

# IDENTITY CONSTRUCTION IN COACHING: SCHEMAS, INFORMATION PROCESSING, AND GOAL COMMITMENT

Chris W. Coultas

*Leadership Worth Following, LLC,  
Irving, Texas*

Eduardo Salas

*Rice University*

Leadership coaching is a nearly \$2 billion per year industry ([International Coach Federation, 2012](#)), and although many different theories and approaches to coaching exist, relatively little is known about the differential effectiveness of various coaching approaches. Grounded in theories germane to but that transcend coaching (e.g., social identity, information processing), this study explores the ways in which several factors influence a very proximal outcome of coaching—commitment to set goals. It was hypothesized that coaches can intentionally help their coachees attain a more helpful coaching schema; additionally, it was hypothesized that this schema influences information processing during the session, which in turn affects goal commitment. A laboratory study was conducted in which trained research associates conducted a 1-session coaching session with undergraduate students focused on improving conflict management skills. Key findings highlight the importance of the coaching schema for directing information processing and eliciting higher levels of goal commitment in coaching.

*Keywords:* coaching, goal setting, information processing, leadership development, social identity

Executive coaching is a class of interventions defined by a one-to-one relationship in which the coach and coachee work together to identify and achieve organizationally, professionally, and personally beneficial developmental goals ([Feldman & Lankau, 2005](#); [Kilburg, 2004](#)). Although research has shown coaching to have beneficial effects on immediate outcomes such as goal commitment, motivation, attitudes, and skills ([Jones, Woods, & Guillaume, 2015](#); [Theeboom, Beersma, & van Vianen, 2014](#)), and others have argued for its generally positive return on investment ([McGovern et al., 2001](#); [Wasylyshyn, 2003](#)), key issues remain unexplored within the executive coaching science; these issues mostly surround the question of “how and why does

---

Chris W. Coultas, Leadership Worth Following, LLC, Irving, Texas; Eduardo Salas, Department of Psychology, Rice University.

This work was supported by funding from the Society for Human Resource Management Foundation to Dr. Eduardo Salas, Principal Investigator (Contract number 162). The views expressed in this work are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the organizations with which they are affiliated or their sponsoring institutions or agencies.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Chris W. Coultas, 5605 North MacArthur Boulevard, Ste 760, Irving, TX 75038. E-mail: [chrisc@worthleadership.com](mailto:chrisc@worthleadership.com)

coaching work” (de Haan, Duckworth, Birch, & Jones, 2013). Indeed, some have even gone so far as to call this question the “Holy Grail” of executive coaching research (de Haan & Duckworth, 2010). McKenna and Davis (2009) looked to the counseling and therapy research, highlighting parallels between what has demonstrated effectiveness in those arenas and what would likely prove to be essential in coaching; however, empirical work has not yet fully validated these claims. Ultimately, a lack of quantitative research (de Haan et al., 2013; Feldman & Lankau, 2005) and competing theories pertaining to coaching effectiveness have complicated further exploration into these issues (Coutu & Kauffman, 2009; Grant, Curtayne, & Burton, 2009; Lowman, 2007; Mackie, 2007). For example, executive coaching *effectiveness* is loosely defined, and may be operationalized in a number of ways such as improved interpersonal skills, decreased stress, and quicker e-mail response; as such, outcomes are nearly impossible to systematically assess across interventions (Mackie, 2007). This is a major issue for executive coaching, because it is the systematic assessment of interventions that drives scientific and practical progress.

It will be difficult, if not impossible, to maximize the effectiveness of coaching on the whole, until coaching practices are more clearly explicated, based in theory, tested, agreed upon, and continually developed (Lowman, 2007; Mackie, 2007). Researchers are beginning to develop models of coaching to do just this. Carey, Philippon, and Cummings (2011) recently reviewed an array of current coaching models, noting a few commonalities across approaches (e.g., the importance of trust) to coaching. However, they identified one major, common problem: a lack of consistent “measures to determine developmental progress and success” (p. 64). For example, even generalizable measures such as Goal Attainment Scaling (Spence, 2007) have not been widely adopted in the field. Because coaching tends to be very situation-specific (Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Turner & Goodrich, 2010), a broad, highly generalizable, process-based framework of executive coaching would provide consistency to the science of coaching; it would also allow coaches and HR professionals to begin systematically assessing the effectiveness of different elements of coaching. Joo (2005) proposed a broad framework of coaching effectiveness that includes antecedents (e.g., coach and coachee characteristics), processes (e.g., coaching relationship), proximal outcomes (e.g., learning, behavioral change), and distal outcomes (e.g., increased success).

Accordingly, this research explores the effects that coaching behaviors (an antecedent) have on one specific coaching outcome (i.e., goal commitment), and the interpersonal and intrapersonal processes that mediate this relationship. As others have noted, personal and leadership development is largely dependent on increasing individuals’ awareness of development opportunities (McCauley & Van Velsor, 2004). Given the importance of awareness, this research approaches coaching from an information processing perspective (Brunswik, 1952; Evans, 2008). Information processing theory and research are focused on the mechanisms that drive the ways in which individuals collect, perceive, store, encode, retrieve, and apply information (Järvinen & Poikela, 2001; Kolb, 1976). One factor that research has shown to influence information processing is individuals’ sense of interpersonal relations in a given situation (Forgas, 2001), which social identity construction research (Ashforth, Rogers, & Corley, 2011; Derue & Ashford, 2010) suggests is an emergent phenomenon. The purpose of this study therefore is to better understand the explanatory mechanisms behind coachee change, with an emphasis on coachee information processing, and the ways in which the emergent coach-coachee relationship influences this information processing. In so doing, this study will serve to further our understanding of how and under what conditions coaching works.

## Theoretical Background

A host of frameworks exist that explain how coaching should be done and how it operates—ranging from the psychodynamic (Kilburg, 1996, 2004) to the highly behavioral (Ducharme, 2004; Joo, 2005; Eldridge & Dembkowski, 2013). Recently, Control Theory (Carver & Scheier, 1990; Gregory, Beck & Carr, 2011) has been proffered as a context-general framework for understanding coaching; though it is not explicitly framed as such, this is an information processing approach to understanding coaching. To briefly summarize, coachees hold information about themselves, and coaches provide information relevant to the coachee which s/he then considers (or ignores) and processes (or

not) to generate an action plan for personal and/or leadership development. The information provided by the coach could refer to the suggestion of an alternative perspective, the offering of an insight into the coachee's behavioral patterns, or even the asking of an open-ended question designed to trigger further coachee cognitive processing (Passmore, 2007). Furthermore, this provided information carries with it an implicit attempt to influence the coachee toward realizing a possible behavioral change (Prochaska, Redding, & Evers, 2008; Weinstein, Sandman, & Blalock, 2008).

However, Control Theory would assume that coachees accept this influence attempt and are actively using the provided information to direct their self-regulation and goal setting efforts (Carver & Scheier, 1990; Gregory et al., 2011). However, this may not always be the case. Especially in coaching, where the available information frequently comes in the form of a dissenting opinion (Ely et al., 2010), this information must first be processed to determine whether or not it is relevant to inform behavioral changes. For this reason, Control Theory is insufficient to fully explain the coaching phenomenon. What is needed is a better understanding of the explanatory mechanisms behind coach influence and coachee information processing. A social information processing approach—derived by synthesizing Derue and Ashford's (2010) leadership identity model and Mugny, Butera, and Falomir-Pichastor's (2001) model of conflict and information sharing in judge–advisor systems—provides a better understanding of these mechanisms. To summarize the model (which is explicated in further detail subsequently), coaching is more effective when coachees feel responsible for and are cognitively invested in the outcomes of coaching; this responsibility and investment is in part attributable to the coachee's understanding of (or schema for) what constitutes ideal coach-coachee interactions. Finally, this schema for coaching emerges through dynamic social interactions between coach and coachee wherein the coachee gradually comes to understand the intended roles of both coach and coachee during coaching (see Figure 1).

### Coaching Identities and Schemas

Derue and Ashford (2010) recently proposed a model of leader–follower dynamics grounded in the social identity literature that argues that the influence central to leadership is based on an iterative process of would-be leaders *claiming* a leadership role and others *granting* these would-be leaders the right to lead them. Leadership claims can be explicit (e.g., stating, “I am the leader of this group”) or implicit (e.g., seeking out leadership roles); similarly, follower identities can be claimed either explicitly (e.g., stating, “Don't look at me, I'm just following his lead”) or implicitly (e.g., avoiding leadership roles with greater responsibility). Identities can be claimed, but they must also be granted by the would-be follower. These granting behaviors may similarly be explicit (e.g., “I need you to tell me what to do here”) or implicit (e.g., deferring a position of prominence in a meeting). Ultimately, this process of claiming and granting defines the leader–follower relationship. If a follower rejects a leaders' claim to leadership, it is no longer a leader–follower relationship. Similarly, if a follower begins to adopt a leader identity, the relationship with the former leader would be changed.

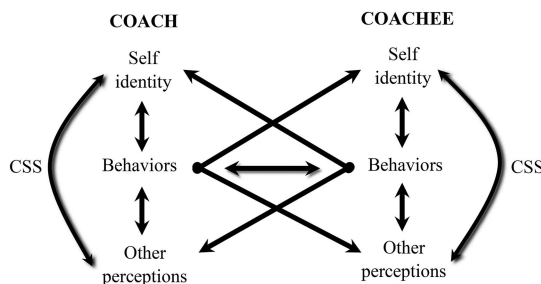


Figure 1. Social information processing model of coaching.

Leadership Identity Theory (Derue & Ashford, 2010) also argues that the structuring of leader and follower identities are akin to leadership schemas (Hogg, 2001; Horowitz, 1989, 1991). These schemas dictate how individuals believe leader–follower relations should be structured (i.e., on a continuum from completely shared to completely hierarchical). These schemas, which are engrained over time, may also “shift among group members through a social construction process” (p. 628) wherein individuals reciprocally claim and grant either leadership or followership identities. Extending this to coaching, coachees may have an initial understanding of who they think is responsible for what in coaching, but this can change over time through reciprocal claiming and granting processes. Accordingly, it follows that at least in part, the coach’s use of claiming and granting behaviors can serve to influence the coachee’s schema for coach-coachee relations and responsibilities, or the coaching structure schema (CSS).

Coach behaviors such as introducing oneself as a coach, dressing professionally, acting with confidence, or emphasizing one’s competence at coaching (Evetts, 2008; Roest & Rindfleisch, 2010) can be used to “claim” the influential role of “coach.” Because claiming behaviors can be implicit or explicit, they may range in their degree of intentionality; ultimately, they are any behavior that the coach engages in that may solidify his or her position as a coach, as a source of trusted advice, guidance, instruction, or direction for the coachee. Competence-based trust (Mayer, Davis, & Schoorman, 1995)—which is grounded in the trustor’s (coachee’s) perception of the trustee (coach) as someone having a degree of expertise or ability in a given domain—is often assumed because the coachee places the coach in the category of “expert” (Wildman et al., 2012). But this expert category (or “coach” identity) can be further reinforced through claiming behaviors (Derue & Ashford, 2010)—provided it is not diminished through identity-inconsistent behaviors such as faulty or seemingly useless advice (Ben-Naim, Bonnefon, Herzig, Leblois, & Lorini, 2013; Van Swol & Ludutsky, 2007). Just as followers who more strongly accept others’ leadership claims allow themselves to be influenced and guided by leaders, coachees who accept their coaches’ claims to coach them will be more strongly influenced than those who reject these claims. The degree to which the coachee expects to be influenced by the coach (e.g., through guiding, leading, or instructing) is one part of the coachee’s CSS. Coachees who expect their coaches to exert substantial influence on them throughout the coaching process can be said to have a more coach dependent, coach oriented, or “coach-centric” CSS. Coach claiming behaviors should have some positive association with a more coach-centric CSS.

*Hypothesis 1a:* Coaches’ use of coach-claiming behaviors will be associated with higher levels of coach-centrism in coachees’ CSS.

Just as successful coach claiming behaviors will encourage coachees to see their coaches as being competent and an active player in the behavioral change process, effective coachee granting behaviors should strengthen coachees’ perception that they themselves are an essential component to the coaching process. Coaching is predicated on the coachee’s *active* participation in coaching (Naficy & Isabella, 2008; Peterson, 1996). Coachee granting behaviors—intended to engage the coachee in the process—may be something as simple as explaining to the coachee that his or her participation is essential, or more clearly highlighting the roles the coachee should play in the coaching process. To this point, when individuals feel a higher level of specific self-efficacy for engaging in certain behaviors, they tend to be more engaged and participative when working with others—evidenced by increased information sharing, among other process variables (Cabrera & Cabrera, 2002; Hsu, Ju, Yen, & Chang, 2007). Accordingly, it is hypothesized that coaches can facilitate a coachee-centric CSS by engaging in coachee-granting behaviors.

*Hypothesis 1b:* Coaches’ use of coachee-granting behaviors will be associated with higher levels of coachee-centrism in coachees’ CSS.

Coaches may move coachees’ CSS toward coach-centrism with coach-claiming behaviors, or toward coachee-centrism with coachee-granting behaviors. However, as others have mentioned (Baron & Morin, 2009; Jowett, Kanakoglou, & Passmore, 2012; Naficy & Isabella, 2008), and as

is explicated in further detail later, a “whole” CSS is neither completely coach- nor coachee-centric. A more complete coachee CSS is one that emphasizes the responsibility of both the coach and coachee in eliciting the desired outcomes of coaching. How can coaches encourage this helpful CSS? By engaging in both coach-claiming and coachee-granting behaviors, coaches facilitate coachees’ sense of a complementary coaching CSS. Coaches can leverage both claiming and granting behaviors, to say, “I, as the coach, am able and should have the right to coach you towards higher performance, and you, as the coachee, are able and must also actively contribute to this process.”

*Hypothesis 1c:* Coaches’ use of coachee-granting and coach-claiming behaviors will interact such that the simultaneous presence of both will be associated with coachees’ CSS being stronger and more shared (i.e., less coach- or coachee-centric).

### Coachee Information Processing

Effective coaching engagements are characterized not only by the coachee’s willingness to hear, process, and act on what the coach has to say (Gregory et al., 2011), but by active collaboration between the coach and coachee (Naficy & Isabella, 2008; O’Flaherty & Everson, 2005; Peterson & Hicks, 1996). But how does this collaborative interaction emerge? As discussed above, coach claiming and granting behaviors can help shape a coachee’s coaching identity and schema. A coachee with a coach-centric CSS will likely adopt a more passive approach to the coaching process, allowing the coach to do the majority of the influencing throughout the coaching process. Conversely, a coachee-centric CSS might yield a more adversarial mindset in coaching, with the coachee rejecting the coach’s right to influence. Finally, a shared CSS should encourage coachees to not only accept and process information provided by the coach, but to actively engage in the process, providing ideas and appropriate push-back when necessary.

These different structures of collaboration and information processing are discussed in Conflict Elaboration Theory (CET; Mugny et al., 2001). Essentially, CET is a model of source/target information sharing and decision-making that takes into account the expertise and competence of both actors. It argues that when one individual (the “source”) attempts to provide information or influence another (the “target”), the target experiences a degree of interpersonal threat (ranging from low to high). The level of threat experienced is partly influenced by the level of competence or expertise of both the source and the target. CET has been explained elsewhere (Buchs, Butera, Mugny, & Darnon, 2004; Mugny et al., 2001), but a brief summary is provided in Table 1 below. The relevance of CET to coaching is that varying levels of competence and threat will influence the ways in which coachees process information and interact with their coaches. Coach claiming and granting behaviors can be leveraged to help create these conditions and consequently influence coachee information processing.

What information is available to facilitate coachees’ decision making and goal-setting efforts? In any given coaching relationship, coachees necessarily have three sources of information at their disposal: (a) information provided by the coach, (b) information privately held by the coachee, and (c) information generated by the coaching process (Hicks & Peterson, 1999; Järvinen & Poikela, 2001; Kolb, 1976; Kuenberger, Mathieu, & Ruddy, 2015; Prochaska et al., 2008). These sources may be theoretically *available* to coachees, but as is argued below, their influence on coachees’ decision-making and goal-setting is at least partially determined by their CSS. The degree to which coachees pay attention to coach-provided information will be dependent on their perception of the coach (Mugny et al., 2001). Research has found that when targets perceive advisors to be competent and accurate, they tend to be more influenced by the advice and information that advisors provide (Sniezek & Buckley, 1995; Savori, Van Swol, & Sniezek, 2001; Yaniv & Kleinberger, 2000). Based on CET, even if the coachee perceives the coach to be a competent source of information and advice, if s/he does not perceive him or herself as being essential to the coaching process, s/he will be less likely to actively engage in the coaching *process* (e.g., communicating, jointly setting goals, etc.). In this instance, the coachee will be more likely to passively or dependently receive the

This document is copyrighted by the American Psychological Association or one of its allied publishers. This article is intended solely for the personal use of the individual user and is not to be disseminated broadly.

Table 1  
*A Summary of Conflict Elaboration Theory*

| Comparison             | High competence source   |  | Low competence source  |  |
|------------------------|--|--|--|--|
|                        | Threatening  | Nonthreatening   | Threatening  | Nonthreatening   |
| High competence target | Conflict of competencies – target’s fear of feeling incompetent compared to source elicits a tendency to invalidate the source’s influence attempts                    | Informational interdependence – no fear of incompetence leads both parties to share information and collaborate constructively | —  | Absence of conflict – target withdraws psychologically from the process, believing the source’s influence attempts to be irrelevant                      |
| Low competence target  | Informational constraint – target’s fear of incompetence drives a shallow level of processing that focuses on providing a right answer but limiting long term learning | Informational dependence – no fear of incompetence leads target to accept and deeply process the source’s influence attempts   | Downward comparison – target’s fear of feeling incompetent compared to the source elicits a tendency to invalidate the source’s influence attempts | Conflict of incompetencies – both parties realize incompetence but are not threatened by it, so they engage in constructive processing and collaboration |

information provided by the coach (Mugny et al., 2001). In other words, coachees who hold a strictly coach-centric CSS are relying on the coach to fulfill some kind of mentor or sage role—providing directive information and solutions.

*Hypothesis 2a:* When coachees hold a coach-centric CSS, they will engage in more passive, dependent processing, focusing more on information provided by the coach.

Directive, solution-oriented information is not the only source of information that coachees may process in a given coaching engagement. Coaches commonly ask insightful questions and provide dissenting opinions that assist the coachee in thinking more deeply on issues relevant to behavioral change and goal progress (De Dreu, Nijstad, & van Knippenberg, 2008; Passmore, 2007; Van Kleef et al., 2009). Research has shown that dissenting opinions have been found to more strongly trigger cognitive processing than do consenting opinions (Savadori, Van Swol, & Sniezek, 2001; Van Swol & Ludutsky, 2007). However, for these challenging questions and perspectives to “unlock” previously inaccessible information, they must be actively processed by the coachee (Sniezek & Buckley, 1995; Van Swol & Ludutsky, 2007). Actively processing a question posed by the coach implies two things. First, it implies that the coachee acknowledges the importance of his or her active engagement in the coaching process (indicating some level of a coachee-centric CSS). Two, it assumes that the coachee sees the coach’s question as being relevant and potentially helpful (again, indicating some level of a coach-centric CSS). Ultimately, coachees holding a shared CSS (i.e., recognizing the roles of both coach and coachee influence in coaching) should focus more on the questions asked by coaches and the insights generated from these questions. This phenomenon is loosely suggested in coaching research. Case studies and interviews suggest that coachees often experience “critical moments” of deep processing, insight, and sudden awareness when working with their coaches (de Haan, Bertie, Day, & Sills, 2010, 2013). These moments often come as a result of intense interpersonal processes. In other words, coachees need to be open to the coach’s role and contributions, but a critical, meaningful moment necessarily implies a more active role on the coachee’s part.

*Hypothesis 2b:* When coachees hold a shared CSS, as opposed to another CSS, they will focus on and process more coaching questions and the insights generated from them.

### Information Processing and Goal-Setting

Coachee commitment to goals set during coaching is one of the most important and foundational predictors of whether the nascent progress made in a coaching setting will actually transfer to the coachee’s life and job environment (Kilburg, 2001; Klein, Wesson, Hollenbeck, & Alge, 1999). Regarding tangible behavioral change, one of the first (most proximal) change-directed behaviors a coachee can take is the setting of and commitment to behavioral change goals (Lewis-Duarte, 2009; Prochaska et al., 2008; Weinstein et al., 2008). While simply the act of goal-setting is unlikely to be a final outcome that organizations are interested in contracting for, because it represents a first step toward desirable behavioral change, goals and goal-setting behaviors may also be considered a meaningful outcome of a coaching engagement, especially during the beginning stages of executive coaching (Lewis-Duarte, 2009). This means that coaches should also be concerned with how to encourage coachee goal commitment.

Research and theory alike have suggested that individuals who process information more intensely during goal-setting tend to be more committed to and work harder to carry out their goals (Gollwitzer, Heckhausen, & Ratajczak, 1990; Kruglanski & Thompson, 1999; Locke, 1996). Other research in the health care industry has found that depth of cognitive processing typically mediates the relationship between various interventions and outcomes (Creswell et al., 2007). Meyer, Becker, and Vandenberghe’s (2004) integrative model of commitment and motivation also suggests that an individual’s identification, value congruence, and involvement with a set goal (i.e., realizations that emerge from information processing) lead to high levels of goal commitment. The underlying theme of these theories and findings is that the more effort that individuals commit to provided information

when setting goals, the more committed they will be to the goals once they are set. On the basis of such evidence, it follows that coachees who process information more deeply during coaching sessions will report higher levels of commitment to the goals they set in coaching.

*Hypothesis 3a:* Depth of coachee information processing will be positively associated with initial commitment to self-set goals.

Though the depth of coachee information processing is undoubtedly important, the focus of coachee information processing is also important to coaching outcomes. Goal-setting theory and research suggest that a host of characteristics germane to volition and action, such as proactive personality (Joo & Lim, 2009), core self-evaluations (Judge, Bono, Erez, & Locke, 2005), conscientiousness (Walker et al., 2010), and specific self-efficacy (Locke, Frederick, Lee, & Bobko, 1984; Zimmerman, Bandura, & Martinez-Pons, 1992) are essential drivers of goal commitment. If coachees are incorporating their own insights and information, this should be a more volitional experience for the coachee than if s/he were to just passively accept the coach's information as the primary driver of the goal-setting process; this enhanced volition leads to higher levels of commitment to set goals (Earley & Kanfer, 1985; Wright, 1992). Conversely, if the goal-setting process is overly influenced by others, difficult goals may be attributed to the other person being unrealistic or out of touch, resulting in lower levels of goal commitment (Hollenbeck & Klein, 1987; Hollenbeck, Williams, & Klein, 1989); in other words, if the coachee's goal-setting process is too focused on coach-provided information, s/he will be less likely to report higher levels of commitment to goals. However, this is not to suggest that coachees who ignore their coaches will be highly committed to their set-goals. Research suggests that goal-relevant information—included that provided by the coach—is linked to greater self-efficacy and goal commitment (Earley, 1986) and can positively influence behavioral change efforts (Daamen, Staats, Wilke, & Engelen, 2001; Rimer & Kreuter, 2006). Similarly, a host of research suggests that more clearly stated goals tend to result in higher levels of goal attainment and commitment for performance goals (Fuhrmann & Kuhl, 1998; Lozano & Stephens, 2010; Wright & Kacmar, 1994) and learning goals as well (Drach-Zahavy & Erez, 2002; Seijts, Latham, Tasa, & Latham, 2004). So although the coachee's sense of control in setting his or her own goals is helpful in eliciting commitment, the goal specificity and clarity gained by a collaborative coaching process should lead to even higher levels of goal commitment.

*Hypothesis 3b:* Coachees who focus on jointly constructed information will report higher levels of goal commitment.

## Method

### Participants

Participants were 109 undergraduate students (56% female, mean age = 19 years) from a large university in the southeastern United States. Participants signed up through the university's participant recruitment system, and they were awarded extra credit for participation in the study.

### Procedure

Participants sat for a brief "coaching" session with trained research assistants who acted as coaches. Because of the highly complex nature of coaching, this was not intended to be a simulation of a real ongoing coaching relationship, but rather a simulation of the initial coaching session in which the intended outcome was to have the participant set a goal and develop a plan to achieve that goal. To control for any possible effects resulting from the focus of coaching (e.g., time management vs. delegation), the coaching session focused on improving coachees' skills in only one content domain—conflict management. Furthermore, to minimize variation in outcomes attributable to unquantifiable differences between coaches, all coaches followed a lightly scripted, outlined process (transposed onto PowerPoint slides and placed in the research associate's peripheral vision to help them follow the script while still appearing natural). Research assistants also followed a "conver-



sation ladder” (Megginson & Clutterbuck, 2005) to help build rapport with participants at the beginning of the simulation; the general structure of the sessions is described in further detail below. The coaching sessions lasted between one and one and a half hours. After completing the coaching session and responding to several questionnaire items, participants were thanked and debriefed regarding the nature of the study. All data were collected electronically through the online survey software, Qualtrics.

**The coaching simulation.** As noted above, all coaching sessions were focused on improving participants’ conflict management skills. Participants were informed before volunteering for the study that they would be receiving conflict management coaching, so there was at least some interest in coaching objectives. To make coaching objectives more attuned to the participant’s needs (thereby better simulating a real coaching session), the conflict management coaching session allowed participants to select from one of four broad conflict management domains – *clearly communicating, listening and clarifying, identifying and focusing, and validating the other person*. These domains were adapted from a larger set of conflict management skills (Arellano & Markman, 1995) because they are decidedly more behavioral and controllable than other conflict management skills (e.g., controlling emotions, resisting escalation). In all conditions, the research assistant guided the participant through a very basic coaching simulation, consisting of a “personal scorecard” to allow participants to self-rate their conflict management skills, a tool designed to assess typical conflict styles, a series of questions to help participants clarify their goals, and the development of a brief, behavior-based action plan to improve conflict management skills. The personal scorecard technique was adapted from Rampersad (2009). The conflict style tool was an adapted form of the Thomas Kilman Conflict Index, a commonly used tool in coaching and leadership development. A series of coaching questions were pulled from the existing coaching literature (Hicks & McCracken, 2010; International Coach Federation, 2010; Jones, 2012; Warner, 2013) and were also generated on the basis of existing motivation and goal-setting theories (Locke & Latham, 2002; Vroom, Porter, & Lawler, 2005). These questions were intended to move participants through the GROW model, which is the most widely used method for structuring coaching sessions (Grant, 2011). The GROW model is a way to structure coaching interventions to make sure that they are: *goal-focused* (G), grounded in *reality* (R), accounting for all *options and obstacles* to goal success (O), and driven by sufficient coachee motivation and *will to succeed* (W).

**Manipulation.** Participants were randomly assigned to one of four conditions, leveraging a  $2 \times 2$  factorial structure to explore the effects of claiming and granting behaviors on coaching outcomes. To more firmly establish causality, measurement periods were time separated so as to establish temporal precedence. The two manipulated independent variables were the presence or absence of coach claiming behaviors and coachee granting behaviors. Coach claiming behaviors refer to the actions coaches take to assert their identity as a coach, and coachee granting behaviors refer to coach actions impart a coachee identity onto the coachee (Derue & Ashford, 2010). These behaviors were manipulated through a script which the coach/research associate read that reflects either the presence or absence of claiming and/or granting behaviors (see Appendix A).

## Measures

**Information processing.** Participants were asked to report their cognitive experiences throughout the coaching session. To assess this, a measure was developed by synthesizing techniques from essay evaluation studies (Bower, Kemeny, Taylor, & Fahey, 2003; Pennebaker & Beall, 1986) as well as market research studies (Hammond, Fong, McDonald, Cameron, & Brown, 2003). Essay evaluation studies assess cognitive effort and focus by asking participants to evaluate their own essays in terms of what they talked about and how deeply they thought about it (Bower et al., 2003; Pennebaker & Beall, 1986). In the market research studies (Hammond et al., 2003), participants were asked how carefully they thought about different sources of information. By adapting and synthesizing these two measures, a measure was developed to assess information processing in a coaching situation; this measure taps the degree to which the coachee engages in independent (i.e., private cognitions), dependent (i.e., information provided by the coach), or

interdependent/joint processing (i.e., information from the collaborative coaching process; see Appendix B).

Various analyses were conducted to determine the quality of the measure. Joint processing, (e.g., “Together, the coach and I come up with ideas on how to achieve my goals,” “Sometimes, questions that the coach asks me make me think of something in a new light”) refers to the degree to which the coachee thinks about content that is generated as a result of dynamic interactions with the coach ( $\alpha = .72$ ). Independent processing (e.g., “I am thinking about my own ideas on how to achieve my goals”) refers to the degree to which the coachee thinks privately (without engaging the coach) about things relating to coaching ( $\alpha = .67$ ). Dependent processing (e.g., “I accept the coach’s ideas on how to achieve my goals without questioning them”) refers to the degree to which the coachee thinks about content directly provided by the coach ( $\alpha = .60$ ). Four generic information processing items were worded negatively and referred to a general lack of interest or disengagement in the coaching process (e.g., “I am not putting much thought into this session”); this scale had acceptable reliability levels,  $\alpha = .74$ . To assess construct validity, these subscales were correlated with a conceptually similar measure of interaction involvement (Cegala, 1981). Interaction involvement is a measure of an individual’s social focus or “perceptiveness” (i.e., self, other), as well as their level of overall engagement or “attentiveness.” As expected, joint processing correlated with self-perceptiveness ( $r = .42, p < .001$ ), other-perceptiveness ( $r = .30, p < .01$ ), and attentiveness ( $r = .42, p < .001$ ). Dependent processing correlated with other-perceptiveness ( $r = .23, p < .05$ ) and attentiveness ( $r = .19, p < .05$ ), but not self-perceptiveness ( $r = .17, ns$ ). Disengagement was correlated with attentiveness ( $r = -.62, p < .001$ ), self-perceptiveness ( $r = -.41, p < .001$ ), and other-perceptiveness ( $r = -.27, p < .001$ ). Independent processing was not correlated with any of the interaction involvement subscales, though this is to be expected, as independent processing items were about internal cognitions, whereas interaction involvement measures are more about processing of interpersonal information. Confirmatory factor analysis was also conducted to assess the fit of a three factor model of information processing (disengagement was excluded as it does not assess attentional focus). Analyses indicated good model fit (CMIN/DF = 1.46, GFI = .903, CFI = .92, RMSEA = .07).

**Coaching structure schemas.** To assess coachees’ CSS, a 16-item measure of this construct was developed by combining a variation of Morgeson, DeRue, and Karam’s (2010) measure of functional leadership behaviors and Mclean, Yang, Kuo, Tolbert, and Larkin’s (2005) measure of coaching behaviors. Select items were chosen from Morgeson, DeRue, and Karam’s (2010) measure and added to the Mclean, Yang, Kuo, Tolbert, and Larkin’s (2005) measure because the latter formed an insufficient representation of coaching behaviors (on the basis of literature review and interviews with practicing executive coaches). The items selected from Morgeson, DeRue, and Karam’s (2010) measures, though developed in the context of functional leadership, were selected on the basis of their conceptual overlap with behaviors and processes that typically occur in a coaching engagement (e.g., setting goals, asking questions). Participants were then asked to what extent coaches and coachees are responsible for engaging in each of the presented behaviors (thus making it a 32 item measure in total). Presenting items in this fashion allowed participants to indicate low but shared ratings (e.g., both coach and coachee are rated low), high and shared, or divergent ratings of coach- and coachee-centrism within their CSS. Using a common stem of “How much should you/the coach,” sample items of the CSS measure include, “open up about personal feelings,” “ensure that you sustain your motivation,” and “establish the purpose of the overall coaching relationship.” Items were rated on a 6-point Likert scale, ranging from *none* to *a lot*. See Appendix C for more information.

Reliability analyses indicated excellent internal consistency—overall coachee CSS  $\alpha = .89$ , coach CSS  $\alpha = .94$ . Because the items covered a broad range of possible coaching behaviors or interactions, ranging from personal vulnerability to goal identification to providing accountability, exploratory factor analyses were conducted on both the coach and coachee items. Three subscales emerged that were consistent across both coach- and coachee-relevant CSS items: *openness*, *direction*, and *monitoring*. The openness subscale consisted of three items, “open up about personal feelings,” “open up about personal opinions,” and “open up about personal values” ( $\alpha_{\text{coachee}} = .90$ ;

$\alpha_{\text{coach}} = .95$ ). The direction subscale consisted of four items, “make decisions about the focus of coaching,” “come up with solutions to achieve coaching goals,” “develop a clear direction for the coaching session,” and “establish the purpose of the overall coaching relationship.” ( $\alpha_{\text{coachee}} = .88$ ;  $\alpha_{\text{coach}} = .80$ ). The monitoring subscale consisted of three items, “ensure that you sustain your motivation,” “ensure that you are committed to coaching goals,” “make sure that you learn something,” and “make sure that you actually improve” ( $\alpha_{\text{coachee}} = .85$ ;  $\alpha_{\text{coach}} = .78$ ). To assess convergent validity, CSS subscales were correlated with several conceptually related measures. The openness and monitoring subscales (both which are more psychologically, rather than behaviorally, oriented) of  $\text{CSS}_{\text{coachee}}$  were correlated at  $r = .29$  and  $r = .30$  ( $p < .01$ ) with psychological mindedness (discussed subsequently), while the direction subscale was not. As would be expected, monitoring and direction ( $\text{CSS}_{\text{coach}}$ ) correlated with the “other perceptiveness” subscale of interaction involvement at  $r = .28$  ( $p < .01$ ) and  $r = .20$  ( $p < .05$ ), but not with “self-perceptiveness.” Confirmatory factor analyses for  $\text{CSS}_{\text{coachee}}$  indicated good model fit (CMIN/DF = 1.41, GFI = .922, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .06); for  $\text{CSS}_{\text{coach}}$  model fit was acceptable (CMIN/DF = 2.50, GFI = .871, CFI = .95, RMSEA = .12).

**Dependent variables.** Goal commitment, the main dependent variable in this study, was measured using a five-item scale of goal commitment. The original scale, developed by Hollenbeck, Williams, and Klein (1989), was nine items long, but after significant research and criticism, it has been pared down to a more unidimensional five-item measure (Klein, Wesson, Hollenbeck, Wright, & DeShon, 2001). This measure of goal commitment is one of the most widely used measures of the construct available in the academic literature. Items were rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. Reliability analyses indicated good internal consistency in this sample ( $\alpha = .82$ ).

**Other measures.** Coaching researchers have suggested several individual difference variables that should be associated with coaching effectiveness (de Haan et al., 2013; Feldman & Lankau, 2005; Grant, 2007; McKenna & Davis, 2009). One particularly interesting variable potentially relevant to coaching effectiveness is coachee psychological mindedness (Nyklíčěk & Denollet, 2009). According to Nyklíčěk and Denollet (2009), psychological mindedness (PM) “refers to a person’s interest and ability to be in touch with and reflect on his or her psychological states and processes” (p. 32). Participants higher in PM should benefit from coaching more than those low in PM, because they will be more intrinsically motivated by the coaching process, and will be more likely to enjoy reflecting on and processing information about their own psychological states and processes. Though PM was not manipulated or directly hypothesized about, it was measured as a possible statistical control. The 7-item PM “interest” subscale, the subscale used in all analyses in this study, demonstrated reliability of  $\alpha = .72$ .

## Data Collection and Analyses

All data were collected with online surveys, created in and distributed through Qualtrics. All data was analyzed with the SPSS 20 statistical software package. For several of the regression analysis, the Hayes (2012) PROCESS and MEDIATE syntax for SPSS were used to test for directionality and simple effects. This method produces equivalent results as a standard simultaneous hierarchical regression would in SPSS, but can automatically mean center products as well as integrate bootstrapping estimates. More importantly, it reports the effects of IVs on DVs at different levels of specified moderators and produces specific data points for plotting purposes, helpful in plotting simple effects.

## Results

### Preliminary Analyses

Preliminary analyses consisted of calculations of means and standard deviations, checks for normality of distributions, and intercorrelation analyses (see Table 2).

Table 2  
Correlation Matrix, and Descriptives of Measured Variables

| Variable                          | M    | SD   | 1          | 2           | 3          | 4          | 5          | 6          | 7           | 8    | 9    | 10          | 11         | 12         | 13 |
|-----------------------------------|------|------|------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|------------|-------------|------|------|-------------|------------|------------|----|
| CSS <sub>coachee-openness</sub>   | 4.91 | .94  |            |             |            |            |            |            |             |      |      |             |            |            |    |
| CSS <sub>coachee-monitoring</sub> | 5.46 | .62  | <b>.30</b> |             |            |            |            |            |             |      |      |             |            |            |    |
| CSS <sub>coachee-direction</sub>  | 4.53 | 1.15 | <b>.28</b> | <b>.52</b>  |            |            |            |            |             |      |      |             |            |            |    |
| CSS <sub>coach-openness</sub>     | 3.20 | 1.48 | .16        | .03         | <b>.41</b> |            |            |            |             |      |      |             |            |            |    |
| CSS <sub>coach-monitoring</sub>   | 5.06 | 1.14 | .13        | <b>.19</b>  | <b>.34</b> | <b>.33</b> |            |            |             |      |      |             |            |            |    |
| CSS <sub>coach-direction</sub>    | 5.35 | .93  | .15        | .22         | .12        | <b>.32</b> | <b>.68</b> |            |             |      |      |             |            |            |    |
| Joint processing                  | 4.26 | .46  | <b>.30</b> | <b>.37</b>  | <b>.29</b> | .13        | <b>.41</b> | <b>.39</b> |             |      |      |             |            |            |    |
| Dependent processing              | 3.59 | .67  | -.03       | .02         | .14        | .11        | .19        | .13        | <b>.29</b>  |      |      |             |            |            |    |
| Independent processing            | 3.01 | .88  | -.08       | .03         | .15        | .08        | -.05       | -.04       | -.17        | .05  |      |             |            |            |    |
| Disengagement                     | 2.06 | .72  | -.13       | <b>-.38</b> | -.18       | .01        | -.15       | -.12       | <b>-.37</b> | -.02 | .15  |             |            |            |    |
| Psych. mindedness                 | 3.35 | .72  | <b>.29</b> | <b>.30</b>  | .14        | .04        | .18        | .07        | <b>.33</b>  | .04  | .17  | <b>-.30</b> |            |            |    |
| Learning goal orientation         | 4.06 | .63  | .07        | .20         | .16        | .08        | .13        | .03        | <b>.41</b>  | .02  | -.16 | -.18        | <b>.29</b> |            |    |
| Goal commitment                   | 3.93 | .60  | .19        | <b>.31</b>  | <b>.28</b> | .08        | .11        | .13        | <b>.41</b>  | .12  | .12  | <b>-.41</b> | <b>.35</b> | <b>.33</b> |    |

Note. Italicized correlations are significant at  $p < .05$ , bold at  $p < .01$ , bold italics at  $p < .001$ .

**Hypothesis 1 – Claiming, Granting, and CSS**

To test hypotheses regarding the effects of coach claiming and granting behaviors on coachee CSS, a repeated measures ANOVA was conducted to assess within-person differences in coach- and coachee-focused CSS. This allowed for a test of both the main effects of claiming and granting, as well as their interaction (i.e., the claiming and granting condition). This analysis also enables an accurate understanding of participants’ CSS in relation to the coach and coachee (strength) and the closeness in strengths (sharedness). Repeated measures ANOVA tests for within-subjects effects using three paired CSS subscales found significant differences with the granting conditions,  $F(3, 102) = 4.67, p < .01$ , partial  $\eta^2 = .12$ , but not with the claiming conditions,  $F(3, 102) = 2.04, ns$ . The interaction between claiming and granting was also found not to be significant,  $F(3, 102) = 0.62, ns$ . Specifically, univariate ANOVAs indicated that granting had a significant effect on coachees’ ratings of direction behaviors,  $F(1, 104) = 4.85, p < .05$ , but not on openness or monitoring behaviors. Interestingly, claiming seemed to have a marginally significant effect on coachees’ ratings of openness behaviors,  $F(1, 104) = 2.87, p < .10$ , but in the opposite direction from what was hypothesized (i.e., ratings of coach openness behaviors were lower in claiming conditions). Figures 2 through 4 illustrate CSS ratings for coach and coachee across the three

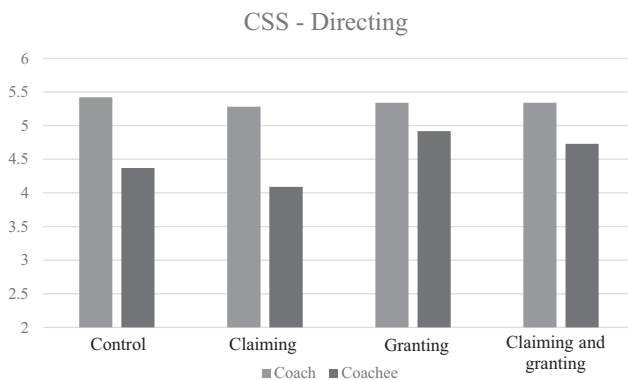


Figure 2. Coaching structure schema ratings for directing behaviors across four conditions.

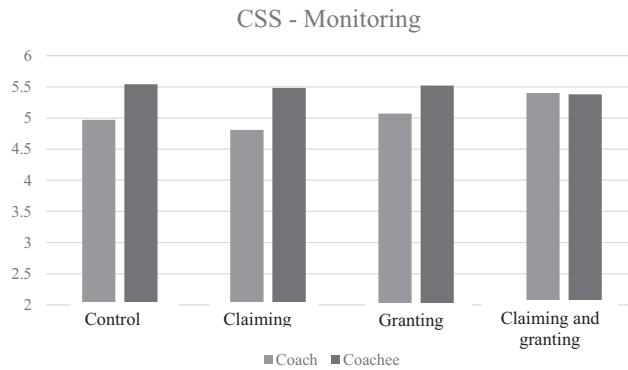


Figure 3. Coaching structure schema ratings for monitoring behaviors across four conditions.

subscales; see Table 3 for more information. Accordingly, Hypothesis 1b (effects of granting on coachee CSS) was supported for direction behaviors, but not for openness or monitoring behaviors. Hypotheses 1a and 1c were not supported.

### Hypothesis 2 – CSS and Information Processing

To test the effects of participants' CSS on the nature of their information processing, bivariate correlations between the CSS subscales and the four information processing subscales were conducted. In partial support of Hypothesis 2a, coach CSS<sub>monitoring</sub> ratings were significantly correlated with dependent processing,  $r = .19$ ,  $p < .05$  (one-tailed); however, ratings for coach CSS<sub>directing</sub> and CSS<sub>openness</sub> were not significantly correlated with dependent processing. Supportive of Hypothesis 2b (the effects of shared CSS on joint processing), correlational analyses found significant relationships between five out of the six CSS subscales and joint processing (see Table 2).

To further test these hypotheses, participants' ratings of joint information processing were regressed on to a model first controlling for psychological mindedness, which has shown to be connected to information processing, learning, and commitment (Brown, Ryan, & Creswell, 2007; Grant, 2001), and then entering the various subscales of coach- and coachee-centric CSS. Because no hypotheses were made about specific subscales within CSS (other than there being coach and coachee components), they were entered as a stepwise function. The model that emerged was significant, explaining more than 27% of the variance in joint information processing. Furthermore, as hypothesized, components of both coachee and coach CSS were retained in the model, with both being significant,  $\beta = .23$ ,  $t(107) = 2.72$ ,  $p < .01$ , and  $\beta = .34$ ,  $t(107) = 4.12$ ,  $p < .001$ , respectively

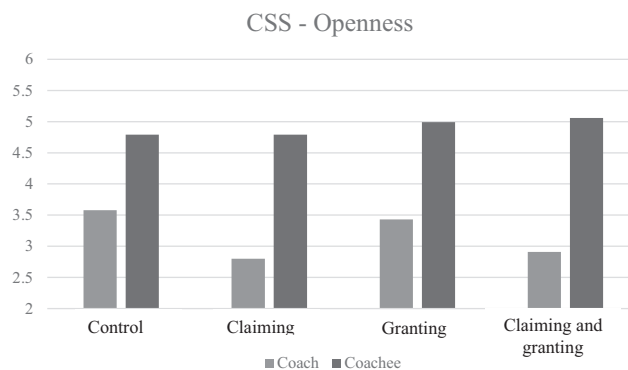


Figure 4. Coaching structure schema ratings for openness behaviors across four conditions.

Table 3  
*Repeated Measures ANOVA, Within Subjects Multivariate Tests for Coach and Coachee Specific CSS Ratings Across Claiming and Granting Conditions*

| Within subjects effects       | <i>df</i> | <i>F</i> | Partial $\eta^2$ | <i>p</i> |
|-------------------------------|-----------|----------|------------------|----------|
| Coaching partner              |           |          |                  |          |
| Openness                      | (1,104)   | 120.36   | .54              | .00      |
| Directing                     | (1,104)   | 37.94    | .27              | .00      |
| Monitoring                    | (1,104)   | 14.14    | .12              | .00      |
| Partner × Claiming            |           |          |                  |          |
| Openness                      | (1,104)   | 2.87     | .03              | .09      |
| Directing                     | (1,104)   | .04      | .84              | .00      |
| Monitoring                    | (1,104)   | 1.21     | .01              | .27      |
| Partner × Granting            |           |          |                  |          |
| Openness                      | (1,104)   | .66      | .01              | .42      |
| Directing                     | (1,104)   | 5.10     | .05              | .03      |
| Monitoring                    | (1,104)   | 1.88     | .02              | .17      |
| Partner × Claiming × Granting |           |          |                  |          |
| Openness                      | (1,104)   | .06      | .00              | .81      |
| Directing                     | (1,104)   | .39      | .00              | .54      |
| Monitoring                    | (1,104)   | 1.48     | .01              | .23      |

(see Table 4). This suggests that both coach- and coachee-centric CSS positively (and independently) contribute to participants’ joint information processing. Interestingly, of the three CSS subscales, CSS<sub>directing</sub> emerged for both coach and coachee.

Exploratory analyses were also run to test the direct and indirect effects of coach granting behaviors on information processing as mediated by CSS. Participant ratings of joint information processing were regressed onto a mediation model with granting as the independent variable, and coachee CSS<sub>directing</sub> as the mediator; the claiming condition (dummy coded), psychological mindedness, and coach CSS<sub>directing</sub> were also entered as covariates. The model was constructed as such because earlier analyses revealed claiming behaviors to have little effect on CSS, and because granting behaviors should only affect coachee CSS. The overall model was significant,  $F(5, 102) = 9.76, p < .001$ , and explained more than 32% of the variance in joint processing. Additionally, the indirect effect of granting behaviors had a significant indirect effect on joint processing as mediated by coachee CSS<sub>directing</sub> ( $B = .05, 95\% \text{ LLCI } .01, \text{ ULCI } .14$ ). Interestingly, claiming behaviors appeared to have a small positive direct effect on joint processing as well (see Table 5).

Table 4  
*Hierarchical Regression Analyses Predicting Joint Information Processing With CSS Scales*

| Model                            | Adj. $R^2$ | <i>F</i> | <i>df</i> | <i>df (e)</i> | $\beta$ | <i>t</i> | <i>p</i> |
|----------------------------------|------------|----------|-----------|---------------|---------|----------|----------|
| Model 1                          | .11        | 13.56    | 1         | 106           |         |          | .00      |
| Psych mindedness                 |            |          |           |               | .34     | 3.69     | .00      |
| Model 2                          | .28        | 14.65    | 3         | 104           |         |          | .00      |
| Psych mindedness                 |            |          |           |               | .28     | 3.42     | .00      |
| Coach CSS <sub>directing</sub>   |            |          |           |               | .34     | 4.12     | .00      |
| Coachee CSS <sub>directing</sub> |            |          |           |               | .23     | 2.72     | .01      |

Table 5  
*Regression Analyses Illustrating Mediation Between Coach Behaviors and Joint Processing*

| Model                            | Adj. $R^2$ | $F$  | $df$ | $df (e)$ | $\beta$ | $t$  | $p$ |
|----------------------------------|------------|------|------|----------|---------|------|-----|
| Model 1 <sup>a</sup>             | .059       | 7.83 | 1    | 106      |         |      | .01 |
| Granting                         |            |      |      |          | .26     | 2.80 | .01 |
| Model 2 <sup>b</sup>             | .29        | 9.76 | 5    | 102      |         |      | .00 |
| Granting                         |            |      |      |          | -.01    | -.12 | .90 |
| Claiming                         |            |      |      |          | .16     | 2.00 | .05 |
| Psych mindedness                 |            |      |      |          | .29     | 3.36 | .00 |
| Coach CSS <sub>directing</sub>   |            |      |      |          | .34     | 4.18 | .00 |
| Coachee CSS <sub>directing</sub> |            |      |      |          | .23     | 2.69 | .01 |

<sup>a</sup> Dependent variable coachee CSS<sub>directing</sub>. <sup>b</sup> Dependent variable joint processing.

### Hypothesis 3 – Information Processing and Goal Commitment

To initially test the relationship between information processing and goal commitment, correlation analyses were conducted. Results provided initial support for hypothesis 3. Specifically, goal commitment was significantly correlated with joint processing,  $r = .41, p < .001$  and disengagement,  $r = -.41, p < .001$ ; however, it was not significantly correlated with independent ( $r = .12, ns$ ) or dependent processing ( $r = .12, ns$ ). To further test this hypothesis, multiple regression analyses were run, controlling for psychological mindedness, and the four factors of information processing were entered as a stepwise function, to see which would contribute the most predictive variance. Overall, the model accounted for nearly 28% of the variance in participants' goal commitment, with joint and independent processing, as well as disengagement, all contributing significantly to the model (see Table 6). In support of hypothesis 3, this suggests that different aspects of coachee information processing account for unique amounts of variance in coachee goal commitment.

### Exploratory Analyses

Exploratory analyses were also conducted to better assess the effects of coach behavior on coachee goal commitment, as serially mediated first by CSS and second by information processing. Though these effects were not explicitly hypothesized, they theoretically follow from the subordinate hypotheses. Integrating the findings of the various regression analyses, a serial mediation model was tested, wherein the effects of granting behaviors on goal commitment would be mediated first by coachee CSS<sub>directing</sub> and second by joint information processing. Furthermore, independent pro-

Table 6  
*Hierarchical Regression Analyses Predicting Goal Commitment With Information Processing*

| Model                  | Adj. $R^2$ | $F$   | $df$ | $df (e)$ | $\beta$ | $t$   | $p$ |
|------------------------|------------|-------|------|----------|---------|-------|-----|
| Model 1                | .11        | 12.66 | 1    | 107      |         |       | .00 |
| Psych mindedness       |            |       |      |          | .33     | 3.56  | .00 |
| Model 2                | .28        | 11.38 | 4    | 104      |         |       | .00 |
| Psych mindedness       |            |       |      |          | .10     | 1.11  | .27 |
| Joint processing       |            |       |      |          | .30     | 3.19  | .00 |
| Independent processing |            |       |      |          | .20     | 2.36  | .02 |
| Disengagement          |            |       |      |          | -.31    | -3.36 | .00 |

cessing and disengagement were included as covariates, as they were found to influence goal commitment beyond joint processing. This analysis was conducted using Model 6 of Hayes (2013) PROCESS macro for SPSS. The overall model predicting commitment was significant,  $F(5, 103) = 9.21, p < .001, R^2 = .31$ , with the effects of granting behaviors being significantly mediated first through coachee CSS<sub>directing</sub> and then through joint information processing ( $B = .03, LLCI .01, ULCI .08$ ). See Table 7 for more information.

### Discussion

This study simulated a conflict management coaching session in a laboratory setting and manipulated a specific behavior that coaches engage in—claiming and granting behaviors—to illustrate that subtle coaching techniques and interpersonal behaviors can influence various aspects of the coaching process. The methodology and research questions were grounded in a synthesized form of social information processing theory (Derue & Ashford, 2010; Mugny et al., 2001), which ultimately posited that coaches can help frame and direct coachees’ information processing efforts by engaging in identity construction behaviors (i.e., claiming and granting). By helping to cocreate the coachee’s situational/relational identity within the coaching context, the coach in turn implicitly directs the coachee to engage in different kinds of information processing. Past research on behavioral change and motivation has suggested that the focus and depth of information processing are important predictors of behavioral change and goal commitment (Creswell et al., 2007; Gollwitzer et al., 1990; Kruglanski & Thompson, 1999; Locke, 1996). This research found several things with important implications for coaches, coaching researchers, and those looking to hire a coach.

### Summary of Findings and Practical Implications

**Identity construction behaviors.** Some support was found for the hypothesis that coach claiming and granting behaviors would affect coachees’ schemas for coaching, though granting behaviors seemed to be more effective. There was also initial support for a broader model wherein the effects of coaching behaviors (specifically coach granting behaviors) were transmitted through coachees’ CSS and their information processing efforts. When coaches used granting behaviors, coachees tended to adopt a more coachee-centric CSS which in turn facilitated more information processing and goal commitment. This study represents the first empirical test that illustrates the

Table 7  
*Regression Analyses Illustrating Mediation Between Coach Behaviors and Goal Commitment*

| Model                            | Adj. $R^2$ | $F$  | $df$ | $df(e)$ | $\beta$ | $t$   | $p$ |
|----------------------------------|------------|------|------|---------|---------|-------|-----|
| Model 1 <sup>a</sup>             | .059       | 7.83 | 1    | 106     |         |       | .01 |
| Granting                         |            |      |      |         | .26     | 2.80  | .01 |
| Model 2 <sup>b</sup>             | .29        | 9.76 | 5    | 102     |         |       | .00 |
| Granting                         |            |      |      |         | -.01    | -.12  | .90 |
| Coachee CSS <sub>directing</sub> |            |      |      |         | .23     | 2.69  | .01 |
| Model 3 <sup>c</sup>             | .28        | 7.85 | 6    | 102     |         |       | .00 |
| Granting                         |            |      |      |         | -.03    | -.32  | .75 |
| Psych mindedness                 |            |      |      |         | .10     | 1.01  | .31 |
| Coachee CSS <sub>directing</sub> |            |      |      |         | .12     | 1.30  | .20 |
| Joint processing                 |            |      |      |         | .26     | 2.69  | .01 |
| Independent processing           |            |      |      |         | .18     | 2.02  | .05 |
| Disengagement                    |            |      |      |         | -.30    | -3.19 | .00 |

<sup>a</sup> Dependent variable coachee CSS<sub>directing</sub>. <sup>b</sup> Dependent variable joint processing. <sup>c</sup> Dependent variable goal commitment.



importance of identity construction behaviors in a coaching setting. From a practical standpoint, findings also seem to indicate that granting behaviors (and the ensuing coachee-centric CSS) have a slight edge over claiming behaviors in driving coachee commitment. This suggests that coaches should leverage granting behaviors—highlighting the coachee's role in the process, his or her need to think deeply, to come up with action plans, and to be willing to experiment with new behaviors—in effect placing the onus of responsibility for growth largely on the coachee. Additionally, these findings may indicate that more directive or didactic coaching styles (especially if they minimize the importance of the coachee) may be less effective in driving goal commitment or engagement. This is not to say that teaching and direction have no place in coaching, only that it will likely be more effective when paired with empowering “granting” behaviors.

**Coaching structure schemas.** One of the first things to note about coachees' CSS is that there appears to be a relatively consistent division of labor across the three broad CSS subscales. Typically, monitoring and directing behaviors were ascribed more to the coach than the coachee—regardless of what claiming/granting condition the participant was in. Similarly, openness behaviors seemed to be attributed more to the domain of coachee responsibility. However, coachees who had a coachee-centric CSS for directing behaviors tended to report the highest levels of information processing and goal commitment. This illustrates the importance of making the coachee an active partner in the coaching process, and not just a passive recipient.

**The nature of information processing.** Coaching is a dynamic process that *ideally* should include inputs and efforts on the part of both coach and coachee. This duality means that multiple sources of information are available for the coachee to pull from, making it essential that measures be developed that can effectively assess what the coachee is focusing on during coaching. Results of this study suggest that not only is generic information processing or engagement important, but so are more specific elements of coachee information processing (e.g., joint, independent processing). This suggests that coachees need more than one source of information to focus on when generating action plans, and perhaps that coaches that can effectively engage multiple channels of information processing may be more effective.

### Limitations of the Research

As with any study, this one is not without its limitations. Briefly, the limitations cover issues of reliability, content validity, and overall generalizability. Information processing scales for independent and dependent processing failed to reach alpha levels of .70. Though this is unfortunate, and hinders the study's ability to make strong inferences regarding the importance of information processing *focus* as a driver of goal commitment, it does not invalidate the findings that were derived. Coachees' CSS were significantly linked to joint processing and disengagement, and both of these variables contributed unique predictive variance to models predicting goal commitment. Furthermore, independent processing, which had near-acceptable reliability levels ( $\alpha = .67$ ), also contributed variance when predicting goal commitment. Though this should be taken with a grain of salt, it is a promising and interesting finding that suggests that accounting for the focus of coachee information processing may add explanatory power to models of coaching effectiveness. Further research should explore and refine this measure.

Generalizability of the research is another limitation; this study explored a complex, individualized phenomenon which is typically targeted at executive-level leaders with a sample of undergraduate university students in a lab setting. However, the development of new and generalizable theories of coaching are essential for the science and practice of coaching to advance (Grant, 2007), and controlled experimental studies are essential to provide initial validation for new theoretical developments (Driskell & Salas, 1992). To conduct this initial research, only a small portion (goal-setting) of the larger phenomenon (coaching), was simulated. Future research might build off of these findings by surveying coaches and coachees in the field to assess their use of claiming and granting behaviors, and to determine the effect of real-world identity construction behaviors on information processing, goal commitment, and other key coaching outcomes. Furthermore, although goal commitment was measured as a proximal outcome, some research suggests that the relationship between broad goal commitment and specific intention to implement behavioral changes is often

quite weak (e.g., Gollwitzer & Sheeran, 2006; Lawton, Conner, & McEachan, 2009). Future research might build on the importance and generalizability of this study by exploring the connections between CSS and goal striving (in a brief study like this one) or actual implementation (using a more longitudinal research design).

Finally, we necessarily limited the scope of our research. As Joo (2005) notes, coaching includes antecedents from both coach and coachee, process variables, and both proximal and distal outcomes. The list of different behaviors and other psychological variables that could fall under each of these categories is nearly endless. We approached coaching from a more behavioral lens and so focused on the role that information processing plays in driving behavioral change. However, “coaching” is a broad field and an even broader term. This research might be expanded to determine whether CSS and information processing influence other coaching outcomes in the broader field of coaching, such as hopes, dreams, personal and professional vision, career paths, et cetera. Furthermore, other process variables which have already been demonstrated to be important, such as the coach-coachee relationship (Baron & Morin, 2009), might be studied alongside information processing. Additionally, we limited the distal outcomes to changing conflict management behaviors; this was to limit confounding variables that might arise as a result of having different goal domains (e.g., different techniques, different difficulty level). This may mean there was some variation in participants’ interest level coming in; however, the study was framed as “conflict management coaching,” so participants can be assumed to have had at least a basic interest in the goal.

### Theoretical Contributions and Future Research

Coaching is an individualized approach to leadership development (Ely et al., 2010; Feldman & Lankau, 2005) which pulls from a wide variety of practical and theoretical fields (Feldman & Lankau, 2005). Although this contributes to the flexibility and appeal of coaching, it also makes evaluation and rigorous research of the *how* of coaching difficult. In this study, broad psychological theories and paradigms (i.e., identity and information processing theory) germane to many coaching approaches (e.g., cognitive-behavioral, Ducharme, 2004; psychodynamic, Kilburg, 2004) were leveraged to facilitate a broad understanding of the behaviors and intrapsychological processes essential to coaching outcomes. This illustrates the utility of a context-general theoretical foundation for guiding the development and testing of specific aspects of the coaching phenomenon.

This study also proposed that the coachee’s understanding of role allocation and division of labor within the coaching relationship—the coaching structure schema—is an important explanatory construct within the coaching process. Initial support was found for these hypotheses, suggesting that future researchers incorporate measures of CSS in models predicting coaching effectiveness. Before this happens though, several avenues for research should take preeminence. Some CSS subscales seem to be more clearly in favor of one member of the coaching relationship over the other. This could mean that some items were clearer than others, that coachees were still unsure as to the appropriate division of labor, or simply that some behaviors seemed more appropriate to share evenly, regardless of the manipulation. Future research could explore a wider array of coaching behaviors. Furthermore, item analysis and IRT-driven research could develop a highly sensitive measure of coachee CSS. For example, direction behaviors tended to be ascribed more strongly to the coach than the coachee; coachees who report an even distribution of this coaching behavior between coach and coachee might be more accurately described as having a coachee-centric CSS than a truly shared CSS. By the same token, openness behaviors tended to be ascribed to the coachee. A coachee stating that the coach and coachee should share this responsibility might actually have an overall coach-centric CSS. Another potential way to improve the CSS measure would be to use geographic grids comprising two combined Likert scales. This could potentially better tap the notion of CSS, because participants would be simultaneously comparing coach and coachee contribution with various coaching behaviors, rather than rating them separately and potentially forgetting the initial reference point. Measure validation research grounded in item response theory and leveraging unique elicitation techniques could enable the development of brief adaptive tests that could effectively assess (and dynamically monitor) the nature of the

coachee's CSS, enabling coaches to clarify (and reclarify if necessary) an appropriate and effective CSS.

Another avenue for further CSS research would be to consider the role of time and the various different phases of a typical coaching relationship on the evolution of coachees' CSS. For example, while (broadly speaking) coaching engagements progress through a period of role clarification, goal identification, generation of action plans, work toward achieving goals, and continual monitoring of progress (Grant, 2011; Palmer, 2007; Passmore, 2007), perhaps different CSS configurations are more or less effective at different phases in the process. A coach-centric CSS would be logical during the early phases of coaching, when the coachee may be less clear about the nature of coaching or when s/he is unaware of specific needs or methods to change (Palmer, 2007). As the coachee progresses toward the end of the coaching contract, a more coachee-centric CSS should be increasingly important—if the goal of coaching is sustainable long-term behavioral change, then overreliance on the coach's help is contrary to this end. The notion of shifting leadership in teams is prevalent in the literature on shared leadership (Fuqua & Newman, 2005; Li, Wang, & Chen, 2008; Shamir, 1999), and it would not be surprising to find it to be an important factor in coaching. Future research could explore the rate of this CSS shift as well; should the shift to a more coachee-centric CSS happen almost immediately, or is it more effective to gradually ease the coachee into this responsibility? This raises further questions related to coachee individual differences—perhaps some coachees are more ready to rapidly accept granting behaviors and take ownership of the coaching engagement while others are less likely to do so. This was demonstrated in part through the positive, significant correlations between coachee psychological mindedness and coachee-centric CSS. Other similar concepts, such as trait mindfulness (Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer, & Toney, 2006) and emotional intelligence (e.g., Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, & Sitarenios, 2003), might be explored in future research to see whether these relationships continue to hold. Research in this domain would ultimately allow coaches to tailor their techniques and processes to better fit the psychological profile of the coachee—potentially yielding a more effective and efficient coaching intervention.

Additionally, although it was noted that granting behaviors appear to have an edge over claiming behaviors in driving engagement and commitment, this observation also suggests future research. It may be that coachee-centric factors (e.g., coachee engagement, self-efficacy) are more important than coach-centric factors (e.g., credibility, trust in the coach); however, all of these variables were not assessed in the course of the study. Future research might explore a broader array of proximal outcomes (e.g., self-efficacy, trust, information processing) to better understand what mediates the relationship between coach behavior and coachee outcomes.

Finally, support was found for coachee information processing as a mediating variable between coach behaviors and coachee goal commitment. This is a theoretical contribution in itself, providing initial evidence for the utility of a process-based model that places the coaching relationship *and* coachee psychological processes as key mediating variables explaining the connection between coaching inputs and outcomes. One potential avenue for further research would be to explore whether there is a curvilinear relationship between depth of processing and goal commitment. Dalton and Spiller (2012) found that writing out goal implementation intentions (increasing depth of processing) led to increased goal commitment for participants writing about *one* goal, but not about *multiple* goals. Related to this, another avenue for research would be to explore how the amount of information provided by the coach during coaching might affect goal commitment and other outcomes, and how that effect may be mediated by the focus and depth of information processing. Research might also examine the coach's role as a form of external cognition (Rogers, 2004), whereby the coach helps the coachee to more efficiently process information. Additionally, some support was found for a multifactor structure of coachee information processing, where the factors successfully contribute unique variance in predictive models of coachee goal commitment. Future researchers should continue to develop measures of information processing that account for *focus* of processing—not just depth. As these measures continue to be developed and refined, researchers should explore the ways in which different processing foci contribute to coaching effectiveness, and to facilitate the most effective modes of coachee information processing. Ad-

vancement in this area will better enable coaches to monitor and adapt to subtle intrapsychological changes within their coachees, leading to a more dynamic and responsive coaching experience.

## References

- Arellano, C. M., & Markman, H. J. (1995). The Managing Affect and Differences Scale (MADS): A self-report measure assessing conflict management in couples. *Journal of Family Psychology, 9*, 319–334. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0893-3200.9.3.319>
- Ashforth, B. E., Rogers, K. M., & Corley, K. G. (2011). Identity in organizations: Exploring cross-level dynamics. *Organization Science, 22*, 1144–1156. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1287/orsc.1100.0591>
- Baer, R. A., Smith, G. T., Hopkins, J., Krietemeyer, J., & Toney, L. (2006). Using self-report assessment methods to explore facets of mindfulness. *Assessment, 13*, 27–45. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1073191105283504>
- Baron, L., & Morin, L. (2009). The coach–coachee relationship in executive coaching: A field study. *Human Resource Development Quarterly, 20*, 85–106. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/hrdq.20009>
- Ben-Naim, J., Bonnefon, J. F., Herzig, A., Leblois, S., & Lorini, E. (2013). Computer-mediated trust in self-interested expert recommendations. In S. J. Crowley & F. Vallé-Tourangeau (Eds.), *Cognition beyond the brain* (pp. 53–70). London, UK: Springer London.
- Bower, J. E., Kemeny, M. E., Taylor, S. E., & Fahey, J. L. (2003). Finding positive meaning and its association with natural killer cell cytotoxicity among participants in a bereavement-related disclosure intervention. *Annals of Behavioral Medicine, 25*, 146–155. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15324796ABM2502\\_11](http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15324796ABM2502_11)
- Brown, K. W., Ryan, R. M., & Creswell, J. D. (2007). Mindfulness: Theoretical foundations and evidence for its salutary effects. *Psychological Inquiry, 18*, 211–237. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10478400701598298>
- Brunswik, E. (1952). *The conceptual framework of psychology*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Buchs, C., Butera, F., Mugny, G., & Darnon, C. (2004). Conflict elaboration and cognitive outcomes. *Theory into Practice, 43*, 23–30. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4301\\_4](http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/s15430421tip4301_4)
- Cabrera, A., & Cabrera, E. F. (2002). Knowledge-sharing dilemmas. *Organization Studies, 23*, 687–710. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0170840602235001>
- Carey, W., Philippon, D. J., & Cummings, G. G. (2011). Coaching models for leadership development: An integrative review. *Journal of Leadership Studies, 5*, 51–69. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/jls.20204>
- Carver, C. S., & Scheier, M. F. (1990). Origins and functions of positive and negative affect: A control-process view. *Psychological Review, 97*, 19–35. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0033-295X.97.1.19>
- Cegala, D. J. (1981). Interaction involvement: A cognitive dimension of communicative competence. *Communication Education, 30*, 109–121. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/03634528109378460>
- Coutu, D., & Kauffman, C. (2009). What can coaches do for you. *Harvard Business Review, 87*, 91–97.
- Creswell, J. D., Lam, S., Stanton, A. L., Taylor, S. E., Bower, J. E., & Sherman, D. K. (2007). Does self-affirmation, cognitive processing, or discovery of meaning explain cancer-related health benefits of expressive writing? *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin, 33*, 238–250. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0146167206294412>
- Daamen, D. D. L., Staats, H., Wilke, H. A. M., & Engelen, M. (2001). Improving environmental behavior in companies. The effectiveness of tailored versus non-tailored interventions. *Environment and Behavior, 33*, 229–248. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/00139160121972963>
- Dalton, A. N., & Spiller, S. A. (2012). Too much of a good thing: The benefits of implementation intentions depend on the number of goals. *Journal of Consumer Research, 39*, 600–614. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1086/664500>
- De Dreu, C. K., Nijstad, B. A., & van Knippenberg, D. (2008). Motivated information processing in group judgment and decision making. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 12*, 22–49. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1088868307304092>
- de Haan, E., Bertie, C., Day, A., & Sills, C. (2010). Clients' critical moments of coaching: Toward a "client model" of executive coaching. *Academy of Management Learning & Education, 9*, 607–621. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5465/AMLE.2010.56659879>
- de Haan, E., & Duckworth, A. (2010). The holy grail of executive coaching: Discovering what really works. *The OMC Coach and Mentor Journal, 24*–27.
- de Haan, E., Duckworth, A., Birch, D., & Jones, C. (2013). Executive coaching outcome research: The contribution of common factors such as relationship, personality match, and self-efficacy. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 65*, 40–57. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0031635>
- DeRue, D. S., & Ashford, S. J. (2010). Who will lead and who will follow? A social process of leadership

- identity construction in organizations. *The Academy of Management Review*, 35, 627–647. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5465/AMR.2010.53503267>
- Drach-Zahavy, A., & Erez, M. (2002). Challenge versus threat effects on the goal-performance relationship. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 88, 667–682. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0749-5978\(02\)00004-3](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0749-5978(02)00004-3)
- Driskell, J. E., & Salas, E. (1992). Can you study real teams in contrived settings? The value of small group research to understanding teams. In R. W. Sweezy & E. Salas (Eds.), *Teams: Their training and performance* (pp. 101–124). Westport, CT: Ablex Publishing.
- Ducharme, M. J. (2004). The cognitive-behavioral approach to executive coaching. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 56, 214–224. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/1065-9293.56.4.214>
- Earley, P. C. (1986). Supervisors and shop stewards as sources of contextual information in goal setting: A comparison of the United States with England. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 71, 111–117. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.71.1.111>
- Earley, P. C., & Kanfer, R. (1985). The influence of component participation and role models on goal acceptance, goal satisfaction and performance. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 36, 378–390. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978\(85\)90006-8](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(85)90006-8)
- Eldridge, F., & Dembowski, S. (2013). Behavioral coaching. In J. Passmore, D. B. Peterson, & T. Freire (Eds.), *The Wiley-Blackwell handbook of the psychology of coaching and mentoring* (pp. 298–318). Oxford, UK: Wiley, Ltd.
- Ely, K., Boyce, L. A., Nelson, J. K., Zaccaro, S. J., Hernez-Broome, G., & Whyman, W. (2010). Evaluating leadership coaching: A review and integrated framework. *The Leadership Quarterly*, 21, 585–599. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.leaqua.2010.06.003>
- Evans, J. S. B. (2008). Dual-processing accounts of reasoning, judgment, and social cognition. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 59, 255–278. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1146/annurev.psych.59.103006.093629>
- Evetts, J. (2008). The management of professionalism. Changing teacher professionalism: International trends, challenges and ways forward, 19.
- Feldman, D. C., & Lankau, M. J. (2005). Executive coaching: A review and agenda for future research. *Journal of Management*, 31, 829–848. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0149206305279599>
- Forgas, J. P. (2001). *Feeling and thinking: The role of affect in social cognition*. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
- Fuhrmann, A., & Kuhl, J. (1998). Maintaining a healthy diet: Effects of personality and self-reward versus self-punishment on commitment to and enactment of self-chosen and assigned goals. *Psychology & Health*, 13, 651–715. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08870449808407423>
- Fuqua, D. R., & Newman, J. L. (2005). Integrating structural and behavioral leadership strategies. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 57, 126–132. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/1065-9293.57.2.126>
- Gollwitzer, P. M., Heckhausen, H., & Ratajczak, H. (1990). From weighing to willing: Approaching a change decision through pre- or postdecisional mentation. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 45, 41–65. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978\(90\)90004-S](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/0749-5978(90)90004-S)
- Gollwitzer, P. M., & Sheeran, P. (2006). Implementation intentions and goal achievement: A meta-analysis of effects and processes. *Advances in Experimental Social Psychology*, 38, 69–119. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601\(06\)38002-1](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0065-2601(06)38002-1)
- Grant, A. M. (2001). Rethinking psychological mindedness: Metacognition, self-reflection, and insight. *Behaviour Change*, 18, 8–17. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1375/bech.18.1.8>
- Grant, A. M. (2007). Enhancing coaching skills and emotional intelligence through training. *Industrial and commercial training*, 39, 257–266. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/00197850710761945>
- Grant, A. M. (2011). Is it time to REGROW the GROW model? Issues related to teaching coaching session structures. *The Coaching Psychologist*, 7, 118–126.
- Grant, A. M., Curtaeyne, L., & Burton, G. (2009). Executive coaching enhances goal attainment, resilience and workplace well-being: A randomized controlled study. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 4, 396–407. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17439760902992456>
- Gregory, J. B., Beck, J. W., & Carr, A. E. (2011). Goals, feedback, and self-regulation: Control theory as a natural framework for executive coaching. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 63, 26–38. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0023398>
- Hammond, D., Fong, G. T., McDonald, P. W., Cameron, R., & Brown, K. S. (2003). Impact of the graphic Canadian warning labels on adult smoking behaviour. *Tobacco Control*, 12, 391–395. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1136/tc.12.4.391>
- Hayes, A. F. (2012). *PROCESS: A versatile computational tool for observed variable mediation, moderation,*

- and conditional process modeling [White paper]. Retrieved from <http://www.afhayes.com/public/process2012.pdf>
- Hayes, A. F. (2013). PROCESS SPSS Macro [Computer software and manual].
- Hicks, M. D., & Peterson, D. B. (1999). Leaders coaching across borders. *Advances in global leadership, 1*, 297–315.
- Hicks, R., & McCracken, J. (2010). Three hats of a leader: Coaching, mentoring and teaching. *Physician Executive, 36*, 68–70, 70.
- Hogg, M. A. (2001). A Social Identity Theory of leadership. *Personality and Social Psychology Review, 5*, 184–200. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/S15327957PSPR0503\\_1](http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/S15327957PSPR0503_1)
- Hollenbeck, J. R., & Klein, H. J. (1987). Goal commitment and the goal-setting process: Problems, prospects, and proposals for future research. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 72*, 212–220. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.72.2.212>
- Hollenbeck, J. R., Williams, C. L., & Klein, H. J. (1989). An empirical examination of the antecedents of commitment to difficult goals. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 74*, 18–23. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.74.1.18>
- Horowitz, M. J. (1989). Relationship schema formulation: Role-relationship models and intrapsychic conflict. *Psychiatry: Interpersonal and Biological Processes, 52*, 260–274.
- Horowitz, M. J. (Ed.). (1991). *Person schemas and maladaptive interpersonal patterns*. Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press.
- Hsu, M. H., Ju, T. L., Yen, C. H., & Chang, C. M. (2007). Knowledge sharing behavior in virtual communities: The relationship between trust, self-efficacy, and outcome expectations. *International Journal of Human-Computer Studies, 65*, 153–169. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.ijhcs.2006.09.003>
- International Coach Federation. (2010). Powerful coaching questions from ICF group members on LinkedIn.
- International Coach Federation. (2012). 2012 ICF Global Coaching Study: Executive summary. Retrieved from [http://www.coachfederation.org/files/FileDownloads/2012GlobalCoachingStudy.pdf?\\_ga=1.154453816.124482212.1424978859](http://www.coachfederation.org/files/FileDownloads/2012GlobalCoachingStudy.pdf?_ga=1.154453816.124482212.1424978859)
- Järvinen, A., & Poikela, E. (2001). Modelling reflective and contextual learning at work. *Journal of Workplace Learning, 13*, 282–290. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1108/13665620110411067>
- Jones, G. (2012). *50 top tools for coaching: A complete toolkit for developing and empowering people*. London, UK: Kogan Page Publishers.
- Jones, R. J., Woods, S. A., & Guillaume, Y. R. (2015). The effectiveness of workplace coaching: A meta-analysis of learning and performance outcomes from coaching. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*. Advance online publication. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/joop.12119>
- Joo, B. K. B. (2005). Executive coaching: A conceptual framework from an integrative review of practice and research. *Human Resource Development Review, 4*, 462–488. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1534484305280866>
- Joo, B. K., & Lim, T. (2009). The effects of organizational learning culture, perceived job complexity, and proactive personality on organizational commitment and intrinsic motivation. *Journal of Leadership & Organizational Studies, 16*, 48–60. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1548051809334195>
- Jowett, S., Kanakoglou, K., & Passmore, J. (2012). The application of the 3+1Cs relationship model in executive coaching. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 64*, 183–197. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0030316>
- Judge, T. A., Bono, J. E., Erez, A., & Locke, E. A. (2005). Core self-evaluations and job and life satisfaction: The role of self-concordance and goal attainment. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 90*, 257–268. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.90.2.257>
- Kilburg, R. R. (1996). Toward a conceptual understanding and definition of executive coaching. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 48*, 134–144. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/1061-4087.48.2.134>
- Kilburg, R. R. (2001). Facilitating intervention adherence in executive coaching: A model and methods. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 53*, 251–267.
- Kilburg, R. R. (2004). When shadows fail: Using psychodynamic approaches in executive coaching. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research, 56*, 246–268. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/1065-9293.56.4.246>
- Klein, H. J., Wesson, M. J., Hollenbeck, J. R., & Alge, B. J. (1999). Goal commitment and the goal-setting process: Conceptual clarification and empirical synthesis. *Journal of Applied Psychology, 84*, 885–896. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.84.6.885>
- Klein, H. J., Wesson, M. J., Hollenbeck, J. R., Wright, P. M., & DeShon, R. P. (2001). The assessment of goal commitment: A measurement model meta-analysis. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 85*, 32–55. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1006/obhd.2000.2931>
- Kolb, D. A. (1976). Management and the learning process. *California Management Review (pre-1986), 18*, 21. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/41164649>

- Kruglanski, A. W., & Thompson, E. P. (1999). Persuasion by a single route: A view from the unimodel. *Psychological Inquiry*, 10, 83–109. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PL100201>
- Kukenberger, M. R., Mathieu, J. E., & Ruddy, T. (2015). A cross-level test of empowerment and process influences on members' informal learning and team commitment. *Journal of Management*, 41, 987–1016. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0149206312443559>
- Lawton, R., Conner, M., & McEachan, R. (2009). Desire or reason: Predicting health behaviors from affective and cognitive attitudes. *Health Psychology*, 28, 56–65. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0013424>
- Lewis-Duarte, M. (2009). *Executive coaching: A study of coaches' use of influence tactics*. The Claremont Graduate University.
- Li, J., Wang, H., & Chen, C. (2008). Shared leadership network: A cooperative pattern in knowledge-based teams. Proceedings of the 2008 Decision Sciences Conference. Retrieved from <https://www.decisionsciences.org/Proceedings/DSI2008/docs/299-4694.pdf>
- Locke, E. A. (1996). Motivation through conscious goal setting. *Applied & Preventive Psychology*, 5, 117–124. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0962-1849\(96\)80005-9](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/S0962-1849(96)80005-9)
- Locke, E. A., Frederick, E., Lee, C., & Bobko, P. (1984). Effect of self-efficacy, goals, and task strategies on task performance. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 69, 241–251. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.69.2.241>
- Locke, E. A., & Latham, G. P. (2002). Building a practically useful theory of goal setting and task motivation. A 35-year odyssey. *American Psychologist*, 57, 705–717. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.57.9.705>
- Lowman, R. L. (2007). Coaching and consulting in multicultural contexts: Integrating themes and issues. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 59, 296–303. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/1065-9293.59.4.296>
- Lozano, B. E., & Stephens, R. S. (2010). Comparison of participatively set and assigned goals in the reduction of alcohol use. *Psychology of Addictive Behaviors*, 24, 581–591. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0021444>
- Mackie, D. (2007). Evaluating the effectiveness of executive coaching: Where are we now and where do we need to be? *Australian Psychologist*, 42, 310–318. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00050060701648217>
- Mayer, J. D., Salovey, P., Caruso, D. R., & Sitarenios, G. (2003). Measuring emotional intelligence with the MSCEIT V2.0. *Emotion*, 3, 97–105. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/1528-3542.3.1.97>
- Mayer, R. C., Davis, J. H., & Schoorman, F. D. (1995). An integrative model of organizational trust. *The Academy of Management Review*, 20, 709–734.
- McCauley, C. D., & Van Velsor, E. (Eds.). (2004). *The center for creative leadership handbook of leadership development* (Vol. 29). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
- McGovern, J., Lindemann, M., Vergara, M., Murphy, S., Barker, L., & Warrenfeltz, R. (2001). Maximizing the impact of executive coaching. *Manchester Review*, 6, 2001.
- McKenna, D. D., & Davis, S. L. (2009). Hidden in plain sight: The active ingredients of executive coaching. *Industrial and Organizational Psychology: Perspectives on Science and Practice*, 2, 244–260. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1754-9434.2009.01143.x>
- McLean, G. N., Yang, B., Kuo, M. H. C., Tolbert, A. S., & Larkin, C. (2005). Development and initial validation of an instrument measuring managerial coaching skill. *Human Resource Development Quarterly*, 16, 157–178. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/hrdq.1131>
- Megginson, D., & Clutterbuck, M. (2005). *Techniques for coaching and mentoring*. Burlington, MA: Elsevier Butterworth-Heinemann.
- Meyer, J. P., Becker, T. E., & Vandenberghe, C. (2004). Employee commitment and motivation: A conceptual analysis and integrative model. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 89, 991–1007. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.89.6.991>
- Morgeson, F. P., DeRue, D. S., & Karam, E. P. (2010). Leadership in teams: A functional approach to understanding leadership structures and processes. *Journal of Management*, 36, 5–39. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0149206309347376>
- Mugny, G., Butera, F., & Falomir-Pichastor, J. M. (2001). Social influence and threat in social comparison between self and source's competence: Relational factors affecting the transmission of knowledge. In F. Butera & G. Mugny (Eds.), *Social influence in social reality: Promoting individual and social change* (pp. 225–247). Seattle, WA: Hogrefe & Huber.
- Naficy, K., & Isabella, L. (2008). How executive coaching can fuel professional—and personal—growth. *OD Practitioner*, 40, 40–46.
- Nyklíček, I., & Denollet, J. (2009). Development and evaluation of the Balanced Index of Psychological Mindedness (BIPM). *Psychological Assessment*, 21, 32–44. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0014418>
- O'Flaherty, C., & Everson, J. (2005). *Coaching in leadership development: Brain-based executive education*. Johannesburg, South Africa: Knowres.

- Palmer, S. (2007). PRACTICE: A model suitable for coaching, counselling, psychotherapy and stress management. *The Coaching Psychologist*, 3, 71–77.
- Passmore, J. (2007). An integrative model for executive coaching. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 59, 68–78. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/1065-9293.59.1.68>
- Pennebaker, J. W., & Beall, S. K. (1986). Confronting a traumatic event: Toward an understanding of inhibition and disease. *Journal of Abnormal Psychology*, 95, 274–281. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/0021-843X.95.3.274>
- Peterson, D. B. (1996). Executive coaching at work: The art of one-on-one change. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 48, 78–86. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/1061-4087.48.2.78>
- Peterson, D. B., & Hicks, M. D. (1996). *Leader as coach: Strategies for coaching and developing others*. Minneapolis, MN: Personnel Decisions International.
- Prochaska, J. O., Redding, C. A., & Evers, K. E. (2008). The Transtheoretical Model and stages of change. In K. Glanz, B. K. Rimer, & K. Viswanath (Eds.), *Health behavior and health education: Theory, research, and practice* (pp. 97–121). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Rampersad, H. K. (2009). *Authentic personal branding: A new blueprint for building and aligning a powerful leadership brand*. Charlotte, NC: IAP.
- Rimer, B. K., & Kreuter, M. W. (2006). Advancing tailored health communication: A persuasion and message effects perspective. *Journal of Communication*, 56, S184–S201. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/j.1460-2466.2006.00289.x>
- Roest, H., & Rindfleisch, A. (2010). The influence of quality cues and typicality cues on restaurant purchase intention. *Journal of Retailing and Consumer Services*, 17, 10–18. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.jretconser.2009.08.007>
- Rogers, Y. (2004). New theoretical approaches for human-computer interaction. *Annual Review of Information Science & Technology*, 38, 87–143. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/aris.1440380103>
- Savoridi, L., Van Swol, L. M., & Sniezek, J. A. (2001). Information sampling and confidence within groups and judge advisor systems. *Communication Research*, 28, 737–771. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/009365001028006002>
- Seijts, G. H., Latham, G. P., Tasa, K., & Latham, B. W. (2004). Goal setting and goal orientation: An integration of two different yet related literatures. *Academy of Management Journal*, 47, 227–239. <http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/20159574>
- Shamir, B. (1999). Leadership in boundaryless organizations: Disposable or indispensable? *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 8, 49–71. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/135943299398438>
- Sniezek, J. A., & Buckley, T. (1995). Cueing and cognitive conflict in judge-advisor decision making. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 62, 159–174. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1006/obhd.1995.1040>
- Spence, G. B. (2007). GAS powered coaching: Goal Attainment Scaling and its use in coaching research and practice. *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 2, 155–167.
- Theeboom, T., Beersma, B., & van Vianen, A. E. M. (2014). Does coaching work? A meta-analysis on the effects of coaching on individual level outcomes in an organizational context. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 9, 1–18. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/17439760.2013.837499>
- Turner, R. A., & Goodrich, J. (2010). The case for eclecticism in executive coaching: Application to challenging assignments. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 62, 39–55. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/a0018650>
- Van Kleef, G. A., Homan, A. C., Beersma, B., Van Knippenberg, D., Van Knippenberg, B., & Damen, F. (2009). Searing sentiment or cold calculation? The effects of leader emotional displays on team performance depend on follower epistemic motivation. *Academy of Management Journal*, 52, 562–580. <http://dx.doi.org/10.5465/AMJ.2009.41331253>
- Van Swol, L. M., & Ludutsky, C. L. (2007). Tell me something I don't know: Decision makers' preference for advisors with unshared information. *Communication Research*, 34, 297–312. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0093650207300430>
- Vroom, V., Porter, L., & Lawler, E. (2005). Expectancy theories. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 1, 94–113.
- Walker, A. G., Smither, J. W., Atwater, L. E., Dominick, P. G., Brett, J. F., & Reilly, R. R. (2010). Personality and multisource feedback improvement: A longitudinal investigation. *Journal of Behavioral and Applied Management*, 11, 175–204.
- Warner, R. E. (2013). *Solution-focused interviewing: Applying positive psychology, a Manual for Practitioners*. Toronto, Canada: University of Toronto Press.
- Wasylshyn, K. M. (2003). Executive coaching: An outcome study. *Consulting Psychology Journal: Practice and Research*, 55, 94–106. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1037/1061-4087.55.2.94>



- Weinstein, N. D., Sandman, P. M., & Blalock, S. J. (2008). The Precaution Adoption Process Model. In K. Glanz, B. K. Rimer, & K. Viswanath (Eds.), *Health behavior and health education: Theory, research, and practice* (pp. 123–147). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- Wildman, J. L., Shuffler, M. L., Lazzara, E. H., Fiore, S. M., Burke, C. S., Salas, E., & Garven, S. (2012). Trust development in swift starting action teams: A multilevel framework. *Group & Organization Management, 37*, 137–170.
- Wright, P. M. (1992). A theoretical examination of the construct validity of operationalizations of goal difficulty. *Human Resource Management Review, 2*, 275–298. [http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/1053-4822\(92\)90002-8](http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/1053-4822(92)90002-8)
- Wright, P. M., & Kacmar, K. M. (1994). Goal specificity as a determinant of goal commitment and goal change. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 59*, 242–260. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1006/obhd.1994.1059>
- Yaniv, I., & Kleinberger, E. (2000). Advice taking in decision making: Egocentric discounting and reputation formation. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 83*, 260–281. <http://dx.doi.org/10.1006/obhd.2000.2909>
- Zimmerman, B. J., Bandura, A., & Martinez-Pons, M. (1992). Self-motivation for academic attainment: The role of self-efficacy beliefs and personal goal setting. *American Educational Research Journal, 29*, 663–676. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3102/00028312029003663>

## Appendix A

### Claiming and Granting Primes

#### Control Condition

Coaching is a process that facilitates behavioral change and improvement, and the focus of today's coaching session is conflict management. The first part of the process will bring out a key conflict area that you would benefit from improving on. The second part of the process will consist of a goal-setting exercise that will contribute to your improvement in this conflict management area.

#### Claiming Condition

Coaching is a process that facilitates behavioral change, by allowing me, your coach, to walk you through a process where I will use a few different coaching techniques to provide you with insightful analysis of your conflict management behaviors. The focus of today's coaching session is conflict management. During the first part of the process, I will analyze your responses to determine what key conflict area you would benefit most from improving on. If you want to get something out of this session, you'll need to listen carefully to the information I provide you with. After this, I will provide you with a goal-setting exercise that will contribute to your improvement in this conflict management area.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, understand that coaching is a process where my coach will complete a few exercises and provide me with some information so that a plan to improve my conflict management behaviors can be developed. I understand that I must do a few things today if I do not want today's session to be a waste of time. I must listen to what my coach says – both the information he provides me and the questions he asks me. If I do not do this, I understand that I will not get anything out of this session and it will have been a waste of time. I therefore commit to listening to the information my coach provides and the questions he asks in today's session.

*(Appendices continue)*

### **Granting Condition**

Coaching is a process that facilitates behavioral change by encouraging you, the coachee, to think deeply and come up with creative and insightful solutions to improving your own behaviors. As you know the focus of today's coaching session is conflict management. During the first part of the session, you will think through a series of questions and identify a key conflict area that you would benefit from improving on. If you want to get something out of this session, you'll need to really get into this process and think deeply and creatively. During the second part of the session, you'll go through a goal-setting exercise that will help you think through your conflict management habits, and come up with realistic solutions to help you improve your conflict management skills.

I, \_\_\_\_\_, understand that coaching is a process largely centered around me, the coachee, and how I can come up a plan to improve my own conflict management behaviors. I understand that I must do two things today if I do not want today's session to be a waste of time. I must think deeply and creatively about conflict and conflict management so that I come up with practical and insightful solutions to my conflict management habits. If I do not do this, I understand that I will not get anything out of this session and it will have been a waste of time. I therefore commit to thinking deeply and creatively in today's session.

### **Claiming and Granting Condition**

Coaching is a process that facilitates behavioral change, by allowing us to walk together through a coaching process. During this process, I will use a few different coaching techniques to provide you with insightful analysis of your conflict management behaviors, and you will be encouraged to think deeply and come up with creative and insightful solutions to improving your own behaviors. As you know, the focus of today's coaching session is conflict management. During the first part of the process, I will ask you a few questions, and based on your responses, we will be able to determine what key conflict area you would benefit most from improving on. If you want to get something out of this session, you'll need not only to listen carefully to the questions I ask, but to think deeply and provide thoughtful answers to these questions. After this, I will provide you with a goal-setting exercise which will help you think through your conflict management habits, and come up with realistic solutions to help you improve your conflict management skills

I, \_\_\_\_\_, understand that coaching is a give-and-take process between myself and my coach, and how together we can come up a plan to improve my conflict management behaviors. I understand that I must do a few things today if I do not want today's session to be a waste of time. First, I must listen to what my coach says – both the information he provides me and the questions he asks me. Second – and just as importantly – I must think deeply and creatively so that together we can come up with practical and insightful solutions to my conflict management habits. If I do not do these things, I understand that I will not get anything out of this session and it will have been a waste of time. I therefore commit to listening to the information my coach provides and the questions he asks, and also thinking deeply and creatively in today's session.

*(Appendices continue)*

## Appendix B

### Information Processing Scale

Below are a few statements that may or may not accurately describe your experiences in today's coaching session thus far. Please read each statement and indicate on a scale of 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*) the degree to which you agree or disagree with each statement.

#### Independent Processing

1. I was thinking about my own ideas on how to achieve my goals.\*
2. I was thinking of things that would help me achieve my goals—but I didn't tell the coach.
3. Sometimes I didn't ask my coach questions because I was trying to figure it out myself.
4. I was trying to figure out how to achieve my goals on my own.

#### Dependent Processing

1. I was thinking about things the coach was teaching me.\*
2. I listened carefully to the coach's answers to my questions.
3. I took things the coach said at face value.
4. I accepted the coach's ideas on how to achieve my goals without questioning.
5. I relied heavily on the coach's answers to my questions.
6. I probably could not achieve my goals without listening to what my coach told me.\*

#### Interdependent Processing

1. Together, the coach and I came up with ideas on how to achieve my goals.
2. Sometimes, questions that the coach asked me made me think of something in a new light.
3. If the coach said something I was unclear about, I asked him/her to clarify.
4. I listened carefully when the coach commented on or asked about one of my ideas.

#### Disengagement

1. I thought about things unrelated to the coaching session.
2. I was thinking about things I was already thinking before coaching.
3. I was just kind of coasting through today's session.
4. I was not putting much thought into the session.

\*Item removed because of low item-total correlations.

(Appendices continue)

## Appendix C

### Coaching Structure Schema Scales

Below are a few items that represent behaviors that you—the COACHEE (i.e., the person receiving coaching) [your COACH (i.e., the person providing coaching)]—might engage in as part of the coaching relationship. Please read each of the behaviors and indicate (on a scale of 1 – *none*, to 5 – *a lot*) to what extent you think YOU should be doing this during coaching.

1. Open up about personal feelings (O)
2. Open up about personal opinions (O)
3. Open up about personal values (O)
4. Identify your unique talents
5. Ensure that you sustain your motivation (M)
6. Make decisions about the focus of coaching (D)
7. Come up with solutions to achieve coaching goals (D)
8. Ensure that you are committed to coaching goals (M)
9. Develop a clear direction for the coaching session (D)
10. Establish the purpose of the overall coaching relationship (D)
11. Figure out ways to use your unique talents
12. Think deeply
13. Come up with creative ideas
14. Identify what it is you need to work on or improve
15. Make sure that you learn something (M)
16. Make sure that you actually improve (M)

O: Indicates items used in the “openness behaviors” CSS subscale

M: Indicates items used in the “monitoring behaviors” CSS subscale

D: Indicates items used in the “directing behaviors” CSS subscale

Received March 11, 2015

Latest revision received September 24, 2015

Accepted September 24, 2015 ■