

## 4. SMALL GROUP COACHING

TIME – 60 mins

GROUP SIZE – Groups of 4-7

MATERIALS - Loose-leaf paper and pens for note-taking

### *WHY?*

A powerful support system is key to successful leadership. Small Group Coaching is a simple process by which to harness the wisdom and resources of your community -- and share yours as well! More often than not, the information, insights, resources, advice, and wisdom we need to move forward in our leadership already exists among the people we live in community with. It is vulnerable to ask for support, and yet, profoundly inspiring to receive it. It is also wonderful to give support -- to discover the huge depth of resources each of us has, if only we are asked for them. Small Group Coaching is a simple form by which to make support visible and available to us. It is an easy way for each person to get exactly the kind of care and support they need to take their next step.

### *HOW?*

Before breaking into small groups, the facilitator gives the following instructions: “We are going to begin a process called Small Group Coaching. It’s an opportunity to fully receive whatever it is you need -- and also an opportunity to fully give. There are a few different ways to approach it. One is to take a moment to think about the challenges you’re dealing with in your life and work. Choose one or two challenges that are especially troublesome. These might be places where you’re struggling and would really like some wise and supportive input.

You can also think about the vision you have for your life moving forward. What feels essential for you? What might be stumbling blocks or places you feel concerned about? The goal is to really hone in on what kind of support would be most beneficial to you as you go forward.

We will soon form groups of six (or somewhere between four and seven). In these groups, each of you will each receive 15 minutes of complete, undivided attention from the other members of your group. (Adjust according to the amount of time you have, divided equally among the small group members. Aim for a minimum of 10 minutes per person.)

You can use those 15 minutes in any way you wish. You can take one minute to share your challenge(s) and then have 14 minutes of input and reflections from everyone. Or, you can just ask to be listened to for 15 minutes. You can ask the group to give you advice, or offer reflections, or ask questions. You can ask for 10 minutes of massage and 5 minutes of conversation. You can ask for a silent meditation or a collective prayer. You can ask someone in the group to take notes for you, so you can be present to

listen. YOU are in charge. Make the most of the 15 minutes, customized to exactly what you want it to be, by letting your group know how they can best support you.

And, when you are on the supporting side -- which you will be for most of the time -- give it your all! Offer your best insights, love and attention. Do everything you can to honor your friend's requests and fully support them. Take great notes! Help them track their time. If they ask you to stand on one foot and recite nursery rhymes, do it with joy! Seriously, though, it is powerful to support someone and meet their requests, so put out your full energy and love. It will make a difference. The only other request is to please honor the 15-minute-per-person guideline, so everyone gets the same amount of time."

The participants then count off in a circle to create groups of 6 (or 4-7), or find some other meaningful way to divide into small groups. Each group finds a space to meet and begin. They should be in a common space, but out of earshot of each other. Each group has a watch that they pass around to keep time for each other.

Small group coaching can be used a few times in a gathering, if you like, as well as at the end. It's also best to go straight from this activity into a meal, as groups will likely finish at different times.