Army 360 / Multi-Source Assessment and Feedback (MSAF) program is operated by the Center for Army Leadership, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas. Log onto MSAF at https://msaf.army.mil. For further information contact 913.758.3216 or 913.758.3160.
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Document Overview

The purpose of this guide is to prepare coaches to help Army leaders attain a deeper understanding of their leadership behaviors, to increase professionalism among Army coaches, and to enhance Army coach understanding of best practices of executive coaching. This guide provides:

- A brief background on the components and process of the Army’s Multi-Source Assessment and Feedback (MSAF) Program.
- Best practices in coaching aligned with the International Coach Federation (ICF) core competencies.
- Definitions and examples of the various roles coaches use when developing others.

This guide is designed to enhance the skills of Army leaders who already have a basic understanding of coaching principles and experience coaching others on leadership. This guide is not intended to help those at a beginner level who would like to start coaching others. Beginner MSAF coaches should reference the MSAF online training modules for coaches. Beginner coaches in an institutional setting should reference the Institutional Faculty Guide to MSAF Coaching. Both of these resources are available through the MSAF Web site (http://msaf.army.mil).

This guide supports the coaching function within the Army’s MSAF program, a process that involves multi-rater assessments aligned with Army leader doctrinal competencies. While MSAF coaching traditionally involves interpretation of a leader’s Individual Feedback Report (IFR) and creation of an Individual Development Plan (IDP), the techniques presented in this guide are applicable to any coaching relationship. Coaching can be conducted using a variety of data sources, including self-assessment, indicators of performance, and informal feedback. The methods of coaching within this guide help coaches demonstrate professionalism and best practices while moving a leader toward development planning and action. This document includes the four sections that are described below.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Army MSAF</th>
<th>Description of the MSAF program, where and when it occurs, its benefits, and how advanced coaching differs from basic coaching.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Adult Learning Model</td>
<td>Describes the cyclical phases of adult learning and relation to the coaching process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coach Competencies</td>
<td>Descriptions, best practice techniques, and examples of the eleven coaching competencies organized into four groups: Setting the Foundation, Co-Creating the Relationship, Communicating Effectively, and Facilitating Learning and Results.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Difficult Coaching Engagements</td>
<td>Handling difficult coaching situations including leader resistance, overcoming roadblocks and obstacles to the process, and when a leader is on an inappropriate path.</td>
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</table>

A list of coaching and leadership development resources is provided in Appendix A of this guide. Additionally, Appendix B includes information on where and how coaches should use various helping roles such as coaching, counseling, teaching, mentoring, and consulting when developing others.
What is Army MSAF?

The Multi-Source Assessment and Feedback (MSAF) program was developed to enhance leader development for the Active Army, Army Reserve, Army National Guard and Army civilian leaders serving in today’s complex operational environment. The MSAF program is under the organization and direction of the Center for Army Leadership (CAL), U.S. Army Combined Arms Center (CAC), which is the action agent for leader development, leadership research, leadership doctrine, and professional military education systems to sustain excellence in the Army’s core competency of growing leaders.

The MSAF program provides a “360-degree” approach that is widely used in both the government and the private sector to better understand individual leadership and the complex leadership challenges that organizations face. MSAF uses a central website to collect feedback through assessments. These assessments are completed by those who surround the leader – superiors, peers, and subordinates – and focus on the leadership competencies and attributes found in FM 6-22, Army Leadership.

MSAF is a way of increasing Army leader self-awareness with objective feedback on his or her leadership from multiple perspectives. Assessments are completed anonymously, and feedback is confidential. Ratings do not serve as an evaluation nor are they used for promotion decisions or other administrative purposes. MSAF provides information to compel and support leaders in the creation and implementation of an individual development plan (IDP) for personal improvement.

The MSAF leader development program is focused on achieving the following key objectives:

- Provide a resource for objective leadership assessment.
- Promote leadership feedback from multiple sources.
- Enhance individual leader self-awareness.
- Reinforce development planning and implementation.
- Provide resources dedicated to leader self-development.
- Provide widely accessible online resources.
- Provide unit leaders with roll-up reports to focus their unit leader development programs on widespread leader development needs.
- Provide institutional schools with roll-up reports to inform them of student population leader development needs.
- Become a synthesizing catalyst for leader development.

When and Where MSAF Occurs

MSAF assessments are initiated and conducted in various ways and for different purposes. MSAF is positioned to support leader growth and improvement in each domain of Army leader development.
Leaders participate in Army MSAF at their own initiative, as part of unit-based efforts, and prior to attending select professional military education (PME) or civilian education system (CES) courses, all IAW AR 350-1:

- An individual leader may initiate an MSAF assessment for self-development purposes at any time he or she deems necessary and appropriate. Several key events in a leader’s career present opportune times for MSAF, including post deployment, before and after serving in a command position, and after a mission rehearsal exercise (MRE).
- MTOE units will participate in MSAF on a cyclical basis to align with ARFORGEN. AR 350-1 states that active component brigades will be scheduled every three years, reserve brigades every six years, and TDA organizations every five years.
- Students scheduled to attend selected PME/CES courses will be notified to initiate and complete an MSAF assessment before course attendance. Cadre, faculty and staff then provide coaching in an academic environment.

The MSAF Process

All cohorts of Army leaders can benefit from participating in MSAF. The program is applicable for use by officers, NCOs, warrant officers and Army civilians across the active, guard, and reserve components. The assessments available to leaders through MSAF have been through a rigorous process of validation to ensure that leaders are assessed on behaviors that positively relate to effective leadership for Army roles and responsibilities. Valid and reliable measurement is also assured by software system rules which
require a minimum of three superior, three peer, and five subordinate or direct report ratings before that grouping will be reported separately.

Each leader receives an Individual Feedback Report (IFR) which includes ratings from participants who know or work with the leader. The report also includes write-in comments on the leader’s strengths and development needs. Coaching is a key step in the process. Coaches facilitate leader understanding of the feedback report and promote action through individual development planning.

Ultimately, a self-aware leader is the key outcome of the MSAF program. This refers to a leader’s perception of his or her own strengths and developmental needs becoming more aligned with the objective feedback received from superiors, peers, and subordinates – resulting in a more accurate ‘self picture’ or self-awareness. A self-aware leader is also one who is more knowledgeable and aware of personal leadership strengths and developmental needs.

**MSAF Coaching**

MSAF coaches help leaders understand and appreciate their current level of performance and potential. Coaches help to explain survey results, identify strengths and developmental needs, provide insight or suggestions on how to reach the next level of knowledge and skill, and guide a leader through the creation of an individual development plan (IDP).

For self-initiated and unit-directed assessments, coaches are experienced retired senior officers, warrant officers, NCOs and DA civilians. For assessments conducted prior to attendance at PME/CES courses, coaches are instructors, faculty, cadre, and staff at the schoolhouse or course training center. All coaches are uniquely qualified to provide developmental feedback tempered by experience.

This guide is focused on advanced coaching, as opposed to coaching at a basic level. When advanced coaching skills are being applied, the coach is more focused on the leader and is able to respond “in the moment.” Coaching at an advanced level includes the ability to spontaneously ask questions that build on what the leader says and knowing when to pause or move the discussion forward based on interactions with the leader. This requires a firm understanding of the coaching core competencies as well as being able to provide useful and focused advice and recommendations for leader improvement.
The role of the coach is to support the leader in becoming aware of what he or she needs to work on, developing practices to try, supporting the practice (even when it feels unnatural), and helping to track when it is and is not working. The following model for adult learning is a graphic depiction of the process:

**Unconscious Incompetence**—Low performance and no differentiation or understanding.
- A leader is unaware of a developmental need; some form of data is needed to identify where there are areas for improvement.

**Conscious Incompetence**—Low performance and recognition of flaws and weaknesses.
- The leader gains awareness of his or her developmental need through a feedback mechanism or data source. The coach helps to bring the weak area into the leader’s awareness.

**Conscious Competence**—Improved performance, conscious, somewhat contrived effort.
- The leader addresses the developmental need through feedback, study, or practice to improve performance. The coach helps the leader to determine and plan how performance could be improved.

**Unconscious Competence**—Natural, integrated, automatic higher performance.
- Improvement on the development need is achieved and the leader performs at a higher level. The coach follows up at this point to ensure the leader is satisfied with the outcome.

Learning is cyclical through these phases. As one piece of learning becomes integrated, the leader embarks on the next cycle. At any time a leader may be at various phases of this process while becoming self-aware and developing. The role of the coach is most prevalent during the consciousness phases. However, the more talking or “telling” a coach does at these middle phases, the more the ownership of the process (by the leader) is undermined.

The coach should follow-up with the leader, either through brief check-ins or additional sessions, to determine how well things are progressing. Ideally, the leader will have moved from conscious to unconscious competence in the area that was previously a development need. If development has not been met with success, the coach should re-engage the leader to consider the appropriateness of the chosen developmental activities and the leader’s plan for implementation in the current situation. If development has been successful, the coach should provide motivation and encouragement to the leader for continued development in other areas.
Coach Competencies

The International Coach Federation’s (ICF) eleven coach competencies are organized into four groupings that describe an effective coaching engagement.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Competency and Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Setting the Foundation</td>
<td><strong>1. Meeting the Ethical and Professional Standards</strong>— Understanding of coaching ethics and</td>
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<td></td>
<td>standards and ability to apply them appropriately in coaching situations.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>2. Establishing the Coaching Agreement</strong>— Ability to understand what is required in the</td>
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<td>specific coaching with the prospective and new client about the coaching process and relationship.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Co-Creating the Relationship</td>
<td><strong>3. Establishing Trust with the Client</strong>— Ability to create a safe, supportive environment</td>
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<td>that produces ongoing mutual respect and trust.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>4. Coaching Presence</strong>— Ability to be fully conscious and create spontaneous relationships</td>
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<tr>
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<td>with the client, employing a style that is open, flexible, and confident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating Effectively</td>
<td><strong>5. Active Listening</strong>— Ability to focus completely on what the client is saying and is</td>
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<td>not saying, to understand the meaning of what is said in the context of the client’s desires, and to support client self-expression.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>6. Powerful Questioning</strong>— Ability to ask questions that reveal the information needed for</td>
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<td></td>
<td>maximum benefit to the coaching relationship and client.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>7. Direct Communication</strong>— Ability to communicate effectively during coaching sessions, and to</td>
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<td></td>
<td>use language that has the greatest positive impact on the client.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilitating Learning and Results</td>
<td><strong>8. Creating Awareness</strong>— Ability to integrate and accurately evaluate multiple sources of</td>
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<td>information, and to make interpretations that help the client to gain awareness and thereby</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>achieve agreed-upon results.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>9. Designing Actions</strong>— Ability to create with the client opportunities for ongoing learning, during coaching, and in work-life situations, and for taking new actions that will most effectively lead to agreed-upon results.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>10. Planning and Goal Setting</strong>— Ability to develop and maintain an effective coaching plan with the client.</td>
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<td></td>
<td><strong>11. Managing Progress and Accountability</strong>— Ability to hold attention on what is important for the client, and to leave responsibility with the client to take action.</td>
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</table>

Within each of these competencies, there are practices that vary from basic to advanced levels of coaching. In the chapters that follow, a description of each competency is provided along with a best practice technique for coaching at an advanced level. While the competencies and associated best practices are generally presented here as independent of one another, in truth, advanced coaching requires proficient demonstration of them all. The competencies, as well as the leadership coaching process in general, should not be seen as a linear progression as much as an interrelated aspects of an interaction. Coaching at an advanced level requires a coach to demonstrate many of these competencies at each phase of a coaching engagement.
An effective coaching relationship begins with a solid foundation. Approaching the initial interaction in a professional manner sets the tone for the entire relationship. Reaching a clear, mutual agreement about what the leader can expect from the coaching relationship and what is required of both the coach and the leader to achieve these expectations will maximize the benefit of coaching.

**Meeting the Ethical and Professional Standards**

First and foremost, a coach must understand coaching ethics and professional standards and uphold these in the coaching situation. The leader is taking a risk by sharing information about his or her developmental needs with a coach. This risk-taking and openness must be safeguarded and encouraged throughout the coaching relationship by adhering to high ethical and professional standards.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethics</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Identify and resolve conflicts of interest.</td>
<td>• Put the leader’s interests before your own. Refer the leader</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Put the leader’s interests before your own. Refer the leader to</td>
<td>to another coach or resource if that would be in the leader’s</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>another coach or resource if that would be in the leader’s best</td>
<td>interest.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>interest.</td>
<td>• Maintain confidentiality. Information about the leader should</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>not be shared with anyone unless the leader has given express</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>permission to do so.</td>
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| Professional Standards                                                |                                                                 |
|                                                                      | • Communicate clearly about what the leader can expect from you  |
|                                                                      | and the coaching relationship.                                  |
|                                                                      | • Be aware of your own issues that may interfere with providing  |
|                                                                      | objective coaching.                                             |
|                                                                      | • Set and maintain appropriate boundaries. This is a professional |
|                                                                      | relationship intended to facilitate leader development. Encourage |
|                                                                      | the client to seek other resources (e.g., individual counseling,  |
|                                                                      | marital counseling, etc.) if appropriate.                       |
|                                                                      | • Have a thorough understanding of the Army’s Core Leader       |
|                                                                      | Competency model.                                               |

Key to advanced coaching is being well prepared for the coaching session. Prior to the first coaching engagement with a leader, a coach must know the Army’s Core Leader Competency model at the competency, component, and sample action levels (FM 6-22, *Army Leadership*). You should know it well enough to be able to think of your own sample actions to help illustrate points to the leader or suggest new behaviors for the leader to try. A thorough understanding of the competency model will aid in interpretation of the MSAF feedback the leader has received, maximizing the effectiveness of coaching. It will also be useful to know other leader development resources that are available to the leader so that you can suggest them as needed. Some resources are listed in Appendix A of this guide.
When done correctly, the coach:

- Prepares in advance of the coaching session by reviewing the Core Leader Competency model and thinking of additional sample actions. The coach is also familiar with other resources for leader development.
- Prioritizes the leader’s interests before his or her own. The coach does not have his or her own agenda.
- Communicates clearly and directly with the leader about the coach’s expertise.
- Keeps the leader’s information completely confidential unless the leader gives permission to disclose it.

**Best Practice: Modeling Ethical and Professional Behavior**

In addition to maintaining the privacy of the leader and encouraging openness on the part of the leader, demonstrating ethical and professional behavior provides a model for the leader. Throughout the coaching relationship, you should model appropriate behavior, making the coaching process even more effective.

**Example**

Mr. Allen is a coach meeting with MAJ Jones for the first time. To be comfortable in his role as an advanced coach, Mr. Allen has read *FM 6-22, Army Leadership* to ensure that he has a good understanding of the Army’s expectations of leaders. He spent some time brainstorming additional behaviors that demonstrate the competencies so that he can offer these to leaders to practice.

At the beginning of a coaching session with MAJ Jones, Mr. Allen briefly describes his role as a coach. While jointly analyzing and interpreting the major’s Individual Feedback Report (IFR), MAJ Jones mentions to Mr. Allen that he has been arguing with his wife a lot lately. He continues to bring this up several times within the next few minutes. Mr. Allen acknowledges the major’s statements about his wife and lets him know that he is not qualified to give advice on marriage or personal relationships. He suggests that the major consider visiting the post chaplain for resources to address that issue. Mr. Allen asks MAJ Jones if he would like to continue the coaching session at this time, and MAJ Jones agrees. Mr. Allen then re-focuses the conversation back to the IFR.
Establishing the Coaching Agreement

Before actual coaching begins, the coach and leader should be clear about expectations for the coaching relationship. Reaching mutual agreement early about what the leader should expect from the coach and what is required of the leader for a successful coaching interaction will save time and avoid misunderstanding later.

| When done correctly, the coach: | • Asks the leader what he or she wants from the coaching relationship.  
• Asks about the leader’s fears and hopes for coaching.  
• Asks the leader to let the coach know what is and is not working throughout the coaching session. |

Best Practice: Checking In Throughout the Coaching Engagement

Beyond the initial discussion about the leader’s expectations for coaching, you should check with the leader throughout the process about how the coaching is going and whether it is meeting expectations and agreed-upon goals. You should then make adjustments based on this information to ensure that coaching is as effective as possible for the leader.

Example

Ms. MacKinnon and LTC Dunaway are just beginning a coaching session. As the coach, Ms. MacKinnon asks LTC Dunaway why she decided to seek coaching and what she wants to get out of coaching. LTC Dunaway explains that she just received MSAF feedback and isn’t sure what she needs to be doing differently in the areas that had the lowest scores. She would like a coach’s help to better understand those areas and what kinds of behaviors she needs to be practicing. The LTC is adamant that this is all she wants from coaching and nothing more. Ms. MacKinnon asks if she has any fears about the coaching process and the LTC admits that she is concerned that it will be like psychological counseling. Ms. MacKinnon assures her that she will not be practicing any psychotherapy and her focus will be on facilitating LTC Dunaway’s development as a leader. She asks the LTC to let her know if at any time during the coaching session she feels the focus has shifted away from this. A few times during their two hour meeting, Ms. MacKinnon asks LTC Dunaway how the coaching process is going for her.
Although a coaching session may be as brief as an hour, due to the nature of coaching, some attention must be given to building a solid relationship between the coach and the leader. For an effective coaching experience, the leader must feel comfortable to share and discuss feedback he or she has received on his or her leadership skills and style. The leader must also be receptive to input in the form of any of the helping roles described previously from the coach. This should be a partnership. These interactions are based on the leader’s trust in the coach and the coaching process and the coach’s focus on the leader.

**Establishing Trust with the Leader**

An effective relationship between a coach and leader is based on mutual trust and treating each other as equals. It is crucial to the success of the relationship for the coach to create a safe environment for the leader. This includes refraining from judgment and criticism so the leader feels at ease sharing feedback on his or her leadership performance. The leader must feel that he or she can trust the coach to not be critical and to keep the leader’s information confidential.

Approaching the relationship from an objective standpoint with a genuine desire to facilitate the leader’s development also provides a role model for the leader. Role modeling for the leader reinforces what the coach says by *showing* how to use the feedback for development rather than judging.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When done correctly, the coach:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Assures the leader that the coaching session is confidential.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Builds rapport with the leader to make him or her feel at ease.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Avoids critical or judgmental statements, instead demonstrating curiosity and approaching the conversation from a developmental standpoint.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Demonstrates respect for the leader’s perceptions and preferred learning style.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Continuously demonstrates personal integrity, honesty, and sincerity.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Best Practice: Building a High Quality Relationship**

The quality of the coaching relationship is key to the success of coaching. You can assess the quality of the relationship by the ease in conversation, the flow of the discussion, and enjoyment of the process. You can also ask the leader how the coaching is going, what is working, and what he or she would like more of.

**Example**

Mr. Gordon, a coach, and MAJ Brown, an officer participating in the MSAF program, have just started a coaching session. Mr. Gordon explains that he will keep the contents of MAJ Brown’s IFR and their conversation confidential. He then asks MAJ Brown about his background and recent assignments. Mr. Gordon asks MAJ Brown what he wants from the coaching experience when the major pulls out his feedback report, saying “It says I’m horrible at ‘Developing Others’. I’m not surprised – I’ve never been good at that.” Mr. Gordon responds “‘Developing Others’ is an area for improvement. Let’s look at the ratings for this competency and see where we need to focus our efforts and where there are strengths we can build on.” MAJ Brown visibly relaxes as he realizes that Mr. Gordon is not there to counsel him about performance deficiencies, but is interested in helping him develop and improve.
Coaching Presence

Coaching is a way of being with the leader as much as it is providing guidance and instruction. By “way of being,” we mean that the nature of the interaction is supportive - the presence the coach brings to the interaction should invite the leader to reach beyond what he or she knows to what is possible. A coach who asks “what gets in the way of doing this?” from a place of curiosity will get a very different (positive) response than a coach who asks the same thing from a place of judgment or criticism.

A distinctive feature of advanced coaching is that the coach is fully in the moment with the leader. The coach’s attention is not elsewhere. When the coach is fully in the moment, the conversation flows naturally and the coach asks questions out of genuine curiosity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When done correctly, the coach:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Prepares for the coaching session so that his or her mind is not on other things.</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is focused on the leader and send cues to show that he or she is paying attention (e.g., making eye contact, engaging in active listening, and asking questions that build on what the leader is saying).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Remains engaged in the conversation and allows the leader to own the process.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Provides direction, recommendations, and advice, as needed.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Uses expertise to help the leader manage, lead, and improve.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Uses humor effectively to create lightness and energy.</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Best Practice: Putting Ego Aside

To truly be present with a leader for the purpose of facilitating the leader’s development, you must put your own ego and priorities aside. While it is important to build rapport, you should not spend too much time sharing your own history with the leader or telling the leader about your achievements. Remember that the leader should dominate the conversation. You should guide the conversation and ask insightful questions that move the conversation forward and get the leader to see things from a different perspective, but the leader should be doing most of the talking.

Example

Ms. Diggs is a coach with a coaching session scheduled for this afternoon. She has more things than she can get done on her “to do” list today and a lot on her mind. Thirty minutes prior to the coaching session, she stops what she is doing in order to prepare for the session. She looks at a couple of leader development resources she recently heard about to see if they would be valuable to recommend. By the time the coaching session starts, she is fully engaged in coaching and has put other tasks out of her mind.

She finds that she has much in common with the leader she is coaching, CPT Cole. They discuss these common interests briefly until Ms. Diggs senses that CPT Cole is feeling comfortable with her and the coaching process. With a little guidance from Ms. Diggs on interpreting the IFR, CPT Cole identifies components of ‘Leads Others’ as developmental needs. Ms. Diggs then asks “How would this look different from what you are doing now?” and listens carefully to the captain’s answer. She then asks the captain, “So what resources do you need to get there?” Ms. Diggs continues to ask questions that build on what CPT Cole is saying. For questions that CPT Cole struggles to answer, Ms. Diggs suggests a direction the captain should consider exploring.
Advanced coaching requires effective communication. Coaches must listen actively to focus completely on what the leader is saying and is not saying, both to understand the meaning of what is said in the context of the leader’s desires and to support leader self-expression. Part of active listening is engaging the leader with powerful questioning. Powerful questioning is the ability to ask questions that reveal the information needed for maximum benefit to the coaching relationship and the leader. Both listening and questioning help build direct communication in the coaching relationship, which is the ability of the coach to communicate effectively using language that has the greatest positive impact on the leader.

**Active Listening**

When listening actively, the coach is fully engaged in what the leader is saying, and shows sincere interest and curiosity. Coaching at an advanced level requires understanding a leader’s emotional state both through the words the leader uses and how they are spoken.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When done correctly, the coach:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Attends to the leader and his or her agenda rather</td>
<td>• Hears the leader’s concerns, goals, values, and beliefs about</td>
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<td>than a personal agenda.</td>
<td>what is possible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Hears the leader’s concerns, goals, values, and</td>
<td>• Distinguishes between the leader’s words, tone of voice, and</td>
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<tr>
<td>beliefs about what is possible.</td>
<td>nonverbal cues.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Distinguishes between the leader’s words, tone of</td>
<td>• Summarizes, paraphrases, reiterates, and/or mirrors back what</td>
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<tr>
<td>voice, and nonverbal cues.</td>
<td>the leader has said to ensure clarity and understanding.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Summarizes, paraphrases, reiterates, and/or mirrors</td>
<td>• Integrates and builds on the leader’s ideas and suggestions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>back what the leader has said to ensure clarity and</td>
<td>• Understands the essence of the leader’s communication; helps</td>
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<tr>
<td>understanding.</td>
<td>the leader “cut to the chase” rather than engaging in long,</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Integrates and builds on the leader’s ideas and</td>
<td>descriptive stories.</td>
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<tr>
<td>suggestions.</td>
<td>• Allows the leader to vent the situation without judgment and</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Understands the essence of the leader’s</td>
<td>then moves onto next steps.</td>
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<tr>
<td>communication; helps the leader “cut to the chase”</td>
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<tr>
<td>rather than engaging in long, descriptive stories.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Allows the leader to vent the situation without</td>
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<tr>
<td>judgment and then moves onto next steps.</td>
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**Best Practice: Attending to Multiple Levels of Listening**

When you listen actively, you are able to focus completely on what the leader is saying and is not saying, to understand the meaning of what is said in the context of the leader’s desires, and to support leader self-expression. Try to practice the three levels of listening:

- **Level 1 is internal listening.** At this level, there is a heavy focus on ourselves. We listen and think about what the speaker says as it applies to our situation, judgments, and feelings.
- **Level 2 is focused listening.** At this level, there is a sharp focus on the speaker. We listen with the speaker’s goals, opinions, assessment, and frame of reference in mind. As a coach, you are listening to more than words, but also the tone, pace, and feelings expressed.
- **Level 3 is global listening.** At this level, there is a sharp focus on the speaker and an awareness of unexpressed thinking, feeling, and emotions.

You will know you are listening at all three levels when you are tuned into what is going on internally, what you experience from the leader being coached, and what you experience from your environment and cues. Practice listening at all three levels during the course of a coaching session. Ask yourself these questions:

- What am I thinking, feeling, and experiencing in regards to what the other is saying?
- What is the other saying with their words, voice, and nonverbal cues?
- What is not being said and what does the context tell me about what is going on?
Powerful Questioning

When conversing with a leader, a coach should ask probing questions based on what the leader is saying. As the coach tracks the leader’s direction, he or she responds with questions. Questions should be thoughtful and posed from a position of curiosity. They should challenge the leader without being combative. There is a quality of “not knowing” that generates this curiosity and consequent questions. The use of probing questions should stimulate the leader to think in new and different ways.

When done correctly, the coach:
- Asks questions that reflect active listening and an understanding of the leader’s perspective.
- Asks questions that evoke discovery, insight, commitment, or action (e.g., those that challenge the leader’s assumptions).
- Asks open-ended questions that create greater clarity, possibility, or new learning.
- Asks questions that move the leader towards what he or she desires, not questions that ask for the leader to justify past actions or look backwards.

Best Practice: Developing and Asking Powerful Questions “In The Moment”

When a coach is “in the moment” with a leader, he or she is able to use curiosity to pose authentic questions. Questions should flow from the conversation and bring the leader back to the task. “In the moment” is the opposite of having pre-planned questions or pre-conceived notions of what the leader needs or how the coaching session will flow. For example, if a leader brings up an interest in exploring a different career path, you must go with it, asking questions that follow naturally such as, “What would success in that career look like?” or “What do you know about what it takes to go down that path?”

When paying attention to nonverbal cues and tone, you may notice some hesitation by the leader. You may respond with, “What might hold you back on this career path?” and “What would it take to move past that obstacle?” Each question builds on the response to the previous question.

The key to coaching “in the moment” is to trust that you will know the right question to ask and that silent pauses are okay. If you have any doubts about the appropriateness of a question, you can always ask the leader “What questions come to your mind as you explore this topic?”, thus keeping the conversation fully in the moment and responsive to what is going on for the leader.
Communicating Effectively

Direct Communication

When communicating with a leader, a coach should use language that has the greatest positive impact. Communication between the coach and leader should be based on mutual respect. There should be an ease in the conversation and the leader should feel comfortable to speak freely. The coach should be direct but maintain a non-judgmental stance in conversation to increase the leader’s understanding of where they are and where they want to go.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When done correctly, the coach:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Is clear, articulate, and direct in sharing and providing feedback.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Reframes and rearticulates to help the leader understand from another perspective what he or she wants or is uncertain about.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clearly states coaching objectives, meeting agenda, purpose of techniques or exercises.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Uses language and nonverbal behaviors that are appropriate, respectful, and sensitive to the leader (e.g., non-sexist, non-racist, non-technical, and non-jargon).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Uses metaphors and analogies to help to illustrate a point or paint a verbal picture.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Best Practice: Using Metaphors to Increase Understanding

A metaphor is a comparison of one thing to another, which propels one’s thoughts into fresh perspectives and insight. Metaphors are best used in coaching engagements after trust and rapport have been established, and/or when a leader is seemingly “stuck.” As a coach, you should help the leader to see his or her current situation from another perspective that is meaningful.

Example

MAJ Hurley leads a large team in a TDA organization. Based on feedback in his IFR, he and his coach identify “Leads Others” as a developmental need, more specifically his use of influence. The coach asks MAJ Hurley to describe his current leadership role using a metaphor, to which MAJ Hurley says, “I am the conductor and I run the train.” Through questioning and engaging with MAJ Hurley’s metaphor, the coach explores how the conductor is responsible for the train’s functioning as well as the similarities and differences between how a train functions and how his team functions. In this way, the coach challenges the major to view his current role from alternative viewpoints.

Eventually, MAJ Hurley comes to the self-realization that he is most effective approaching his job as “the coach on the sideline of a soccer game” than as “the conductor driving a train.” This new perspective provides MAJ Hurley with new insight on his feedback and a new approach to move forward with his development.
Effective coaches facilitate learning and results by creating awareness, designing actions, planning and goal setting, and managing progress and accountability with the leaders they coach. When coaching at an advanced level, effective coaches also facilitate a leader’s learning and awareness by sharing knowledge and providing recommendations for action.

Creating Awareness
Coaches create awareness in leaders when they integrate and accurately evaluate multiple sources of information and make interpretations that help the leader to become more self-aware and thereby achieve agreed-upon results. Effective demonstration of this competency is especially important when analyzing and interpreting an Individual Feedback Report (IFR) with a leader.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When done correctly, the coach:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Invokes inquiry for greater understanding, awareness, and clarity.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Goes beyond what is said in assessing a leader’s concerns.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Identifies for the leader his or her underlying concerns, typical and fixed ways of perceiving himself or herself and the world, differences between the facts and interpretation, and disparities between thoughts, feelings, and action.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Helps leaders to discover the new thoughts, beliefs, perceptions, emotions, and moods that strengthen their ability to take action and achieve what is important to them.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Expresses insights to a leader in ways that are useful and meaningful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Helps the leader to identify major strengths and areas for learning and growth, and what is most important to address during coaching.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Best Practice: Identifying Patterns in Feedback for Deeper Understanding
Accurate interpretation of feedback (i.e., an Individual Feedback Report) is the key to understanding and improving leadership skills. Reviewing feedback is both an art and a science, and absolute scores are less important than trends across available data. Assessments are often clustered around a narrow range, as participants tend to rate the target leader high across behaviors (a common trend when others are asked to provide feedback).

To overcome this limitation, look for patterns in the data that represent potential strengths and possible developmental needs. Help a leader to structure his or her thoughts in this way by asking questions that go deeper than conscious awareness of surface information or results. You will know you are doing this when the leader has to stop and think before responding. Through questioning, also prompt the leader to offer anecdotal evidence of his or her performance that supports other sources of feedback. Help the leader to find ways to leverage information from multiple perspectives and sources, and to interpret consistencies and differences in the feedback.
CWO Hayes meets with a coach to interpret his IFR. Both the coach and Chief Hayes reviewed the IFR in preparation for the coaching session and have made notes on what they found in the data. Chief Hayes seems determined to quickly move through feedback interpretation to get to action planning based on his feedback. The coach suggests they spend some time jointly going through the feedback to ensure action planning is appropriately focused, and the chief agrees.

The coach asks for Chief Hayes’ assessment of the feedback report, and when hearing it, notes the chief only identifies the top two strengths and developmental needs listed in the report: “Establish and Impart Clear Intent and Purpose” and “Create and Promulgates Vision of the Future.” Chief Hayes states he needs to focus on the competency “Leads Others.”

The coach re-engages Chief Hayes in looking at his feedback by asking questions such as, “What else stands out in the assessment values?”, “In what other areas were you rated high or low?”, and “Have you examined the values of other competencies or components that relate to the ones you identified?”

After re-examining the feedback, Chief Hayes realizes components within the competency “Communicates” are somewhat lower, and relate to the lowest two components he originally identified. The coach asks if there is other evidence that this may be a developmental need. Chief Hayes reads through the written comments in his IFR and finds several indications that his communication skills may be lacking. The coach then helps Chief Hayes explore communication as a potential area for development by asking him to describe specific instances where he was or was not effective when communicating with others.
Designing Actions

Powerful questions asked by the coach help the leader to distill down to areas to focus on (i.e., based on what is mission or role critical or what would have impact in other areas). In asking these questions, the coach should consider both what the leader will find motivating and what is within the leader’s control. Effective coaches then help leaders to create opportunities for ongoing learning (during coaching and in work-life situations) and in choosing new actions that will lead to agreed-upon results in the most effective way possible. Developmental activities answer the question: *How are you going to achieve the outcome?* Effective demonstration of this competency is especially important when guiding a leader through an Individual Development Plan (IDP).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When done correctly, the coach:</th>
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<tr>
<td>• Brainstorms and assists the leader in defining actions that will enable the leader to demonstrate, practice, and deepen new learning.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Helps the leader to focus on and systematically explore specific concerns and opportunities that are central to agreed-upon coaching goals.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Engages the leader to explore alternative ideas and solutions, evaluate options, and make related decisions.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Promotes active experimentation and self-discovery where the leader applies what has been discussed and learned during the session immediately afterwards in his or her work or life setting.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Challenges the leader’s assumptions and perspectives to provoke new ideas and find new possibilities for action.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Advocates or brings forward points of view that are aligned with the leader’s goals; engages the leader to consider them.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Encourages a balance between challenges and a comfortable pace of learning.</td>
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### Best Practice: Tailoring Developmental Actions to the Leader’s Role and Opportunities

Depending on a leader’s situation, you should guide him or her to discern, select, and create developmental activities that appropriately fit their current working environment. When designing actions with a leader, prompt him or her to consider three different approaches to developmental activities: feedback, study, and practice. Feedback is an opportunity to gain information from others about how well you are doing, including direct feedback from others, one’s own observations, analysis of response patterns, and acknowledgement of outcomes. Study provides a foundation of knowledge, principles, and concepts, including formal training, reading books or articles, observing others on the job, and analyzing various sources of information. Practice provides activities to convert your learning into action. Practice includes engaging in practical exercises, walk-throughs, drills, teamwork, and other opportunities to gain experience in an area. Encourage the leader to try a combination of approaches, and ensure the activities are designed to fit the leader’s current role and opportunities so that development occurs “on the job.”

Note: The Leader Developmental Improvements (LDI) Guide provides suggestions for Feedback, Study, and Practice activities for each leader component identified in FM 6-22.
SSG Bakke is working with a coach to determine developmental activities for his IDP. He has identified the component “uses appropriate influence techniques to energize others” as an area he is committed to improving. The coach asks the sergeant questions such as “What types of training or development do you think could help assist you in improving this behavior?” and “What on-the-job development opportunities do you have in your current position?” SSG Bakke hesitates to answer and eventually says he doesn’t really know. The coach then asks the sergeant to consider three approaches: seeking additional feedback, studying, and practicing.

SSG Bakke likes the idea of periodically seeking additional feedback, and the coach suggests he occasionally touch base with his subordinate leaders to determine how well his use of influence is creating a positive environment. The sergeant also decides he should practice new techniques, such as using a less coercive and more cooperative style to help build and sustain a sense of task ownership by subordinates. SSG Bakke remains committed to improving this area and is now motivated to carry out these activities, as the actions are aligned with his current role and responsibilities.
Planning and Goal Setting

Coaching at an advanced level requires the coach to develop and maintain an effective coaching plan with the leader. The plan should not only identify goals but also clarify outcomes, identify indicators of success and how those will be measured, and describe concrete changes that are desired as a result. The detailed plan should include when and how action will be taken to achieve goals. During planning, the coach asks questions to facilitate development of the plan, including what it will take to implement the plan. However, ownership of the plan must remain with the leader.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When done correctly, the coach:</th>
<th>Helps the leader to consolidate collected information and establish a coaching plan and development goals that address the leader’s concerns and major areas for learning and development.</th>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>Ensures the leader’s plan has results that are attainable, measurable, specific, and have target dates.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Makes plan adjustments as warranted by the coaching process and by changes in the situation.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Helps the leader to identify and access different resources for learning (e.g., books, other professionals, and existing Army development resources).</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Identifies and targets early successes that are important to the leader.</td>
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Best Practice: Using a Logic Tree When Goal Setting

A logic tree is a simple technique for breaking down a complex goal or outcome into steps that are easily achieved. This method is useful in instances where a leader cannot see a clear path toward an outcome and needs to identify intermediate actions toward achieving goals. You can guide a leader through this technique by following six steps.

- **Step 1**: Ask the leader to define a goal as clearly as possible. This should be stated as an outcome.
- **Step 2**: Through dialogue, explore what the leader needs to do to achieve the goal. For example, to be successful in a key position, a leader may need to seek additional feedback, acquire knowledge, or obtain additional experience.
- **Step 3**: Break each element of Step 2 into further sub-elements and continue the process until each results in a series of actions that can be undertaken relatively easily or soon.
- **Step 4**: Apply timelines to the actions and determine milestones that will indicate success at each level. How soon can the lowest level objectives be met? What is a reasonable expectation for achievement?
- **Step 5**: Review the process. Are all the important elements listed to achieve the outcome? Are the milestones of reasonable effort and duration? Does the outcome now seem more achievable?
- **Step 6**: Given this analysis, if the leader is still interested and motivated to pursue the goal, encourage him or her to pursue the first steps. If the leader is discouraged after reviewing the requirements, help him or her to re-evaluate goals and desired outcomes.

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Mr. Johnson is serving as a coach for 1LT Callahan. Upon reviewing feedback, it is jointly determined that the lieutenant should focus his development on creating a positive environment, specifically in fostering teamwork, cohesion, cooperation, and loyalty. 1LT Callahan is committed to being effective in this area, but is having trouble determining how he is going to get there. Mr. Johnson suggests the lieutenant develop a logic tree to better define intermediate actions.

1LT Callahan clearly states his desired outcome, “I want to effectively foster teamwork, cohesion, cooperation and loyalty. When Mr. Johnson asks “what are competencies or knowledge that you will need to do that?” the lieutenant replies, “well, I’d like to get some more experience, but I’d also like to know how others do this effectively.” Mr. Johnson continues to raise questions such as “and what will you need to achieve that step?” as the two work down the logic tree, to prompt 1LT Callahan to consider how he will reach each level. Through dialogue with Mr. Johnson, the lieutenant ultimately determines a set of relatively simple actions he can start on the next day that will move him toward his desired outcome.

The following diagram depicts the logic tree 1LT Callahan developed with guidance from his coach.
Facilitating Learning and Results

Managing Progress and Accountability

Coaches manage progress and accountability by focusing attention on what is important for the leader and leaving responsibility with the leader to take action. By reaffirming the leader’s ownership of the process and outcomes, the coach strengthens the leader’s commitment to development.

| When done correctly, the coach: | • Effectively prepares, organizes, and reviews the leader information obtained during sessions. |
|                               | • Keeps the leader on track between sessions by holding attention on the coaching plan and outcomes, agreed-upon courses of action, and topics for future session(s). |
|                               | • Focuses on the coaching plan but remains open to adjusting behaviors and actions based on the coaching process and shifts in direction during sessions. |
|                               | • Is able to move back and forth between the big picture of where the leader is heading, setting a context for what is being discussed, and where the leader wishes to go. |
|                               | • Clearly requests actions that will move the leader toward their stated goals. |
|                               | • Promotes the leader’s self-discipline and holds the leader accountable for what he or she says he or she is going to do, the results of an intended action, or a specific plan with related time frames. |
|                               | • Demonstrates follow through by asking the leader about those actions that the leader committed to during the previous session(s). |
|                               | • Positively confronts the leader with the fact that he or she did not take agreed-upon actions. |

Best Practice: Encouraging Habits of Learning and Self-Reflection

You should model and teach habits of learning and self-reflection by encouraging leaders to engage in journaling and creative writing. A reflective journal can serve as a record that leaders can analyze from time to time to look for patterns of behavior or outcomes in either their own behavior or those with whom they interact. At some point in a coaching session, suggest to a leader that he or she engage in journaling and record issues such as:

- Personal fulfillment – factors that pleased or frustrated you this week.
- Accomplishment – notes about what you completed, left incomplete, or avoided.
- Resourcefulness – new skills or processes you learned or people added to your network.
- Decisions – significant decisions you made and the results.
- Challenge – areas where you challenged yourself recently.
- Goal Fulfillment – steps you took (or started) to reach longer-term goals.

You, the coach, can also benefit from keeping a journal of self-reflection of your own learning as it pertains to coaching leaders. This could be especially valuable for tracking how you address challenging coaching situations, your success in meeting those challenges, and other tips you pick up that may be useful to share with other coaches.

When coaching at an advanced level, coaches must be able to handle difficult situations as they arise. Some of these situations include:

- Leader Resistance.
- Overcoming Roadblocks and Obstacles.
- Inappropriate Direction or Path.

**Leader Resistance**

It is not uncommon for leaders to resist change. Leader resistance comes from real-life concerns. What will this change ask of me? How will others see me? How can I be as competent and confident in this new situation as I am now? Leader resistance to change exists for a number of reasons, often including a lack of confidence about what lies ahead, hidden fears about expectations, and concerns about identity and others’ perceptions.

**Concern about what lies ahead**

To increase a leader’s confidence, ask questions that help the leader clearly and concretely picture challenges that lie ahead and what will be required of the leader to meet these challenges.

**ASK**

Effective questions to ask include:

- If you were doing this successfully, what would it look like? What would you actually be doing?
- What would it take for you to do that? With whom would you be working and communicating?
- What would you need? How would the rest of your job need to change?
- How would you know it was going well? How would you get support?
- What will be better for you if you make this change?

**Hidden fears about expectations**

Oftentimes, big assumptions underlie leader resistance to taking on certain actions or tasks. Assumptions may or may not be accurate, but will get in the way of leader progress in important areas. A coach should help the leader to identify hidden fears or concerns about expectations.

Ask the leader to imagine doing what it is they are required to do and doing it successfully. As they imagine it, ask them to tell you what they are doing and how they are doing it. Ask them what fears or
Difficult Coaching Engagements

corns come up for them (e.g., any sensations of concern, jitters, or embarrassment). As they share their concerns, listen and affirm by either repeating it to them or simply saying, “yes, I get it.” Then ask what it is they are assuming about themselves or the situation that leads to that concern.

For example, a female officer may need to give a briefing to a large group of male superiors. In this situation, the female may have fear or concern that the senior leaders won’t take her seriously, and the assumption under this would be that male officers only respect other male leaders. As a coach, it is important to work with this leader to test her assumption against reality. In this example, the coach may help the leader assess the merits of her conclusions by asking questions such as, “have you experienced a problem like this in the past? With these leaders, or with other leaders? What other factors may have played a role in the outcomes of the situation? Can you recall a similar situation where you were successful? What contributed to your success?”

**ASK**

Effective questions to ask include:
- What about your assumption is accurate? How do you know that?
- What else might be true about the situation that is not captured in your assumption?
- What might be another way to view the situation?
- What does that say about what you might try differently?

**Concern about identity and others’ perceptions**

Behavior change can lead to shifts in how a leader sees him or herself.

**ASK**

Effective questions to ask include:
- What will be different for you when you make this change?
- What is another way to see the change so it is not a threat or concern for you?
- How might others see you when you make this change? How can you make this work to your advantage?
- What does the mission ask of you in this situation?
**Overcoming Roadblocks or Obstacles**

Leader resistance often originates from realities on the outside, such as situations, relationships, and events that are either unexpected or predictable, but seemingly insurmountable. When coaching a leader through a roadblock or obstacle, help him or her to focus on what he or she has control over, where and how he or she has influence, and where he or she needs to let go.

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**Practice**

The following exercise is based on Stephen Covey’s theory of circle of concern and circle of influence. This technique is useful when coaching a leader through an obstacle or roadblock.\(^1\)

**Step 1:**

Draw a circle in the middle of the page, and place the letter C in the center (control). Around that circle, draw a larger circle, and label it with the letter I (influence). Around that circle, draw a larger circle, and label it with the letters LG (let go). OR populate the circles depicted in the diagram.

**Step 2:** When discussing a situation with the leader, ask the leader to identify the factors they have direct control over. Make the distinction between power and control (power is knowing where you can have an impact and where you can’t; control is where you know you can make something happen, directly).

*The correct answer to this question is almost always that the leader only has control over themselves and how they choose to respond.*

Next, ask the leader, given the situation at hand, where and how he or she might have influence (*This usually speaks to relationships and alliances)*.

- Who do you need to influence? For what purpose (or what is the objective)?
- What do you know about what works best with those individuals?
- What would it take to have influence in those situations?

Finally, ask the leader what he or she needs to let go of within the given situation. Here it is often important to point out the distinction between letting go and giving up. Letting go is accepting you cannot make a certain change in order to free up efforts to focus on where you do have control and influence. Giving up has an emotional quality that suggests upset, anger, helplessness, and resignation.

*The discussion should result in the leader being able to identify what they can control (i.e., their own behavior), who they might have influence over (others), what they need to know about those others, and what it will take to influence them, and what factors they need to let go of to move forward.*

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\(^1\) Adapted from: Covey, Stephen R. *The seven habits of highly effective people*. New York: Fireside, 1989.
Coaching Resources

There are additional resources available to help coaches gain knowledge and expand their coaching skills:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coaching Competencies</th>
<th><a href="http://www.coachfederation.org/research-education/icf-credentials/core-competencies/">http://www.coachfederation.org/research-education/icf-credentials/core-competencies/</a></th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

MSAF Resources

There are several MSAF resources designed to enhance the feedback interpretation and development planning process. Each of these is available for download through the MSAF portal (https://msaf.army.mil).

| Individual Feedback Report (IFR) Analysis | • Compiles a leader’s MSAF ratings (self-ratings and those by others).  
                                          • Serves as a basis for which coaches can identify and discuss a leader’s strengths and developmental needs. |
|------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Individual Development Planning (IDP) Guide | • Helps coaches guide a leader to identify areas for improvement and select and plan actions and activities that will improve performance.  
                                            • Includes practical examples of creating an IDP. |
| Leadership Development Improvement (LDI) Guide | • Aids a leader with selecting ways to act on developmental needs.  
                                               • Offers suggestions for developmental activities tied to the Army Core Leader competencies. |

Leader Development Resources

The following is a list of leader development resources. Coaches should know these resources to offer them appropriately to the leaders they coach. Many of these are available for download through the MSAF portal (https://msaf.army.mil).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Army Leadership, FM 6-22</th>
<th>Army’s leadership doctrine. Describes the Core Leader Competency model.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Commander’s Handbook for Unit Leader Development</td>
<td>Helps commanders carry out their duty to develop leaders in their unit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader Transitions Handbook</td>
<td>Helps leaders during career transitions (e.g., taking first in command, assuming a new leadership position).</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Coaching at an advanced level will sometimes require a coach to shift among other development roles. The practice of coaching shares common characteristics with other “helping roles” involving leader interaction such as mentoring, counseling, teaching, and consulting. Coaches should understand each of these roles, how they differ, and when and how each should be applied in a coaching engagement. An effective coach can integrate and transition between each of these developmental roles, as necessary, when coaching a leader.

Choosing the Right Approach
Regardless of which role is needed, you (the helper) must remain in service to the leader that is being helped. It is important to pay close attention to the conversation and the needs of the leader in order to recognize which developmental role would be most useful in a given situation. When coaching, consider the following:

- Ask yourself “what is this situation asking of me?” or “what will best serve the leader in this situation?” when deciding which role to use.
- Clarify when you are changing roles. Use statements such as, “I am going to put on my consultant hat for a moment and suggest that you…” or “allow me to slip into teaching mode and tell you that…”
- Offer questions that help the leader re-orient around the purpose in each conversation. In some cases, a leader will benefit most from your advice or a specific recommendation. It is appropriate for you to share your knowledge to increase the leader’s understanding or to keep them on track.
- Remember your primary role as a coach is to support the leader through an “ask not tell” approach, and limit conversation that is overly prescriptive.


Appendix B: Development Roles

Coaching

Coaching is a customized development process with an individual that uses observable data, stimulating questions, coach expertise, and a safe, supportive partnering relationship to guide a leader in creating solutions and development paths forward.

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<th>What is the focus of coaching?</th>
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| Coaches provide support to leaders as they develop solutions and strategies to transfer ideas and awareness into practical application. Coaching involves the development of competencies and capacities for forward movement and improvement, aligned with individual and organizational goals. Competencies are the knowledge, skills, and abilities that enable action. Capacities are the awareness, qualities, characteristics, and attitudes that enable action to happen. Effective coaches raise questions to stimulate discovery and introspection without judgment or criticism and ensure leaders have responsibility and ownership for the process and outcomes. | • A safe partnering relationship.  
• Genuine interest in the leader’s development and success.  
• Provocative questions and strong listening skills.  
• Willingness and ability to understand the leader’s unique situation.  
• The ability to “get out of the way” of the leader’s process to enable them to come up with their own solutions and strategies for success. | Coaching is best suited for situations when the leader is highly motivated, shows the capacity for insight, is open to suggestions and ideas, and readily engages in open and trusting dialogue. |

What does a coaching interaction look like?

James is scheduled to meet with a coach after receiving his feedback report. After introducing himself and explaining the logistics of the coaching arrangement, the coach asks James what he would like to get out of the coaching meeting. James says he would like to improve the way he develops his subordinates. The coach then asks a series of questions to help James better define his outcome, such as:  
• What would it look like if your subordinates were better developed?  
• What do your subordinates need in order to get to that result?

While the coach is listening, he is also acknowledging James’ thinking by repeating or paraphrasing his comments. When James comes to a clear definition of a coaching outcome, such as “my subordinates will have the ability and confidence to lead in the absence of orders,” the coach says, “So what you would like to get out of our conversation is how to help subordinates lead effectively in your absence?”

With this series of questions, the coach has helped to identify a possible root cause of the team’s leadership needs. Clarity about the root cause will help James to concretely identify realistic strategies. This will come from further questions to help James identify what he observes about his subordinate leaders, when they do and do not lead effectively in his absence, and what he can do to develop this skill in his subordinates. The questions presented by the coach build on James’ comments and discoveries.
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Mentoring
Mentoring is the voluntary developmental relationship that exists between a person of greater experience and a person of lesser experience that is characterized by mutual trust and respect (Army Leadership, AR 600-100).

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| The focus of mentoring is on the development of a career path or particular skill set and building a relationship in which the mentor is invested in the progress and success of the learner. Mentorship supports the organization as well as individual professional goals. | • Experience in a relevant area.  
• Willingness to dedicate time and energy.  
• Ability to provide the right balance between support and challenge.  
• Ability to listen well and provide feedback.  
• Genuine interest in the learner’s development and success. | Mentoring is appropriate when the mentor wants to support a less experienced individual in following a particular career path. Mentoring often involves a combination of teaching and coaching in order to introduce skills and build awareness. |

What does a mentoring interaction look like?
Heidi is new to a job that requires influencing others outside of the organization, a skill set in which she has limited experience. In this interaction, Tanya had first-hand knowledge and experience in Heidi’s new role and showed a genuine interest in Heidi’s development and success. Much of the interaction involved Tanya providing her knowledge and insight to Heidi, though provocative questioning and challenge were also used to ensure learning. Together they discuss the position, identifying what Heidi needs to know about the job expectations, the people involved, politics and communication channels she needs to learn to navigate, and what it takes to be successful in that particular role. Tanya offers insights and knowledge from her experience while Heidi asks questions for clarification and requests suggestions for training as well as concrete information about whom to go to for what.

Throughout the process, Tanya uses coaching techniques such as open-ended, provocative questions to get Heidi thinking critically about what it will take for her to step into the new role. Additionally, Tanya may help Heidi to identify the strengths she brings to the role as well as specific areas for development through coaching or training.

Tanya has first-hand knowledge and experience in Heidi’s new role and has a genuine interest in Heidi’s development and success. Much of the interaction involved Tanya providing knowledge and insight to Heidi in the areas of interest, though provocative questioning and challenge were also used.
Developmental Counseling

Developmental counseling is the process used by leaders to review with a subordinate the subordinate’s demonstrated performance and potential (Army Leadership, FM 6-22).

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| Counseling is driven by a specific event: to review performance or for professional growth. The exchange involves a leader providing specific feedback to a subordinate that leads to directed or joint establishment of performance objectives and standards for the next period. The emphasis of counseling is on the subordinate’s development. | • A clearly defined purpose for the counseling.  
• The right balance between support and challenge to encourage the subordinate while providing guidance in working through problematic issues.  
• Flexibility in counseling style to fit the subordinate.  
• Genuine interest in the subordinate’s success. | Developmental counseling is appropriate when there is a clear developmental need or situation. The counselor should be someone who is in a superior role. |

What does a counseling interaction look like?

Tom has demonstrated a pattern of poor communication with peers, which is also evident in his MSAF feedback report. Additionally, Tom’s superiors noted that Tom was being passed up for opportunities that would allow him to prove himself in new situations. Tom’s immediate supervisor meets with him to discuss this pattern and identify what he needs to do to improve. The conversation begins with Tom’s supervisor clearly explaining the concerns and why it is in Tom’s interest to work with him to consider improvement in this area. Tom’s supervisor says, “Tom, I’ve observed that you are not getting the opportunities that would move you further along and I am concerned that the hard work you are putting in is not paying off. From what I have heard and observed, it is clear that if you communicated more effectively with your peers, they would better understand what you are trying to do and would be more willing to work with you.” Tom agrees with this assessment, and the supervisor responds with, “I have some materials on improving communication skills that you can review.”

Because the feedback was presented in a way that showed the supervisor was interested in Tom’s success, Tom was open to hearing what was said. This made it easy to continue with the potentially difficult conversation about performance improvement and behavior change.
Consulting
Consulting is an interaction in which an individual with specific expertise facilitates idea generation and/or problem resolution related to that area of expertise.

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| The focus of consulting is on generating ideas and resolving problems. A consultant provides expert advice and facilitation as a part of the interaction. | • Expertise in either content or process to move a client toward resolution.  
• Ability to form and maintain credibility and trust.  
• Ability to listen and ask questions to assist the client in finding solutions. | Consulting is appropriate when the individual has a specific, isolated need or problem, and the consultant has specific expertise and is able to deliver that expertise in a way that suits the individual's needs. |

What does a consulting interaction look like?
A unit commander needs to find the best location for an upcoming operation. He understands the mission but not the terrain or political considerations involved. The consultant, an expert on that particular region, provides information that helps the commander make the necessary decisions. The consultant also asks questions that help the commander envision what it would look like to operate in that location, which in turn helps him to not only make a decision, but clarify what would enable unit success at that site.

In this interaction, the consultant provided the important information and steered the decision making process with input from the commander.
**Teaching**

Teaching (or instructing) is a process in which individuals with specific content expertise educate others by providing knowledge and materials relative to the content.

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| The focus of teaching is on transferring knowledge or technical understanding from an expert to a learner. Information is shared in a way that accurately captures what the learner needs to know. | • Thorough knowledge of the content to be taught.  
• The ability to present information in a way the learner can readily understand.  
• An appropriate environment for transfer of knowledge (e.g., classroom), one-on-one interaction, demonstration, etc. | Teaching is appropriate when there are specific skills to be transferred. |

**What does a teaching interaction look like?**

Ron’s new job requires that he process a dozen different forms. He is not familiar with any of these forms, each process is very different, and he has been told he needs to know the processes by the end of the week. Luckily, Jill had to learn the procedures a month earlier. She walks Ron through each form, demonstrates how to process each one by showing him what he needs to fill in, how he accesses the information, and where each goes once complete. Ron asks Jill questions as he goes along. Through practice, he begins to get the hang of it.

Ron entered this interaction with little to no background on what needed to be done. To transfer this information, Jill did most of the talking while Ron asked clarifying questions.