

Dear Master Coach

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Dear Master Coach:

I'm still not convinced I'm any good at this. I worry that I'm not really helping people. And they pay me!

I've been thinking about taking a job selling perfume at Nordstrom.

*Sign me,
Coach Earnest*

Dear Earnest.

So let me start with what I know about you.

- You've invested tons of time, \$\$ and energy in your professional development as a coach-- and you have the ambition and heart to get really good at this craft
- You've got coachy colleagues who affectionately support and challenge you
- You know you're not as good now as you'll be ten years from now
- You can hear the difference between your own inner coach (specific, positive, gracious) and your self-doubt (general, negative, harsh)
- As a new coach, you're probably coaching all-comers right now, but you've got some hunches about the specialties and sectors you might be uniquely suited to understand and serve.

How am I doing?

Are you smiling like you would if I reminded you to calm down, you already ordered the turkey for Thanksgiving? Good.

Now let me add another question. When was the last time you had some fun with this work? Got playful in a coaching session? (You know there is such a thing as level-III playfulness, right?) One of the things I love about the Core Competency of "Coaching Presence" is that it's contagious: When we play, our coachees start to play too. We stop worrying so much about "doing it right"--and they stop worrying so much about the other half of that dance, "getting the most out of this".

Last week I was in my third meeting with a talented mid-career Seattle exec who's getting ready for a big COO interview in the morning. And I get inspired with one of those "intuitive hits/blurts" I'm always talking about . . .

Me: (A little extra enthused about the question I just thought of) "Who are you on the Starship Enterprise?"

Him: (Leaning in and joining my little game) "Scotty. The guy in the guts of the operation who never gets any credit, but doesn't really need any. He just loves knowing all the parts and making things go."

Me: "What happens if you're giving it your best shot and Captain Kirk wants even more?"

Him: (with even more energy) "I'll evaluate, prioritize, stay late or stand up to him!"

Me: "Hmm. Can you use any of this tomorrow?"

I'm pretty sure this guy walked out of my office more ready for his interview—not just about what he wanted to say, but about how he wanted to show up. We both got to play at level III and in his voice, breath, mood and posture, he reflected not only confidence, but that he knew clearly what he had to do next.

I think we'd both done a good job and I was still smiling after he was gone.

So, Earnest, when I start to wonder if I'm worth it, I get honest with myself about the questions at the top of this article, and then I lighten up a teensy bit. I hope that helps. And I hope you don't go sell perfume at Nordstrom.

PEB, MC

Listen to Patty's "Dear Master Coach" quarterly 3-4 minute answers at:

<http://www.seattlecoach.com/dear-master-coach-blog>



"You'd better come up with something that will sell—or else. I hope that was helpful."