

PLEASE SHUT UP

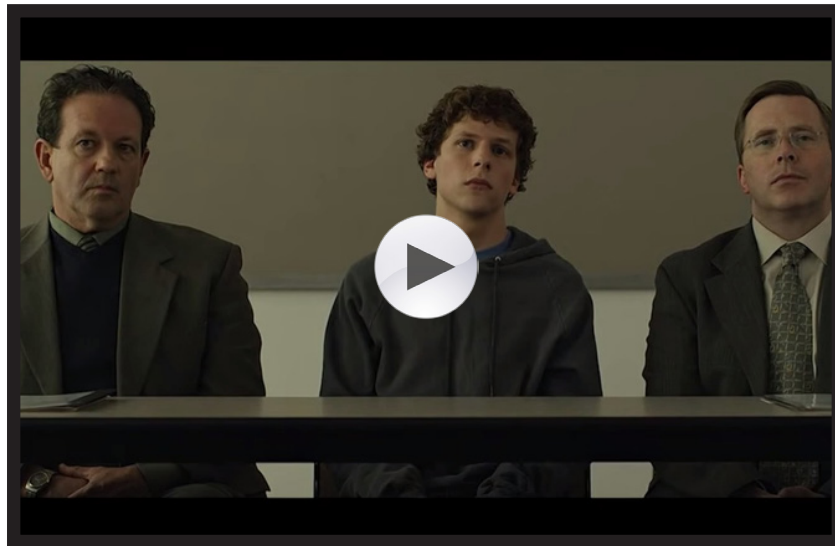
| IDIOT-PROOF COACHING FOR MANAGERS |

6. Stay On Track

The Sidetracks You'll Encounter And How To Kill Them

NARCISSISM AND SELF-DECEPTION ARE SURVIVAL MECHANISMS WITHOUT WHICH
MANY OF US MIGHT JUST JUMP OFF A BRIDGE.

- TODD SOLOND



We love this Zuckerberg scene from *The Social Network*. The discipline board is all set to rain hell on the hoodie. They're clearly in the right. Anyone with any sense can see that, but the object of their scorn has a surprise for them.

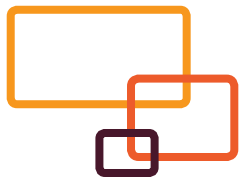
He thinks he deserves a "thank you" for breaching university network security. **BOOM!**

Agenda. Disrupted.

There's just one little problem with all of this advice we've given you on how to be a better coach. It assumes your target is going to listen to you, talk when they're supposed to talk and then say things that match your coaching model.



It Wasn't Me
Shaggy



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This just in: the conversations rarely are that smooth. People are people, and they generally have a hard time admitting when they have room for improvement. When you coach, there will be grinding of teeth, rubbing of hands and bad body language. In fact, if you're using any of our coaching models and you get all the way through it exactly as planned, one of two things may be happening:

1. **The person you're coaching may be deferring to you based on your positional authority** and may be a little bit scared, or
2. **The person you're coaching did the minimum necessary to get out of the conversation** as quickly as possible.

Expect them to whine. Expect them to moan. Finger pointing is probable as well. Maybe they even ask for a "thank you."



Misery (Frustrated Incorporated)
Soul Asylum

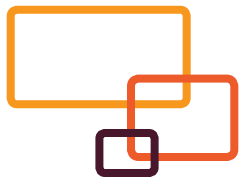
We know. The gall. *The nerve.*

Your job as the coach? Put all the sidetracks and emotional reactions to the side. Deal with and deflect the sidetracks, so you can get back to what's real—the change you need to see in your employee to make them as good as they can be.

Before you can deal with the sidetracks you see when you coach, you probably need to be aware of who you're dealing with. Let's start there.



In his book *Outliers*, Malcolm Gladwell cites research that says the ability to negotiate is directly tied to an individual's socioeconomic class.



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The Big Question: Are They A Narcissist, In Defense Mode Or Just Plain Right?

Sidetracks from employees come in a lot of different flavors. Before we start outlining the sidetracks and how to deal with them, let's take a look at the classifications of employees who use sidetracks and their motivation for doing so.

In our experience there are 3 types of employees who throw out sidetracks when you're trying to get your coaching game on:

1. Complete Narcissists. This is the person on your team that thinks they're God's gift to your company. They already think they're underappreciated. They have an inflated view of their skills, a sense of entitlement, egotism, low empathy and... wait for it... aggressive reactions to criticism.

Of course, your attempt to coach is going to be viewed by the narcissist as extreme criticism. As a result, their sidetracks are likely to be focused on pointing you to others with bigger problems. Or maybe you're the one with the problem—don't be surprised if the narcissist goes there.

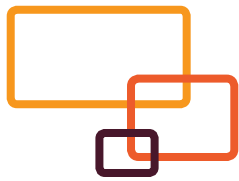
2. Employees Playing Defense. This is the scared employee. Their sidetracks aren't driven by an elevated sense of worth and self-esteem, but rather by an instinct to survive. As a result, any employee playing defense is worried about job security, future compensation, etc.

They don't think they're the best. But they're scared, so they'll do what they can by talking about bad tools and impossible assignments to throw you off the trail.

3. Employees Who Are Right About the Sidetracks They Highlight. We know this is going to shock you, but sometimes employees are simply right about the sidetracks they cite. If you're not dealing with the narcissist or the scared employee, you'll want to help them cope/deal with roadblocks rather than simply deflecting their objections. But you'll still have to hold them accountable for the improvements you expect. It's still about them.

Knowing who you're dealing with is key for perspective when sidetracks come your way when coaching. Know the motivation behind the sidetrack, and you'll always have the right level of empathy as you transition the employee from the sidetrack back to their individual performance.





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EXERCISE: YOU'RE MISSING THE POINT



Group exercise time. Let's think out loud—When you're trying to coach employees, what other profiles beyond **narcissist, scared and right** do you see? Which ones occur the most often?

1.

2.

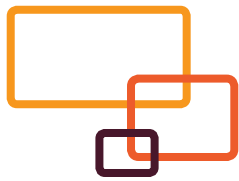
3.

4.

5.

#IRONIC

Is narcissism an epidemic? One study showed that narcissism has increased 30% since the 1970s. That's the same rate as the obesity epidemic...



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TalentDNA, Faking Good And What It Means When You Coach

If you're fortunate enough to have access to a behavioral assessment at your company, you may already have a tool to help you understand the "coachability" of the employees who report to you. This type of coachability scale can be key in helping you prepare for coaching conversations.

As we outlined in our first module of this series (**POP THE HOOD - Using Personality Assessments to Build Better Teams**), our assessment platform at Kinetix—**TalentDNA**— has a dimension called "Faking Good" that is directly tied to coachability. Details below:

FAKING GOOD: The TalentDNA system has a "Faking Good" index that measures a person's willingness to be frank and honest in all situations, the openness to discuss weaknesses, etc. The faking good index gives our clients a great line of sight to how "coachable" a person will be once they're part of the team. Coachability doesn't become a concern until someone hits the top two boxes.

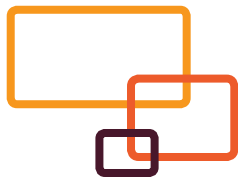
HIGHEST 2 BOXES: This isn't an indication of truthfulness—it signals a blind spot to weakness. They will struggle to admit shortcomings and potential weaknesses. Still workable, just be aware that at times you'll attempt to coach and they won't acknowledge that there's an issue in the area of performance you want them to focus on. We've hired great people with this trait at Kinetix—you simply have to control it by talking about it before the offer and creating expectations on how you're going to coach them after they are onboarded.

LOWEST 4 BOXES: This individual will be coachable as you talk about performance. No risk on this capability.

Our experience with high Faking Good individuals is that they can still be great employees, but you need to budget more time for coaching as they'll initially struggle to admit to any performance challenge. At times, a learned behavior kicks in and they will attempt to tell the manager doing the coaching "**I got it**" in order to make the coaching session end in as short of a time possible.

Of course, they "**don't got it.**" That's why you have to budget more coaching time than normal for these individuals.





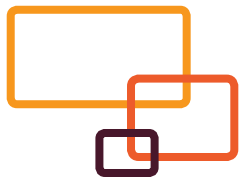
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Here's what someone in the top two boxes of Faking Good looks like in a TalentDNA report—don't forget to use TalentDNA as a tool to prepare for coaching:

	Lowest	Low	LowMid	HighMid	High	Highest	
General Reasoning Learns Slowly							General Reasoning Learns Quickly
Assertiveness Follows Direction Speaks Indirectly Avoids Confrontation							Assertiveness Gives Directions Speaks Directly Handles Confrontation
Rules Seeks Change Adapts to Situations Sees Need for Exceptions							Rules Seeks Stability Follows the Rules Sees Need for Compliance
Details Poor Organization Reacts to Events Loose Time Mgmt Loose with Details							Details Well Organized Plans to Events Good Time Mgmt Good with Details
Sensitivity Relaxed Sense of Urgency Tough-minded Insensitive							Sensitivity Extreme Sense of Urgency Emotionally Sensitive Empathetic
People Reserved Listens More Than Talks Emotions are Inside							People Outgoing Talks More Than Listens Shows Emotions
Team Self Comes First Needs Recognition Very Competitive							Team Team Comes First No Recognition Needed Not Competitive
Faking Good Frank & Honest Discusses Weaknesses Report Reliability Good							Faking Good Not Frank & Open Conceals Weaknesses Report Reliability In Doubt





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Let's Break Down The Six Main Sidetracks You'll See When Coaching

Sidetracks are designed to prevent you from holding the team member accountable for results. They're diversions served up as "reasons" for the performance issue at hand, and the goal is to take the responsibility off the team member.

You need to be ready to identify them, deal with them, then get back to the topic at hand when you coach—what the person in question can do to get better in the area you're focused on.

The six major types of sidetracks include the following gems:



No Excuses
Alice In Chains

1. WHAT ABOUT THEM?

- **Focuses on the accountability of others rather than self.**
 - Lack of support from stakeholders.
 - Sabotage!
- **What other forms does Sidetrack #1 take?**
- **DEAL WITH IT And Get Them Back On Track**
 - Key as manager is to offer support, remove barriers.
 - Key is also to make team member accountable for "early warning."



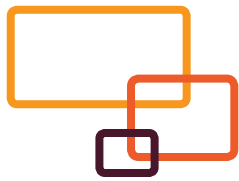
2. WHAT ABOUT YOU?

- **Focuses on the accountability of the manager rather than self.**
 - Lack of support from you – the team lead.
 - Are you taking tasks that don't belong to you?
- **What other forms does this sidetrack take?**
- **DEAL WITH IT And Get Them Back On Track**
 - Key as manager is to offer support, remove barriers and obstacles you create.
 - Key is also to make team member accountable for "early warning."
 - STOP TAKING ACCOUNTABILITY ON BEHALF OF THE EMPLOYEE.



Hate Everything About You
Three Days Grace





3. MY TOOLS STINK

- **Challenges assumption is that everything else necessary is in place.**
 - Can't accomplish my goals because my tools don't work correctly.
 - Hardware, Software, Resources, External Vendors, etc.
- **DEAL WITH IT And Get Them Back On Track**
 - Key as team lead is to have regular one-on-one for status checks, talk about status of projects and inquire about obstacles.
 - Troubleshoot and remove the barriers as you become aware.



4. THE CUSTOMER STINKS

- **Poor performance is due to difficult customer with unrealistic expectations.**
 - Disengagement or avoidance often follows.
- **In what other forms do you see this Sidetrack?**
- **DEAL WITH IT And Get Them Back On Track**
 - Key as manager—Define acceptable customer behavior and what success looks like.

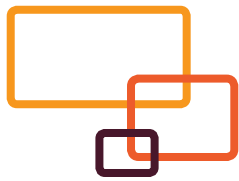


5. MY LIFE/TEAM IS MESSED UP

- **Poor performance is due to life circumstances causing distraction.**
 - Missed deadlines, lack of attention to detail follow.
- **DEAL WITH IT And Get Them Back On Track**
 - Toughest sidetrack to deal with because of the personal component.
 - Key as team lead is to show empathy while asking for improvement in areas of focus.

6. <INSERT YOUR SIDETRACK HERE>

- Sidetracks are a **normal part** of coaching and performance management.
- **Often real in the eyes of the team member.**
- **Your task**—to engage on all sidetracks by removing obstacles and bringing focus of the team member back to the elements they can control.



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EXERCISE: A LITTLE MORE ACTION PLEASE



We gave you five types of sidetracks to expect from the members of your team as you attempt to coach them. We also told you how to handle them. Time for some group discussion:

What other sidetracks have been thrown your way?

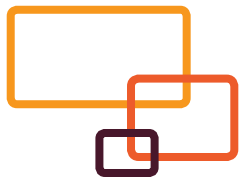
1.

2.

Chances are you tried to get the conversation refocused on the employee in question. What did you try and what was successful?



A Little Less Conversation
Elvis vs. JXL



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Here's A Handy Flowchart To Help You With Sidetracks

Here's how it's going to go... You're going to see something you need to coach on, do a bit of prep and then jump right into coaching the employee on the item in question. All good—until the employee starts talking, right?

You can't prepare for specific sidetracks—you can only educate yourself for how to deal with them, and then address them as you hear them and get back to the coaching tool.

That's why we created this handy chart to help you deal with sidetracks. Now that you know what the sidetracks are, **here's a clear shot at what to do when you hear each specific sidetrack:**



THE SIDETRACKS

WHAT ABOUT THEM?

WHAT ABOUT YOU?

MY TOOLS STINK!

THE CUSTOMER STINKS!

MY LIFE/TEAM IS MESSED UP!

WHAT TO DO WHEN YOU HEAR IT

Offer support, remove barriers. Make the employee responsible for "early warning." Resist the urge to gossip about other teammates (we kid—kind of. You'd be surprised how many get sucked in).

Offer support, remove barriers and obstacles you create. Make team member accountable for "early warning." **STOP TAKING ACCOUNTABILITY ON BEHALF OF THE EMPLOYEE.** Resist the urge to say "How Dare You!"

Focus on the employee taking responsibility for performance with the tools they have (no such thing as perfect tools). Key for team lead is to have regular one-on-ones for status checks, talk about status of projects and inquire about obstacles. Get them a new MacBook Pro (kidding).

Define acceptable customer behavior and what success looks like. Also define what employee can do when unacceptable customer behavior happens. It cannot include finger gestures.

Do not say, "Tell me something I don't know." Show empathy while asking for improvement in areas of focus. Try not to get sucked in or let them off the hook for improvement in the area in question.