

# Lessons Learned in Executive Coaching



*Dr. Stacy Feiner* is an executive coach for the middle market and author of *Talent Mindset: The Business Owner's Guide to Building Bench Strength*. Stacy brings psychological strategies to business owners that help them improve their performance and advance their organizations. Her methodology enhances complex dynamics within owner-operated companies, family businesses, boards, and management teams. Stacy is a licensed psychologist, coach, author and national speaker.

Leaders seek coaching for two distinct reasons. Sometimes the trajectory of the owner is clear and coaching is about fine-tuning. Other times it's about challenging old assumptions to clear the way for new thinking.

In the first case, the goal of coaching is to perform better today than yesterday. The leader is hitting on all cylinders, using all their senses, tapping quality resources and capitalizing on a sweet spot in the market. They want to keep their edge; they want to seize every opportunity; they are hungry for new ideas. A necessary tension and drive exists between the leader and the coach to discover the subtlest areas for growth.

In the second case, the goal is to get unstuck. The leader has aspirations for themselves or for the company that they are simply unable to achieve. They've hit a roadblock that seems immune to regular fixes, and has become worrisome. The leader and the coach must dig deep to figure out what is holding them back to clear the clear the way for new thinking. In both cases, leaders seek an executive coach for honest self-analysis.

Executive coaching offers a unique learning environment for leaders who are seeking to be better: better drivers of profitability, better leaders of people and better decision-makers. Great executive coaching distinctively helps leaders see themselves as the source of growth. Unlike coaching that focuses on behavioral change, or leadership competencies, or quadrants, colors and letters, leaders need the psychological strategies that explicitly help them increase self-awareness. The five essential ingredients for developing self-awareness are:

- A deep **connection** with a coach for honest self-analysis.
- A confidential and continuous **dialogue** to circulate untested ideas that are refined and delivered to the world with conviction.
- The hard and necessary **introspection** on the impact of your words and actions on others.
- The **reflection** on intended and unintended consequences of your decisions and the ability to incorporate lessons learned for future decisions.
- **Passion** and energy that propels you to do great things and achieve the success you want and deserve.

After all, self-awareness is a leader's ultimate competitive advantage. Whether you are looking to shave a second off your best time or overcome a roadblock, coaching is a ready resource for you. This self-awareness is invaluable to executives, and crucial for the organization as a whole. Once a leader begins to use the strategies for their own development, they can then use them to develop their leadership team. Ultimately, the lessons executives learn don't stop with them, they can be transferred to every member of the organization and help revitalize every level of the company.