

Example Coaching Assignments

Outlined below is a series of de-identified examples that demonstrate some of the outcomes achieved through my work either in one-on-one coaching or my peer group leadership coaching. Some of these examples relate to senior leaders, while some relate to more front-line leaders, however all demonstrate a shift in their thinking and practice.

1. I worked with an assistant Manager, a man in his mid-late 40s, who had been a people leader for many years, working mostly with people in the engineering industry. He was a leader who had strong beliefs about 'hands-off leadership'. He liked to trust his teams; not watch them too closely, and only tended to get involved when he had to. He was a leader of other leaders, and he remembered how uncomfortable it was to be closely supervised. Throughout the course of his coaching experience, he started to pay more attention to his practice and seek feedback about his impact. He realised that being 'hands-off' was actually having unintended consequences a few layers below. He realised he needed to set clearer expectations upfront of his direct reports, and to 'check-in' rather than 'check-up' on how they were leading their teams. By not checking 'in' he did not have a clear sense of whether his direct reports were leading their teams well. He realised he also needed to engage more with individual staff members within his broader team; to them his 'hand off approach' looked like he didn't care about them. When we altered his approach, he demonstrated to the broader team that he did have an interest, not only in terms of what they were doing in a work-sense, but also in their well-being.
2. I worked with Team Leader, a lady who was in her mid-40s who was considered an 'expert' in her field. Due to continual changes and restructures, she ultimately became the 'reluctant leader' of a team that was very short staffed. She became the gate keeper, often doing more than was her fair share, and having an auto-pilot of pushback when any request came in; effectively adopting a 'maternalistic' approach. She associated more with being a 'team member', rather than a 'leader' and found herself distancing herself from 'management'. Unconsciously, her words and actions perpetuated the 'us' and 'them'. She was not really comfortable with the title of leader, almost feeling like an 'imposter'. Over the course of a few months, she began to see the importance of her role, and that even if she didn't want to be, she was the leader. She slowly began to be more comfortable with what it really meant to be a leader, and she began to own it. Through seeking feedback, she had validation of the things she was doing well, and she became more comfortable in letting others take on a bit more. She realised she had a role to advocate more for her team, and more creatively manage upwards. Allowing others to step up a little more meant she had more time to work on other stakeholder relationships which had been neglected in recent years.
3. I worked with a man in his mid-late 40s, who had been a longtime manager in local government. The most senior leader in the department had a very strong, directive style that became the norm in the department. This manager had a very different natural style, preferring to be more participative and collaborative, but he felt pressured into leading in a way that mimicked the cultural norms of the division. Through exploring his beliefs about leadership, he realised that ignoring these deeply held values, this was contributing to his increasing levels of stress. After fleshing out what this meant on a practical level, he realised that he could be his more authentic self, do things differently to others, and still be a very effective leader; in-fact a far more effective leader than he was before. He decided to stop worrying about others and how they operated, and worked to be the best version of himself. His team noticed his changes, and their positive reactions to them helped him to make some permanent changes.