On Becoming a Leadership Coach

On Becoming a
Leadership Coach
A Holistic Approach to
Coaching Excellence

*Edited by
Christine Wahl, Clarice Scriber,
and Beth Bloomfield*

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ON BECOMING A LEADERSHIP COACH

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*To our students over the years in the
Georgetown University Leadership Coaching Program,
who have found their own unique leadership coaching
voices through mastery and improvisation.*

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Introduction

Christine M. Wahl

One way or another, we all have to find what best fosters the flowering of our humanity in this contemporary life, and dedicate ourselves to that.

—Joseph Campbell

Possibility. Sustainability. Agility. Reality. Opportunity. Quality. Authenticity. Ability. Capacity. Stability. Productivity. Curiosity. Rationality. Emotionality. Dignity. Humanity.

The meanings associated with this word list have tremendous connection to the work we do as leadership coaches. Coaching leaders is a heart-and-soul, mind-and-body endeavor. Such an endeavor focuses on results and requires clients to step on the challenging path of moving beyond one's current boundaries. Such work is uncomfortable, emboldening, freeing, and grounding. For surely, it brings leaders back to a person they know well—themselves.

So much of coaching leaders is about helping them remember their best version of “self.” We call this authenticity. We need more of it from our leaders.

The chapters in *On Becoming a Leadership Coach: A Holistic Approach to Coaching Excellence* are written by coaches and educators who have been on the faculty of the Leadership Coaching Certificate Program at Georgetown University. The writings cover topics that reflect heart and soul, mind and body. Our intention in writing this book, divided into major sections of “Being,” “Doing,” and “Using,” is to share our current thinking in multiple domains of leadership coaching. While aimed primarily at helping coaches stay in their own development and giving coaches concepts and tools to work with, this book speaks also to leaders, managers, educators, consultants, psychologists, clergy, and entrepreneurs. The concepts presented here apply to development and thereby help anyone wishing to understand themselves better find greater fulfillment in their personal lives and create more productive work lives.

In this book, you will find chapters on what it means to “be” a coach, what coaches “do,” and tools that coaches “use.” The act of coaching leaders is aimed at supporting them in producing sustainable results in the most humane way. Leaders

create the future, they affect business, economics, global productivity, efficiency, and sustainability, and they do this through the “who” that they embody daily. Their “who” touches and influences all the people in their orbit, both near and far. It is from their “who” that their actions flow, and from their actions, they work to achieve results that will benefit the whole—their organizations and, ultimately, the larger systems within which they live.

As coaches, we have been influenced by many who came before us and wish to thank each of the big thinkers we have learned from. While there are too many to mention here, we are grateful to all of those teachers who have been in our lives, either by reading their work or experiencing their teaching in real-time, who have challenged our thinking and supported our humanness in ways big and small. We are grateful to all of our students, who over the past seven years, have stimulated fantastic conversations and helped us to continually refine our own processes. We are grateful to the deans and administrators who have known and supported us at Georgetown University. Lastly, we are grateful to our families, whose precious and generous support surely allows us to focus on our passion of creating more joy and life within organizations, through the courage of the leaders with whom we work.

As you read the following chapters, we hope you find inspiration and validation, and that your passion for excellence finds a new spark that continues to motivate. Every coach is an ambassador for bringing generosity, openness, curiosity, and kindness into the world of achieving in the workplace; coaching leaders brings these qualities of humanity to the foundation of doing business in today’s world, with the mission of creating more and more ambassadors. May you be graced with time to reflect, support to engage in personal and professional renewal, and resolve to continue to make a difference in the lives—the “being alive”—of those you influence.

I don’t believe people are looking for the meaning of life as much as they are looking for the experience of being alive.

—Joseph Campbell