



A Conversational Revolution: Transforming Churches and Individuals One Conversation at a Time

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I read a book review of *"Evocative Coaching: Transforming Schools One Conversation at a Time,"* and I was intrigued by a phrase used by the authors: *"Most of us don't resist change; we resist being changed."* Over the last 40 years of my leadership experience I've observed that many leaders tend to be fixers. But people don't need to be fixed. People and organizations need to be transformed. People resist being "fixed." How could people and organizations be transformed? Imagine with me that transformation could begin through simple conversations, one at a time. It's what I call a "conversational revolution."

What we don't do well

Generally speaking, most of us don't listen well, and we seldom ask open-ended questions that evoke self-discovery. We often don't help others set and achieve THEIR goals. We struggle with promoting personal accountability without resorting to shame and guilt. Simply stated, many leaders don't understand how to empower people. One of the biggest reasons I believe we need a conversational revolution is because in most conversations someone is trying to force their agenda of change on the other person. We give our advice instead of helping the other person come up with their own solutions. We 'tell and sell,' instead of ask and listen. If it's true that people need to be transformed, transformation requires more than simply giving advice or telling people what we think they should do. We need to learn how to empower people. And good conversations can lead to empowered people.

A conversational revolution through coaching

My experience in church leadership over the last 4 decades has led me to believe that most of us don't understand how to have good conversations. My friend and author, Quentin Schultze, says that what we need is *"servant communication."* Servant communication occurs in conversations where we assume the role of a servant and turn the spotlight on the other person by asking questions that evoke discovery, instead of forcing our own agendas and giving unsolicited advice. I call it coaching, but it all starts with conversations. Equipping leaders to coach would jumpstart a conversational revolution in the church. Here's how.

Training Christian leaders to coach would equip them:

- to listen; really listen. This alone would revolutionize every conversation and lead to better communication and collaboration.
- to ask open-ended questions that evoke self-discovery and challenge preconceived paradigms.
- with the skills and process to help a person set and achieve THEIR goals.
- with the skills, process, and mindset to help a person take ownership for the outcomes of their choices.
- with the heart of a coach that views people as capable of discovering their own solutions.
- with a more positive, empowering approach to accountability, helping people manage the commitments they make.

- to offer judgment-free zones for others as they disciple people to move from where they are to where God wants them to be.

The Most Important Conversation

When I first meet with a new coaching client I make sure they know my philosophy of coaching: coaching is a conversation between the coach, client, and the Holy Spirit. My job as a coach is to stay out of the way but remain close enough to encourage my client to hear what God is saying in the conversation. I freely admit that without the Holy Spirit involved in the coaching relationship and conversation, I've got nothing! The most important conversation is the one going on between the Holy Spirit and my client. And that's what leads to sustained life transformation. This isn't easy to do. We've been trained to answer people's questions and give expert advice, but unfortunately we haven't been trained to listen well, whether it's listening well to our client or listening to God. Coaching equips leaders to do both. And it will lead to revolutionary conversations.

Training leaders to coach could result in a conversational revolution which empowers people to move from where they are to where God wants them to be. Coaching + Revolutionary Conversations = empowered people. Empowered people will transform churches. Transformed churches will transform society. Join the conversational revolution!