next generation saying, "no, we don't like how things were and we can make it better."

It's fresh, it's relevant and it enables the next generation of leaders to boldly express their own power and autonomy. This generational shift keeps us from becoming autocratic and top-heavy. It puts "the man" on alert. It enables democracy by preventing monopoly.

The tension that results keeps us all on our toes. Having a competitor to test our speed and mettle against is, quite simply, motivating in the most visceral way. The result? Rapid competitive differentiation that is inarguable.

2 THEY HAVE SOMETHING TO PROVE

Meta-Strength: Resilient Spirit
Character Strengths: Inspiration, Creativity, Openness

What's more fun than proving you can create something no one else has thought of? Insights are born from a unique blend of interests that no one else in the world can duplicate because they have their own set of interests. Disruptive ideas arise from immersion in numerous bodies of study or research, then converging to produce an extraordinary insight.

Once the idea is formed, a new vision of the future is possible. We are profoundly attracted to new ideas because they give our spirit hope. The first important step to manifesting something in reality is believing it is possible. This requires

a bit of hubris and a bit of crazy. The result? The imagination of the one, becomes the benefit of the many.

3 THEY ARE RUTHLESSLY FOCUSED

Meta-Strength: Mindful Wisdom
Character Strengths: Focus, Perspective, Diligence

Those who are agile actually enjoy constraints, but not the ones you might traditionally think of. There's something about having to do more with very limited resources that demands rigor and ruthless focus on priorities. Instead of seeing this as a limitation, agile teams are stimulated by constraints.

If others say it's impossible, all the better. They know that not having to

worry about what's most important is death to productivity and efficient decision-making. The result? Continuously prolific output that results from focus.

4 THEY HAVE GOOD VALUES AND INTENTIONS

Meta-Strength: Compassionate Humanity
Character Strengths: Empathy, Likability, Trust

Agile teams almost always have honorable intentions that concern the world at large in some way. They want to make the world better in some way by healing wrongs of the past. Inclusion and diversity is a given. There is a fundamental empathy in teams that are devoted to

healing the transgressions of the past. Profoundly innocent in many ways, they seem to represent the desire for a world that is kind and that takes care of their own. This is the glue that holds agile teams together. Not only do they have each other's backs, they also collectively serve some greater good for humanity or planet. The result? They are loyal apostles for their cause, willing to work tirelessly to serve a mutual cause together.

5 THEY ARE AGILE IN ALL FOUR META-STRENGTHS

What results? Flow. Agile teams have no time for dysfunction, drama and ego-politics because they can't afford to be, and because they employ agile methodology to their productivity process.

They are transparent and radically honest about reality. They don't have time for emotional escalations and are not afraid of conflict. Not one iota. In fact, they embrace it vigorously. Tension is part of their process because their minds work at another level of complexity that includes the need for angst to catalyze the creative process. They embrace polarity like it's self-evident.

So, how can we help more traditional clients learn the skills of agility, so they can morph to become more productive, creative, innovative and generative? I think it's crucial that we examine the link between character and agility. Character intelligence is anything but a soft skill. It's about growing up to interact in a way that embraces the facts about our reality right now. Agile teams are not softies. Quite the opposite, they are tough and full of grit, tenacity, responsibility and commitment.

Unless we have a framework of organizing principles and a common language to help us generate dialogue, we may not get very far in catalyzing the necessary change. And "far" feels like what is before us in these precarious times. We must embrace tension and polarities in ourselves in order to lead the way. •

