

Coaching Insights with MAJ Ali Heenan

Transcript

Appearing

In order of appearance:

1. MAJ David Stephens
2. MAJ Ali Coulton née Heenan

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Transcript details

- MAJ David Stephens Ali, what are your top tips as a coach that you give to other coaches?
- MAJ Ali Coulton née Heenan I think one that is very important to me is to be authentic. There might be a lot of expectations from your coaching counterpart, based off your rank, your background experience. But I think being authentic and showing up as another human being with flaws and challenges and mistakes from your own past is really important. Not trying to pretend to be someone that you're not or have experience that you don't is one.
- MAJ Ali Coulton née Heenan Another tip that I would offer is to let go of feeling like you have to have the answers and move into problem solving mode and fixit mode. I find this can be very detrimental and can take away from what might be most beneficial for the counterpart. Where if we come in with our own expectations on what the session needs to look like, or where the TO needs to go, or get to, through their coaching program. So to let go of coming in as the expert and the advice giver.
- MAJ Ali Coulton née Heenan And another tip that I would have is make the most of silence. I think a lot of people can be very uncomfortable with silence and it can be a really powerful way to increase the tension a little bit. We can often default into filling the silence and giving more prompts, if we've asked a question and the counterpart is struggling or not quite sure where to go. But there's a real power in becoming comfortable with the uncomfortable silence.
- MAJ David Stephens Thanks, Ali. Tell me, what does success look like for you as a coach?
- MAJ Ali Coulton née Heenan I think success for me is less about me as a coach, but more about the individual that I'm working with. So asking the question of them, of what does success look like for them? And they may not know at the start, but that might become more apparent throughout. So for me, my focus is on making sure that I show up for the



coaching counterpart in that time, and I'm not distracted and that they have my full attention.

MAJ Ali
Coulton née
Heenan

And it's not about a certain outcome over the program, but rather engagement with the TO is sort of where I see success over the program.

MAJ David
Stephens

Great. And tell me, what does it mean as a coach to be an effective listener?

MAJ Ali
Coulton née
Heenan

I think a lot of people can believe that they are good listeners. But I find that it is a very active skill that you need to practice. Quite often we can fall into the habit of having an answer or figuring out what we're going to say next in response to what someone else, or in this case, the counterpart is saying.

MAJ Ali
Coulton née
Heenan

And that detracts from actually listening to what they are saying. So I think if you can set aside knowing what your response is going to be and listen to what they are saying, then you can listen not just for the words, but for the emotions. Listen for what is not being said, and listen for patterns of certain words that the TO might be sharing.

MAJ Ali
Coulton née
Heenan

And then that can also inform your questioning and your inquiry of getting curious about what a specific word means to them that they might be repeating. And that might be 'success'. It might be 'leadership'. It might be 'vulnerability'. What does that word mean for you? So I think that really helps with your active listening.

MAJ David
Stephens

Thank you.

