

Peer Coaching for Maturity

Study guide for the Master's Men's group to better understand the use of Peer Coaching

As a group of Christian men who meet twice a month, we have been hinting at the idea of finding a consistent way of encouraging and challenging ourselves to grow a deeper relationship with Jesus Christ.

Over the years we have occasionally had some, what we called, weekly challenges. Some of the challenges were helpful and some not so much. When we did set a challenge for the session, we struggled to accomplish it throughout the week because of at least 5 major reasons.

1. **The challenge itself was not specially defined enough or explained.** We talked about the challenge at the end of the session but walked away not completely understanding why the challenge was important and how the challenge was to be carried out.
2. **The challenge didn't really have the parameters well defined.** We usually left a Master's men meeting a little fuzzy about exactly how we were to conduct the challenge. We had some ideas of what we needed to do, but it was not razor sharp. As a result, there was confusion about what we did or should have done when we talked about it at the next meeting
3. **There was little if any accountability between sessions.** In the 2 weeks between meeting we didn't encourage each other or ask how it was going. As a rule we didn't call, text, email or have a face to face with others in the group about how the challenge was going. We also didn't take the time to ask questions or dig deeper into the issues of each challenge when we finally got together.
4. **We did not carry a challenge for more than one 2-week session.** This really led to a level of apathy by not continuing the challenge and looking for growth over a longer period of time.
5. **We struggled to have some type of metric for evaluating our improvement.** We could use a scale of 1 to 10 as a tool to measure success or a general nodding of our heads, but we didn't actually develop any rigorous method for recording each day's success or failures. It would have been helpful in the group meeting to of been able to talk about our improvements if we recorded some results. It's been said you only measure what you want to improve on. We needed to do more measuring.

I do believe that each one in our men's group has the desire to press into God. Why else would we be willing to set aside 2 hours twice a month to study and provoke each other to follow Christ. We really want to have a deeper and more meaningful relationship with God. And we are each willing to give up somethings that would move us in that direction.

So what is peer coaching all about?

The word coach was actually derived from the 17th century horse drawn coaches that got people from where they were at to where they wanted to be. That is exactly what we want to do. We want to move spiritually, mentally and emotionally from where we are to where we sense Jesus Christ wants us to be. Coaching is a process that helps us get there.

Coaching helps us identify areas of change that a believer desires to make. After the area is identified a method is used to get us there. It is really a dialog between two men that want the best for each other and are willing to help them get there. In each of the coaching sessions there is a **coach** that plays the role of listening and asking questions and there is a **coachee** that is sharing an area in his life that he want to grow in.

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These coaching interactions are primarily accomplished through:

1. **Active and prayerful listening.** The coach listens without judgments and without giving advice to the coachee. To make sure the coach is understanding what is being said, the coach will summarize or paraphrasing the thoughts and ideas the coachee was saying.
2. **Asking questions.** To help the coachee clarify his thoughts, the coach will ask questions to help the coachee better understand the issues and the actions needed to move forward. The coach is not necessarily to give an answer as much as ask the questions that will draw out an answer from the coachee.

Questions and Answers about Peer Coaching

Q 1. "Why do I need a coach since the Holy Spirit is already inside of me? One could say that as a believer have the Holy Spirit to guide me, I don't need anyone to help me address my issues or help me change my habits other than Jesus Christ and the Word of God."

A. I believe that there are situations, when done with the right heart attitude, that this line of thinking is absolutely right. There are also times when we need to confess that we are stuck in our walk with Christ that that we need help from our brothers and sisters to move us forward. We do have the Holy Spirit and He does minister to us directly and we also have each other for that self-same purpose. See the diagram below concerning men dealing with issues with and without the help of others

I can do it myself



90% of the time men get stuck here. They see the problem in themselves and say they can correct it, but they don't make a concerted effort till things get out of control or dangerous for them

Jesus Help me



50% of the time men will sincerely ask Jesus for help to keep their thoughts and actions under Holy Spirit control. The other 50% will ask for help from Jesus but then revert back to "I can do it myself" mode

Please send someone to help me



10% of the time men will seek a person to help coach and encourage them to change their habits and beliefs.

- Courageously Confessing
- Encouraging Accountability
- Lovingly Supporting

Jas 5:16 Confess your trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

Gal 6:1 Brethren, if a man is overtaken in any trespass, you who are spiritual restore such a one in a spirit of gentleness, considering yourself lest you also be tempted.

Gal 6:2 Bear one another's burdens, and so fulfill the law of Christ.

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Q 2. So what is the Peer in Peer Coaching mean?

A. Peer coaching is when 2 men each take the role of a coach and a coachee in a session. Each man has an opportunity to listen and ask questions (coach) as well as an opportunity to talk and develop goals for the next session.

There is a procedure that is used to aid in this process of coaching. In peer coaching 2 men take turns, listening and asking questions of each other. There is a time to review the previous goal and to help clarify the next goal. The coach is not necessary there to offer suggestion or point out solutions but has the responsibility to ask questions that the coachee can use to go deeper into the underlying issues related to the goal. That doesn't mean that the coach shouldn't do anything but ask question? No but the questions are the primary tool to help the coachee discover what and why their goal is important to them.

Q 3 . So how is Peer Coaching different from an accountability group?

A. Depending on your experiences with an accountability partner there could be lots or just a few differences. Peer coaching focuses listening to the other person without necessarily providing input or solutions. The intent is to draw out of the person what God has already placed within them. Asking questions is the tool that goes along with active listening. Both of these are applied to a SMART method to identify an achievable goal and actions for the next session. To the best of my understanding accountability groups have some of the goals but not the structure that peer coaching has.

Both approaches can work in helping a man grow in his spiritual and emotional maturity, I believe that coaching is a more active and interactive way of accomplishing this.

Group Accountability	Peer Coaching
2 or more with each person sharing weekly story	Only 2 – Coach/Coachee – Take turns
Members share their different experiences	Coach is focusing on listening to the coachee
Members share their encouragement and give advice	Coach is focusing on asking question to get specific understanding of the target goal
May or may not have a plan for achieving goal	Create a S.M.A.R.T directive for an achieving goal. See Appendix related to SMART goals
Roles reversed among members	Roles reversed for each other
May or may not discuss what improvements could be made.	Summary and discuss possible issues and how to correct them.

Q 4. What do I have to do to get started?

A. There are some basic coaching principles that must be understood, but all that is needed is a willing heart to help and be helped by another person? Please consider watching the videos, they will aid in helping you come familiar with coaching principles and practices.

Q 5. Does this take a lot of time?

A. No it doesn't. The actual time spent over the phone or video chat will be no more than 30 to 35 minutes. The actual effort on each persons part will be in the daily awareness of the issue that are being addressed.

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Q 6. So what are some of the topics that might be addressed in a peer coaching session?

A. Here are some questions that might be asked as it relates to faith and life topics:

Faith Questions	Life Questions
I wish I got more out of the worship service.	I wish I wasn't so tired all the time.
I cannot get my wife involved in church.	I want to get more out of life
I'm stuck spiritually.	Our son is failing in school
I am listening for God, but all I hear is silence.	Things have got to change
Church is boring, but I'd like to know more about God.	I want to do more to make a difference in the world
I think God might be calling me into the ministry.	I always thought things would be different
I want to do more to use my spiritual gifts.	I wish I knew what to do
I'm confused about the impact of my work on my family and really want to hear from God on what to do about my career.	I feel like I should be doing something more or different with our family finances
I want a deeper relationship with Christ.	I want this marriage to succeed
We want Christ to be at the center of our marriage, but we don't know how or where to begin	My daughter who is considering getting a divorce

Q 7. I know that coaching has an element of asking people questions. I am not so good at that, are their tools that will aid me in doing this?

A. Absolutely. Part of Master's men's peer coaching is to help each other in learning how to pose a question that draws out and encourages the other man to provide an honest answer. Learning how to ask related questions based on the answer of the individual is all part of the peer coaching learning experience.

Q 8. How will both men be involved in a peer coaching session.

A. Each man will take a turn in asking questions and helping the other person in the area of his personal growth. When the weekly challenge has been laid out and agreed upon the roles will be reversed and now the other person will be asking and directing the questions. The time will end in prayer and sharing their thoughts about the session. This a dialog between 2 men who are learning to share the issues of their heart. If either of the men have questions about the peer coaching approach, they are encouraged to talk about it during the session and ask for help.

Q 9. What is it that we are supposed to walk away with in a peer coaching session?

A. The outcome of each session for both men will be the same. That is, each man will have a challenge to work on during the week. They should have some specific and measurable goals (See Appendix A - What is a SMART approach for developing goals) that they will work on throughout the next session.

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Q 10. I don't feel I will have any of the answers to the questions being asked, how do I coach someone when I can't tell them the answer to their questions?

A. That's a great question. The good thing is that peer coaching doesn't involve having to answer the person's question, it is much more about asking more questions so the person that is being coached can discover a pathway that the Holy Spirit has already been revealing to them. Let's take an example using a faith topic like "How can I worship God more"? You, being the coach, might ask the person you are coaching questions that might include:

- Tell about a time when you did enter into the worship you want to have with Jesus Christ?
- Can you describe what an ideal time of worship would look like to you?
- Can you think of some things you might do to prepare yourself for the worship you would want with the Lord?

The purpose of you asking the questions is to draw out the answers that are already there in the heart of the other man. As a coach you might want to share a personal experience or insight you might have, but be careful not to use your experience as an answer to the question that is being asked.

Q 11. So what would the time line for a particular coaching session be like?

A. Each peer coaching session can be tailored for each session but should include a time for each person to play the role of coach and coachee. It is very important to peer coaching that each man walks away with a plan and an encouragement for meeting next session goals. The actual time spent will be decided on by both men. The schedule will depend on what both men agree to but it could be something like this:

Duration in minutes	Persons – 1 st & 2 nd	What to do during a peer coaching session
3	Both	Say hello and chat for no more than 5 minutes, Ask Jesus for help
3	1 st man	Talks about his weekly challenge and his results
5	2 nd man	Asks 1 st man questions about results
5	Both	Formulate next weeks challenge
3	2 nd man	Talks about his weekly challenge and his results
5	1 st man	Asks 2 nd man questions about results
5	Both	Formulate next week's challenge
5	Both	Discussion goals and method and end in prayer

Q 12. How are we going to make this work with all our other time constraints and responsibilities.

I don't think I can carve out another evening to meet with someone else. What can I do?

A. Each one of us is asking the same question. If you are sensing that God could be nudging you forward using peer coaching, then you will find a solution to the time problem. Don't forget that although in person meeting are the best method for peer coaching sessions you can alternatively talk on the phone or use skype or some other internet approach. Coffee at Panera at lunch time could work too.

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Q 13. Can peer coaching be used by people that are from entirely different ages and background?

A. The nice thing is that peer coaching is a dialog between 2 people that want to grow. As a result, age and background may not really be a hindrance. I should be able to have a teenager as my peer partner and it should all come together because we are following a procedure and process that works. Does that mean that age and background will not have any bearing on the out come of a peer coaching session, no, it might. But the sessions can still be meaningful if the heart of both people are for each other and the Lord.

Q 14. Is coaching a practice that the Assembly of God organization identifies with?

A. It appears, by the ag website, that coaching is fully accepted as a practice to help believers in their spiritual growth. So much so that they have a separate AG coaching website that offers training to be a coach. Please refer to the Resource page for links to both websites.

YOUR QUESTIONS: (use this space to write down the questions you have that we can discuss at the next Master's men session.)

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.
- 6.
- 7.
- 8.

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Appendix A – What is a SMART approach for developing goals.

The SMART acronym stands for goals that are Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Realistic, and Time oriented. Peer coaching sessions use this approach to identify what the Coachee specifically wants to set as a goal and how that goal will be worked through.

Each goal that is set must be:

Specific

- What exactly do you want to accomplish?
- What will it look like when you get there?
- Describe what will be different in your life when you have reached your goal. accomplish?

Measurable

- How can you quantify this goal (so your progress is measurable numerically)
- How will you know that you have reached this objective?
- How could you state this goal so you can measure your progress?

Attainable

- Is this goal within your capabilities?
- Are there any barriers or circumstances that preclude reaching this goal?
- Does this goal depend on anyone else? Could you restate it so it only depends on you?

Realistic

- Why is this important to you?
- What are you willing to let go of or cut from your schedule to work on this goal?
- Do you care enough about this to follow through and get it done?

Time Oriented

- By when will you have this done?
- When will you start?
- What is your deadline?

During each peer coaching session, you will end with a review of each aspect of the SMART method. This will help to ensure that each goal the coachee wants to attain to will be well defined and clear as to how the goal will be accomplished.

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Appendix B – Coaching Tools

(1) Active Listening – As men, we really can do a better job at listening to those who are asking for our help. Usually we are already thinking of a solution to the problem the person is talking about. We might look like we are listening, but more than half our brain is digging into our own experiences so we will have something to say when the person has stopped talking. One of the chief aims of peer coaching is to allow the other person to fully express their own thoughts and the words the Holy Spirit is telling them. We help to do this through Active Listening.

1. **Active listening** for a coach means acknowledging what the coachee has said and checking for coaches own understanding of the statements. Most often this can be made in the **form of paraphrasing or summarizing what the coachee has just expressed**.
2. **Active listening** involves asking questions with the purposes of clarification, probing, development of hypotheses, and asking for commitment. In general, asking open questions is more productive than asking closed questions.
3. **Active listening** is not about arguing with the person but rather about learning how the coachee is related to his Issue. It may require some discipline on the part of the peer coach to avoid a temptation of “being right” and instead focusing on a learning opportunity, even if the peer coach has a strong view on what the coachee is talking about.

(2) Asking Questions – It can be very difficult to ask questions of other man to help draw out the answer that the Holy Spirit has already been whispering in the persons hear. Asking question is partly personality and partly practice. Here are some helpful hints to keep in mind when you are in a coaching session.

1. Ask the Holy Spirit to help the person you are coaching. Just say “Help me God, I need your word and wisdom”, Settle you heart and cast off any expectations that you have to ask the RIGHT question or that the session outcome is your responsibility. Remember that God is leading the two of you.
2. Asking questions is a skill that improves over time. During these training sessions ask the questions of the coachee and then dialog with him to see if other question might have been more effective. Be easy on yourself, but put in the effort to grow in your skill of asking questions that draw out truths in the lives of others. Developing this skill can help your wife, children and grandchildren.
3. Search the internet for books and articles that talk about coaching questions. There is a lot of information that will help you. Let us know if you need some help doing this or if you are stuck in working out active listening or in asking questions.

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Resources

Material Resources

Coaching Books:

- Faith Coaching. A conversational approach to helping others move forward in faith, Cad W. Hall, 2009
- Peer coaching training workbook, Tony Stoltzfus, 2007
- Peer coaching training facilitator's guide, Tony Stoltzfus, 2007
- Transformational Coaching, Dr. Joseph Umidi, 2005

Coaching Websites

- Assembly of God coaching website: <http://agcoaching.org/about/our-mission>
- Links to coaching articles on the Assembly of God website: <https://ag.org/Search-Results?q=coaching>
- There is a link to the ICF, one of the top organizations for coaching training. The agcoaching.org site also has links to training sessions. <https://coachfederation.org/why-icf>

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Setting S.M.A.R.T Goals Worksheet Your Name: _____

Your coaches name: _____

Today's Date _____

Date & Time of next meeting _____

Add as much or as little detail as needed to crisply define each of the SMART goal actions. At the end you should be able to read back to your coach each of your SMART goal responses. The idea is to walk away from the session knowing exactly what you need to do between now and your next coaching session.

Specific

- What exactly do you want to accomplish? _____
- What will it look like when you get there? _____
- Describe what will be different in your life when you have reached your goal. accomplish? _____

Measurable

- How can you quantify this goal (so your progress is measurable numerically)? _____
- How will you know that you have reached this objective? _____
- How could you state this goal so you can measure your progress? _____

Attainable

- Is this goal within your capabilities? _____
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