
Why Co-Active Coaching?

An Integrated Approach for Aligning Individual
and Organizational Achievement

co-active®
changing business.
transforming lives

Organizational Need

Companies today require leadership that stems from collaborative relationships and the ability to connect with others in a way that fosters organizational engagement and superior performance. Today's progressive organizations seek leadership development strategies that will:

- » Deepen the leadership competencies of emotional intelligence and drive employee engagement
- » Foster an organizational climate in which developmental conversations—interpersonal exchanges that focus on how skills and results can be improved—are viewed as a vital part of day-to-day organizational life
- » Reinforce the importance of working to achieve results through relationship and connection with others
- » Engage leaders in hands-on experiential learning that shifts the fundamental ways that they operate and relate to others rather than being limited to an intellectual exercise
- » Enable leaders to interact with others such that they are challenged and inspired to step forward boldly, and so that they are more able to access and bring forward a greater degree of their potential for highest achievement.

THIS PAPER DESCRIBES

1. CTI's integrated approach to fostering results in organizations through internal coaching, management capability to bring forth talent and leadership.
2. The Co-Active® Model of CTI and its relevance and value for organizations.
3. CTI's strategies for fostering powerful "inside-out" learning.

Integrated Approach

Coaching, Management, Leadership



While training and skill building are central to the service that CTI provides, “delivery of training” is not our objective. Rather, we seek to partner with organizational clients such that over time the environment of the workplace is altered. The Coaches Training Institute brings a unique approach to building leadership capability in these areas. Our model is based on the principle of “Co-Active®” interaction, a relationship-based approach rooted in the competencies of emotional intelligence and the belief that people have an inherent desire to strive toward meaningful and fulfilling goals and will perform at their best when challenged and supported by others who act as effective champions and coaches for them.

Our objective is to enable organizational leaders to build a climate in which employees and teams interact to elevate learning and achievement as an ongoing focus in the organization. As Co-Active skills are blended into the organizational culture, people will seek out opportunities to develop themselves, colleagues will challenge one another to “aim higher” than they may have previously, and an atmosphere that blends both challenge and support takes hold.

To accomplish that, we recommend a three-tiered approach outlined by Figure 1 that includes: **(1)** building internal coaching capability, **(2)** enabling business leaders to bring forth and leverage talent in their organizations, and **(3)** reinforcement of culture change by senior executives.

“ WITH THE ECONOMIC CLIMATES WE HAVE, EVERY PERSON IN THE COMPANY NEEDS TO BE MOBILIZED AND ENGAGED... EVERYBODY IS NEEDED TO BE MOBILIZED, TO BE CONTRIBUTORS, AND TO BE FULLY ENGAGED EMPLOYEES IN A COMPANY.”

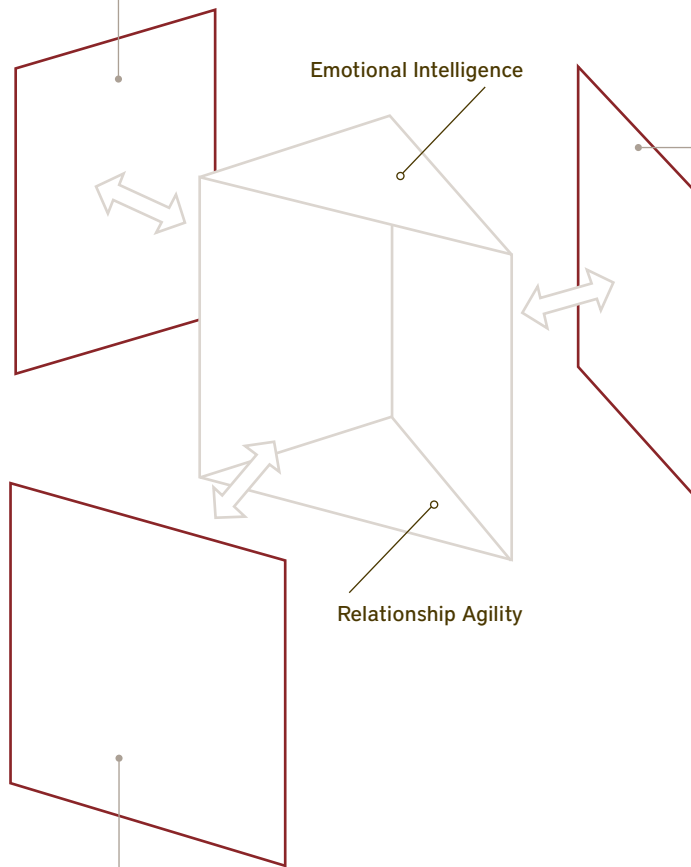
*Christine Alexander Smith
Internal Coach, Global IT Company*

FIGURE 1: CO-ACTIVE® COACHING FRAMEWORK

Internal Co-Active® Coaching

INTERNAL COACHES

- ICF-Accredited Coaches
- Serve as a formal coaching capacity within an organization
- Identify, develop and deliver targeted coaching interventions across the enterprise
- Provide guidance to business leaders and senior executives regarding their role in supporting key talent initiatives



Talent Champions

MANAGERS

- Display high Emotional and Social intelligence competencies.
- Integrated highest-leverage coaching skills into daily management activities
- Recognize their central roll in driving employee engagement, retention and promotability.
- Actively seek opportunities to support the learning and development of peers and direct reports during formal interactions and in-the-moment conversations.
- Effectively leverage existing talent management infrastructure.

Executive Coaching

SENIOR EXECUTIVES

- Possess a personal appreciation for the value of coaching
- Understand their role in supporting and guiding the overall program
- Effectively mentor the next generation of leadership

The Co-Active® Approach

to Human Development in the Workplace

The Co-Active® Model is distinct from other models of coaching in that it is more an anchor for who the leader is in relationship to the employee, team member, or coaching client than what the coach does. As a brief introduction to the model, several key concepts are important. These include:

- » The **Principles** of Co-Active Coaching are at the heart of the model and provide the fuel for the engine of coaching. Achievement of the principles for the growth of the employee or team and organization is the core purpose of Co-Active coaching. With the client (employee team or organization) depicted in Figure 2 as the central star, the Co-Active coaching process exists to support the client's fulfillment (purpose-driven, meaningful worklife), balance (making powerful choices), and process (full engagement and presence).
- » The **Cornerstones and Contexts** provide the foundation on which the leader or coach stands in relationship to the employee. The cornerstones establish who the leader is, how the leader views the employee or team, and the intentions that the leader holds in relationship to the employee or team. The contexts orient how the leader interacts with the employee or team. In the illustration the Cornerstones appear at the outside corners and Contexts appear at the five points of the star.

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“...I REALIZED THAT WHEN I USED THE [COACHING] SKILLS AT WORK I WAS LEARNING HOW TO SHOW UP MORE AS MY AUTHENTIC SELF WITH MY DIRECT REPORTS...THEY WERE MUCH MORE ENGAGED IN THE CONVERSATION, IT FELT MUCH MORE AUTHENTIC.”

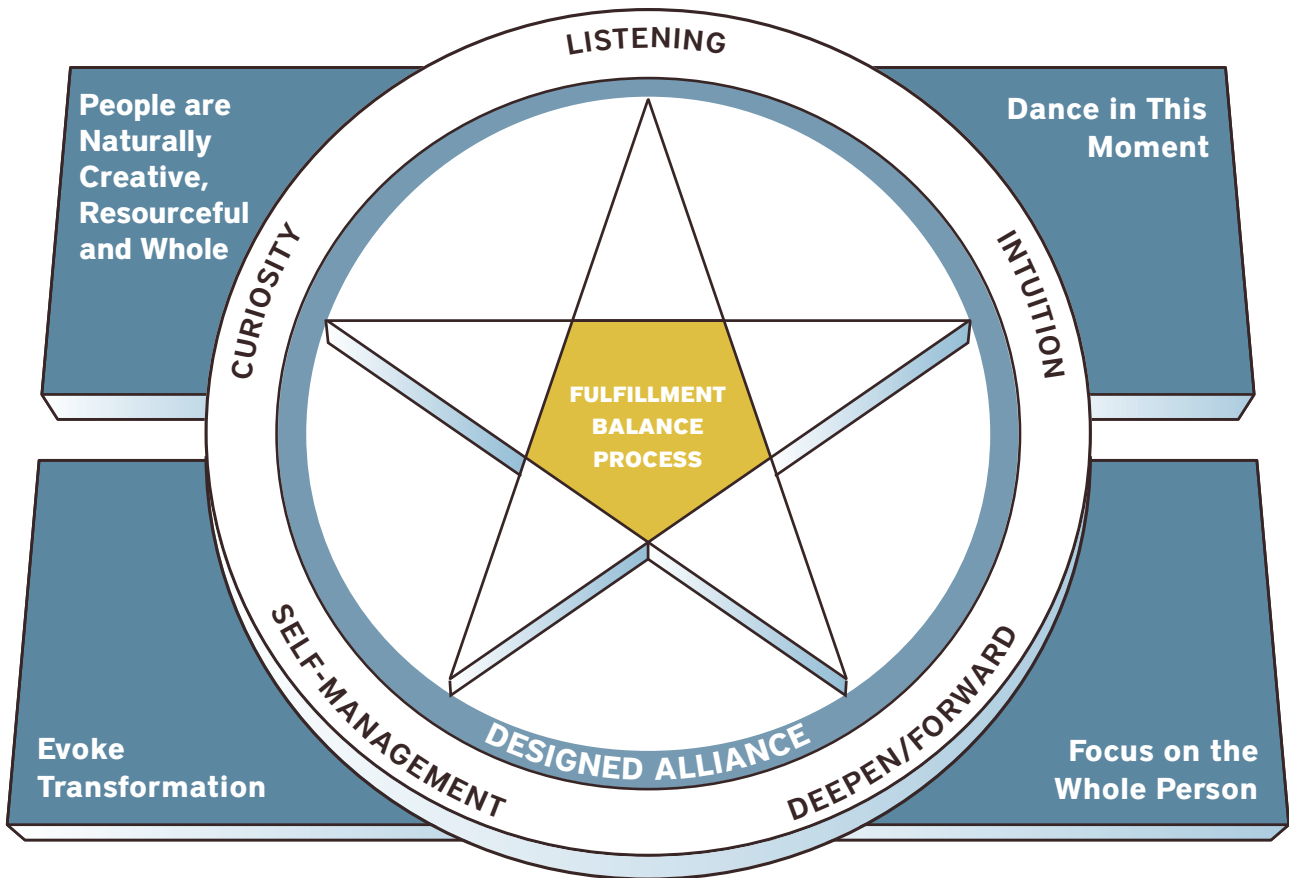
*Loren Scott, Product Manager,
Major American Retailer*

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- » Finally, an intentionally **Designed Alliance** establishes a trustworthy container for the coaching relationship. This relationship is mutually created by leader and employee or team for the sake of the individual's growth and achievement, as well as for the overall performance of the team or organization. The ring encircling the star in the illustration represents the Designed Alliance.

The particular value of these aspects of the Co-Active model are discussed in the following sections. For a more thorough description of how to put them to use, see *Co-Active Coaching: Changing Business, Transforming Lives* (Kimsey-House, Sandahl 2011).

FIGURE 2: CO-ACTIVE® MODEL



Principles of Co-Active® Coaching



Co-Active® coaching integrates three foundational principles that together serve to enhance the quality and results experienced in organizational settings through coaching. These principles are:

1. Fulfillment—deriving deep satisfaction from work that is meaningful and purpose-driven
2. Balance—viewing organizational challenges and opportunities from an empowered stance; making powerful choices and taking effective action
3. Process—operating with full engagement and awareness of what is occurring at any given moment.

These principles are at the center of the coaching process—the Co-Active leader always strives for the employee or team’s full realization of these principles. The following sections describe the ways that integration of these principles of Co-Active coaching adds value to the coaching process.

FULLFILLMENT

To live a life of meaning—having an impact and making some sort of difference beyond oneself—is intrinsic to life as a human being. To live life in a way in which this intent forms the basis of one’s professional life and to inspire others to do the same leads to a sense of fulfillment and satisfaction (Frankl 1984; Quinn 1996; Cashman 1998; Kouzes and Posner 2002). This is the heart of the Co-Active coaching principle of fulfillment.

Fulfillment brings power into the coaching process because it engages the person fully and vividly in aspects of work that are most meaningful, most compelling, and most alive. When the principle of fulfillment is at play, people become more solidly aware of what they most value and the possible futures they most want to create. While it is at times important to focus on identifying obstacles and solving problems, this is not the primary orientation of a Co-Active coach, particularly in the context of fulfillment. Envisioning desired outcomes receives greater emphasis than diagnosing past mistakes.

“ I WOULD SAY THE SKILLS I LEARNED IN THE CTI PROGRAM TAUGHT ME HOW TO HAVE MORE IMPACT AT WORK WITH MY COLLEAGUES AND WITH OUR PARTNERS [BY] DEALING WITH PEOPLE AS HUMANS, AND NOT AS ROLES. A COUPLE OF MY CO-WORKERS SAID THAT THERE’S A DIFFERENT PLACE FROM WHERE I BEGIN IN SITUATIONS AT WORK...AND THAT’S MADE QUITE AN IMPACT ON THEM, AND IT BRINGS PEOPLE TO ME.”

*Matthew Montgomery
IT Business Development Manager
Europe’s Largest Brewer*

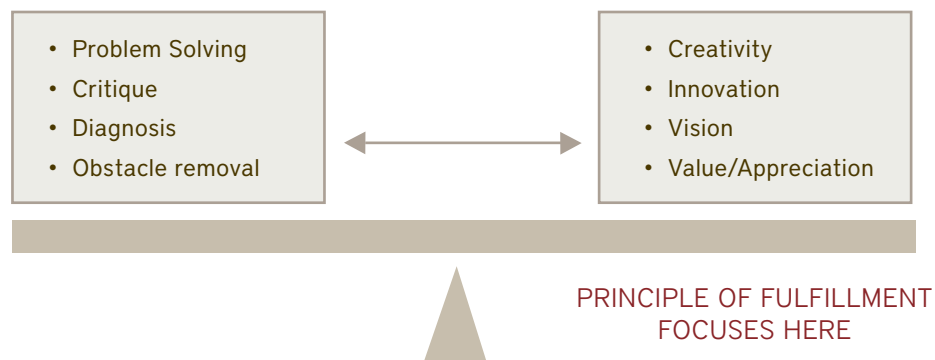
Businesses are typically well equipped to address the task-oriented issues of the left-hand side of Figure 3. The application of fulfillment principles represented by the right-hand side helps employees and teams move beyond routine challenges to operate with balanced skills. The implications on business of placing greater emphasis on areas such as creativity, innovation, vision, and values are far reaching.

This balance orientation matters where the objective is to enable an individual, community, organization, or society to bring forward greater alignment to a collective or core purpose, an expanded sense of possibility and agency to impact the future, and sustained focus on values that matter most. A prominent example in the field of organization development is the practice of “appreciative inquiry” which focuses on “...asking the unconditional positive question to ignite transformative dialogue and action within human systems...” (Ludema, Cooperrider et al. 2001, p. 191).

BALANCE

Incorporation of the principle of balance in Co-Active coaching creates the distinction between making incremental improvements over past achievement versus realizing leaps forward that are surprising, unexpected, and transformative. Through the principle of balance, employees discover more agency which allows them more capacity to

FIGURE 3: FULFILLMENT PRINCIPLE EMPHASIS



view their circumstances, opportunities or challenges in ways that create possibility and engender strength, and more able to identify concrete and powerful actions to move forward.

The principle of balance in Co-Active coaching rests on theories of transformative learning in adult education and organizational psychology. In essence, there is always a set of assumptions or beliefs in which someone stands as she views herself and the world around her. By exercising aspects of the balance principle in Co-Active coaching, the leader prompts greater awareness in others of their default outlook toward life or particular circumstances, and supports them in finding and adopting perspectives that serve to fuel possibility, strength, and a greater field of possible actions from which to choose. In this way, a leader is able to catalyze team members to think in non-traditional ways about issues that matter.

In this context, when outcomes do not match what was wanted, the key is to critically examine the underlying values and assumptions rather than just the actions. This transformative nature of Co-Active coaching is distinct from some models of coaching that rely on approaches that are more prescriptive or which are more focused on solely providing behavioral feedback to support improving individual or team performance.

Through greater awareness, people become more able to choose perspectives that serve to empower them and foster greater possibility rather than limit or constrain them. Ultimately, the principle of balance in Co-Active coaching establishes a strong platform from which people can exercise choice and make responsible and accountable commitments to taking action.

PROCESS

While action and achievement are an essential part of Co-Active coaching, at its center the Co-Active approach emphasizes the state of being and identity of the person. The principle of process in Co-Active coaching focuses on the experience of full engagement of the individual (or team) in relationship to the surrounding world in any given moment. It is the essential experience of presence in which all senses are awake, and there is a simultaneous expression of the authentic person as an individual, and an interconnection of the person with others and the world around them.



While many characteristics potentially influence interpersonal effectiveness, it is fundamentally who people are being in the midst of interacting with others that makes the biggest difference in achieving a successful outcome (Arbinger Company 1999). The principle of process within the Co-Active coaching framework places an emphasis on this BEING level of the person.

When the principle of process is at play, not only do individuals experience greater richness in their work, but perhaps more importantly they experience greater capacity and range to respond effectively to the world around them. Too often as we navigate the challenges of the workplace, aspects that are unpleasant or difficult may be pushed aside, ignored, or denied. Through the process lens of Co-Active coaching, the degree to which we are able to proactively engage with and respond to whatever may be occurring deepens significantly. The employee or team becomes more resourceful in a wider range of circumstances and more facile in navigating them.

When the Co-Active principles of fulfillment, balance, and process powers the coaching relationship, the leader experiences a visceral commitment to “go the distance” for the sake of the individual or team. The objective of coaching is not to follow a set formula, specific process, or series of steps, but rather to interact in such a way that the Co-Active principles are made real. Applying a Co-Active Coaching approach in organizational settings raises the bar for individual and team aspirations, creates opportunities to step beyond “business as usual” ways of thinking and decision-making into operating with full engagement.

The cornerstones and contexts of the Co-Active model establish the foundation on which the Co-Active leader stands in relationship to the individual or team. The cornerstones outline beliefs that guide coaching relationship. They are:

- » The individual, team, or organization is naturally creative, resourceful and whole
- » The agenda comes from the individual team or organization
- » The coach dances in the moment
- » Co-Active coaching addresses the whole person

“ DURING THE WORKSHOP I HAD TO COACH A FRIEND OF MINE, AND WE WERE ABLE TO HAVE A VERY AUTHENTIC DISCUSSION IN A VERY SHORT PERIOD OF TIME. SHE HAD BEEN STRUGGLING WITH A CERTAIN ISSUE [BUT] SHE HADN'T REALLY THOUGHT ABOUT RAISING IT WITH ANYBODY ELSE. WHEN SHE GAVE ME PERMISSION TO DISCUSS THAT [ISSUE], SHE CAME UP WITH HER OWN SOLUTION INTERNALLY. IT REALLY CHANGED HER LIFE.”

*Asok Ramji
Research Analyst
Hedge Fund in Sausalito, California*

Designed Alliance

The Power of Relationship



THE CO-ACTIVE ATTITUDE
ALLOWS ME TO TAKE
RELATIONSHIPS AND
CONVERSATIONS TO A
COMPLETELY DIFFERENT LEVEL.
WE ACTUALLY CREATE THE
FUTURE THROUGH HOW WE
TALK ABOUT IT. AND THE
CO-ACTIVE® ATTITUDE
ALLOWS THAT TO COME
THROUGH IN WAYS THAT
I HAVEN'T SEEN IN OTHER
DISCIPLINES. IT IS NOT
CONTROLLING, IT IS NOT
DEMANDING; IT IS FULL OF
ENCOURAGEMENT AND BELIEF
IN ONESELF AND THE OTHER.”

*Andy Denne
Former Marketing Manager
Global Alcohol and Beverage Brand*

The reverse also holds true: employees who are perceived by managers to be mediocre tend to perform at a lower level than their counterparts (Manzoni, 1998). This set-up-to-fail syndrome becomes a vicious circle in which poor performance that is influenced by low expectations reinforces the manager's belief that the performer is weak, and the cycle deepens.

As managers and professional colleagues within organizations engage in coaching and build their capacity to hold assumptions of competence of employees and peers, the impact on productivity will be positive. Whether organizational coaching relationships are established between formal coaches (internal or external), from peer-to-peer, or between manager and employee, it is reasonable to expect that interaction stemming from the position that employees are naturally creative, resourceful and whole will contribute to greater learning and improvement in performance.

When adopted in organizations, the other three cornerstones of Co-Active coaching (following the employee, team, or organization's agenda; dancing in the moment; and including the employee's whole life) create a climate in which employees are valued, encouraged to focus on development that is most relevant and meaningful to them, and where they are viewed and interacted with as multi-faceted human beings with whole lives. These cornerstones form a foundation of Co-Active coaching that may be distinct from other approaches, and which we believe contributes to an organizational climate that is most conducive to strong employee satisfaction and high performance.

When the Co-Active coach stands solidly in the cornerstones and contexts of Co-Active coaching, a degree of confidence and commitment on behalf of the employee or team emerges that serves to elevate the individual or team's focus beyond the status quo. Interacting from that place, the confidence, commitment and engagement of the Co-Active coach elevates what the person views as possible for him or herself, shifting the coaching conversation above the routine challenges of problem solving and development planning to a territory that is more inspired and meaningful.

The Co-Active model places explicit emphasis on the designed alliance that is formulated between coach and employee. This co-created relationship forms a container in which coaching occurs, similar to what is described by developmental theorists as a “holding environment” (Winnicott 1965; Kegan 1982; Daloz 1999). Research indicates that results from coaching in organizations occur most when the quality of the relationship between coach and employee is strong (Wales 2003). This holding environment created by the designed alliance provides a climate of trust between the educator (an internal coach in this case) and the learner. Describing strong learning partnerships characterized by deep trust, adult educator Laurent Daloz (1999) says:

“To engender trust is central to any strong, nurturing relationship. But although the trust that characterizes an early relationship owes much of its strength to the ascribed authority of the teacher, more mature trust is sustained increasingly by the shared commitment of each partner. It must be constantly recreated.” (p. 176)

The designed alliance of Co-Active coaching incorporates important aspects of contracting or formulating working agreements in related disciplines such as consulting or counseling (Block 1981). The process of designing an alliance empowers the coaching relationship and process because it has the employee and coach consciously and intentionally choose to create a relationship that will support achievement.

Within the container of the coaching relationship, the Co-Active leader uses skills that support the employee or team, such as listening, acknowledgement, and championing; as well as skills that challenge such as articulating what’s going on, championing, and challenging. The ability to balance providing support with creating sufficient challenge for learners is a fundamental skill of powerful adult educators, mentors, and leaders (Brookfield 1990; Heifetz 1994; Daloz 1999). When this type of alliance exists, individuals are able to stretch beyond their current level of capability.

Learning can take on a wide range of meanings depending on the context and interpretation. For the Coaches Training Institute, learning is first and foremost about the transformative growth of the person along with development of capability as a Co-Active coach or leader.

Cornerstones and Contexts of Co-Active® Coaching

The contexts establish where the coach comes from in his interaction with the employee or team. They are: curiosity, intuition, listening, self-management, and deepen-the-learning/forward-the-action. When the coach allows these contexts to inform how they interact, the specific skills, methods and approaches become more easily accessible in the right moment.

Cornerstones and contexts are critical tools for the Co-Active leader which have a significant impact on how leaders engage with and help transform the organization. It is important to note that the cornerstones and contexts of Co-Active coaching work together, simultaneously, in an integrated fashion to form the foundation on which the coach stands. While some may appear to be more prominent than others in certain situations, the coach does not elect to incorporate just some and leave others behind.

The value of this model is evident in diverse coaching settings, from families to communities to organizations. When Co-Active leaders interact from the stance that their employees are “naturally creative resourceful and whole,” this perspective of confidence serves to enhance performance and contributes to a climate of productivity that is self-reinforcing.

Studies from numerous fields including healthcare, education, and business management show that when leaders (managers, teachers, doctors, etc.) hold the assumption that the other’s (employee, student, patient, etc.) capability is high, productivity or performance will tend to be high (Rosenthal and Jacobson 1968; Livingston 1969; King 1971; Eden and Shani 1982; Eden 1992). Key findings from studies on this phenomenon of self-fulfilling prophecies show that:

- » What managers expect of employees is a key determinant of performance.
- » Superior managers are able to create and convey higher expectations of their teams than are those that are less effective.
- » Managers are more adept at communicating low expectations than high ones, even when they believe the opposite.
- » The phenomenon of self-fulfilling prophecies in business has the largest impact on employees who are relatively young.

CTI's Strategies for "Inside-out" Learning

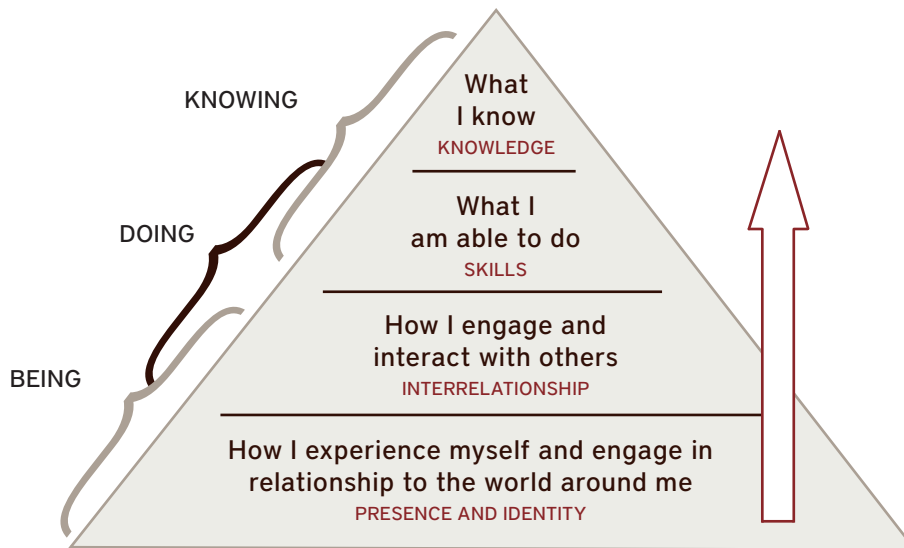
What beliefs about learning are woven into programs and approaches? Leaders at CTI believe that:

- » Human beings have an inherent desire to learn and grow. Part of the human endeavor is to become increasingly available and able to become an engaged and contributing member of society. We want to evolve.
- » People are naturally able to expand their ability to interact effectively with others. The potential for brilliance exists and can be brought forward.
- » Learning occurs when people are able to directly experience new ways of being and acting with others within contexts that matter to them. Learning is a process of active experimentation, engagement, and interaction with the world.
- » Learning happens most powerfully through human interrelationship rather than in isolation. A community of actively-engaged learners creates a richness of experience that cannot be created alone.
- » The educator's role in the learning process is to create a powerful container in which learning flourishes, to establish the contexts around which learning experiences are built, to provide a mix of challenge and support for learners, and to bring finely tuned awareness to the learning process so that rich moments of learning are surfaced.

Leadership development in a CTI program happens from the inside-out. We believe that the foundation of the learning experience focuses on the person—who they fundamentally are and how they interact with their world. In Figure 4, this is represented by "Being." From that foundation, learning builds into the areas of "doing" (skills), and "knowing" (acquisition of knowledge).

This illustration represents a flow beginning at the bottom of the pyramid to imply that each level is sourced from the level below, with presence and identity at the core. In the Co-Active approach to learning, coaching, and leadership, an emphasis

FIGURE 4: THE INTERACTION OF BEING, DOING, AND KNOWING



is placed on states of “being” in addition to “doing” and “knowing.” This approach is fundamentally ontological as it places an emphasis on the basic state of being of the person. The graphic illustration creates the illusion of a systematic or linear process at play, when the reality of in-the-moment learning and discovery is unconstrained.

Using multiple modalities for learning and engaging learners in processes that have them think, feel, act, and imagine is evident in all programs of CTI. Expanding our conception of learning, cognition, and skill development to include multiple modes of experience—including but not limited to rational dimensions—has become increasingly important for many theorists in the adult education field (Dirkx 1997; Goleman 1998; Taylor 1998; Dirkx 2000; Gill 2000; Mezirow 2000; Dirkx 2001; Heron 2002; Kasl and Yorks 2002; Cranton and Roy 2003; Yorks and Kasl 2003). Learning the Co-Active way is a blend of learning approaches and methodologies. Most fundamentally, learning for CTI is about the transformative growth of the person, and springs from creating meaning from direct experience.

In the CTI learning environment, understanding emerges for each person as they engage with other learners, experience new ways of interacting, and reflect on their experience through the unique lens of the life they have lived. While course leaders guide the process of learning and the particular course content, concepts and models of Co-Active coaching or leadership are part of the learning mill, these are not the primary sources of knowledge. Rather than viewing people like empty bank accounts in need of knowledge deposits made from outside (Freire 1972), meaning comes from a dynamic and co-created exchange of learners with each other and the environment.

Conclusion

The approach of Co-Active coaching may be distinct from other approaches to human capital development and contributes to an organizational climate that is conducive to high performance and employee satisfaction. This concept is consistent with findings of a landmark study conducted in 1998 by the Gallup Organization. The purpose of their study was to identify the core factors that contribute to creation of a strong workforce, and to measure the links between employee satisfaction and business unit results (Buckingham and Coffman 1999). Based on interviews with over 80,000 managers from more than 400 companies, the researchers identified twelve key factors that constitute overall employee satisfaction. More significantly, they found a solid link within business units between these twelve factors and corresponding business results measured by productivity, profitability, employee retention, and customer satisfaction.

Co-Active coaching supports many of the core factors identified in the Gallup study. In his book that resulted from the study, author Marcus Buckingham's description of a great manager is similar to the way we would characterize the role of a Co-Active leader. He advises managers to "...do everything you can to help each person cultivate his talents. Help each person become more of who he already is." (p. 141).

Simply focusing on developing employees' technical or functional expertise is inadequate to create sustainable breakthrough performance. The most effective organizations will shift their focus to fundamentally rewiring how people hold themselves and engage with others in the workplace, giving employees the skills and opportunity to recognize and coax the best performance out of themselves and each other.

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