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Leadership Coaching Tip: From an Adult-Developmental Perspective

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I understand "Coaching Tips" as highly generic suggestions thought to apply to all kinds of clients. From an adult-developmental perspective, such suggestions should be specific to different levels of social-emotional and cognitive maturity, measured by semi-structured interview (Laske, 2006). The notion is that generic coaching tips need to be customized to the developmental "size of person" of the client.

Below, I am taking a stab at formulating some developmental Coaching Tips specifically geared to "leadership coaching," leaving behavioral—that is, non-developmental—issues out of account.

1. If you don't know how to make a developmental assessment of the client's leadership potential, work from your intuition as to how far the client is able to disengage from ego-centric needs both in *feeling* (social-emotional development) and *thinking* (cognitive development). Ego-centricity will show in the client

- either being defined by the expectations of others (other-dependent level) or by his/her own values and principles (self-authoring level), neither of which is sufficient for leadership in the sense of being “in the flow,” and thus being unattached to specific parts of oneself such as one’s history, background, education, expertise, ideals, etc.
2. Try to ascertain how far your client’s thinking is restricted to formal logical thought, without any capability of thinking of situations, events, persons, and constellations as *living systems* (such a bee hive), that is, in terms of transformational systems. This also has to do with the way the client justifies beliefs in the face of uncertainty, in the sense that the more the world is seen in transformational terms, knowledge is felt to be uncertain and truth is therefore seen as requiring hypothesis formulation and testing.
 3. Try to ascertain how far your client is identified with his or her particular “little personality,” rather than acting from a more wide-scoped persona in which one’s own personality is felt to be just one of the many possible manifestations of mature humanity. This often shows in the way the client experiences “shame,” “guilt,” “loneliness,” and “superiority,” as well as the client’s ability for compassion with self.
 4. In just focusing attention on the client’s speech, without interpreting or modeling new behaviors, ascertain the oscillations of your client’s consciousness between defining him- or herself from a steady *Center of Gravity* (comfort zone), in contrast to acting from “below” that center in situations of crisis, or “above” that center in situations of high support and boosting. (Also consider whether the client is possible at a higher level of maturity—Center of Gravity—than you yourself, in which case ethical coaching issues would arise.)
 5. Become an observer of your client’s interactions with herself, others, and the organizational environment, and give your client feedback on what you “see” in this regard, making sure you understand your own relationship to yourself as a professional coach (in contrast to your own little personality).
 6. Systematically lead the client out of her “Task House” where her own role is in focus, into the “Organizational House” of the surrounding environment, and from there to the “Self House” where the client’s own motivations and agenda are topical. Try to ascertain, in which House the client spends most of her time, and what floors and chambers of each of the Houses might be taboo for them to enter. If such taboos are found, explore them with the client, and see whether the underlying resistance can be brought into the open. This then will further show the level of the client’s maturity.
 7. If you feel you know too little about your own present developmental position as an adult, afford yourself of a developmental assessment that will show you your own present developmental “size of person.” Look into Laske’s [Measuring Hidden Dimensions](#) (2006) to know what is meant by that.