

Leading Isn't Just Commanding Why Every Leader Should Wear the Coach's Hat — and 4 Skills Needed To Coach Effectively

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If you're going to coach individuals, you need to have a good understanding of your own strengths and weaknesses and values and beliefs and a lot of self reflection and feedback from your coach or from other leaders can make you more aware of how you impact others.

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My guest today is Nick Goldberg, the CEO and co founder of Ezra, what do you think some of the skills are that they need to possess to be an effective coach

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resilience is key, to be a good leader and to really support your team and coach them that is a skill and an ability that we as leaders have to have a coach could help a leader with and it's something that a leader can help another leader with for self awareness is another skill or trait that leaders need to have in order to be successful.

Jacob Morgan 00:47

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Hey, everyone, welcome to another episode of great leadership. My guest today is Nick Goldberg, the CEO and co founder of Ezra, Nick, thank you for joining me.

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lovely to be here, Jacob, great to be on with you.

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For people not familiar with Ezra, can you give us a little bit of background information about the company? What do you guys do? How many employees do you guys have?

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Sure. So we are one of the largest digital coaching companies in the world. We have 350 employees are full time employees. And we also work with about 2000 coaches across the world. Our mission is we passionately believe that people are more effective when they have a coach. And just to our birthday is actually next week. And four years ago, we decided that coaching should not only be given to the executive, and how do we make that more available for more people across the world. And so quite simply, how do we democratize coaching. And over the last four years, we've been on a bit of a journey, which we might talk about. We're incredibly proud of what we do. We support people in over 100 countries in 26 languages. And we're incredibly proud of the work we do every day. Well, I'm

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glad that you mentioned something that I talked about a long time, which drives me nuts is that oftentimes just leadership training and development, coaching, anything related to professional development. And enhancement has usually only been reserved for leaders, right people who've been at the company for a while people who are in official leadership roles. But if you're an entry level, or even oftentimes even a mid or junior level employee, you don't get any of that stuff. And so you don't get the coaching, the leadership training and development. And the question that I have always asked companies is, why wouldn't you want everybody inside of your organization to get that training to get that coaching and to get that development? It just doesn't make any sense. And I think it comes from this, you know, the old school mentality that we used to have, right, where the training is only going to be given to people who have earned it only people who've, you know, gotten their stripes, so to speak. So I love that you've democratized that and made that available to everybody inside the company.

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Oh, absolutely. And I gotta tell you, there was an interesting inflection point we had after a couple of years. So you know, our original mission, and still our mission was to give this support to more people. And what's interesting, Jacob, you talk about what before we started, Ezra, we interviewed about 50 CHR OHS all over the world. And we said to them, if, if money was no object, what would you do in training? And they said, Well, if money was no object, we would give everyone a coach. And I asked them well, why why why why would you do that? And a genuine curiosity and they said when somebody has a coach, it is truly personalized, and and the coach meets them where they are and support them on their journey in their context and their space. If we could do that, for more people, we would but put simply, it's just far too expensive. And this is four years ago. So our mission, or as my co founder, Jack often says, our exam question was, how do we take this amazing group of coaches, and we and we had a benefit of being part of a kind of larger, more traditional coaching company at the time? And how do we scale that to more people more affordably? And then And then finally, and again, to help these learning people in organizations, the chief learning officers, the chief HR officers, how do we measure it? Because oftentimes, companies will provide a lot of learning at scale, but we'll have no way of actually measuring whether it works or not.

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So is one way to think about as or is it just kind of a platform where employees can connect with coaches kind of just like a marketplace?

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No. And, and we pride ourselves on not being a simple marketplace in one respect, you could argue there's an element of that, but but we started this business as a coaching company. Okay, not as a technology company. So we, we already had the benefit of 50 years experience of our parents, a company called Lee Hecht, Harrison, okay, you had all of these amazing coaches, and then put simply, our job was, again, taking that group introducing technology that made it available. So whilst you're right, the user experiences if I work at Microsoft, or at Coca Cola, I would get the opportunity to have an extra coach, I would go on there. And then I would select a little bit like Tinder, dare I say, you know, I would, I would look through a number of different profiles, I would watch a number of different videos about these coaches. And then based on my preference, I would be able to select a coach, that's right for me. But where it differs slightly for a marketplace, is that our clients, like Microsoft, for example, would say to us, at Microsoft, we need our coach, we need your coaches to understand our business. So Microsoft have their own, call it cadre of coaches that work on the Microsoft instance, if you like. So when, when Mary or Johnny at Microsoft, meet a coach, their meeting coach with a real understanding of Microsoft, not just an ICF accredited coach, they actually understand the context the world that they work in, and therefore, it's not just as simple. I go into a marketplace, I actually get to work with coaches that understand my business as well.

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Got it. Got it. Okay. So I'm curious to just kind of take a step back and just get your perspective on. Maybe leadership in general, because at least one of the trends that I've seen over the past few years, is that coaching is becoming more widely used, adopted, accepted. You know, in the past, in meeting to working or admitting to working with a coach, I think for a lot of people was viewed as a sign of weakness, it was kind of like admitting to having a therapist. And now more and more, it's becoming talked about accepted encouraged is not a sign of weakness or deficiency, but as a sign of learning, growth, development, improvement and strength. What do you credit? Or first, do you agree? And do you credit, anything with making that shift where coaching is now viewed as this really positive thing inside of organizations?

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I mean, firstly, I would say certainly, and again, because we work globally, I think that this, this idea that coaching which was previously remedial is now positive is certainly true in America, in America, where probably most of your listeners are, I'm imagining, there is definitely a shift in mindset that giving somebody coach is a sign of strength is a sign that they're doing well. And there's a sign that you really do care about them. And you want them to be more effective. In other markets, particularly in Asia, it's still seen as remedial, it's still seen as something that there might be something wrong with this person, and therefore we need to give them a coach. But certainly in America, there is a real acceptance and actually proactive nature now to giving people the support. And you asked me about leadership, you know, just at a high level, if you think today, even just post pandemic, what leaders have to deal with in terms of, you know, hybrid in terms of the economic climate, the political climate, the attention, war that you have to have from employees. It's a huge on top of the previous VUCA world that people are often

very familiar with, in a kind of new VUCA world now where things are even more complicated and this idea of adaptively leadership is so incredibly important. And therefore, some of the old school ways of developing people through kind of standardized workshops, no longer hits the mark, you know, everyone is different, your need to Jacob, as a leader running your own business are very different to your neighbors needs. Yeah. And there's no one size fits all. And that's where personalized learning comes in. And your choices for personalized learning are either your own kind of learning digital elearning pathway, or having a coach. And I think that that is why coaching has become also far more prominent, because it's far more relevant to what the needs of the leaders are today is.

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And you know, we've the term coaches has been around for a while. And I think a lot of people you know, when they think of a coach, they think of, you know, a sports coach, you know, athletes, basketball, hockey, you know, whatever sport you can think of, but in the context of business, what defines a good coach? So, for example, people who are listening or watching this, they're thinking of working with a coach, what does a coach actually do? And what should you be looking for when you're reaching out to a coach?

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Great question. A coach, in the shortest, simplest description, helps you as an individual, come to the solution yourself. So when we have a problem, the solution to that challenge that we have often lies deep within us. And a coach is there to, through something called Socratic questioning, which is very, very difficult to do. And it's a skill that takes years to perfect, and it can be frustrating, of course, very frustrating. And I actually did a podcast recently where I talked about my coaching session, I can share that more with you. Oh, yeah, very frustrating. Offer often silences, they're often questions that you don't want to get asked. But ultimately, those questions lead you to your own solution. And there's a lot of behavioral science that shows that when you come to the conclusions yourself, and you rewire your brain literally into thinking in a different way, you're then far more likely to sustain that learning and adapt your style and lead in different way to how you were previously before your coaching conversation, versus versus being taught something on the chalkboard or on a webinar, and then trying to absorb that and take that forward.

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It's interesting, because that's actually very different than a sports coach, because a coach in sports will give you the play. And they will tell you go do this, go do that. Here's what we're going to do. I mean, I'm sure there's a little bit of what what do you think as players or as a, as a player, but a lot of it is coaches mapping out the plays, analyzing things and telling the players what to do. Whereas it seems like in the business world, that's not a good approach. And so simply just telling, you know, people that you're coaching, hey, do this ask that, you know, this is the decision that you should make, it seems like that's probably going to cause more harm than good.

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That's interesting. So I think and again, we're doing a lot of work on this at the moment as we look to release our latest offering to the market. But there's this difference between directive coaching and kind of more more questioning type style of coaching, yeah, and what you're describing what I'm describing

as coaching, certainly at the management and leadership level, where you've got enough experience to call on to come to the conclusions yourself. And by the way, if you take sports coaching, if a sports coach is working with the leading, and the big soccer fan leading, if a sports coach is coaching, the top striker in the world, they're not telling that striker how to strike the ball more effectively, that striker knows by the time that they become, you know, Lionel Messi doesn't need to be told by his coach, how to score a goal or pass the ball. What Lionel Messi coach, I'm presuming I don't know. Lionel Messi is coached. But I imagined that Lionel Messi, his coach would work with him, watching the videos and pausing that video and says, To beat that player, what could you have done differently? So I actually think at a more senior level in Sport Coaching does appear when we think of coaching, like if I have a golf coach, as a beginner, when I know nothing about golf, I need to be told how to improve my swing. And when we think about actually a product that we're releasing to market at the end of this month, which is coaching, and learning essentially for the most junior levels of organizations, Ezra whilst we wanted to democratize coaching, did that still only hit probably the middle layer of an organization because of its price point, and we've worked over the last two years to do develop a new solution, which is more of a development focused solution, far more directive Than Ezra that will actually start to teach and a bit like coaching and more junior levels, some of the basic principles around particular topics to help people, but in done in a personalized one to one way. So I think it really does flex between coaching at more junior levels to coaching at more senior levels, the amount of direction that you're prepared to give as a coach

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seven to that a little bit more as far as like the directed versus the Socratic. Because I think that's very interesting for people who are looking to work with a coach, and also leaders who are looking to coach their people, because that's also one of the big things that we keep hearing about is how does a leader act more like a coach. And even when I wrote my book, The future leader, I asked 140, CEOs, what are one of the most important skills that leaders need to have, and one of the ones that was identified was being able to coach your employees, you know, helping them make help make your employees more successful, even more successful than you are as the leader. And so I think this balance between directed versus Socratic coaching is very interesting. Would it be safe to say then, because I'm trying to figure out like, how, how do you know when to use each one? It seems like there's a place for directed coaching. And maybe, maybe that is more relevant in situations where the coach has either more experience, or it has proven something or has demonstrated competence in that area. Let's say for example, if I'm a coach, and I'm trying to lead a guide, a leader, how to lead through crisis, you know, if I, as a coach, you know, have gone through that process several times, maybe that might be a place where I can then provide more directed coaching to another leader and say, you know, what, this is what you should do, because I've done this several times, I've lived through several crises. And you know, here's what worked, whereas the Socratic, maybe is more of a better fit for. I don't know, maybe where the coach doesn't have that much experience. I don't know, how would you direct that balance between the two?

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By the way, I would also slightly flip that round and think about the coachee, who's been through crisis, if the coachee has led through crisis five times, and done it incredibly successfully. But it's so whipped up in the day to day of what's going on right now. And they forgotten about what they did two years

ago, or what they did 10 years ago. A coach's job in that situation, in my view, is to use the Socratic technique to understand what do you think will work most effectively? How will you lead this crisis? When you did this before? What worked? What didn't work? What lessons did you learn? Where might you go with this change to be more effective? All the sorts of questions that again, you've probably got the answers to, but you've led you've led Kochi has led through a crisis versus a frontline leader, who's managing for the first time, there's just been a riff within the organization, they've got to deal with that the very first time when a coach just asked them questions about how do you think people are going to feel? Which is, which is often a question that coach will ask, it's quite difficult for that frontline manager to know how people are going to feel if they've never done that before. Yeah. And, and therefore, that's where and again, when we launch this new offering, that's where something like focus, which is what were the name of the new product, is is finding coaches to your example who have led through change. So you have to have coaches in that scenario. And clients will be able to choose coaches with a particular expertise to help people through his very specific scenarios, and give some guidance, but then still coach them. So now you've read this thing that I sent you, or now you've completed this micro learning that we've that we've exchanged? How are you going to use that with your team? Horrible question, because like normals to answer these very difficult questions, but by answering those difficult questions, they then learn something from a nudge or a micro learning. And now they're going to learn how to put that into place based on the coaching that they've received from their coach. So I do think it's about knowing, as a learning leader, where to use the most effective type of development. And as you get more senior and more experienced and understand the solution to make it stick, the Socratic technique, which ultimately is coaching that we know in business is the best way. Does that answer your question?

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Yeah, I mean, it seems like it's a little bit of kind of a blend of art and science, like there's no kind of formula for when it should be directed and when it should be Socratic. I think that it sounds like it's up to an experienced coach to be able to tell the difference of when to use both. But I'm trying to I was trying to get there's like guardrails that you could put to nudge people. For example, if I'm a leader, and I'm coaching some of my employees, and I'm trying to figure out, should I use the Socratic method with them and ask them questions to kind of get, get them to realize what the answer should be? Or when is it okay for me as leader to step in and tell my employee what the answer should be, if ever? And I don't know if there's, if there's like a defined way to do that? Yeah, I

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think, look, I think that, again, not to overgeneralize because every every, every, every one is different. And we're in a business and one of the, you know, I was talking to someone over the weekend about Ezra, and now it's, it's a tricky business, because we have human beings delivering a service to human beings. We built, yes, we have a platform, but at the end of the day, our product, our human coaches, and our customers are one to one individuals. And there's so much nuance in what we do. But if I was to generalize, I would say that within an organization as you progress to the different career moments that you have, and as you gather experience, you have more of those more of the ability to be coached in the purest sense of the word than you do to be directed. So, you know, I would say, a frontline manager needs to give some direction to individuals, probably more so than I do as the CEO of Ezra, to my leadership team, my leadership team should know the answers to the challenges they're facing.

And as a, as a CEO, is to coach those answers out of them far more than it is to direct them to the solution. And you know, we're not talking about coaching. As externally here, we're talking about how, as a leader, you coach people,

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I started out with a very basic question when I wrote this book, is vulnerability for leaders the same as it is for everybody else? And it turns out, the answer to that is no. So how do the world's top leaders tap into vulnerability into the right way,

Jacob Morgan 22:12

so that they can lead through change, unlock the potential of others drive business performance, create trust, if you want to find out, preorder your copy, by going to lead with vulnerability.com, you'll get access to some really cool bonuses there as well. Again, that's lead with vulnerability.com. Have you ever had anybody take your vulnerability and use it against you,

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I was able to build this trust and this vulnerability with these two folks that are directly you know, on my team, he took it a little too far to where over time, I had to redraw the line

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don't fall into that category where the answer is yes. And unfortunately, that's part of life,

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it's corporate life, someone's always out to get you. Well, we all have scars. And I think the important thing is that we need ointment on that Oscarson make sure that we keep going with that.

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So you mentioned you had a coaching session, I'd be curious to hear how that went. It's funny, because there's so many books on coaching, and we'll kind of get to your coaching story in a little bit. But I know there are so many books on coaching, there's so many approaches, there are so many methodologies, it seems like everybody has their own kind of way of doing it. Is the outcome always the same, though the outcome is to get the person you're coaching to be able to do something that they previously weren't able to do or to become a better version of themselves like that. That should always be the outcome, right? Is that the same? Regardless of what approach?

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Yeah, correct. The only nuance I would say is Ezra, our coaching is really focused on improving their performance at work, okay, now, now we do understand that part of that is around their well being is around their personal circumstance. And of course, that will form part of the coaching conversation. But when we work with our clients, you know, that they are providing this service to their employees to improve their ability and competency in their job and become more effective. So our results are measured by our clients on how, of course how engaged people are, but then more so on harder metrics, like how did their teams improve their business performance, improve how their productivity

improves, so we do have a focus on that versus kind of a more generic life or well being coach. We are we are focused on improving performance for our employees for our coaches and internal clients.

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Okay, let's let's talk about some of your sessions so people can understand. You know, obviously if you've worked with a coach, people will have a good sense of what that looks like. But I suspect probably a lot of people watching and listening to this have not had experience working with a coach and are probably trying to figure out? What does that experience? Like? Is it like going to a therapist where you walk in and you sit down and you know, the coach says, will tell me what's bothering you today. And you, you get into your childhood? And, you know, so and so got promoted, and I didn't, and you just, you know, talk therapy like, how does how does that work? And maybe you could share your

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great question. Great question I'm happy to So firstly, I have a session every other week. Something that we, we recommend, and and it really does help. Sometimes they're there 15 minutes, sometimes they're an hour, so not we'd have to fill the space. And my coach, and our coaches understand that. So how did they they work? Or how did it what does what do I use them for? So I use them for a number of different things. The most common place I go is as a senior leader, and quite frankly, as any leader in an organization in today's world, there are a multitude of things we're dealing with at any one time. And my coaching sessions are used to help me focus and prioritize on the things that are going to matter the most, over the next two weeks that are going to have most impact on the business. So a lot of the time in our coaching session. I'm I am not not like in therapy, but I am downloading the challenges I have at work right now to try and help me reframe those challenges into what is going to serve the greatest purpose over the next two or three weeks. And where should I focus my attention. So the coach will, through the challenges i i present, essentially encouraged me in a clever way to force rank those challenges and think through the impact of where I should focus my time through a series of fantastic questions. And again, some tricky questions, once we then get into the most important priority, you know, I will have certain limiting beliefs that will stop me from making certain decisions, and a limiting belief for those listeners out there are things that you believe, again, based on probably things that have happened to you over your career in your life, that aren't necessarily reality, but but that you think might happen again. And my coach will work with me to help me think through actually the reality versus my own limiting belief or perception of what might happen based on the decisions I make, again, through a series of questions. And in those questions. Some of those questions are the questions that you don't ask yourself, because, you know, you should ask yourself those questions. But for whatever reason, you're uncomfortable with doing that your coach, a really good coach will ask you the questions you don't really want to ask yourself. And during our session, my coach will ask me a question. And I will often just pause, not know the answer, wait for him to fill the space, which he doesn't do. And then within about sometimes 20 seconds, which is a very long time of silence, I will then answer the question. And in answering the question will have probably helped dramatically from where I was. And then the coach actually another another big part of what what my coach Gary does with me, at the end of every session, they'll ask me, what did you learn today about you? And about how you're going to do things differently over the next couple of weeks? And then how are you going to do those things. And then because we meet so regularly, a bit like a personal trainer, yeah, if I have a training session, and then I go to McDonald's every day, and go back my coach, I'm actually probably going to feel bad doing

that in front of my coach, I've got an accountability to my coach. And a bit like this, you know, over the next two weeks, part of not all of but part of my accountability is now to the one to one expert that's been helping me. And when I walked back into that session two weeks, I want to make damn sure that I tried some of the things that we talked about. So we know through our research that without accountability, we fail. And there's so much research on that. And a coach actually acts often as an accountability partner.

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So when you walk into a coaching session, so how does it start? Is it the coach will ask you, how's your day going? What are your challenges and you kind of just jump into listing what those are, and then kind of prioritizing them?

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Yeah, so I think it's, it's, there's a difference between your first coaching session ever, and then a coaching session you have once you have a relationship. So in the first coaching session, it is about building rapport and building trust because the quick So you can trust your coach, the more vulnerable you're going to be and the more vulnerable you're going to be, the more value you're going to get. So that first session is all about the coach, again, being experts at being able to get people to build trust, build rapport with the individual. So assuming that that's happened, how does the session look, there are two ways. So either I walk in so four weeks ago, we had a I wouldn't call it a crisis, but we had things going on in the business a lot going on in one given time. And I really needed a session. And again, the beauty of Ezra is you can click three buttons and probably book a session within 48 hours with your coach. So that session was about me walking in saying, this is going on in the business, we're thinking about this globally, I'm really torn between making these decisions, I need your help to help me think through the best way of handling this. That's, that's a common coaching scenario. And then we will spend half an hour working that through, and I'll come out of the call with clarity and confidence going into the decision I'm about to make. The other type of coaching session is if I haven't had one for a few weeks is So Nick, last time, we spoke all about your challenges with hybrid, your challenges with growth, and annual challenges with profitability, all of the normal stuff a CEO has to deal with, how are those going? Where are you with that? Okay. And again, you know, coaches build a relationship with you as the same coach that you have throughout this process. So they know that next challenges were this, and how are we going to handle those? And what's he done differently since so there's a quote, there's a chronology to the coaching sessions.

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So I'm curious in terms of the questions. So making a strategic business decision, like you said, that was one of the examples. What are the types of questions? A coach won't obviously that your coach asks you or that a coach should be asking to help you kind of get clarity around a decision, and I'm guessing this could be for a strategic business decision, it could be for a personnel decision, it could be you know, making an investment. What are the types of questions your coach asks you, that then helps you get clarity and know that you're moving in that right direction that you couldn't, for example, ask yourself,

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so I'll give you I'll give you a couple of examples. So let's say we're making a big strategic hire or strategic change in the business. Firstly, a coach, and I'm thinking between choice A or choice B. A coach will often ask, and often we, as individuals and humans are, are inherently negative, certainly us in the UK, about things. And will often say what's the worst case scenario? Very, very common phrase, what's the worst case scenario? Coach will ask, what's the best case scenario will often say to me, well, what's the best case scenario? How would you do what? What might happen if you make this decision? Okay, and then and then let's assume we've done that. My, my, some of my thinking will often be, what's the perception? No, I might say, Gary, one of my concerns I have is, you know, I'm worried how the business is going to perceive this change. And Gary will say, Well, how is the business going to perceive this change? And I might answer, you're gonna have to think about it, because I've kind of again, got this limiting belief that people might react badly or positively in different ways in different countries. And we'll go through that, and then he'll say, why, why do you think they're gonna react that way? And, and then he might say, Why do you think they won't act this way? And through these questions, basically leads me to the belief that, that going with Choice A is a lot more effective, because some of the things that I'm thinking are wrong with choice A, might actually might actually be absolutely fine. It's just, it's just come from a negative space that I've got my head into or that another colleague has mentioned, when I think about it with clarity, which is what Gary will help me do, it certainly becomes a lot more effective. Yeah. So again, that's some of the questions that they would ask.

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Yeah, that's interesting. I like that approach. And it's very, yeah, kind of leads leads you to your own conclusion, as you were talking about earlier, but what happens if you do that and you make the wrong choice? So you go through a coaching session, you make a strategic business decision, it ends up being the wrong one. Then you go back to Gary and say, Gary, what the hell? You know, we did a session. You asked me some questions. I thought it was going in the right direction. I made a mistake. You're an idiot. I don't want your coaching anymore. Like, what? You know what I mean? Like, what happens? If you are you make the wrong choice after these sessions, because there's no guarantee that, you know, just because Gary's asking you questions you're gonna, you know, make the make the best choice.

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Yeah, and by the way, just a couple of other things, you know, when you're making big decisions as a leader, it's not just your coach that helps you come to the right conclusion, data. And, and let's just be clear, you know, I don't make huge changes in this business purely based on a coaching session, I will often have data to help me make those decisions. And then Gary is helping me choose the right one, but it still goes wrong sometimes, right? It's still goes wrong. And, and again, I think that, you know, as a leader you need with integrity, you leave with values, and so long as you are following your own values, and doing things with the best intention, and you and your, I would say I am courageous in what I do, you're prepared to make mistakes. You learn from those mistakes. And Gary, quite frankly, and I would never do this, I wouldn't say Oh, Gary, you're an idiot, you know, and I don't assume you said I would do that. Why did you make me do this? But Gary, and I would go through it. And we would say, Well, what, what didn't go well? Why didn't go well? How do we address that? How do we now focus on the solution? And often, by the way, in any decision you make, there are elements that go well, so let's focus sometimes on those as well and learn from what we did so that we can do that more effectively

next time. So the coaching session then becomes about, you know, how I did it, how I communicated it, what I did, how I ran that team meeting, how I did that presentation? What could we do differently next time? Why didn't you get the response that you wanted? What was the fear? Why do you think it went wrong? Like that's another question, you say, it's gone wrong, it's been a disaster. Why is it a disaster? Is it a disaster? Because five people don't like you? Or is it disaster? Because the business isn't performing? You know, because, again, some of those perceptions aren't quite reality. So it's, it's, it's, it's becomes a coaching session about what happened, a bit like a sports coach, you know,

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why didn't you win the game?

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Exactly, exactly. And you don't win every game. But so long as the coach in that in the post match talk, or in the post match analysis helps think you through it helps you think through why you did it, then that's often often a great way through it.

37:29

Is everyone coachable, though, because I'm trying to think of people, for example, Dad, if you're listening or watching this, I love you, but I would not consider my dad to necessarily be a coachable person, right? I mean, immigrant from the former USSR, works in aerospace in his early 70s, just different different mentality of thinking about sharing and vulnerability, and talking and coaching similarly, you know, and not just because it's my dad, but you lots of people could be like that, right? Where they don't feel comfortable sharing. They don't want to open up whether it's cultural, whether it's behavioral, whether it's learned, but I can imagine lots of scenarios where somebody goes to talk with a coach, and the coach says, you know, will, will tell me some of the things that you're struggling with, or what you're challenged with. And the employee might just say, I'm great, I'm in here, because my leader forced me to, I got nothing to say it's kind of like going to a therapy session when you don't want to be in therapy, right? You're your friend or your spouse. So you go to therapy, and you're like, What the hell am I doing here? So is coaching actually relevant for everybody? Are there situations in which whether you as a leader cannot coach your people, or whether an employee just cannot be coached by anybody? And you know, what do you do in those situations?

38:55

Yeah, I mean, I think everybody is coachable to a degree. Yeah, I don't know your dad. Right. But if if, if a coach was working with your dad, and really good coach to

39:08

ever take a lot of sessions, let me tell you, but they have an incredible

39:11

amount of emotional intelligence. And they might say to him, not very struggling, they might say to him, you know, what did you do last week? Why? Why was that successful? What was it about it that made it successful? And he just just purely focused and by the way, we learned so much more, there's this myth around failure versus fate, we learn more from our mistakes. And there's this like, Silicon Valley

kind of mantra. Whilst that is there is an element of truth to making mistakes helps you learn. We also know from a lot of research that we've done, that we learned far more from our successes than we do from our failures. So with someone like your dad, and again, I don't know your dad, and again, he might just not want to talk to anybody, which is challenging. But but if we could establish some rapport, to understand as an immigrant, how He made a life for himself, and what he did to create that life for you and your siblings and your family, there might be some nuggets in there that he has that behaviorally he's done that he might then take forward into other scenarios. So he might not be as coachable as, as everybody else. But there are still some things that people can be coached through. And on Ezra, interestingly, you know, we coach, we coach about 15,000 people a month. And we don't, we very rarely have, very rarely have people just don't engage. We have peep, we struggle at times the initial engagement, but once someone started their program, and they've seen the value, and they've seen, it's not therapy, and they've seen it's, it's, it's a genuine one to one development session, that really helps you become more effective at work, then people open up. And then obviously, you see, interestingly, over the course of time on our program, sessions become more regular. And at the end of the program in the last month, people are meeting more regularly than they get in the first month, which again, compared to a lot of training programs where things tail off over time, in coaching, it actually increases over time, because it becomes more effective, the better relationship you have with your coach.

41:29

You mentioned also something a few minutes ago, which is vulnerability, and I'm glad you mentioned that. So I have a new book that's coming out October of this year called leading with vulnerability. So I talk about that in a lot of detail. And it's interesting that you mentioned that in coaching too, because to me, it seems like to be able to be coached means that you need to be able to display some vulnerability. And if you don't display that, it becomes very hard to Coach. And this is kind of why I mentioned my dad, because my dad is the opposite of anything vulnerable related. And again, Dad, if you're listening or watching, I love you. But let's be honest, it's true. Right? So he's the complete opposite of vulnerability. And so that's kind of what I guess what I was alluding to is if you are trying to coach somebody who's not willing to be vulnerable, talk about mistakes, failures receive compliments in a genuine way, it becomes very, very hard to coach them. So what's the role that vulnerability plays? I guess I'm both sides there on on the realm of the coach, like does the coach need to be vulnerable? And also the coachee? So what's the vulnerability relationship for both those parties there if there is any?

42:42

Yeah, I think that, you know, again, it's it's a skill. And again, it takes two years generally of training to become a qualified coach. It's why, you know, we Ezra, we do worry sometimes about you know, anyone calls themselves a coach, there is an there is an incredible organization called the ICF, the international coaching Federation, okay. It takes about two years to become qualified by their standards, all of the coaches on Ezra are qualified by their standards. And through that training, there is a lot of work done around this topic of vulnerability, and being able to have the skill to make people feel comfortable. And of course, not everybody is going to share even on their 15th session, their deepest, darkest, most vulnerable moments, but through that process, and through again, showing some vulnerability as a coach, which is part of the training, you will be able to, you know, I suppose the

question is more, could really good coaching, get people to be vulnerable, and I believe it does. And we see that in, in the work. And again, I'm sure in your book, and I'm excited to read it in October, you know, it will share that by being vulnerable, you're far more likely to learn more effectively, you're far more likely to develop to see a putter hold up a mirror to yourself, to see where your challenges may lie to start addressing those challenges as you go through that, by the way will present more challenges in the future. And that is that is the role of a coach in a relationship with a coach to help you through that.

Jacob Morgan 44:23

Leading virtual coaching and learning provider Ezra is taking your leadership to the next level with Ezra X, a virtual coaching platform delivering high impact executive coaching in real time on their time, powered exclusively by world class coaches, with over 20 years of senior management experience as your ex delivers the gold standard support your leaders deserve in the moments they need it most. See what as your ex can do for your leaders at [Hello ezra.com](https://Helloezra.com)

44:52

That's Hello PZR a.com Yeah, yeah, and you're right there. There's gonna be a lot in that. I'm not going to spoil that yet. But yes, there will be a lot of that in the book. I think it's a huge huge assets asset for for leaders inside of organizations. What makes an effective coach? Like, what if you're a leader, and you're trying to coach your people, for example? What are the important skills that you as a leader need to possess, and I suppose in this context, I'm mainly thinking of what we traditionally think of as soft skills, because a lot of our conversation has really been focused on the coachee. But there's also if you're a leader, trying to coach your people, you know, there are leaders who can make great coaches and leaders who can also make bad coaches, I would imagine, just one thing off the top of my mind, is if you're a leader, and you don't have patience, for example, and you're very command and control, it's going to be very hard for you to be an effective coach of your people. And so, you know, it's not gonna make sense for you to coach your employees, because, again, you'll probably do more harm than you would good. So for all the leaders out there who are thinking, how can I be a better a more effective coach for my people? What do you think some of the skills are that they need to possess to be an effective coach?

46:12

Yeah, so I'd I'd, I'd maybe call out for four skills. And the first one actually, is, it's not patience, but it helps with patience, and that is resilience, okay, you know, into in today's world, there is so much stress. You know, often at times, particularly, in large organizations, when people again, are fully remote, this has become more and more apparent someone's calendar, as starting at 830, through to 530. Meeting back to back to back to back to back. And if you come out of a meeting, that has rocked you, for one reason or another, and you walk into another meeting where one of your employees needs some support, your ability to manage that stress, remain composed, be patient, will inspire confidence, and main, maintain focus and really help the individual find the opportunities through some adverse times. And I think that that resilience that you can have, as you go through, excuse me, as you go through your day, or your week, or your month, or your year. And by the way, my team listening to this will tell me that oftentimes, I I am not, I'm not the finished article. So you know, I can't I try as hard as I can to remain that composure throughout my day, throughout my week, especially when you're

traveling and the more senior you become, and the global nature of your role and tiredness kicks in resilience is key to be to be a good leader, and to really support your team and coach them.

47:53

Would you so really quick before you jump to the next one. So is resiliency, a kind of the way to summarize that? Is it just bouncing back from a tough day? Whether it's having a tough conversation, or just having a packed day filled with meetings? It seems like it's always it's the ability to show up for your people, regardless of the circumstances, it seems like, roughly, absolutely,

48:21

yeah, not another another word I use with my teams and actually give advice to other line managers recognize regulate is, is you know, the more senior you become, often the more or more of a roller coaster you go on through your weeks and your days, you've got incredible highs and incredible lows. And if you can find a way to regulate whilst not also becoming sterile and non emotive and, and not celebrating your wins, but just see things from a much longer term view, then you become more patient, then you become more resilient. And I think that is a skill and an ability that we as leaders have to have to have, but becomes much more difficult. The busier we're becoming and therefore it's, it's something that, you know, a coach could help a leader with, and it's something that a leader can help another leader with. And you know, leading on to I talked about me for a moment there. But you know, self awareness is, is another skill or trait that leaders need to have in order to be successful. And if you're going to coach individuals, you need to have a good understanding of your own strengths, and weaknesses and values and beliefs. And a lot of self reflection and feedback from your coach or from other leaders can make you more aware of how you impact others. And I think that is really, really important when you're thinking about when you're thinking about how you can help others. You need to know where your strengths lie. And there are so many tools, free ones on the internet, ones that your organization provides that might also psychometric tools help you understand your own personality, and where you're sitting in the debrief. And you'll say, oh, yeah, I know what I meant. Now, you said that makes me think about that, or I realize that about myself, or I'd also encourage every leader out there to be brave enough, even if it's informal, to do a 360, where you'll get feedback from your peers, your boss, your direct reports, because again, having good awareness of yourself will really help one one very quick point on that, you know, and again, my team will probably laugh, because they'll tell me, I still do this, but I try and do it less than I ever did before. But I once had a 360. And I was basically told that when I'm not interested in a topic, you can see it all over my face. So if you're in a meeting, and we're talking about something that's just just got boring. As a leader, you need to you need to figure out methods and coping mechanisms to maintain the momentum, the enthusiasm in the room, and I at times, would zone out, play with my phone or do something and distract myself. And again, hearing that and knowing that about myself, which is probably true. So probably true, it is true. When I'm now sat in a meeting and things get boring is the wrong word, things are less relevant to my own agenda, or to the business's agenda, I will either figure out how to stay involved, or I'll or I'll actually just leave the room in a nice way. Because, again, that's self awareness, that's knowing yourself.

51:31

So self awareness. And emotional regulation seems like those two kind of go together. And it's, it seems like understanding your strengths, your weaknesses, but also how other people perceive you, I

think, is a great way to kind of think of self awareness, emotional regulation to Well, I guess, emotional regulation is more, controlling your emotions. So for example, if you're having a bad day, you're not going to like flip over tables and throw chairs at people. Similarly, if you're having a great day, you're not just gonna go off the rails and like splurge and do like an \$80,000 party, like you can maintain a stable balance of emotion, I mean, recognizing when you're unhappy, and when you are happy, but not having these, like ridiculously wild swings going up and down.

52:17

Yeah, I mean, I would still say I would class, you know, resilience, the ability to manage stress, and remain composed self awareness. And then the third one I'd actually put down as emotional intelligence, which is, which is kind of what you've been talking about. But, you know, understanding that Rachel is a very different human to Bob, and how you empathize with them and how you connect with them on their level, is, is critical to to leadership, because not everybody reacts to you in the same way. And you need to have incredible empathy as a leader and truly understand their perspective and their personal situation. At times, we all have our personal lives in our work lives are far more intertwined now. But having that empathy, to engage with leaders show that emotional intelligence really builds strong relationships, it helps resolve conflicts, and, and ultimately will motivate people far more effectively.

53:17

Yeah. Okay, so we talked about I don't think we covered all four yet, but the first one, we talked about resilience. Yeah. The second was, I guess, self awareness. Yep. Any emotional regulation, you'd bucket those two together?

53:31

Yeah, I would say self awareness. And then emotional intelligence, self awareness is knowing yourself. Emotional Intelligence is knowing how other people feel.

53:39

Okay, and what would be the fourth attribute that you think would make for a leader?

53:44

Yeah, I've, I've talked about this more and more and more, but you know, the ability to be agile and adaptability, I would call it so okay, you know, businesses have become far more dynamic, they're far more uncertain, it's far more complicated. You need to be adaptable to change and flexible. And if budgets move, or if business has changed direction, or if there's a reaction to the market to release a new product, you have to have the agility to do that. We're just the world is changing daily. And you know, the strategy that you create on Jan, one may not be relevant on September, the first and you need to be adaptable to that. And as a leader, you need to show that you're adaptable, so that your team can be adaptable to.

54:29

Okay, so being and I suppose being adaptable is really going back to, I guess, being flexible in your thinking, being able to think of different scenarios and opportunities and possibilities at the same time.

Because one of the stereotypes of leaders right is that they usually pick a path, they make a decision, and they're a full speed ahead with that decision, regardless of what the consequences are going to be. And if things are getting in the way, they just assume that they can kind of plow through it. And as we know, that's not always a good, a good thing to do. And I think a lot of people would use more Zuckerberg is an example with meta, where, you know, dumping billions and billions of dollars into something and people are saying, hey, you know, you should probably stop doing that. And he's like, Nope, it's my vision, we're going to do it. And you know, the hell with everything else. And of course, it will remain to be seen what the outcome of that is going to be. But I think that's an example of somebody who just has that one path. And that's, that's it like, they will get to that path regardless of what needs to happen. And not always the best approach.

55:27

Yeah, agreed. All right, agreed.

55:32

So we just have like two or three minutes to wrap up. So maybe we could end on any piece of advice that you have for leaders out there who are looking to be better coaches, we talked about the four attributes that leaders need to embrace. But is there any other advice that you have for them, maybe something we didn't touch on, that leaders should be thinking about when it comes to coaching?

55:54

Yeah, I mean, I mean, I would, I would, I would always give this advice to leaders. And coaching plays a big part in it. But you know, and I say, and it's, it's become a cliché, but you know, your company's culture, your team's culture, your department culture is the single biggest correlation to the success you're going to have within your business. If your people feel listened to, if they feel that you're self aware, if they feel that you've empathize with their situation, if they feel like you're confident in the strategy, and you're adaptable to what's going on, then you will create a culture in that team, where they are courageous, they are confident, they are proud, they are excited to come to work every day, they are talking about work with their friends. And then when it comes to things like making your product come to life, or making your marketing plan come to life or making your sales meeting that you'll go into more effective. Having that confidence in your own company's culture, which comes from your leader will change the way that you turn up every day that you sit in front of a customer in that you lead with your teams in and the read, I suppose the overarching point is culture comes first, and results come second. Because results and it is a self fulfilling prophecy, because then you get better results. And then your culture improves. But you've got to have the guts that's at the beginning, wherever you are in your journey. If it's broken, fix your culture. If your results are broken, it's somewhere sitting in your culture. And that's something that you have to fix. First and foremost, if you want a sustainable change in your business, and I think that would be a what I'm saying is, this isn't just soft, fluffy stuff. This is real stuff. And if you're a leader, who necessarily isn't a huge believer in this, most people do, do buy into good leadership that listens that follows those four traits that I shared. Never underestimate it, because that's what makes successful companies.

58:07

I love it. Nick, where can people go to learn more about you, Ezra, anything that you want to mention for people to check out?

58:15

Yeah, absolutely. So please follow me on LinkedIn, Nick Goldberg. If you want to learn more about Ezra, our website, we'll guide you in the right direction. It's Hello as your.com H E double I o ezra.com. We would be delighted to hear more and support your organization and how you're looking to grow and develop your leaders across the world.

58:40

Very cool. Nick, again, thank you so much for taking time out of your day. I really appreciate it. And thanks, everyone for tuning in my guest again, Nick Goldberg, the CEO and co founder of Ezra and I will see all of you next week. I hope you enjoyed my conversation with Nick Goldberg. If you want to start your day with the world's best leaders, which is what 1000s of people are doing today, then join us at Great leadership.substack.com That's great leadership.substack.com It is a community newsletter that I recently started where every day, I share insights, strategies, advice or research to help make you a better leader. There is a free version. And there is a premium version. If you become a paid subscriber, there are a couple of things that you're going to get, which you won't get if you are a free subscriber. The first of those things is something called The Five Minute leader, where every week I will share a leadership hack or strategy that a CEO shared with me that I will in turn share with you it's a three to five minute video that you're gonna get once a week. The second thing you will get is something called the leaders toolkit. These are 15 minute deep dives with guests that I have where we talk about something specific related to leadership that you can implement in your leadership and your professional development journey and the third thing you will get is a weekly article that I personally write, which we'll talk about a trend. It will share a discovery, a piece of research insight. It's a deep dive article that I spend several hours writing that, again, you can apply in your leadership and your professional development journey. All of these things are designed to help make you a better leader. It's not expensive at all, it is 999 A month or \$108 for the entire year, less than the cost of two lattes a month. It'll be the best money you ever spend on your professional and your leadership development. So I hope to see you over there. It's great leadership.substack.com I'll see you next week.