

The Coaching Parent

David Miskimin and Jack Stewart

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Typeset in Garamond

Praise for The Coaching Parent

“The Coaching Parent is a really innovative approach which allows parents and children to deal with difficult situations in a constructive and positive way in the home environment.”

Don McLaverty
Parent with two children

“However experienced, capable and sensitive we may be when dealing with adults or other young people, it is always far more difficult to present a calm approach when endeavouring to encourage and help our own children. The emotions present in such close relationships often make our comments appear as criticisms or of us as having over-demanding expectations. It is therefore invaluable to have The Coaching Parent as a resource that suggests practical examples and strategies which we parents’ can employ as we lovingly prepare our children to tackle and achieve greater challenges with flair and success.”

Joy Naylor
Vocal Coach and a parent with L plates on!

“As a business consultant and Mum to two lively boys aged 9 and 7, The Coaching Parent is universally an essential read and source of reference. My 2 boys’ personalities are so different that it is essential that I can build rapport with each of them, question and listen to uncover their personal issues, praise according to what has meaning to them and deal with their diverse self-confidence issues. With the skills and techniques in the book I can “coach” each of my boys so much better. Additionally I can now use the newly acquired techniques with my clients and the teams they have to manage.”

Annette R. Kurer
Ark Consultants - consultancy, coaching and training

“I have used the concepts in The Coaching Parent and found them to be invaluable. Coaching your child opens up new areas of development for both of you.”

Mother with two children

“The Coaching Parent arrived into my life on my 52nd birthday and as I began to read the philosophy and ideas expounded by David and Jack, I realised that I have never read a single book about parenting, attended a lecture, watched or listened to anything.

“Yet I have co-parented 5 children whom I am proud to describe as some of my best friends. Like the best of friends, we occasionally have our spats and ‘don’t call each other enough’ and yet, when the chips are down, we are there for each other - unconditionally.

“I reflect that, maybe part of my ‘success’ as a parent has been facilitated by my career as a business coach - and by the books, conferences and people I have met in the development of my coaching skills.

“Somebody is quoted as saying that ‘parenting is the last great preserve of the amateur’.

“I don’t know whether I would have made a better job of it if The Coaching Parent had been around 19 years ago when all of this began - but I do know that I would have felt less lonely, less inadequate and less fearful of the outcome of this perilous journey.”

Chris Barrow
Principal of The Dental Business School, The Coaching
Business School and The Online Business School

“We found it really easy to get to grips with the flow of the book and the advice provided from the cards. It has endorsed our 25 years practical experience of being parents, and certainly provided us with many different ideas to assist in the coaching of our grandson. It also makes sense of many of the challenges that we faced with our children. It’s a pity this book was not available all those years ago when they were growing up.”

Steve and Lynn Bugg
Parents with two children

“The Coaching Parent isn’t just a simple system that works; it acknowledges that parenting is work and shows you how to do that work properly. It causes you to lift your game and reach new levels of relationships with your children.”

Nikki and Mike
Parents with two children

“This book provides the encouragement, inspiration and the practical tools needed to help you tackle the most challenging job on the planet - being a parent.”

Paul McGee
Author of the best selling book ‘S.U.M.O... Shut Up, Move On.’

“As a parent, early years teacher, school governor and someone who has benefited from coaching; I know that coaching helps to build self esteem, break down barriers and release latent potential. It explores and develops the skills necessary to do this in a way that is relevant to each individual, recognising the fact that children and adults learn in many different ways. It helps individuals to reach and achieve their maximum potential whilst also developing invaluable life skills. I think this book would be a valuable resource not only in every parent’s library, but also for anyone interested in improving and developing learning skills.”

Gail Steele

“You carry your precious child for 9 months but nothing can prepare you for the enormity of the responsibility until the birth. For weeks after my son’s birth I felt that I had misplaced the much needed ‘handbook’ which would tell me what to do and which I so desperately needed. Eight months later I feel a little more confident but recognise that at every junction the decisions my husband and I make could impact upon our sons life and development. The Coaching Parent is the handbook which I have been looking for, allowing my family to develop in a positive way without imposing strict rules that we all have to adhere to.”

Natasha Jones
Mother and Practice Partner CFP Solicitors

*“Train up a child in the way he should go: and
when he is old, he will not depart from it”*

Proverbs 22:6

Acknowledgements

One of my core beliefs is that “Everything counts”. Whatever we do or don’t do, has an effect. So with reference to inspiration and material for this work, there are multiple sources. If you feel aggrieved that your name is not mentioned, I hope you are able to forgive me.

I failed my 11 plus and my teachers led a lengthy inquest as to how it could happen! My best friend just scraped in to Grammar School and much to our shared dismay, we were parted. I know he won’t mind me saying that for several years he struggled near the bottom of his classes, while I was always in the top 3 for most of mine. I was already learning that ‘failure’ is down to how we interpret the experience. Mr Comrie inspired me as a teacher, where he demonstrated without using the words, that goals and expectation of outcome are powerful motivators. My final GCE exam result was precisely as he predicted.

My parents, brother John and sister Karen, have provided a source of ideas and reference; like me, always doing the best with what they knew. Friends and wider family, especially the greatly loved and sorely missed Ken Mason, played their part too, with much wisdom and support over the years. My wife Laura has believed in me throughout and contributed much to my growth as a parent, husband and coach. Our daughters Nicole and Anne-Marie have (usually) been willing students, and where necessary, adept in letting me know when I get it wrong! Grandchildren Marcus and Aiden, continue to both remind and inform me about how adults and children interact in the real world!

Achieving a personal goal of meeting 1:1 with Lou Tice, International Consultant on Personal Motivation and co-founder of *The Pacific Institute*, was a deeply moving and life changing event. “Thank you Lou – you are one in a million.”

My big secret is out – while over the years several hundred coaching clients have produced fabulous results, I too have experienced a sense of achievement and growth by sharing in their hard won personal change.

Speaking of which, thanks Jack for coming into my life at just the right time. Working with you on this book has been an experience I would not have wanted to miss. In turns; exciting, frustrating, fun, annoying, enlightening, disappointing and ultimately, fulfilling. I can't think of anyone else who would have matched my needs better!

Finally, as authors with experience of different publishers, we both wanted to acknowledge Bookshaker.com. Flexibility, creativity, professionalism, tireless efforts - lets limit the superlatives as others might think Debbie Jenkins and Joe Gregory wrote them – we mean it – well done guys, great work!

God bless those who have contributed in my journey through life.

David Miskimin

Just about everyone who I value, and many of those who I don't yet, influences me, so below are those most relevant to this book.

My own wonderful parents, now departed, who in keeping my adoption secret, taught me the power of love. I am forever grateful to my brilliant wife, Anne, who continues the lesson. To my step-daughters Karen and Janet, both model parents themselves.

Bob Szpalek, headteacher in a million, and his students at Darlaston Community School. Mark Leeson, Malcolm Ratledge, and Theresa Powney, educationalists. Keith Greenwood and Chris Wolfenden, who gave us a break to work with parents of their excellent school.

Tim and Carol Howard, who opened the door at Walsall LEA. To the support proved by Len Blood, Nick Poole and my Purrfect business partner, Jeff Moran.

And finally, all the NLP trainers, who continue to make the world a better place: Frank Bentley, Peter McNab, Robert McDonald, Steve and Connirae Andreas, Penny Tompkins and James Lawley.

Like David, I have mixed views about ‘success’ and ‘failure’ in education, and despite my probably having too many qualifications, two incredible teachers helped lift me back on the rails in the late 60’s, Eric Liddle and ‘Charlie’ Parker.

The warmth and sincerity of David Miskimin has always shone through from day one. Typically, he persuaded me, a lifelong Liverpool supporter to read Alex Ferguson’s book, ‘Managing My Life’! World-class rapport skills from a wonderful human being.

Jack Stewart

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Foreword

As a coach and someone who has been a trainer of coaches for many years I am honoured by the opportunity to work with thousands of coaches and students from all around the world. There is enormous gratification in hearing feedback from them that tells me something important - that coaching works.

I like to think that I have been relatively successful in business but of course there is more to life than just work. In addition to my business, I have the pleasure of being the proud father of three boys. Yet with all my 'skills' and experience nothing prepared me adequately for becoming a parent.

Nobody can quite prepare you for the enormous changes that take place. It was so different when my wife and I were just a couple. Then we had our first child, and when he was a baby things were absolutely fine, but then he started to walk, talk and develop a personality and my goodness things did change! The whole dynamics of the family changes, the relationships become far more complicated and there is so much more to think about and deal with. Now I have three children, all boys: a 15 year-old, a 13 year-old and a 6 year-old. One might be forgiven for thinking that having had one child it makes little difference if you have more – after all you have learned all about it now. How wrong! The beauty of children is that they are so unique and this of course means that what worked for one is completely useless with another. You are constantly trying to deal with very different personalities whilst trying to maintain a family unity.

The major difference between being a parent and running a business is that when you encounter a challenge or problem in business and you successfully deal with it, you are then able to put into place processes

and systems to ensure that you never meet the same problem again. This of course is absolutely not true in parenting.

Over the years, I have heard the phrase “good parenting” many times. A phrase that is talked about all the time and is absolutely guaranteed to make those of us who are parents feel guilty, inadequate and insecure.

However, the good news is I did not have to look very far for help. I soon realised that the techniques I employed with my clients as a coach could be of immense use to me as a parent.

So what is coaching? Well here is my definition:

“Coaching is about performing at your best through the individual and private assistance of someone who will challenge, stimulate and guide you to keep growing.”

Explained more fully, your coach engages in a collaborative alliance with you to establish and clarify purpose and goals and to develop a plan of action to achieve those goals. They will establish an understanding of what is really important to you in life and subsequently enable you to take charge of your life; to construct and act upon action plans that will help you to realise these priorities.

Coaching also incorporates learning and yet a coach is not a teacher and will not necessarily know how to do things better than you but this does not matter. Your coach will observe patterns - set the stage for new actions and then work with you to put these new, more successful actions into place. This involves learning through various coaching techniques such as listening, reflecting, asking questions and providing information. Finally, and most importantly, your coach will help you learn how to become self-correcting and self-generating. That is, you will learn how to correct your own behaviour, generate your own questions and find your own answers.

So if you think about it, isn't this precisely what we do with our children?

I have personally known David Miskimin for many years as both a fellow coach and a friend. During that time, not only have I witnessed him coach many other people, but have also experienced his coaching myself. David really is a master of the Art; I have seen him work with people and in a short space of time completely reframe their thinking and help them go through a process of cognitive restructuring such that their emotional state changed very quickly indeed. As a coach I have the highest respect for him and his ability, and as a friend I count myself honoured to be able to call on his coaching skills to help me in my times of need as indeed I have had occasion to do in the past.

Whilst I have not met Jack personally, his passion for giving children the opportunity to improve their life chances is evident. His skills and experience with youngsters, and David's extensive coaching background, have uniquely blended to create something really special in this work.

When I received the first draft of this book it was with such relief that I found it answered many questions that I have, not just as a father but as a coach and trainer of coaches. It placated many of my own fears and managed to cover this in depth subject in such a quiet, caring, calm and easy to understand way. This book is most definitely required reading and must have a permanent place of residence on the bedside table of any would be father or mother.

Gerard O'Donovan
Founder and Principal of Noble Manhattan Coaching
CEO of the European Coaching Institute

Introduction

The path of parenting is strewn with potholes and traps as any parent will tell you. Yet, in spite of the pain, anxiety and frustration, we continue. Parents love their children – so we persist. There is also that nagging part of us, working hard in some way to give our child more hope, skills, and possibility for their lives than we had in ours. It's not that we have failed or under performed, more that there is a part of us – maybe its called wisdom or experience – demanding to be heard. Sometimes voiced or played as a thought perhaps like “Knowing what I do now, I'd do it this way...”

With the pressures of modern life including long or unsocial working hours, family break-up is reaching crisis levels. Whatever your own circumstances, and with stability or not, any child in your care remains important to you. As parents we need all the help we can get. Not for our sakes, but for the children.

This book provides many resources for you to reach into in whatever way is best for you. By experimenting and practicing with the tools, techniques and knowledge in this book, you will very quickly find yourself becoming a coach.

Finally, please remember – however you approach this as *The Coaching Parent* – always do it with love.

David and Jack

The World's Best Coach ...

Imagine you could afford the world's best coach for your child. Watch, listen to and feel what it is like as your child blossoms, discovers hidden talents and abilities, and develops an ever-deepening level of *self-confidence*. Notice how the coach is working. Marvel at the wonderful *rappport* coach and child share, how *learning* has become not only enjoyable, but also easier and faster. Stress? The *coaching relationship* even helps your child to *use 'stress' to their advantage*, applying their newly discovered responsibility to make rapid strides towards realising their potential. How much would you give to employ this person?

Well, imagine now *you* are that coach. Watch, listen to and feel what it is like as you work with your child, doing everything the coach did, and more! Adjust the script; as in your mind's eye you combine the deep love and respect you have for your child, with the skills of the world's best coach. Notice the absence of any barriers to achievement for both of you...

And the next step? Welcome to **The Coaching Parent!** You are now on your way to becoming your child's personal, inspirational coach.

This book will make *you* the world's best coach for your child. All the tools and motivation you need to *make the best use of the coaching opportunities that arise daily* are in these pages. Depending on your style, needs and experience you can dip into whichever chapter appeals most. Alternatively, you can start your journey right now and read the book from cover to cover. It really is up to you.

CHAPTER ONE

Taking your first steps

Exactly what is *coaching*?

Coaching is a term now commonly heard in sports, business and education. We realise this does not automatically mean that you, the reader, necessarily appreciate all the similarities or differences. We felt that a brief explanation might be helpful, so that the coaching style we propose for *The Coaching Parent* can be more easily understood.

In many ways, developing a coaching relationship with a child has perhaps the closest parallels to sports coaching. However, unlike sports coaching, we are not helping our child prepare for a win/lose competition. Our approach, is focused on a collaborative win/win result, which will enable your child to grow as an individual rather than to beat their “opponent.”

In sports, the coach can rarely outperform those coached. Some of our most successful sports coaches never achieved the highest levels in their chosen sport. Maybe there is a link with us acting as parents? As a parent or step-parent many of us can experience self-doubt. Many of us struggle with:

- “Am I getting this right?”
- “Is this the best thing to do with my child in this situation?”
- “That parent seems to have a better relationship that I do.”
- “Ill never be a good parent.”

Dilemmas like these are especially strong when it’s a first child we are dealing with. In business the coach will probably be an accomplished

‘player’. For example is it possible to conceive of a successful sales manager who was never a salesperson? Yet, we as the parent have never ‘been there’ with many situations we face with our child. In sports, coaching is a full-time job supported in many cases with assistant coaches. For the parent it’s a bit like having a husband, partner, relative or best friend to support you. Other times, you will need to move forward on your own.

We know the coach has many diverse responsibilities. In gymnastics, for example, the coach usually works one-on-one. Many sports coaches see themselves primarily as teachers. In business, even though the word “coach” has become a popular addition to most managers’ job descriptions, it’s doubtful that the word teacher would also appear.

The role of the parent in any child interaction varies in its importance based on many factors – try substituting ‘parent’ for ‘coach’ in the next few sentences. For example some research¹ indicates younger children’s perceptions of the performance qualities of other athletes are influenced as much by a coach’s reaction as their own opinions. In older age-groups young adolescents’ personal decisions are more influential than a coach’s reactions.

When Jack and I [David] discovered we shared a common area in which we both felt passionate, it was a revelation. He had spent much of his life working with children, removing blocks to their learning and development. In his opinion, this was an area in which a difference desperately needed to be made. His aim was to explain and demonstrate that children can learn quicker and remember more, enjoy the delights of

¹ *Amorose, A. J., & Weiss, M. R. (1998). Coaching feedback as a source of information about perceptions of ability: A developmental examination. *Journal of Sport and Exercise Psychology*, 20, 395-420.

being truly listened to, reduce their stress levels, and become even more confident. He had even spoken at education conferences ensuring that his strength of views and ideas, which were not always supported by the system, were conveyed.

I had similar yet different motives. I'm very proud of the achievements of my children. However, like most parents, I wished that I'd had greater knowledge, experience and skills earlier so that I could have been even more effective in helping my children fulfil their potential. I had established a successful business career, which grew into my own executive and business coaching company.

Now, through coaching business executives, I can see the common threads between coaching in organisations and parenting. Many leaders and managers lack credibility with colleagues. If you wonder how that's relevant, ask yourself how credible are you with your children? Some bosses say one thing and do another – staff really hate that don't they? Has that ever happened in your home? A good manager will want to develop and grow individuals so that their talent and career aspirations are realised. As a result, the manager feels a sense of achievement and the individual also experiences great satisfaction. Isn't this what a parent most deeply desires for their child? Is it possible that by improving your parenting skills you may also become a better manager at work and your children learn valuable work/life skills?

While we share some beliefs and differ in others, Jack and I are convinced that God brought us together, with our different talents, to develop this programme, working with gifted, able and 'difficult' adults and children of all ages. One of our aims in this book, and beyond, is to help raise your own awareness as to your role in positively influencing your child.

HOW DOES COACHING WORK?

Coaching is a way of asking questions that empowers the listener. By asking questions, we present options and possibilities. In so doing, our awareness and understanding are likely to increase. Whomever you coach will become massively more aware of who they are, what they know, and how they function.

How much more effective would you be if you could choose the time and place to be your best, you knew why you operated as you did, and you always felt a connection to those closest to you, or your purpose, mission or calling?

Well, you can have all this, and then, as if by magic, so will your child. You will become an inspiring role model, allowing your children to copy qualities and techniques you possess that will transform their lives.

And when you are ready, maybe you can create other opportunities to use your coaching skills...

If you want to start on the journey to becoming the world's best coach for your child, consider how you might already be using daily opportunities for coaching.

How often do you catch your child doing something right, and reward them with a smile, praise, or a well-considered question?

"That's great Josh/Jessica - How good do you want to become?"

So, we begin with coaching conversations in Chapter 2. You will soon discover the 'magic' of coaching is:

1. Creating a favourable climate for dialogue
2. Using 'normal' daily opportunities
3. Having an intent to coach
4. Putting a little more thought into what you say before you say it

5. Using questions instead of opinion
6. Ensuring agreed actions are taken and monitored.

These coaching conversations are repeated and analysed in Chapter 12 with commentary, showing what is really ‘going on.’ In a very short time, the ‘commentary’ will be in your mind, as you seamlessly help your child realise their potential.

Just as important as how you construct your **questions** is the ability to **listen** actively. Tips and techniques on both are in Chapter 3.

By the time you have read the first three chapters, you are likely to have questions yourself! If that’s the case, go to the Appendix for Frequently Asked Questions. Chapter 4 introduces a very simple yet powerful ‘model’ of coaching, which you will soon be using effortlessly. This model [GROW] helps with **goal** setting, becoming aware of your child’s **reality**, helping them recognise additional **options**, and then choosing their own **way forward**.

The book is based on 45 ‘cards’, each allocated into one of six suits.

1. Rapport
2. Self Confidence
3. Accelerating & Improving Learning
4. Coaching
5. Optimising Stress
6. Jokers

Each of these ‘suits’ contains key aspects of **The Coaching Parent**.

They are covered in depth in Chapters 5 through to 10. Here’s a sneak preview:

1. Rapport

Rapport is a term describing the effect of all simultaneous communication between you and your child. That's verbal, non-verbal, what you notice, and what you don't. Signs that confirm the message or suggest it may be suspect are mismatches between *what* is said, and *how* it is said revealed by posture, tone, gestures and facial expression. These external signals are far more reliable than guesswork or intuition. However, intuition i.e. 'this doesn't feel right', has the potential to be your best indicator, if you are skilled at using it, and when it is combined with the tools you are about to learn.

Without rapport, you cannot influence anyone, unless you use coercive force. We know you love your child. Yet in loving him or her, you may have overlooked simple yet very important things like your body language, tone of voice and physical position in relation to them. Here you will explore a collection of thinking, life skills and life stories that are obvious only *after* you have learned them! Develop powerful links into how you and your child relate to each other and how you relate to the world. Being 'in rapport' means communication flows effortlessly, without prejudice or barriers. It is like a dance between equal partners, each trusting each other, each movement occurring almost telepathically.

2. Self Confidence

The most limiting thing we can have is the lack of belief in ourselves. How we think about ourselves and how we present ourselves to the world hugely influences how far we get in life. Many now famous people in history used self-belief to conquer massive obstacles. Their parents, teachers, or employers wrote many of them off originally. You will discover how so much of how you think and what you think about is tied closely into your self-confidence. Real confidence radiates out and lifts others. False or low confidence does the opposite.

3. Accelerating and Improving Learning

Are you in rapport, feeling confident? Brilliant! Now find out how you can learn more *and* remember more? Read about and then apply new learning techniques and approaches; experiment with the ideas for yourself and children.

4. Coaching

You know that coaching empowers others. Although they may adopt a different approach, think about all the great coaches in sport. How about coaches who transform people who were labelled ‘tone deaf’ into recording artists? But no coach, no matter how good, can perform or take exams for his or her protégés! By raising awareness and responsibility in your child, they can ‘go solo’, reaching heights previously undreamed of.

5. Optimising Stress

You are in rapport, confident, your learning skills honed like radar. You know and accept yourself. You want to succeed and are on your way. Now is the time to use stress to your own advantage. Stress is natural. We read and hear so much about the increase in stress these days, don’t we? Set aside time to reflect on those areas of our lives where making lasting changes will benefit us forever.

6. Jokers

Who inspired you as a child? As well as you mum or dad, didn’t you learn from true-life stories and collected wisdom? Share your discoveries with your children. Maybe ask them what or who it makes them think of. Could *your story* become part of our programme? All stories stimulate the right hand side of the brain, neglected in formal education. Maybe your child would like more stories to read...

IS ALL THIS BEGINNING TO MAKE SENSE?

Our aim in this book is for coaching to reach parents and children regardless whether they're a man or a woman, a boy or a girl. With this in mind we'll aim to refer to the child as a girl and a boy equally to make things fair and the reading easier.

How many times have you wondered, "I wish I could be like her", "She inspires me", "My mum or dad might have taught me that", and "How can I be so that my child copies my best points, and forgives my worst?"

Every 'card' in this book contains skills and wisdom for life. Coaching is the missing ingredient that makes all this come to life.

You can be like *your* role models, inspire your child, and teach your child your best 'stuff' by becoming the best role model for them! This book will show you how.

We present real life examples of how coaching has helped children in Chapter 11.

In addition, as promised, in Chapter 12, we return to the coaching conversations we started with in Chapter 2.

The book closes in telling you a little about us, and recommends some further reading, tools and resources to build on your skills as *The Coaching Parent*.

**Before, during and after using these materials, who do you think
might be the world's best coach for you...?**

CHAPTER TWO

Coaching Conversations

Are you ready to get started? Read these conversations, which we have designed to illustrate the key topics of rapport, learning, self-confidence and stress. Place yourself first in the position of the parent, then re-read them, as if you were the child. See Card 17 in *Chapter 7: Learning*.

‘Coaching conversations’ you have had, and will have, are more likely to cover different topics, as you will find in the Appendix - Frequently Asked Questions. However it will soon become apparent that the key issues we have addressed in *The Coaching Parent* are behind just about everything.

Remember that one definition of coaching is: “A participative partnership designed to develop an individual to their full potential.”

We encourage you to seek, listen for, and grab those partnership opportunities as they present themselves.

At the end of several chapters we have inserted exercises for you to note what you’ve taken out of the reading. Coaching involves committing to action to achieve results and we’ll be asking you to record those items too.

As a way of demonstrating how ordinary conversations can easily incorporate coaching we invite you to read the conversations below. As the book unfolds the approach taken will be revealed to you.

How might you use these conversations to help you become a better coach?

CONVERSATION 1

Dialogue between Josh [in italics] and his mum.

Mum, why is it sometimes easier to get on with Dad than at other times?

What do you mean Josh?

Well there was a problem yesterday, didn't he tell you?

No - go on ...

Dad told me off for dropping my dinner off the tray.

So you lost rapport?

Rap-what? What's that?

Sorry, yes it is a strange word isn't it? Well - let me put it another way - how do you know when you are getting on with someone?

Don't know - it just sort of clicks I guess.

So when Dad told you off what was it like ?

Awful. He shouted, which I didn't like. Then he swore, which made it even worse as he never swears. Not only that, but the carpet was a horrible spaghetti Bolognese colour!

...then what happened

I said sorry - it was an accident. He wasn't happy though and made me clean it all up. He was grumpy for ages.

Later on I asked if he wanted a cup of tea and he was a lot nicer - like normal really.

How could you tell?

He smiled and he said "come here" and gave me a cuddle. He was okay after that.

So you were back in rapport?

If that's what that word means, yes I guess so. It seemed more comfortable, almost as though it had never happened. Is that what rapport is then?

That's exactly what rapport is like.

If something like this ever happened again, and I hope it doesn't, what might you do differently?

I'd apologise straight away - then say don't be cross with me for ages, as I feel uncomfortable when you do that.

How would dad take that do you think?

Don't know - he might be alright, he might not.

What could you do to find out?

I could ask him before it happens, so that he knows I don't like it!!

Interesting idea, when would you do that?

Tonight - but before tea!

How will you know if he's happy with that?

If he is understanding, then I'll know I've cracked it!

CONVERSATION 2

Jessica [*in italics*] is talking to her mum.

Mum, why am I so clumsy all the time?

What have you done Jessica...?

I've just knocked my homework books on the floor. Yesterday I knocked a cup over!

Just because you did that doesn't mean you are clumsy does it?

Well I think it does!

Jessica, it is likely if you keep insisting that you are clumsy, that soon you are going to believe it.

What do you mean?

Well - just for fun, can you imagine what the very opposite of clumsy might be?

Don't know - how about not clumsy?

Well that's true, actually I'm wondering if there is a positive way of saying that? At the moment you are saying **you're not** something. How about **I am** something...

Don't know what the opposite is - how about graceful? No that's not me either!

Okay, let's try going with that just as an experiment. How would you feel if you were graceful?

Confident I guess.

And if you were confident, how would that be?

Good!

Does a confident person ever knock her books or drinks over?

I wouldn't think so, and even if they did they probably wouldn't worry about it.

Well why don't you try that. In your mind's eye imagine you are that confident person - how is that?

...Its cool. I'm aware of everything around me. Yet, it's all under control.

How good is that?

It's great - I'm really confident.

Great stuff - just remember this moment, as you go on from here
- whatever happens you are that confident person!

Thanks Mum - you're a star!

CONVERSATION 3

Josh [*in italics*] is talking to his dad.

How's it going Josh?

Terrible, I'm just rubbish at maths

Surely you can't be rubbish at all of maths, is there anything in particular that's difficult?

Well I guess its algebra mostly. We've been doing it for weeks now and I just can't get the hang of it.

What's happening with algebra then?

It just doesn't make sense at all.

Is there any of it that does make sense?

I think I know how simple equations work.

Anything else?

No that's about it, I can't do quadratics though.

How do you want to be at algebra?

I need to understand quadratics.

And if you did, what would be happening?

I'd be getting good marks.

What are your marks like now?

I get about 40% right.

Well you must be doing something right then!

Suppose so.

What sort of marks would you be happy with?

I'd like to get at least 70% right.

I wonder what you might do to improve – have you any ideas?

Not really.

Well to be honest maths wasn't a strong point for me either.

However I do know something about working these sort of things out.

If you were being really creative, like you are with English what sort of ideas would you come up with?

Hmmm. Well I could ask to sit with David, he seems to understand this stuff. I could ask Sir if he would give me a hand, I don't like asking in front of the others though. And I could ask for some old maths papers to practice with.

Great stuff – which of those do you prefer?

I think sitting with David, he is really good, but I don't think he'll mind helping me a little bit.

Okay – when will you sort that out?

Tomorrow I'm going to ask Chloe - she's his sister - to have a word with him because she knows him really well and she likes me!

CONVERSATION 4

Emily [*in italics*] talking to her mum.

Hi Emily, how are you?

Don't ask!

Give me an idea, I might be able to help.

Doubt it...

Shall I start guessing or will you give me an idea?

Knowing you, if I don't give you an idea, you are just going to nag me to death.

Don't be silly - go on, I'm listening...

It's Becky.

What about her?

She is such a pain, I'm sick of her, she drives me mad!

How does she do that?

Whatever I say she says, whatever I wear she wears, wherever I go she goes – I want to strangle her!

Is there a reason she does this?

No she is just stupid and it stresses me out.

I'm wondering if there might be a reason and it's just that we don't know it yet.

I don't care and what's it got to do with you anyway?

It seems to me that if you didn't care, you wouldn't be getting so stressed out.

Maybe, maybe not.

How would you like things to be with Becky?

I'd like her to go away, so that I don't feel so stressed.

Does she know that?

Not really, I just ignore her.

How do you think that makes her feel?

Probably pretty bad I guess – it's her own fault though.

Do you really want her to go away?

I do if she keeps being so stupid.

What do you think she wants?

I've no idea and I don't really care.

How could you find out?

Oh! I suppose I could ask her.

Just supposing that you did, what might be good about that?

She might tell me why she is being such a pain...

Anything else?

I would probably feel a little better just knowing why she is driving me so crazy!

We started by wanting to reduce your stress - I get the idea that talking to Becky would be worthwhile, what do you think?

Oh you drive me mad too – of course it makes sense. Thanks Mum!

Will you sort it soon?

Yes, I'll talk to her – and you – tomorrow. Are you happy now?

That's the end of the four coaching conversations. Depending on how curious you are feeling right now, you might continue your reading with the next chapter, or you might dip into Chapter 12 – Worked Examples.

CHAPTER THREE

Questioning and Listening

Questioning and listening are central to your role as you are becoming a Coaching Parent. There are some clues to be aware of which will help in knowing if it is a genuine interaction:



Both of you feel you're being heard and understood. Adult and child are open with each other.



The best aspects of communication are multi-directional, or at least it is a real two-way experience, when you and your child are both occupied with the conversation and interested.



The mood is comfortable and so the important things are said, even if the subject matter is awkward or difficult.



As a result of talking, something useful or satisfying happens and you feel good, maybe even experience an increased bond.

The above aspects apply in all forms of effective communication.

Getting the above four things right will lead to effective interactions with the following beneficial outcomes:

- You will have improved communications
- You will have better personal relationships

ABOUT THE AUTHORS

DAVID MISKIMIN

Executive and Business Coach, Consultant, Trainer, Keynote Presenter, Radio Broadcaster, Author and Writer.



David, founder of **The Directors Coach**, is an Executive and Business Coach with a background of over 15 years senior management experience within ICL, NorTel and Reuters. David works as a coach and mentor with people at all levels and with teams in business. His own understanding as a senior manager enables him to help senior people achieve performance excellence. This includes CEOs, MDs and Lawyers. He has a particular passion in the building of purpose, direction and follow-through with senior teams. His coaching clients include financial services, engineering, software and consultancy companies as well as the public sector.

Coaching Academy trained, David is a Founder Member of (what is now) Coaching and Mentoring International, contributes to their Corporate Coach Training and is dedicated to the development of coaching. They commissioned David to write the communications module of their first Corporate Coaching Programme. EEF (the UK organisation for engineering, manufacturing and technology based businesses), commissioned David to write and deliver to its members a Managing & Motivating programme and modules for the Institute of Leadership & Management Diploma. He is retained for ongoing delivery of these and other programmes.

As an accredited trainer, consultant and coach, he holds LCA, MCLC, British Psychological Society Level A and B, Assoc CIPD qualifications, Myers Briggs and 16PF practitioner and is an internationally accredited NLP Practitioner. Trained by the Dale Carnegie Organisation, David

achieved awards for Outstanding Performance and Human Relations. Committed to life-long learning, David is undertaking the Noble Manhattan Coaching post-graduate Corporate Coaching Practitioner Diploma (Masters level).

A popular keynote speaker, he has appeared on BBC Radio Stoke, Merseyside and Manchester for interviews and phone-in coaching, and has a regular newspaper column. He joined forces with Jack Stewart in order to provide younger members of society with a means to realise their talents.

David is married to Laura. They have two daughters, Nicole and Anne-Marie, and two grandsons, Marcus and Aiden. Contact him through email to david@thedirectorscoach.com.

JACK STEWART

Psychotherapist, Author, Publisher, NLP Trainer and Nurseryman.

Jack Stewart, BA, MSc, FCIPD, has spent most of his working life as a trainer and developer in the public, private and voluntary sectors. He has designed and run training programmes, team building and other ‘interventions’ for thousands of directors, teachers, managers, children, supervisors and employees.



Through personal experience of leading change in local government, combined with his research interests, he co-authored ‘The Learning Organization in the Public Services’ published by Gower in 1997.

Since establishing Organisational Healing in 1995, Jack has diversified into running and franchising NLP (Neuro-Linguistic Programming) Practitioner and Master Practitioner courses. He has designed and run NLP-based programmes in schools (Modelling Genius, ‘Re-righting the Code’). Twice he has addressed the annual Early Years conference

organised by Walsall LEA. Working with David Miskimin means he can now help parents nationally and internationally.

Jack has a psychotherapy and coaching practice, and he published the personal development magazine the Magic Lamp, (now on-line), six years ago. He was a consultant to Shrewsbury Town Football Club, and Warrington Wolves Rugby League Club, helping players be more skilled at the mental side of the game.

Prior to 1995, Jack was a senior lecturer and CIPD examiner in personnel management, and taught strategic management for the Open University's MBA.

In September 2004, Jack co-produced with Jeff Moran the unique Purrfect Symphony CD. He is now developing his skills as a spiritual teacher, and his (about tenth at the last count) latest life change is to become the proud owner of a cottage nursery business.

Jack is married to Anne, and they have two daughters; Karen and Janet (stepdaughters to Jack) and three grandchildren; James, Nicola and Josh.

Jack can be contacted through email to jack@organisationalhealing.org.

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