

COACHING TIPS FROM WENDY ALFUS ROTHMAN

We asked coaching and training guru Wendy Alfus Rothman if she could share any universal lessons learned from her over 15 years helping people perform better at work. Wendy, President of The Wenroth Group, has been seen on CNBC, heard on Cox Radio, quoted in The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, Newsday, Smart Money, & CIO Magazine. She is a featured resource for 6 Figure Jobs, Columbia University & Fairleigh Dickinson University. She is a partner to The Five O'Clock Club and is co-author of our top three best-sellers. Here are a baker's dozen of the tips she shared with us.



Wendy Alfus Rothman
President, The Wenroth Group

1. Know Yourself

First and foremost, be aware of your own character and work-style profile. You won't have a prayer of influencing anyone else if you lack self-insight.

- ◆ Be clear about your strengths and leverage them fully.
- ◆ Be clear about your values and motivations and make sure they align with your work. Otherwise, you won't be able to get out of bed and face the world every day.
- ◆ Become brutally aware of your potential derailers. You may not be able to overcome them, but you can surely devise coping strategies to deal with them.
- ◆ Know your emotional style and develop your capacity to use and improve it.

2. Know What You Want

When things don't work out as planned, we often respond with anger and frustration. In addition to being ineffective, those emotions use up enormous amounts of energy - energy that is then unavailable for solving the situation.

Refocus your energy towards a positive solution by figuring out what you want to happen as an alternative. This will force you to move on to purposeful and productive behavior. People have a hard time with this - they do not like letting go of their anger. When they do, it's truly liberating. And, they usually discover new resolutions to the problem.

3. Know What You Can Control

You absolutely cannot control other people. We all want to (both personally and professionally), and the effort is usually draining and unsuccessful. You *can* however control your own behavior and your attitude.

This news is disheartening to many people. They feel that they are victims of the dysfunctional people that surround them. They insist that - if not for those people- their performance would be different. They're probably right!

But you just can't sit around waiting for those people to change. It's like a tennis match, where you're waiting for the ball to be returned from someone else's court. I suggest business is not tennis at all, but more like golf. Sometimes your ball lands in a sandtrap or in the woods. You can rant and rave about the unfairness of it all, or you can pick a new club and practice a new swing. The ball is *always* yours.

4. Know Who Can Help

Find a role model. In times of trouble ask yourself how s/he would advise you to achieve your goals. Maybe one role model isn't enough for you. Okay, so create a Personal Advisory Board. Fill it with people that are strong in areas where you have gaps.

Perhaps someone you know is especially good at written communication. Someone else really knows how to interview people. Someone else you know is fantastic with numbers. Ask them to be available to you for brief brainstorming and guidance in their particular areas of expertise. And figure out what strengths you have to barter in exchange!

5. Know Your Key Messages

Your assets may be obvious to you, but don't assume they are obvious to anyone else. Define a key message about who you are, what you do, and what you want.

What do you want your boss's boss to know about you?

Be ready if the President of your company ends up in the elevator with you one morning. When the doors close and he or she says, "How are you", you'll have something to say besides "fine thank you".

6. Get Out of Your Office

Leaders inspire and motivate their teams. They build a spirit of collaboration. They don't do this holed up in their office. They get out and walk around. Be sure you are available to people on a casual basis; be approachable. You know how engaging you are; make sure others know too. Face-to-face.

7. Communicate Clearly

Respect your colleagues by not wasting their time in endless, directionless meetings and rambling e-mails. What do you want people to know as a result of your communication? Figure it out, and say *that*. In other words, *be bright, be brief, & be gone!*

8. You're Not an Imposter

Knowing what you don't know is a critical component of leadership. Too often, executives - suffering from the 'imposter syndrome' - try to hide their lack of confidence. In so-doing, they erode the very credibility and trust they are trying to create. Difficult to believe but yes, not-knowing is often what being smart looks like. Admit what you don't know, and go find out the answers.

9. Know Who Your A & B Players Are

Nothing drives away top performers like a boss who tolerates 'C' players. Spend your training dollars on the people that have shown you they have what it takes. Be relentless about rewarding talent and initiative.

10. Delegate - Make Your People Look Good

Don't get stuck in the "I can do it better myself" syndrome. You'll end up overcommitted and burnt out. Your people won't see enough opportunities to grow and learn. The best ones will become frustrated and leave.

Shift your picture of success from doing the job yourself to creating a stellar team. Teach them what they need to know, back their decisions, and hold them accountable. Let them learn from their mistakes. The more you empower your teams, the more they will support you over the long haul both privately and publicly. Become known as the best manager to work for, and see your career sky-rocket.

11. Manage Your Energy More Than Your Time

If you're physically at work but mentally asleep, you're just taking up space in the universe. To be fully energized means to be mentally focused, emotionally connected, and physically alert. When these dimensions come together, performance is at full capacity. You will get twice as much done in half the time. Live your life in a way that maximizes your energy levels.

12. Know When to Recover

Energy is finite. High performance has to be followed by downtime - by recovery time. A 'burnt out' leader is a liability to him or herself and the organization. Build opportunities into your day when you can replenish yourself.

13. Have Fun & Enjoy the Ride

What is all the hubbub about balance? I think maybe you're not *supposed* to be in perfect balance for more than an instant. I think it's kind of like a seesaw. You can't spend too much time balanced in the middle. You're either on your way up or on your way down and balance is something you pass through on the way. The game is about the *movement*. At least until you pack up your things and go to a new playground.

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