

Pop Quiz: Your Assumptions About Change

Here's a little pop-quiz to help you identify your assumptions about change. Take a few minutes and jot down your answers to the questions below before you go on and look at the answers.

Think back to the most recent time that another individual that came to you for help. You'll need to come up with a particular, recent, real situation to evaluate yourself – just using your general impressions of how you function won't work. Once you have a situation in mind, jot down an answer to each of the following questions:

1. Why did this person come to me? _____

2. What of value did I provide to them? _____

3. If a problem was solved in the conversation, from whom did the solution come? _____
4. What kind of follow-up support are you providing for implementing the solution? _____

Now, look critically at what you actually did in light of the two sets of understandings about change listed below:. Which of these assumptions fits how you acted best?

The "Telling" Paradigm

- When you come to me for help, what you need is answers and advice.
- My value to you is in the knowledge, life experience, ideas, and wisdom I can convey to you in words.
- You can't solve this without my help.
- I can quickly diagnose and solve your problem with minimal information.
- If you get the right answers, you'll be able to change successfully.

The Coaching Paradigm

- When you come to me for help, what you need is someone to walk with you.
- My value to you is in listening and asking questions that help you draw from your own knowledge, life experience, ideas and wisdom.
- You have the resources to steward the life God has given you.
- If I help you think this through, you can come up with a better solution than I can.
- Successful change is more a function of support and motivation than information.

How'd you do? For most leaders, the telling paradigm is what we've been taught, and it is deeply ingrained in us. To coach well, you must believe in the power of listening – that simply to listen is to give a person something of great value. But there's an even better reason to listen. Think for a minute about your own prayer life. What percentage of the time that you spend with

the Lord is he speaking, and what percentage of the time is he listening? What would happen if you changed your conversational habits so that you were imitating God?

*From the book, "[Leadership Coaching](#)" by Tony Stoltzfus
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