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Professional Christian Coach and Coach Trainer

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Session Description

The impact you have as a coach is directly proportional to the depth of your relationship with the person you are coaching. In this session, you'll explore a revolutionary paradigm for how to build authenticity and see it modeled. You'll also get a chance to practice several practical storytelling skills that foster authenticity with a peer. Additionally, we'll discuss the practical details of how to launch and structure an effective coaching relationship.



Telling Authentic Stories

Listen to the two story examples given by the presenter. What makes these good (or bad!) examples of the kind of story you would tell to catalyze an authentic relationship?

Key Characteristics of Stories that Catalyze Authenticity

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____



Launching a Coaching Relationship with Life Stories

The Importance of Investing in the Relationship First

Types of Life Stories

- **Career/Geographical**
Education, jobs you've had, accomplishments, places you've lived

- **Family**
Birth order, parents, growing up, spouse and children

- **Faith History**
How you came to the Lord, your church involvement, service and calling

- **Identity**
The events that shaped you into who you are, and how they impacted you

Shaping Event

A key experience that deeply impacted me and had a significant influence on who I have become.

What are one or two of your shaping events?

Reflection Exercise: Life Messages

Most people find the roots of their calling in experiences that have deeply impacted and shaped them. A little girl is teased and excluded on the playground and grows up to be a teacher who feels called to reach out and love the marginalized kids, or a boy whose father dies when he's ten finds himself coaching little league and teaching Sunday school so that the boys in his neighborhood all have a male role model. We can go through painful experiences and come out bitter, or survive them and get life back to normal—but when we meet God there and allow Him to reshape us, he has a way of turning that area of our life into a powerful message for others.

How to

The object of this exercise is to understand the messages God has given you and be able to tell the stories they came out of. First, we'll identify some past shaping events and areas you minister out of now that may hold a life message. Next, we'll try to nail down the messages. Finally, the exercise asks you to create a story using the four principles of authentic storytelling (*Significant, Specific, Vulnerable, and Not Needy*) to share about the experience that birthed that message.

Step 1: Reflect: On the Past

1. What are some times in life where God deeply shaped you?
2. What are the turning points in your life? How did you meet God in them?
3. What part of your character has God most deeply worked on? How did he do it?
4. What's an area where you failed spectacularly or were particularly weak in the past that God has turned into a strength?

On the Present

1. Do people come to you often with a particular kind of need because they know you've "been there?" What is the experience you had that attracts them?
2. What are the themes you constantly come back to when you work with others (like 'God will supply all your needs' or 'You have a great destiny'). We are shooting for platitudes here – that are the themes that have special meaning to you because they are rooted in your life?

Step 2: Find the Message

As you look over your answers to these questions, what unique messages do you see in you that God has given you for others? They will be:

1. Rooted in a shaping experience
2. Themes you return to again and again
3. Places you have unusual impact when working with others

Step 3: Tell the Story

Identify the key event behind each message. Then practice telling the story behind the message with a friend. Include the four principles of authentic story telling: *Significant, Specific, Vulnerable, and Not Needy*.

Two Paradigms of Authenticity

Phileo ("The Time and Trust Paradigm") vs. Agape ("The Catalyzing Paradigm")

	Time and Trust Paradigm	Catalyzing Paradigm
Definition:	"I can be authentic with people who I know I can trust."	"Authenticity is a gift I give to many others to open the door to deep relationship."
Motivation:	Need	Gift
Safety by:	Being careful to not get hurt. Limiting authenticity to those who are proven trustworthy.	Accepting that I'll get hurt. Trusting Christ as healer.
Risk:	Shared. Small, incremental risks.	Unilateral. Big, frequent risks.
Time to build Authenticity:	From six months to years.	One conversation.
Who I Can Be Authentic With	Few	Many

Question: How do these two paradigms affect small group life?

Coaching Covenant (for Small Group Coaching)

(Adapted from the *Peer Coaching Workbook* by Tony Stoltzfus)

Purpose

We agree to build a strong, supportive, consistent coaching relationship that will help you grow and accomplish important personal and small group goals. We're committing to meet regularly and be on time for our sessions. Our conversations will be characterized by openness and honesty. We're in this relationship because we want it. If our times together become inconsistent or unproductive, we'll talk about it honestly and choose to refocus, recommit or ask our small group pastor for help.

Your Role

In a coaching relationship, you are responsible to seek God's agenda for your own growth, choose the goals you want to work on and create action steps to take you toward that goal. When you choose to commit to an action step, the expectation is that you will follow through, and want to be held accountable to do so.

The Coach's Role

A coach is more a partner than a guide. My job is to provide the positive support, encouragement, accountability and challenge you need to reach your goals and the goals of the small group, not to tell you what to do. I will manage our conversations so we stay on track with the goals you've chosen to work on and always end up with concrete steps to move you toward them. I will support you, believe in you, and treat what you say to me with respect and discretion.

Under Authority

As a small group coaching relationship, what we do needs to fall within the overall boundaries and direction of our small group system. If we aren't sure whether the goals, action steps or life patterns are appropriate ones, or we need outside help, we'll go to our small group pastor together and work it through. We agree not to go around each other, but to respect lines of authority in the coaching system.

Logistics

1. We will meet: monthly bi-weekly
2. We're agreeing to meet together for _____ months, then we'll reevaluate.
3. Our sessions will be _____ minutes long.

Name _____ Date _____

Name _____ Date _____

(sign here)

Peter's Authentic Life Story

Excerpt from *The Peer Coaching Workbook* by Tony Stoltzfus

A compelling picture of Peter's authenticity comes down to us through the gospel of Mark. Eusebius, one of the early church fathers, states that, "Peter, from excess of humility, did not think himself qualified to write the Gospel; but Mark, his acquaintance and pupil, is said to have recorded his stories of the deeds of Jesus.... all things that are recorded by Mark are said to be memoirs of Peter's discourses."¹ In other words, the book of Mark is Peter's personal account of his time with Christ.

If you were writing the story of Jesus' life in a few pages, what would you choose to put in and leave out of your account? Take, for instance, the story of Peter's confession of Jesus as the Christ, and his subsequent rebuke for trying to talk Jesus out of going to the cross (see Mk 9:31-33 and Mt 16:13-23). If you were Peter, it would be easy to look at what happened and say, "The real point of this story is my confession of Jesus as the Son of God. That's what's most important. The 'Get thee behind me, Satan!' part was more of a personal growth issue in my life – just between me and Him. So let's leave that out and focus on Jesus as the Son of God." Or you might say, "It's not appropriate for a leader to air his dirty laundry in front of the whole congregation. Leaders need to model the strength of character they want their followers to live out, not weakness. When we're preaching the gospel, we should present the leadership mandate of, 'On this rock I will build my church' instead of looking like we're sinking sand."

Surprisingly, Peter does exactly the opposite. He downplays Jesus' praise of him, completely omitting from his own account the blessing Jesus pronounces on him ("I tell you, you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church..." Mt 16:17-19). Instead of presenting himself as the man with the Keys to the Kingdom, Peter, the foremost of Jesus inner circle, apostle, church planter, evangelist, the man who saw thousands saved at a time under his preaching, who spoke the word of God that ended Ananias' life and raised others from the dead, the man whose shadow could heal the sick—this same Peter intentionally chose to portray himself as someone Jesus rebuked for being "not on the side of God, but of men."

What was Peter thinking? Many of Peter's stories of Jesus life are similarly sprinkled with accounts of his own weaknesses, failures and faux pas. Why did he do choose to preach that kind of gospel?

I'm thankful that Peter gave us an honest picture of what it looks like when real, fallible men and women serve a holy God. We don't have to read about a spin-controlled Peter who only shares his victories to make his movement look good. We don't see a Peter who hid his weaknesses to appear strong to his followers. We know the real man. The Bible's willingness to tell authentic life stories gives us these gifts:

1. We see flawed people who God still uses, and we begin to believe that God can use us in spite of our own flaws. Stories like Peter's give us confidence that we are "like nature with Elijah" (James 5:17) – and because we are like him, we're capable of same acts of faith that he did.

¹Jamieson, R., Fausset, A. R., & Brown, D. (1997). *A commentary, critical and explanatory, on the Old and New Testaments*. On spine: Critical and explanatory commentary. (Mk 1:1).



2. Peter's failures teach us how to handle failure. The one who had just denied Jesus was still willing to jump off the ship and swim to shore to be near Him a little sooner. Characters like Peter show us how to handle failure and adversity as well as blessing and victory.
3. We learn not to make Christ share the glory with us. When Jesus does incredible things through ordinary, flawed individuals, he gets the glory for getting his work done in spite of us. When we pretend we've got it all together, we steal the spotlight from Him.



Additional Small Group Coaching Resources on the Web

- www.Coach22.com/discovercoaching.html
Free articles and resources on coaching and how to coach
- www.Coach22.com
Christian coaching bookstore with a wide variety of coaching and coach training resources
- www.TouchUSA.org
Small group leadership and coaching resources from Touch (the Cell Group People)
- www.ChristianCoaches.com
The Christian Coaches Network is the largest network of professional Christian coaches

Recommended Books and CDs for Small Group Coaches

- ***Leadership Coaching*** by Tony Stoltzfus
A comprehensive handbook on fundamental coaching skills like asking powerful questions, intuitive listening, goal-setting, etc.
- ***A Pocket Guide to Coaching Small Groups*** by Randall Neighbor
A guide to building the relationship with a small group leader you coach
- ***Coaching for Performance*** by John Whitmore
A business coaching book that introduces you to the GROW model, a widely-used structure for a coaching conversation
- ***Peer Coach Training Program*** by Tony Stoltzfus
A nine-session, DVD-based course for training coaches or introducing accountable peer coaching relationships within a small group
- ***How to Ask Great Questions*** by Karen Lee Thorp
An excellent guide to question construction that will help you refine your asking skills
- ***Christ-Centered Coaching*** by Jane Creswell
This book about the benefits of coaching is the one I recommend to get a pastor or leader on board with the value of coaching
- ***Coaching Small Group Leaders*** by Les Brickman (CD)
Teaching and live demos on fundamental small group coaching skills
- ***Powerful Questions: Problem Solving*** by Tony Stoltzfus (CD)
Live demos of several powerful techniques for helping coaches solve problems with telling them what to do

In-depth reviews and/or sample chapters of the above products are available on-line at the www.Coach22.com coaching bookstore.