In network marketing, learning how to coach is the single most important tool you could have to become a leader and develop leaders.

COACHING | PERSONAL GROWTH | PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT | SPEAKING AND LISTENING | VISION

If I could show you a way

How the new field of coaching is transforming network marketing.

a conversation with **John Milton Fogg** by **John David Mann**

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I open the local community newspaper, and there in the directory for local services, along with massage and dog grooming, there's life coaching. I don't think I would have seen that five years ago. What happened?

It's a combination of things. First, there were people who worked very hard to establish coaching as a legitimate profession beyond the world of athletics. A gentleman named Thomas Leonard, who was the founder of Coachville, was also the creative force — interesting enough, in partnership with Carol McCall in the beginning — behind what became the International Coach Federation (with more than 6000 members and

over 145 chapters in 30 countries). These are people and enterprises that teach, train, certify and give more prominence to the field of professional coaching.

The second major factor was that corporate America embraced the idea of coaching. I don't do much with corporations, but I imagine that it's now probably pretty hip to be sitting in a Manhattan or San Francisco watering hole at 5 o'clock on a Thursday afternoon and talking about what you're working on with your personal/professional coach.

Corporate America began using professional coaches, people from outside the organization, and they started getting results. Coaches came into play especially with the leadership of these corporations, talking with them about vision, decision making, problem-solving, strategy and things of that nature.

These two happenings created a greater awareness of coaches and coaching.

William James said, "A new idea is first condemned as ridiculous and then dismissed as trivial, until finally, it becomes what everybody knows."

> ***I promise you, in just a few tomorrows from now, coaching will be something "everybody knows" — especially in network marketing.***

I think the coaching programs we have today trace directly back to the human potential movement that began emerging in the late 60s and early 70s. What are you going to do after you graduate from est, do the Forum and Communication Courses and attend all the workshops? Where do you go from there?

And also out of the seminar context.

Right, into the real world. One of the biggest problems with the seminars was that after you had your weekend, your intensive, your peak experience, you were back in the real world all by yourself, unless you happened to have friends or co-workers who did the same program. You were pretty much left to your own devices — and you crashed and started burning by Thursday.

The distinctions you learned, the language you'd begun to use, the great new ideas you had... you simply had no way to share them with people.

You had a religious experience in church on Sunday and then went back to work on Monday.

Exactly. This is why many devoutly religious people will have a Bible study on Wednesday, prayer meetings and go to services on three or four weekdays. How do you keep the experience going? How do you keep this growth, these breakthroughs happening? And, the fact is, books and tapes don't cut it.

When we were in our 20s and 30s, a lot of our contemporaries were interested in gurus of all kinds. But a coach is not a guru.

You go to the guru for his or her wisdom; the coach's job is to have you find your own. One of the tenets of the kind of coaching I profess is that your client (or the "player") has all the answers. Your job is not to provide those answers. That's not coaching, that's giving advice.

> ***Sometimes coaches do give advice, but that's counseling, and coaches are not counselors.***

They can be, and sometimes there are psychological issues to deal with, especially because the beliefs people have — their habits of thought, which is what all beliefs are — play such a key role. But coaches are more aimed at productivity, having you perform better in your life and work.

That premise is rock solid:

You have the answers. My job as a coach, and my job in training coaches, starts there, that's one of the laws.

In an editorial you wrote [included at the end of this interview]**, you talk about how a great coach is not necessarily a great player.**

We come from a culture that demands we be a great player to have great success. You look at the heavy hitters, the leaders in network marketing, and you say, "What a great player!" Rarely, "What a great coach!" is far more often the case.

I think if you're a great, great player in network marketing, you're probably handicapped! Certainly by comparison to being a great coach.

In network marketing, learning how to coach is the single most important tool you could have to become a leader.

I think coaching and leadership are synonymous in network marketing. The best leaders in this business are the best coaches.

And not necessarily so in other realms.

No, not necessarily. I don't think Lee Iacocca was necessarily a great coach. Jack Welch, Alan Greenspan, George W., are not necessarily great coaches. But network marketing is the most personal of all business ventures; this is all-all-all about the people. So, bringing out the excellence in your people? That's what leadership is — and the way to do that is through coaching.

Do you think this has been a learning curve for us over the years, or have we always known that?

Intuitively we've always known it. From the rational, analytical side of our minds, people are waking up to the absolutely pivotal, fundamental role that personal growth and development plays in network marketing success. It's always about the people, who and how they are doing and being.

In fact, I go so far as to say that coaching is a pivotal skill even right down to the first conversation you have with someone new.

A prospecting conversation at its best is a coaching conversation!

You, the network marketer, are coaching your prospect to make a wise decision — a career decision, maybe even a life decision.

How is that different from prodding a prospect to make a decision for my product or company?

Because a good coach doesn't go in there with the agenda to "get" somebody into the business. A good coach goes in there with the agenda of finding out, "Is there a fit here? A good fit between you and me? For the products, for the company, for you at this time, where you are in your life right now?"

That's why I think network marketing prospecting at its best is relationshipping: you're getting to know the person, the person's values and vision. You're gathering ideas you can use to paint a picture: What it would be like for them to live in what I call three-D: as they Desire, Dream and Deserve. You get to learn these things about the person, to tease them out, through conversation, which I simply call relationshipping.

I'm intrigued with the idea of prospecting as coaching. It doesn't sound like there's a place there for the three-fingered double-looped close, or the classic sales techniques.

Absolutely not. I come from a camp that is as diametrically opposite as we can get from "throw 'em up against the wall and see who sticks." If you want to put your finger on the source of the real problems in a networking organization, it's going to come from operating in that way. They're just getting names and numbers: bring 'em in, sign 'em up, head 'em up, move 'em out. That's a damn cattle drive!

Look, when somebody tries to "get" you to do something, what's your response?

I push back.

Exactly. It's fight or flight. We're not going to literally punch them out; we fight them with our mouths. We have a term for it in network marketing: it's called "handling objections." When prospects throw objections at us, it's simply because we tried to "get" them into the business, and they're pushing back.

Or, there's flight: the dog's barking, front porch light's on, but nobody's home. They're not listening to a thing you say; the only thing they're possibly listening for is the opportune moment to get out of there — to get away from you and still be seen as a nice person.

How do I end this conversation with at least the semblance of politeness?

Exactly. Whereas if you approach it as a coaching conversation, where what you're looking for is the fit — is this right for her or not right for her — look at the freedom in that!

> ***Look at what those "objections" become: now they're simply elements of conversation. They're genuine, interested questions.***

"What about this? Well, if I do this, what will happen? How about this: I don't have a lot of free time right now? Can I really succeed at this?" It

becomes a conversation where your job is to help them see whether or not this is right for them. That's coaching.

How do you work with challenges in your organization? What's the best place to come from in trying to work with those? As a manager, a boss? I think, as a coach. You are coaching your people.

One of the most liberating things I'm hearing in this is that I don't necessarily have to know all the answers; I need to help you find your answers. What does it take to become good at doing that?

Speaking and listening.

The specific speaking is asking the right questions. Listening is having your attention fully on the other person, free of an agenda. Free of the agenda of "getting" somebody into the business, "getting" somebody to do what you want. You need an agenda like the slogan from the old Hebrew National Kosher hot dog commercials: "We answer to a higher authority." Your higher authority is: what's right with this person. How can you help them have more or better of that, how can you serve them?

I've heard people teach it this way: "When you approach a prospect, try to get them to talk about what they're unhappy about in their life."

No. Dead wrong. Here's what happens.

Start thinking about something right now that's wrong in your life. Start piling it on; "stir your own pain," (like a good salesman). "What's wrong, why isn't this working, what else is wrong, how bad is it, why is everything so screwed up, why do I keep doing this?" Now, check your energy: how do you feel?

Pretty bad.

Worse than when I started asking these questions?

And now I'm thinking, boy, you're fun to be around.

Right. Now, let's go the other way.

What's working in your life? What are you doing right, what's going just great? That's fun for you, that you're really good at, that you appreciate so much?

Now, where's your energy going? You can already feel it shifting.

Look, you have to be aware of what's not working, what you don't want. Clarifying that and learning what it is that makes it wrong, unwanted... is important. But once we've shined the light on that and we're both clear about what doesn't work, it's time for a 180 with a toe-grab on to what's right. If I keep you focused on what's wrong, your energy will run down and out like the Second Law of Thermodynamics, Entropy, and you'll soon be cold and dead — no kidding.

> ***You bring somebody into the business based on the quality of his energy. Do you want to bring him in feeling bad, or you want to bring him in feeling good?***

Which do you think is more likely to succeed in having somebody join you as a partner?

But if I stir up his dissatisfaction with his poverty, misery and wretchedness, doesn't that make him more likely to want to leap at my answers?

Ah yes. You come riding in on your white horse and lay out network marketing in front of them as their savior (maybe someday Mel Gibson will make a movie about you)... and how many people get into the business based on that kind of manipulation?

You want in theory, or in reality?

In reality.

In reality, those who do come in today are out the back door tomorrow!

Yeah, why? Because they got in under false pretenses. With the dangled carrot or the pie in the sky, rather than the realistic assessment, "What's going on? What are you doing well? What do you like to do? What are your strengths, your values?"

It's a kind of razor's-edge distinction: having an agenda versus not having an agenda. You do have an agenda, but it's one that truly serves and honors; that might be the best way to explain it.

When I talk with people, I am listening <u>for</u> something. What I'm listening for are their values: those things that are most important to them in their lives.

In the process, I can see if this is a fit, if this guy or gal really excites me as a partner. And when they do, and I blurt out, "Gosh, John, you are incredible! I love the way your mind works, you're magnificent with people, you really value making a positive difference in other people's lives... that's exactly what I'm looking for in a business partner — give me five or 10 minutes just to show you what I'm talking about and see if you're interested in learning more." That's awfully hard to say no to — especially since I've been so interested in you and we've started falling in like with each other.

Which, by the way, is the next step after relationshipping; friendshipping. And that's followed by partnershipping and developed through leadershipping. I call it 'Shipping and Receiving'. Do those shipping parts successfully and you ***<u>receive</u>*** the rich rewards of this business.

This all takes some time, but not as much time as people think.

You can get heart to heart with somebody in two to five minutes,

through asking the right questions and really listening.

Can you say more about "speaking and listening"?

The best thing I can recommend is to do what I've done, which is learn from the best.

The major teachers of asking the right questions, which is the essence of the "speaking" part, are Kurt and Patricia Wright. Kurt's book *Breaking the Rules* is the bible on that subject. In "listening," it's Carol McCall. Her book and audio album, *The Empowerment of Listening,* is a great learning tool. Richard Brooke, who also studied with Carol, is masterful at teaching listening. These folks are my mentors in these two areas.

Listening is simple physics, Newton style: No two objects can take up the same space at the same time. That's true with listening:

You cannot be thinking and listening at the same time. Not possible.

You've got to have your attention fully on the person you're speaking with. Not thinking about what you're going to say next, not manipulating or laying out the conversation, this is not playing pool, where you're planning five shots ahead. You can't do that when you're listening. You can't be interpreting, agreeing, disagreeing, opinionating, making facts "mean" this or that, judging.

Both speaking and listening are at their very best when they're free of mental judging, of weighing good versus bad, right versus wrong. And that's a very, very hard place to get to. That's a life's work, that one.

So I say, on the journey, just quit doing the negative part.

If you're going to judge something, come down on the positive side; that's the high road.

It's always your choice: Good or bad. And since you make it all up anyway, make it good. Sure feels better. Sure has more and better energy. And given the Law of Attraction — like attracts like — if you're feeling good and your energy is high, that's what you'll get. You don't want the other one.

If you must think, think about what's right.

Exactly. Think about what's good here, what's the blessing here, what do you appreciate here. Be the optimist: look for what's right, what's working, what's best. Those are the source of great questions.

Let me give you an example. What are one or two things you appreciate most about the conversation we've had so far?

The simplicity and clarity of what a coach does and how that works in the context of network marketing.

What is it that makes that valuable and important for you?

It makes it so easy to understand and to apply.

Now, that was an overly simple demonstration of asking right questions. We're turning facts, data into knowledge. If we keep going, we'll transform that knowledge into wisdom.

That's a creative conversation. That's a coaching conversation.

How so?

Because we're both discovering, we're both learning something.

How then does that lead to my greater productivity?

You tell me. You got a hit of the simplicity and clarity coaching can bring to network marketing. Do you have a different point of view, even if slightly, about a prospecting conversation now?

Yes: when people understand that a prospecting conversation is at its best a coaching conversation, suddenly it's not frightening. Because I don't have to be an expert or know the right answers.

Great. And really, what the heck difference did knowing the answers ever make anyway? To know the right answers about the comp plan, about the product ingredients or how much you're gonna' save using this long distance.... It's not that those things aren't important; they are. Actually, I think they're best handled by a web site, CD or brochure — and your job is to connect with the person, get into relationship and grow it into friendship.

Intention is 99.979 percent of the law here. What's your intention?

If your intention is to get them into the business, that's a manipulative agenda.

If your intention is to assist and support them in bringing out, revealing and discovering their excellence, what is for the highest good for that person and all concerned, if that's how you're approaching it, just look at the universal forces you've just marshaled in your favor! That's akin to the wonderful W.H. Murray "Commitment" quote:

> *"All sorts of things occur to help one that would never otherwise have occurred. A whole stream of events issues from the decision, raising in one's favor all manner of unforeseen incidents and meetings and material assistance, which no man could have dreamt would have come his way."*

That could just as easily be said of coaching.

I've never seen so much interest before as I have in the last few years in using "a system" to build your business, which these days means Internet lead generation.

The problem with the system is that it rarely honors the individual. Some systems will honor some people, but not all people... not most people. How many times have you heard an upline leader with a system tell his people, "Hey, if you don't use our system, you don't get my support." Well, that's an enlightened remark!

I think our job is to know the 10 or 20 different business building styles that will appeal to different people's talents and strengths. Some people are wonderful on the computer. I know people who to this day won't use one. I know network marketers who brag about not even having email, yet they've built strong groups.

That's not to say that structure is not important, or that some systematic approaches to certain things, such as organizing yourself and your time, are not important, that there are not tracks to run on that make sense to learn about.

Everybody in this business MUST prospect, present and then duplicate that and those steps. One-two-three. But when you try to stick people into a cookie-cutter system, that's nuts, because it simply can't honor them. You've got to come up with a system that's pretty universal, so that you can utilize my strengths and I can utilize your strengths.

For example, one thing you and I can do, John, is write.

When I was building the beginnings of my first organization, I did a lot of my initial prospecting writing people letters. It worked for me, built a big group — but it never duplicated.

Right: we're writers, but how many of the people we bring in are writers? Some day some upline is going to get so hip that she creates a team where you and I as writers contribute our talents to the whole team, along with the other guys who are speakers and computer nerds and phone-

calling folks and all the other people playing from their different strengths, only playing with them together.

That's going to be a marvelous day. And I'll tell you what: the upline leaders who do that, they're going to be coaches. In network marketing, the real coaches, the great coaches, will assemble teams building on the strengths of all their players — and also turn those players into coaches.

Do you have a coach... or coaches?

I am an absolute advocate of the idea that the only good coach is somebody who has a coach himself. In fact, I stopped coaching for a while and one reason was I wasn't being formally coached. When I was, I had a coaching conversation every Monday at 1:00 with Kurt Wright while he was still coaching. Before that I had other coaches: Teresa Romain, Carol McCall, Richard Brooke, Terri Levine, Sharon Wilson. They have all been my coaches and to some extent, even though we don't have a formal "coaching" relationship, they are to this day. I will call any of those people and others like Bob Proctor, Brian Klemmer, Tom Schreiter, with an issue or opportunity, something I need some coaching on, and say, "Hey, have you got 15 minutes, will you do some coaching with me?"

My interest in coaching really started over 20 years ago, with the personal development teachings and programs of Werner Erhardt, Robert Fritz, Stewart Emery of Actualizations, and other folks creating interesting things in the personal growth and development field. My most specific initial coaching in network marketing was when Richard Brooke brought Mike Smith and Carol McCall into his company, Oxyfresh, to train people to be coaches and leaders of their networking organizations.

> ***People are just starting to realize that with coaching in your left hand, and network marketing and the role of leadership in your right hand, you have something really vital and powerful.***

Richard Brooke was an absolute pioneer in that.

Bringing coaching into your network marketing business has a very practical side for the organization: when people are first coming in and not yet making a lot of money, if you can help change their lives, their perspectives and attitudes, have them feeling better and getting more out of their relationships and being better parents, they'll stick around until they are making money!

Seven or eight years ago, I created the Greatest Networker Mentor Program, which was a completely phone-based coaching program, there was no Internet involved at that point.

When GreatestNetworker.com got going, about five or six years ago, I was doing one-on-one coaching with people, and I loved doing that. The challenge was no leverage: there's just the two of you. All the wonderful questions and explorations and discoveries and wonder-filled conversations are experienced by just two people.

Teleconferences enlarge this, to some extent: you can now spread that conversation out to hundreds — but the Internet just exploded the whole thing. The Internet allows you to post that conversation in a forum, so anyone, from anywhere, at any time, can come and learn from it and contribute to it.

I wanted a coaching program that would embrace the values, vision and philosophy within the book *The Greatest Networker in the World* and bring that to their business building, training people to coach that way. The Greatest Networker Certified Network Marketing Coaches (CNMC) program naturally came out of that intention.

We had coaches in our program who were predominantly feelers: they go to the feelings first. It's all about the emotion and the energy for them. We have others who are more intellectually biased, who lean toward explaining things. All those different styles and approaches are always going to be there; it's always going to be an inside and an outside

process, an inner and an outer game. In the CNMC we brought them together.

The Internet is so extraordinary for accomplishing that, because you can have a forum running 24 hours a day. The people who are actually having the conversation, the thread of the forum itself, comprise one interaction. Then you've got all the people who are following and reading that thread--and this is where you start to really leverage what you're learning. Add a deep and rich library like we had: 655 articles, 24 complete books, 240 hours of audio programs, all on-line 24.7.365, and you've got an extraordinary and powerful knowledge and learning resource for people.

My approach has always been pretty eclectic.

> ***My mission is to learn from the greatest teachers, mentors, trainers in the world, then take what I'm learning and who I'm learning it from and share that back out with millions of people.***

So, we have an amazing roster of people available to our members: Kurt and Patricia Wright, Richard Brooke, Tom Schreiter, Teresa Romain, Brian Klemmer, Bob Proctor... just an endless procession of incredibly talented, insightful, masterful people teaching people how to coach in network marketing. I'm dismayed at the lack of appreciation people have for on-line forums. They have such awesome power to transcend limits and give access to real wisdom and discovery to so many people. Take your private conversation public: that's how you can change the world!

It strikes me that a sponsor is a coach: that's what you're saying a sponsor does.

That's right, and it kind of baffles me that more people haven't gotten that yet. If you can learn the skills of coaching — and that's what they are,

skills, especially the most fundamental of all, which are speaking and listening — and teach those to your people, so they become coaches, you can create an organization of coaches. Can you imagine what that will be like, what that team can accomplish?

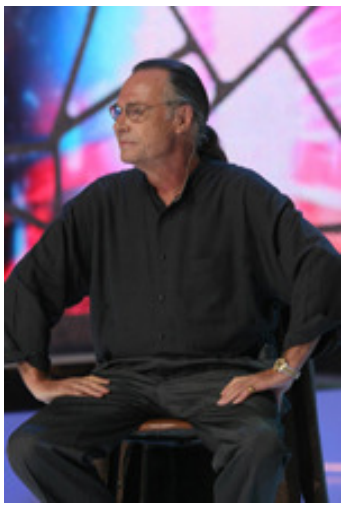
And of course, it's going to work the exact same way network marketing organizations have always worked:

> ***Look through any organization and you'll find that the majority of the upline's check stems from the efforts of two, three or five human beings. I see the day when the majority of those people are going to be coaches.***

Not the former entrepreneurs or the real estate superstars or the insurance salespeople or the guys or gals who are in their fifth network marketing deal, but coaches. Coaches are tomorrow's leaders.

Just consider, for example, the loyalty factor. You have an organization of coaches; somebody comes along with the latest new rocket to the stars--but your people aren't going anywhere, because they haven't just built a check: they've been being coached, their lives have changed, they're happier, healthier, wealthier, more abundant human beings. I don't care what product or comp plan you dangle in front of those people, you can't pry them away!

The great news for every network marketer who reads this is: more and more, the people who are succeeding in this business are going to be the coaches — and you don't have to be a superstar player to be a great coach.



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John is the author of the best-selling industry classic *The Greatest Networker in the World,* which has been read by more than two and a-half million people around the world and he has edited and contributed to far too many books to be mentioned here.

He has spoken around the globe, through out Canada and the United States, in Australia, China, Costa Rica, Crete, Iceland, India, Indonesia, Korea, Malaysia, New Zealand, Russia, Singapore, Trinidad and the Ukraine.

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