
Coaching Conversations: Transforming Your School One Conversation at a Time

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Relationships: Books

DESCRIPTION

Coaching Conversations: Transforming Your School One Conversation at a Time, by Linda Gross Cheliotas and Marceta Fleming Reilly, introduces leaders to the use of conversations as a powerful means for promoting the improvement of teaching, learning, and relationships in schools. In order for leaders to utilize coaching conversations to promote professional learning and change, conversations must be straightforward with no hidden agendas and must address key skills including:

- Being a committed listener
- Speaking with intention
- Focusing on the positive
- Avoiding advice
- Asking powerful questions, and
- Offering reflective feedback.



The book is organized into six chapters that provide a description of effective coaching conversation skills that increase the ability of leaders to work collaboratively with others toward total school transformation. Chapter 1 distinguishes coaching conversations from other interactions and describes how these conversations might transform a school community. Chapter 2 further distinguishes how coaching conversations differ from supervisory or mentoring conversations. Chapter 3 describes committed listening skills. Chapter 4 describes speaking powerfully. Chapter 5 introduces a framework for feedback. Chapter 6 provides two case studies to demonstrate the power of coaching conversations along with a description of next steps for practitioners.

STAGE 1 LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Coaching Conversations: Transforming Your School One Conversation at a Time, by Linda Gross Cheliotas and Marceta Fleming Reilly, supports stage 1 development of specialists working to develop effective coaching skills. Listening and speaking powerfully are two skills crucial to the coaching relationship.

Committed listening is foundational to all coaching conversations. A specialist might begin by using the Listening Skills Self Assessment in chapter 3 to determine what listening habits are strengths

and what habits need focus. Using the information from chapter 3, specialists might develop an action plan for developing the components of committed listening. Coaching conversations that result in long-term change involve both committed listening and powerful and intentional speaking skills. Chapter 4 provides information to help specialists recognize and apply powerful language through:

- Creating an intention for conversations
- Choosing appropriate words
- Forming positive presuppositions
- Avoiding advice
- Understanding and developing powerful questions

STAGE 3 LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Coaching Conversations: Transforming Your School One Conversation at a Time, by Linda Gross Cheliotis and Marceta Fleming Reilly, supports stage 3 leadership development for those interested in advocating and systematizing leadership skills of those they lead. Chapter 6, “Putting It All Together, A Way of Being,” provides a description of next steps for practitioners that might be used as a framework for professional learning with specialists in practice. The authors advocate the use of a “critical friend” to provide feedback as specialists practice the skills of coach-like conversations. Over the course of several months, a group might read and discuss the first five chapters to become familiar with the descriptions and examples of specific coaching skills and then follow the recommendations to practice these skills with a colleague or “critical friend.”

Those supporting specialists will also find the appendices useful. Appendix A provides samples of powerful open-ended questions requiring more than *yes* or *no* answers that stimulate thinking and reflection and lay the groundwork for change. Appendix B provides samples of reflective feedback prompts designed to provide information to others while maintaining trust within relationships. The three types of reflective feedback include:

1. Clarifying questions or statements
2. Value potential statements
3. Questions or possibility statements