

Leadership Advice from the World's Greatest Coaches

COACH ME!

YOUR PERSONAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Edited by

Brian Underhill

Jonathan Passmore

Marshall Goldsmith



WILEY

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This edition first published 2022

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Registered Office(s)

John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, USA

John Wiley & Sons Ltd, The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

Editorial Office

The Atrium, Southern Gate, Chichester, West Sussex, PO19 8SQ, UK

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A catalogue record for this book is available from the Library of Congress

Paperback ISBN: 9781119823780; ePub ISBN: 9781119823797; Obook ISBN: 9781119823803.

Cover image: © Michael Nivelet/Shutterstock

Cover design by Wiley

Set in 10/12pt Warnock by Integra Software Services Pvt. Ltd, Pondicherry, India

Profits from the sale of *Coach Me! Your Personal Board of Directors* will be provided to the Marshall Goldsmith Bursary at Henley Business School, United Kingdom, which is a special fund dedicated to training the next generation of worthy leaders from the developing world to become coaches.

To my beautiful wife, Julie. Eccl 4:12. - BU

To Katharine, Florence, and Beatrice. - JP

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Foreword

A CEO's Journey through Coaching

Aicha Evans

CEO, Zoox, Inc.

Mark Thompson

World's #1 CEO Coach

When you meet world-class leaders whose talent is as extraordinary as that of Aicha Evans, you might not imagine her looking to executive coaches to be inspired and supported. However, throughout her remarkable career, she has tapped master coaches as strategic partners in building every great team, particularly in organizations facing massive growth and change. As CEO of Zoox, an Amazon company, Aicha is leading a mission as epic as a technological moonshot – autonomous driving – a radical redefinition of “personal transportation to make it safer, cleaner and more enjoyable for everyone,” she says.

“My job, first and foremost, is to coach my team to become better leaders! And the biggest challenge every leader faces is to make yourself vulnerable to coaching as a role model of professional growth and personal transformation,” Aicha smiled: “When it comes to change, you go first!”

As a CEO coach, Aicha's journey reminds me just how fortunate I am to learn from and support the world's most talented leaders. My mentor and friend Alan Mulally, the legendary former CEO of Ford and Boeing, often reminds me: “The secret to success as a coach is client selection!” When Marshall Goldsmith and I first met Aicha, we realized she was among the most gifted and compassionate technology leaders we would ever serve.

Whenever Aicha is challenged to break new ground or make change happen, “your first step must be to look in the mirror. You have to find your own growth story and help your team cross the chasm, cascading a culture of coaching throughout your organization,” she said. “As you’re promoted, your role as a leader obviously becomes less and less as commander and director, and more about coaching and cheerleading,” she insists.

Growing up in Senegal, West Africa, “from the very beginning I thought I was going to be a fighter pilot,” Evans said. “By the time I got to Paris as a student and bounced between Africa and Europe, I knew I wanted to be a technologist.” Her passion revealed itself as she found herself compelled to disassemble and reassemble every electronic device in the house. As a teenager, her parents attempted to put a stop to her long-distance phone calls, which were racking up high international charges. At the time, phones had a dial, which her parents locked, but Aicha found a hack to run the dial tone code on the phoneline and continue her international calls anyway. “By the time I arrived in the US for college,” she mused, “it was obvious to me that I’d be focusing on computers!”

At Intel, the world’s largest semiconductor chip company, “I learned about one’s responsibility as a technologist when it comes to society. I learned to be a leader at scale, to deal with press and media and investors. More importantly, I learned how to focus on people, but at a really massive scale, and coaching plays a big role in making that happen faster and better.” Aicha believes that her focus on coaching individual executives and teams “helped me do really well at Intel. I was enjoying it and felt that I was working on something important.”

At this point, she was a notable success and drawing considerable attention from corporate recruiters. “I had to

have a one-on-one with myself and say, 'Okay, I'm happy here. What would make me think about something else?' And I answered, *transformative technology*." In other words, Aicha wanted to lead a company where she would "be there at the beginning where you get to participate in creating the wave, as opposed to riding the wave. And that's exactly what happened with Zoox. You have the opportunity to literally impact society."

Aicha never imagined still working at 50. She had envisioned that she'd be doing a different kind of coaching: "I thought that I would be teaching math in elementary school, middle school or high school, because I feel that math is not taught properly, especially to girls. Along the way, though, I've discovered what is called 'meaning' and how to have impact on people at scale using technology," she said. Aicha will likely never stop working and serving in some major way. "Frankly, I think that if I went home tonight and told my kids and my husband that I'm not going to be working anymore, they would say, 'You need to find something you're going to do between 9 and 5, because you're not going to manage us!'"

As a CEO, Aicha seems driven to help others find their highest and best impact on the world. Her best coaching advice for executives? "What I tell young people, particularly women in their twenties and thirties - and I'm even having these conversations with my 15-year-old daughter - *take a chill pill*." She sighed and looked at me with that loving expression that comes from hard-won experience you would hope to get from your coach. "It's going to be okay," Aicha reassured. "Take the time to get to know yourself really well. What type of person are you; what really motivates you? If you find it, you'll know. Figure out what's important to you and then ride the different phases and waves."

And when things go wrong? “If something doesn’t go so well, take a step back, have a one-on-one with yourself and talk to your support system, like your coach! I was fortunate to have CEO coaches Marshall Goldsmith and Mark Thompson to help me (and my team) see what really happened. You have to be willing to make adjustments, ask for help when you need it and, by and large, you’re going to be fine.” Evans insisted.

Coach Me! is a book about how coaching ignites hearts and minds to build better leaders. This book is a treatise on how we, as coaches, can discover and serve extraordinary leaders like CEO Aicha Evans – executives *who deserve to have impact* at every level of an organization in every community. With patience and love as a coach, you just might help them change the world.

Aicha Evans joined Zoox as the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) in February 2019. Prior to Zoox, Evans served as Senior Vice President and Chief Strategy Officer at Intel Corporation, driving the company’s transformation from a PC-centric to a data-centric company. Previously, she ran the company’s wireless efforts and oversaw a global team of 7,000 engineers. Evans is a member of the Supervisory Board of SAP and holds a bachelor’s degree in computer engineering from The George Washington University.

Mark Thompson is a NYTimes bestselling author and the world’s #1 CEO Coach ranked by the American Management Association and Global Leading Coaches/Thinkers50. Forbes described him as having the “Midas Touch” with clients including World Bank CEO Jim Yong Kim, Pinterest cofounder Evan Sharp, and Virgin founder Richard Branson.

Acknowledgments

We would like to begin by thanking the Thinkers50 organization for its vision in recognizing the top coaches in the world, which has since inspired this project. We are so proud to see how far this profession of coaching has come in its short existence.

Thank you to Kathy Vlietstra of CoachSource who handled the yeoman's work of tracking, reviewing, and organizing all of these chapters. We are also very grateful to all the fantastic people at Wiley who helped bring this vision to life, during a pandemic – Jake Opie, Monica Rogers, Christina Weyrauch, and undoubtedly many others.

We honor our families for their support of all our extra hours required to make a book happen. An enormous thank you goes out to our wives, with special acknowledgment for our families Julie, Jenae, Briana, Kaitlyn, and Evan (BU), and Katharine, Florence, and Beatrice (JP).

Without our 52 authors – and our Foreword guest Aicha Evans – and their thousands of years of combined wisdom, we would not have a book. Each author gave generously from their incredibly busy schedules to share learnings that were new, fresh, insightful yet timeless. We are so incredibly grateful for their participation. May their wisdom bless you on your leadership journey.

About the Editors

Brian O. Underhill

Brian O. Underhill, PhD, PCC, is an internationally recognized expert in the design and management of worldwide executive coaching implementations. He is the Founder and CEO of CoachSource, the world's largest purely executive coaching provider, with over 1,100 coaches in 100+ countries. Previously, he managed executive coaching operations for Marshall Goldsmith, the world's #1 coach.

Brian is the co-editor of *Mastering Executive Coaching* (Routledge, 2019), the author of *Executive Coaching for Results: The Definitive Guide to Developing Organizational Leaders* (Berrett-Koehler: 2007), and the author of numerous articles and blogs in the coaching field. He is an internationally sought-after speaker, addressing The Conference Board, ICF, EMCC, and many regional coaching events. He has been nominated as a Thinkers50 Leading Global Coach in 2019.

Brian has a PhD and an MS in organizational psychology from the California School of Professional Psychology (Los Angeles) and a BA in psychology from the University of Southern California. Brian is certified in the Hogan Assessments, Element B, Extended DISC and holds Advanced Certification in the Goldsmith Coaching Process. He is a Founding Fellow of the Institute of Coaching Professional Association at McLean Hospital - a Harvard Medical School affiliate. He was named a 2021 Fellow of the Society of Consulting Psychology (APA - Division 13). He is a Professional Certified Coach (PCC) with the International Coach Federation.

Brian resides in Silicon Valley, where he enjoys cycling, racquetball, plays music as a worship musician, and spends time with his wife, Julie, and their four kids.

Jonathan Passmore

Jonathan is senior Vice President at CoachHub, the global digital coaching company and also holds a professorship at Henley Business School, UK.

He has held board-level roles in government, not-for-profit and commercial sectors. He is a licensed psychologist, holds five degrees, and is an award-winning coach, author, and researcher. He has authored and edited over 30 books, including Top Business Psychology Models, Becoming a Coach, The Coaches Handbook, and WeCoach. He is also the editor of the eight-volume Wiley-Blackwell Series on Industrial Psychology. He has published over 100 scientific papers and book chapters on coaching, leadership, and change, and spoken at over 200 events worldwide. He believes in Open Science, sharing knowledge openly with other scientists and practitioners; thus, much of his work is available for free download from his website:

jonathanpassmore.com, and the income from most of his titles is donated to charitable causes such as The Railway Children and Water Aid. He has received and been shortlisted for multiple awards, including Marshall Goldsmith Global Coaching Awards Thinkers 50, Global Gurus List, Association of Business Psychologists, British Psychological Society, EMCC, and Association for Coaching.

He has previously worked for PWC, IBM, and OPM as a change consultant and executive coach, with clients including government ministers, celebrities, and senior leaders in the public, private, and non-profit sectors.

He is based in the UK, and works out of offices in London, Berlin, and New York.

Marshall Goldsmith

Dr. Goldsmith is the author or editor of 35 books, which have sold over two million copies, been translated into 30 languages, and become bestsellers in 12 countries. His two other New York Times bestsellers are *MOJO* and *What Got You Here Won't Get You There* - the Harold Longman Award winner for Business Book of the Year. In February 2016, [Amazon.com](https://www.amazon.com) recognized the 100 Best Leadership & Success Books in their To Read in Your Lifetime series. The list included classics and newer books - management and self-help books. Both *Triggers* and *What Got You Here Won't Get You There* were recognized as being in the top 100 books ever written in their field. Marshall is only one of two authors with two books on the list.

Marshall's professional acknowledgments include Harvard Business Review and Best Practices Institute - World's #1 Leadership Thinker; Global Gurus, INC and Fast Company magazines - World's #1 Executive Coach; Institute for Management Studies - Lifetime Achievement Award for Excellence in Teaching; American Management Association - 50 great thinkers and leaders who have influenced the field of management over the past 80 years; BusinessWeek - 50 great leaders in America; Wall Street Journal - top 10 executive educators; Economist (UK) - most credible executive advisors in the new era of business; National Academy of Human Resources - Fellow of the Academy (America's top HR award); and World HRD Congress (India) - global leader in HR thinking. His work has been recognized by almost every professional organization in his field.

Dr. Goldsmith's PhD is from UCLA's Anderson School of Management, where he was the Distinguished Alumnus of the Year. He teaches executive education at Dartmouth's Tuck School of Business. He is one of a select few executive

advisors who has worked with over 150 major CEOs and their management teams. He served on the Board of the Peter Drucker Foundation for 10 years. He has been a volunteer teacher for US Army Generals, Navy Admirals, Girl Scout executives, and International and American Red Cross leaders – where he was a National Volunteer of the Year.

Introduction

Dear Leader,

Through your own leadership journey, we suspect that you can relate to at least one of these real-life examples. Or, perhaps you have seen similar situations with others?

Steve was head of the oncology department at an established pharmaceutical company. For many who knew him, he was at the top of his game. He was the smartest guy in the room. Now, as CEO at a biotech, it was not going well only 6 months in. Why? Because he *had* to be the smartest guy in the room.

(Chapter 12, Philippe Grall)

Rosita's marketing ideas would revolutionize the company and increase revenue, but her blunt and directive style prevented her from enlisting midlevel global managers to execute on her concepts. Her communication style was preventing her from bringing her ideas to life.

(Chapter 7, Lisa Edwards)

The CEO of a marketing firm in China, Bruce, watched his business disappear overnight as COVID-19 spread quickly through his country – and the world. How would he save his business?

(Chapter 34, Karen Wu)

Marco, the possible future CEO of the largest manufacturing firm in the world, watched his most valuable person quit due to his management style. If Marco's fatal flaws are not fixed, he will not be promoted – or worse.

(Chapter 13, Carol Kauffman)

High-flying Arthur was promoted to the China COO of a major software firm when he began to struggle – badly – navigating this transition. His Regional COO said, "I'm disappointed, as he didn't function as the COO as we expected." His boss would replace him in 3 months if he could not improve.

(Chapter 39, Cathleen Wu)

Renee's nonprofit began with great excitement and high hopes. But, "Donations were scarce, human resources dwindling, and motivation running down" Would they need to shut down? Is this the end of the line for their mission?

(Chapter 25, Magda Mook)

Oliver was promoted from running one country to running many. And now his boss is saying, "ever since Oliver had taken over nine months ago, business in each geography was suffering." Oliver is befuddled, "It's as if all I've learned in the past isn't working for me anymore." (Chapter 21, Brenda Bence) .

Rick is stuck in between the conflict of two of his direct reports. His two department heads behave "like in kindergarten" – constantly blaming and pointing fingers at each other. How long can this possibly go on?

(Chapter 11, Christopher Rauen)

How about the CEO who was paralyzed by fear, too afraid to take risks...enough that the entire company behaved just like him. “We are not ready for big goals yet” – was the striking statement from a Senior Vice President. Will this company simply cower in fear and become irrelevant over time?

(Chapter 42, Oleg Kononov)

No one said leadership would be easy, but you probably did not realize it would be *this* hard. Perhaps you can relate to one of these stories – either for yourself or you see it in others you work with (or work for!)

Perhaps you began your career deep inside a career specialty, such as accounting, engineering, biology, law, or any other profession. Somewhere along the way, someone suggested (or you actively sought) to take a new position managing others – and that was the beginning of your new – and never ending – leadership learning curve. You soon realized your training in your specialty did not include management or leadership skills.

Perhaps you then continued moving up the ranks – for some of you, you have reached near or at the top of your organizations. Your challenges have become more and more complex. At this point, hundreds or thousands of careers and lives are impacted by your decisions, untold amounts of wealth are hanging the balance regarding the products or services you may be overseeing, and indeed, the very future of your organization may be fully in your hands. The pressure can be unbearable.

But wouldn't it be great to have someone to talk to, to bounce ideas off of – an objective expert *outside* your organization to speak with confidentially, who will not tell others inside the company about your fears, hopes, and dreams. Some wise counsel, adept at understanding human behavior, organizational dynamics, and even your business

itself. Perhaps, even a “personal trainer” who can help keep you accountable over time to do what you said you were going to do. Someone who can hold up a mirror and tell you the truth, even if no one around seems to be doing so. Leadership can be lonely, especially the higher you go.

This is exactly the role of the executive coach. And then some...

And we have gathered 50 of the world’s top coaches to share their secrets with you – right here in *Coach Me! Your Personal Board of Directors*.

What Is Coaching, Anyway?

You may have heard of this field of “executive coaching” by now. Perhaps, only 40-ish years old as a profession, coaching has experienced meteoric growth over the past two decades. There are now estimated 70,000 coaches worldwide. Various estimates place the industry at anywhere from \$2 billion up to \$15 billion per year (US dollars).

In the 1980s to early 1990s, coaching was initially used mostly for those “problem children” leaders who were in trouble as a last-ditch effort to fix them (or to pretend to try) before letting them go. Coaching was often done in secret, with the coach visiting surreptitiously (or meeting at an undisclosed location), with nearly no one knowing about it – even the coaching invoice line item description would be changed to keep prying eyes from noticing. One coach once told us she had a reputation as “the angel of death” – when she showed up, people knew her leader was on his/her final days.

Today, coaching is often seen as a badge of honor – a sign that a company wants to invest in your growth and development. Coaching for performance problems has

actually decreased steadily in use throughout the years. In our (Underhill) 2018 study, 1/3 of coaches reported coaching for performance problems, which decreased to only a quarter in 2020. A 2007 Harvard Business Review study found that just 12% of assignments were used to address derailing executives.

Corporations, nonprofits, and government alike have increased their use of coaching multi-fold over the past many years. Many estimates suggest at least half to 75% of corporates use executive coaches to develop their leaders. In our (Underhill) 2020 research study, we found that 95% of those responding organizations planned to increase (or at least continue) their current use of coaching over the next 2 years.

Household name leaders – even celebrities – are working with coaches, and being public about it. Names such as Michael Dell, Larry Page, Cheryl Sandberg, and Steve Jobs (briefly) have been known to work with coaches. The late Bill Campbell, literally a former football coach, has been nicknamed the Trillion Dollar Coach by a book of the same name. Former Google CEO Eric Schmidt has said, “Every famous athlete, every famous performer has somebody who’s a coach. Somebody who can watch what they’re doing and say, ‘Is that what you really meant? Did you really do that?’ They can give them perspective. The one thing people are never good at is seeing themselves as others see them. A coach really, really helps.”

What is driving this growth in the industry? Various studies have shown that attracting, retaining, and developing people have been one of the greatest concerns of organizations for the past many years (which is more acute in the post-pandemic world). Some firms are unable to grow effectively without more leaders in more parts of the world. Others are learning that leadership effectiveness is

one of the most critical drivers toward corporate success. Yet, there is less time to send leaders off to traditional classroom training. Instead, coaching can be done *in situ*, on-the-job, in the moment, working on real-life leadership challenges. Studies show coaching creates much greater content retention than classroom training alone.

Popular belief is the word “coach” originated from the town of Kocs, Hungary, which in the 16th century was known for making fine transportation carriages, eventually becoming popular all over Europe. The purpose of the carriage was, of course, to take you from where you were to where you wanted to go. Today’s term “coach” actually encompasses a countless range of professions, most notably sports coaches, but others including life coaches, career coaches, executive coaches, team development coaches, and the like. “Coach” has even been co-opted and used regularly by other professions, such as a “mortgage coach,” “divorce coach,” or our favorite: “nipple confusion coach.” Popular TV shows have depicted (and very much misrepresented) “coaches” such as Wendy Rhoades from “Billions” or Denpok Singh, the spiritual advisor of Gavin Belson from “Silicon Valley.”

Executive coaches are most commonly hired by an organization to help a leader grow in a particular area of development; 97% are usually retained to grow a leader in various competencies of leadership. However, during the course of this relationship, it is not uncommon for coaching to possibly explore various aspects of the leader’s career path, or even their personal life at some point, as you will see in some of our chapters.

Coaching is best used for situations such as a leader transitioning from one role to a larger one, a super smart get-it-done manager who gets it done – at the cost of those around them, a leader who needs to act and portray “more

like an executive,” and an executive director who tries to do it all him/herself and fails to delegate; or for any of a myriad of situations usually under the banner of “leadership,” “relationships,” “communications,” “influence,” “transition,” and much more.

Coaching is not well suited for situations such as someone who needs to get better at the technical aspects of their job (perhaps consider training, a consultant or mentoring), someone with deeper psychological concerns (therapy), and someone who has integrity issues (let them go), or – and incredibly important – coaching is not worth it for someone the organization has already given up on (let them go), or who personally has little interest in changing (see below).

So, how is coaching distinguished from consulting and therapy? To some extent, these professions may overlap, or could even be performed by the same practitioner, but yet they are also completely distinct. We see executive coaching as “the one-to-one development of an organizational leader” – its purpose is the development of the leader’s skills within the organizational context (although in more recent years, coaching has expanded to teams and groups – beyond the one-to-one charter).

This seminal Harvard Business Review article on coaching from 2009 (<https://hbr.org/2009/01/what-can-coaches-do-for-you>) offers a great graphic to compare and contrast between consulting, coaching, and therapy.

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