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# Preface

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At heart, I have always been both a teacher and a student. I have been fortunate to continue to meet a variety of people and have traveled to many interesting places in both capacities over many years. One thing I have found to be true: learning has kept me stimulated, curious, and optimistic about life and its possibilities.

Learning takes many forms, but the most powerful is the learning we gain from direct exposure to other people. Whether we know it or not, many of those people to whom we have been exposed have been coaches. Sometimes they are parents or teachers or community leaders. Sometimes they are friends or colleagues. All of us, if we have been lucky, have grown from our experience with these early coaches in our lives. Coaching is about connections, relationships that endure and make a difference to who we are and who we might become. A good coach can open a door that we otherwise might not see, might not walk through.

Coaching is especially important in the workplace, where people are measured on their perceived performance. Successful performance, especially for leaders, is more a matter of how these leaders impact others than one of technical expertise. By the time someone is in a leadership role, he or she is the conductor rather than the musician in the symphony of business results.

The subject of this book is how you can help leaders be more effective. While I talk about applying the same rigor to coaching that you would to other business processes, coaching is ultimately about the personal connection. It is not just a set of “tools” and “skills;” it is, in the end, letting other people know that you care about them and their success.

Coaching is the art of giving back. You are investing in someone else and seeing the world through his or her eyes. It is a reciprocal relationship that enriches the life experiences of both people in the coaching relationship. I hope

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you feel inspired by this book, and will pick up some new ideas to make coaching as exciting and rewarding as I know it can be.