



Butterfly Coaching: Why Develop People? ...so that You are Promotable!
By Val Williams, Master Certified Coach

We sometimes think of developing people as just “a good thing to do”, or as “a favor for our team”. However, our ability to coach and develop our staff and our colleagues is much more than that. Coaching is a leadership skill that is one of the keys for us to be promotable.

At every level, whether we currently have direct reports or not, we should be practicing our ability to coach the people we work with. This includes our peers in a mentoring program, our team mates on cross functional projects, as well as our own staff. And coaching becomes an even more important tie to promotability as we move up the ranks. At more senior levels of leadership we become a “leader of leaders”, and our need to develop other high achieving people calls for top notch coaching skills.

As an Executive Coach I frequently see leaders who are unknowingly blocking their own promotion. For example: Joan is an Operations Director leading a team to completely upgrade a business unit’s processing systems. The project is so high profile that the CEO sits in on updates. Joan is not comfortable delegating to her reports because she is not sure they will execute tasks as well as she would. Joan is also not comfortable giving her team tough feedback outside of their annual performance evaluation. So Joan is working every weekend, she cancels one on one meetings with her staff, and she is overwhelmed; but she feels she is successfully meeting deadlines.

What Joan does not see is that she is preventing her own promotion. Because she is not coaching her reports enough, she has no successor, she is actually doing project work lower than her level instead of leading, and she is not creating new leaders.

What Joan needed was a simple clear tool for coaching her team real time, during the highly visible project. Butterfly Coaching is a 3 step practical strategy that helped Joan start developing her people on a daily basis while they were doing their regular jobs. Instead of just telling people what to do in small steps, Joan learned to start projects with mutual conversations on the big picture. Joan learned to ask questions about how a team member planned to approach a task; so she knew where to intervene. She probed for obstacles upfront instead of being frustrated when deadlines were missed. Joan learned the skill of making bigger requests of her people, instead of

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giving them advice. In short, she learned the powerful but light touch of how to do Butterfly Coaching.

There are many signals that tell the organization that you are promotable. Here is a challenge for you. Whether you are a vice president or a new leader: How satisfied are you that you send these signals that tell your company you are ready for your next level of scope and responsibility? How well do you demonstrate the following?

- You are leading a team that you have coached so well that they could run without you.
- When you join cross functional project teams, you so naturally coach others that you raise the level of play for everyone around you.
- You are known for your ability to solve business problems by working through people vs. doing it all yourself.
- You have a style that attracts followership. People want to work for you because they know they will learn from you.
- You are so good at the skill of making requests that you move people forward just by what you ask them to do.

All of these signals of your being ready for advancement depend on your ability to coach and develop others. Successful leaders need to know how to lead others to become leaders.

Val Williams, Master Certified Coach, is an Executive Coach who runs her own company: "Professional Coaching and Training, Inc." Val presents training seminars to organizations and coaches executives individually to achieve career and personal goals. She specializes in Leadership, Strategic Planning, People Development, Team Development, and Stress Management. To read about Val's background, visit www.valwilliams.com.

Webinar: *Butterfly Coaching* November 13, 2009 at 1PM Eastern