

Susan Gilell Stuy: I'd like to begin our conversation with what led to your writing *The New IQ*, and what made this the right topic and the right time?

Christopher Coffey: I would say probably in the early 2000s, [Marshall Goldsmith](#) was really pushing me to write. And it was interesting, as my response was always, and forget your political persuasion, that Socrates, Jesus, and Buddha, if you think of it from a world point of view, have certainly influenced and impacted our world. And I said to him as far as I know, none of them have written anything. And fortunately Socrates had Plato and Aristotle, and Jesus had Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, and Paul went out and sold it, and Confucius has his students who captured everything. So I said so why don't you write and just let me go teach? I said there are 2 ways you can do this: You can be the candle, or you can be the mirror that reflects it. So let me just be the mirror that reflects, and you write.

But then over the years, people kept pushing me to do it. And the seminal moment came over lunch with a former student of mine named David Lam, who's my co-author on the book. David would call me periodically and we'd have lunch, and he'd have an issue he wanted to talk about, and he said to me, "You know, you ought to write a book," and he was about the third person in a month who said that. And I said "David, I'm not going to write a book. First of all I'm too lazy, it's hard work, I'm not a writer. You know, I don't want to put that much effort in." And then was the end of the conversation. Then about 2 weeks later, I get an email with about twelve written pages, and he said, "You know whenever I'm with you I just capture things that you say," and he said, "Why don't we collaborate on this? And let me interview you and you talk and I'll write and you edit, and let's see if we can come up with something."

So I said we need to come up with a theme. And the theme really was: student / teacher. It's my process and my philosophy of how to do this, and he was the guy that executed. He doesn't do what I do—he's an IT guy—so it was an interesting collaboration. I think the stars just lined up.

SGS: The structure of the book is based on the idea of student / teacher with you in the role of teacher and David as student. How does the theme of student / teacher fit with coach / client or leader / team member?

CC: I think David would always think of himself as a student of mine: always pro bono, he ran the IT department for a Jewish school. And he'd run into problems with people and what have you. And I'd say it's not much dissimilar than anyone who I worked with as a coach who'd say, "You know what, I want to write an article about having worked with you," which is what they do at the end of a coaching engagement, when they write their after-action review.

There are 4 questions: What'd you set out to do? What happened and why? What insights have you gotten? And what are you going to do to maximize this investment of time and money you put into working with me? And they write it.

And I find that to be the most rewarding part of my job when people call and say, "Let me tell you how my life's been different because of something we discussed, or my working with you."

SGS: You have had unique and varied life experiences and careers that have contributed to the person/coach you are today. What I would like people reading this post to understand is: How they shaped your thinking, defined your core philosophy, and led to your passion for helping already successful leaders become even more successful?

CC: Well, I guess everything starts with the family. I was raised Irish Catholic. My mother ran the place. What my mother said went, and that was it. She would say, "You do this and I'm going to tell your father." Well, I wasn't afraid of my father—it was my mother who I was afraid of. It was interesting, when I got out of the little Catholic grammar school, the principal went to see my parents and said, "If you let him go to the local public high school, you're quite likely to have a juvenile delinquent on your hands. He's the class clown, and he could go in a positive direction or a negative direction. We've all certainly seen both of those." So they suggested they get me down to a Jesuit prep school, which I didn't particularly want to go to, but I did. I was an athlete, and it was a great school to be an athlete in.

Then I had a teacher senior year in prep school. His name was **John McLaughlin**, and some people they know him from the McLaughlin Group on television. He's been around for years. He was my homeroom teacher senior year. And he said to me, "You're going to be a teacher." Everyone thought I was going to be an attorney. I was on the debating team. I did all of those things. I loved to argue. I loved to win debates. And when he said, "You're going to be a teacher," I thought he was crazy.

So I went on to college and majored in Philosophy and Marketing. Did the Navy. Typical lost soul of the 60s. Became a ski bum in Aspen. Started law school. And then became an actor and lived in New York. And I think the acting skill of learning to be a character, think like a character, what's the behavior you want, who's the protagonist, who's the antagonist, all of those things. And then in 1980 I met **Paul Hersey** at **The Center for Leadership Studies**. And I started to teach situational leadership, and did stand-up leadership training for 20 years. That's where I met Marshall Goldsmith and **Frank Wagner**. I taught at companies like IBM, MacKenzie and Company, and Citibank. And that's pretty much what led me to my philosophy of life. You've probably seen in some of my emails, my sign off, "Learn as if you're going to live forever. Live as if you're

going to die tomorrow, and be happy now,” And they’re not hollow words for me. I try to live my life that way. I think I have a moral responsibility to my family to be happy and optimistic.

SGS: I know you’re an avid golfer and that you frequently use golf to illustrate concepts when you speak teach and coach. Jack Nicklaus is often quoted as saying, “The more I practice the luckier I get.” How does practice as a leader develop the leader’s skills? What have you learned about life from golf?

CC: Well, I took up golf seriously at the age of 60. And I’ve become much better. I’d grown up as a caddie as a kid, but I never played at all. I was a basketball player then, so golf was really never something I got into until really late in life. So I went down to take a golf lesson, because I like to get better at things, and everyone kept saying to me, “You’ve got potential, you’ve got potential.” And either you turn the potential into skill and ability, or it becomes unrecognized potential.

I went down to the golf pro somebody recommended and hit a few balls, and he looks at me and says, “You’ve never had a lesson?” And I said “No,” and he said, “It shows.” And I thought for a second, and then he said to me—and I thought it was a great question and it’s one that I still use all the time in my coaching—“How good of a golfer do you want to be?” And I thought, “Wow,” and I thought, “I want to be a single digit handicap and be able to play to it, but I don’t have the time. I work full time, I have a family, I got all of this.” And most people make the excuse, “I don’t have the time.”

Well when you think about practice: repeated, focused, purposeful attention, perfect practice makes as close to perfect as you’re going to get. All of us have little bits of time during the day that we just let slip away, and I made a commitment to see how good I could become. And I went from shooting bogey and double bogey golf to a 7 handicap, and I’m a pretty good one. And now, this year, even after shoulder surgery, I want to get it down to a 5 handicap. I like to get better at things. That’s just my DNA. If I’m going to do something, I want to do it as well as I can.

And I find good instruction—I’ve learned from that. Then I practice. And so with leaders that I’m coaching—I had one person who was a Chief Financial Officer, and he said to me, you know, “How good of a leader do I need to be?” And I said, “Only good enough for me to get paid for my point of view.” I coach and work with people for a year, and I don’t get paid until the end of the engagement, but that’s only if they improve. I’m sure we’ll get to that later on.

So I said to him, “Just good enough for you to get better, but that’s not the right question though,” I said, “The right question is how good of a leader do you want to be?”, just like “How good of a golfer do you want to be?” or “How good

of a skier do you want to be?”, “How good of a parent do you want to be?”, “How good of a collaborator do you want to be”, “Do you want to be seen as a good collaborator?” And these are questions that one person can’t answer for the other. You can ask the questions, but you can’t answer them for people.

And I think too many coaches *try* to answer them for people, and I don’t do that. So with golf I keep the clubs in the car, I’ll stop for 15 or 20 minutes, and I’ll practice different parts of the game. It’s just like communication: it’s the short game, inside 40 yards, chipping, putting. There are many, many aspects in golf, just as there are in communicating. And which ones are you good at? Which ones do you want to get better at? And if you do, how will that improve the overall skill? So the bottom line is repeated, purposeful, focused attention. And I tell people that it takes courage and discipline—discipline primarily, and the follow through.

SGS: Please share with the readers a little bit about how you began working with leaders, how your methodology and approach evolved, and when you find it most rewarding?

CC: Well, I’ve been doing this since 1980. In 1980 I got recruited—it was a seminal moment in my life—I was an actor in Los Angeles and doing OK. Quite frankly I was a little bored. I’d moved out from New York. We had our first child in 1980. And then I met Paul Hersey and **Ken Blanchard** of Situational Leadership. And what’s changed when you project back that far is that companies just didn’t do leadership training very much back then. At the time they were putting Paul Hersey on $\frac{3}{4}$ ” videotape. This was before VHS or Beta or any of that. And I taught Situational Leadership at IBM. Probably who better than an actor to bring this stuff to life? Hersey was the content guru with the videotapes. So I was hired to do that, as was Frank Wagner and Marshall Goldsmith and all the rest of us.

And over the next 20 years it evolved. I started my own company in 1986 with a couple other guys. And we basically taught situational leadership, the excellent manager, DNA teams, influence without authority—all these different workshops—we were pioneers with 360 feedback. In fact, our company was the first one to put it online in 1991 with silicon graphics. So for the first 20 years it was stand up, teach, and give people 360 feedback, help them develop a plan, collect them, and say goodbye. I think the mistaken belief was, “If they understand, they will do.”

And then, around 2000, Marshall Goldsmith and myself and Frank Wagner reconnected. Agilent was splitting off from Hewlett Packard, Jack Welch was leaving GE, and everyone knew that there were 7 internal candidates for Jack Welch’s job at GE, and then a new word came into our lexicon called “bank strength.” GE was reputed to be three-deep at the top 300 spots, and so

everybody starts to think about bank strength and succession planning, and coaching really started to take off. Marshall Goldsmith got a contract with Agilent to coach 24 high potential individuals. And he and I talked and he said, “I would like you to take 4 of these people.” And I said, “Well what am I going to do with them?” And he said, “We’ll make it up as we go.”

So it evolved into the Stakeholder Centered coaching process like the one we do today. In a nutshell, it’s active involvement in stakeholders, and a measurement tool, which we call a mini survey, after a leader picks a couple of key skills to work on: delegate, collaborate, hold people accountable, focus on what’s most important. Whatever it is—based on feedback, interviews, or however you get to it. Engage stakeholders, and measure it. Frank, Marshall, and I are the 3 people that still do it. There may be some others. And, you know, we don’t get paid until the end, and we only get paid if there’s improvement seen by the stakeholders.

So I think the change is that companies have gone from “Let’s train everybody,” to “Where are we going to get the biggest return for the money we invest?” The whole high potential movement came in, and one of ways I describe what we do is, “How do we help shorten peoples’ learning curve?” And I love when somebody says, “Well, this will come with maturity, and maturity will come with time.” And my response to that is, “The only thing that comes from time is age—not wisdom.”

SGS: How do you view the role of coach in the stakeholder process and coaching in general?

CC: So part of the job as a good coach and part of the job for writing the book is “How do you shorten peoples’ learning curve?” I think too often with self-help books, which is probably the category mine would be put in, people dismiss them as just being common sense. I love when someone says, “I’ve heard that before.” Using golf again as an analogy, you can understand a golf swing. It’s not hard to understand—you can read *Golf Magazine* ad nauseam. But the ability to go out and execute a shot is a different story, so understanding doesn’t mean you have ability—it just means you understand.

SGS: You’ve mentioned that the belief with respect to leadership development was: “If they know and believe, then they’ll do” and that you learned through experience more than understanding was required. Would you say that The Stakeholder Centered Coaching and your new book *The New IQ* really give people the structure needed and practice needed to move beyond just understanding to really implementing the behavioral changes needed to become more successful?

CC: I think so. I mean, that's the feedback we get from people who do the two-day certification. They come out and say, "You've given me a new perspective." I think too often coaches make it about themselves. I have this degree—I have that. I have this credential—I have that. As an example, for one of my engagements I did not get paid—I refused the money back in 2001. The reason was I thought I could get an adult to do something when that adult didn't want to do it. You can get them to do it if you have the position power to make them do it for a period of time. But it won't last. They won't sustain *unless* they see the value in it themselves.

SGS: I know that both you and Marshall say that client selection is key relative to how much success you have as a coach. What is the most important element for you in choosing a client to work with or that a leader should look for when using your methods with a team member?

CC: If you're not going to get paid until the end, and only if there's improvement, client selection is absolutely imperative. And that's why on the front end, we make the effort to say, "You say you want to collaborate more effectively—what's in it for you and what's the benefit?" The way I describe myself as a coach, I say, "I help successful people have a positive change in behavior that's sustainable and that's recognized and acknowledged by others." And if you dissect that sentence, there is a lot in it. But they have to be able to articulate to me why they want to do this. Why do you want to lose weight? Why do you want to stop drinking? Why do you want to be a better collaborator? Why do you want to be a better decision maker? Why do you want to be seen as someone that takes more appropriate risks?

They have to be able to viscerally feel it and articulate it to me before we move on. That's so I judge their commitment to do it. Three words that I use to describe it: it takes courage, discipline, and humility. The courage to be able to say to a group of people, "As good as I am, I'd like to be more effective at fill-in-the-blank." Collaborate. Delegate. Listen. Do you have self-control? Do you have self-discipline? I think the discipline to follow through is key to everything.

SGS: How important is long-term commitment on the part of the leader being coached, and the leader implementing your strategies to the success of the process?

CC: It's critical all the way through. I would make the case that the first 20 years of doing this, coming out of a workshop—let's say you have 20 people in front of you. I would say probably 80% of those people have the commitment at that moment. They walk out of there saying, "I'm going to do this. I'm going to give it a try." But then it wanes. I think everyone who joins a health club on January 1st with a New Years resolution is committed at the moment or they wouldn't have gone in and spent the money. How do you sustain it, though?

SGS: How do you help your clients maintain the momentum needed to move forward and sustain the changes they make? What can leaders learn about change from this that will help them more broadly?

CC: Well, part of our approach to working with an executive is that we work with them for a year, we don't get paid for a year—we only get paid if they improve. So at the beginning it's easy: you interview, you come up with a whole bunch of stuff, you do the interview 360, they pick a couple of things, you get suggestions from the stakeholders, you build an action plan, you share the action plan with the stakeholders, and you say, "Hold them accountable to doing these things."

There are three ways to be a coach. You can be a scorekeeper, a referee, or a real advisor. The scorekeeper just says monthly you have to check in with the stakeholders, ask if they've noticed a difference or if they have any suggestions moving forward. The referee may chastise somebody and say, "Look, you said you were going to do this, don't blow smoke up my nose, are you committed to doing it?" And they call people on things that they said they were going to do that they don't. And then ultimately if you get to be an advisor or confidant to them, they really trust when you're making suggestions on how to do things. And I know there's a lot of coaching out there that says, "A coach never makes suggestions—you just help them discover it themselves." But I have a different philosophy.

You ask a few questions. That's what my book is all about. But ultimately time is the new currency of business, and if you can help people shorten their learning curve, you make suggestions. So I think part of the answer is, as a coach, it's your job to keep people's feet to the fire. And that's part of what the Stakeholder Centered Coaching process teaches people what to do and how to do it. And it's not time-consuming—that's what executives love. I mean we have 1200 coaches around the world doing this now.

SGS: I'd like you to tie the Stakeholder Centered Coaching methodology to the ideas and concepts in your book. I see these two as highly complimentary. The book contains a lot of tips and nuggets that I thought complemented the program well, and even deepened the process. How do you see the two going hand-in-hand and working together? How can a leader reading the book execute on the strategies and tips?

CC: You know, Marshall had written ***What Got You Here Won't Get You There***, and he lists all those unrecognizable habits: adding too much value, passing judgment, making excuses. And then ***Triggers***—I had the good fortune as Marshall was writing *Triggers* to get different chapters and what have you, and he really gets into talking about, "What are the things inside of us that lead to certain behaviors, and what are external triggers, stimulus, that get us to

react certain ways?” And what I really thought about this book is, “How do we really take it down to the micro level, to help people execute on all these?” So someone in an action plan may say, “Build consensus.” But that’s really a goal. An ideal final result is that people see you as somebody who can help build consensus and get people committed to move in a certain direction. Well how do you do that?

So in an action plan, what I have through the book is, “What are questions you could ask to build consensus?” So somebody may be talking about something, and you’re listening, and you don’t really agree. And so a question you might ask is, “Well, is that your opinion? Or do you have some empirical data to back that up?” Now if people think your intention of asking that is to belittle them, then that’s a problem. If people see you asking that question, you say, “Well, I don’t see it the way you do.” So all the way through the book, it’s about, “What’s a question you would ask, or a statement you would make, to create a safe space for both you and your conversational partner to come up with better decisions?” So I think the book really gets down to the micro level. And I think in the back of it there are about 10 pages of questions. People often will say to me, “Well these just a roll of your tongue,” and I say, “My ad-libbed lines are well rehearsed,” to quote a line from a Rod Stewart song. Everything I say I’ve said a million times. Most of us don’t say anything really original. We’ve said it before. That’s not criticism—it’s just an observation.

So how do you get people to ask good questions? Someone says, “We’re going to need to be successful on this,” and I agree with you. Instead of starting with what you *disagree* with—what do you agree with? So for instance, I may say some things and I’d say to somebody, “Now before you tell me what you disagree with, what is it that I just said that you *agree* with?” It totally changes the likely response you would’ve gotten from them, and you’re building off the positive versus the negative. And let me be clear: These are all learned skills for Chris Coffey. I wasn’t raised this way—I was raised as a debater, to tell me, “Let me tell you where you’re wrong.” Or when somebody says, “I agree with you,” I say, “Well, of course, you know, you’re smart and I’m smart, and I can tell you’re smart because you agree with me.” I mean you can get into that mindset also. Or you can say, “You know, in listening to you, I agree with A, B, and C. You and I are in sync on that. But with D, I don’t see how D gets us from here to the desired result we said we wanted. What am I missing?” There’s the question. So then you toss it back to them to clarify.

Now the magic sauce in this, as I articulate in the book and in classes that I do, is you have to be open to changing your mind. And I will say that the level of individuals I work with, successful people, smart people, very often the most powerful person in the room—getting that individual to be open to changing their mind can be huge. And this is the way the whole book is laid out, to really get down to that micro level of behaviors. All we humans deal with three things:

We think, we feel, and we behave. That's it. Thinking can't be seen. And you can't see feelings—you can only see a behavior that's been a *result* of a feeling. For example, you see somebody who's really sad. What is it about their demeanor or what they're saying or their tone of voice that leads you to believe they're sad?

SGS: Being open to changing the way you think about things is key to success in changing behavior. How do you determine if a leader is open to changing their mind? What should people look for in others that show them the other person is receptive to changing their mind? What might be the challenge they face in having this type of conversation?

CC: Depending on the person sitting in front of you, I might say to somebody, "When was the last time that you changed your mind?" Here's an example everyone can understand, and this will certainly date what's going on: We have Presidential Debates going on, and Donald Trump is leading on the Republican side. Staying out of politics, and which way I lead is irrelevant here, the question I would ask Donald Trump: "You've been a very successful businessman and you've made that point. You build golf courses. You build buildings. When is the last time somebody around you has gotten you to change your mind?" And see if he can come up with an answer. They asked Ben Carson yesterday on a talk show, "What would you do with this problem that's just happened in Paris?" I don't know what he said. I didn't see it. I just knew that he was on and he was going to be asked that question.

But I think the answer is he's a neurosurgeon. I think anybody on that stage would say, "I would call on our military experts. They're the subject matter experts on this. And if we want to win this war, if we're going to declare ourselves in a war with Isis, you're the subject matter experts, so talk to me. What should we do?" Which is exactly what John Kennedy did for The Cuban Missile Crisis after the disaster of The Bay of Pigs the year before. So you have to know what you have subject matter expertise about. Surround yourself with smart people and listen to them. But also relate your decision.

Now so often, and back to Corporate America, if you move up in Corporate America it's because you're good in the discipline you're in. I'm working with two Senior Vice Presidents right now—one in IT and one in Systems Engineering—and the two different Presidents that they report too, in my interview with them, the Presidents said, "If they continue to do what they did as Vice Presidents, and they were extremely successful Vice Presidents, they will fail at the Senior VP level." So I said tell me more. And he said, "They were the go-to in Technical, both in Engineering and IT. They're brilliant. But now they have a seat at the big table. Both of them need to see the big picture more. They need to be able to discuss, debate, and present points of view about their field.

They also have to have a broader understanding of the economics of it, the finances of it, and the marketing of it. There's the big table."

So back to *What Got You Here Won't Get You There*, it tends to be the people skills. Do you have what it takes as you move up to be able to disagree without being disagreeable, to ask those good questions? I was a single father for 10 years. I had my children half the time, and their mother had them half the time. My son, who was 8 at the time, would come in and he'd start barking about something he wanted to do. And I'd let him get all the air out, and then I'd say, "Now Christopher, what do you think the likelihood of you getting what you want is, from me, with that approach? Is it high or low?" And he'd look at me and say, "Low." So I'd say, "I suggest you walk back out that door, you think about what you want, you think about what's important to me. What is it that I'm going to need to see in order for me to be willing to let you do what you want to do?" And he'd walk out and come back in, and it'd be amazing to see the difference in his approach. And then I'd ask questions, and I'd always look for one to say, "You know, I'm not quite clear on this. You're going to need to give me a little bit more on this one." And it's fascinating watching an 8 or 9 year-old figure those things out.

Now the key is, not just for me as a father of an 8 and 11 year-old at the time, for a Senior Vice President, when somebody's coming in who's saying, "I'm not sure this is the right way to go and let me tell you why," how open are you to changing your mind? Do you really look for opportunities to defer to somebody else's point of view? Because once you get a reputation of, "It's his way, he's thought it through, he's smart," well, why do I need to prepare to come to this meeting? The guy knows what he's going to do. I have other things I can focus on. Yet if you know that that person's going to say, "I agree with A and B. But I don't see C the same way. Convince me. I'm open," you'd come more prepared. There are the things to put focus on, what I put focus on in my coaching, and so much of the book is getting down to what are those questions. On a scale of 1 to 10, if you could wave a magic wand, what could you do differently? Shut up and listen. That's what's fun.

SGS: I know that argumentation is one of your areas of expertise, and you subtly talked about it and demonstrated how you practiced it in how you dealt with your children and senior leaders with whom you work. What strategies and concepts and innovative questions will help the reader resolve disagreements more effectively? If you had to give them only one nugget, what would that be?

CC: Let's save the one nugget until the end, and let me extrapolate out of that. Like I said, the first 20 years I taught a lot of Situational Leadership and different workshops. As I got into coaching, and really working with individuals, all of a sudden you can take what you taught in a class, and now you have to help people *execute* it.

And what I really started to think about: What are new skills that I, Chris Coffey, want to get good at? Certainly conflict management and conflict resolution. Conflict is inherent in human nature. You want to go to a steak restaurant, and your spouse wants to go to a fish restaurant, and there's conflict. How do you resolve it? Now if you're smart you say, "Honey, wherever you want to go, it's fine with me."

SGS: A wise man.

CC: A wise man! So then it becomes: Do you want to debate it, or do you want to accommodate the other person, What is it that you want to do? There are different models out there. There's the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Resolution: You accommodate, you collaborate, you compete, you avoid, and you compromise. They're all different results, negotiating skills, decision-making skills, and argumentation skills.

What led me to argumentation is my whole background in debating. And I think unfortunately it's called argumentation because people see that arguing a negative. Just think about parenting: "Don't argue with your brother." So it's a skill very often that's not so good. Now certainly my background, 8 years with Jesuits, you debated everything. And I started to say, "I really want to get good at this," so I started reading different books and thinking about it.

And I really started to put together my thoughts on argumentation. If you think about it: It's rhetoric, it's logic, it's dialect. Rhetoric is an audience. Logic is the question of how you put together your thoughts. Dialectic is your questioning of knowledge through Q and A. How do you do it for yourself? How do you do it with others? It's a whole big field of study. First of all somebody makes a claim. The components of argument: There's a claim, there's evidence, there's inference, and there's a warrant. A claim is a statement you want the listener to believe. Evidence is the grounds you have for making that claim. Inference is just a fancy word for how you're connecting the dots. What's the main proof-line from the evidence to the claim? And then the warrant is what gives you the license to make the inference and the claim in the first place. In other words: What makes you a subject matter expert on this?

So in our legal system, that's an expert witness. I'm going to bring in my expert witness, you're going to bring in your expert witness, and we're going to let an impartial jury decide which one of these two is really the expert. I teach people those concepts, and so when I'm working with somebody, they make a claim, and a question I might ask is, "Well, what evidence do you have to back that up?" Another question might be, "Well, is that your opinion? Or is that based on some empirical data—some evidence that we could use to support it?" So my point in this is, when you know different models—Situational Leadership, DNA of

teams, conflict resolution, argumentation—it leads naturally to questions. You start to frame things that way. And you start to think, “What are the best compliments I get as a coach?” And, “You not only got me to change certain behaviors, but you got me thinking differently.” So if you’re listening to somebody, they make a claim, and you think it’s just a fallacious, outrageous claim. What most of us tend to do in that situation is just argue and tell them where they’re wrong, instead of asking questions.

The most powerful way to influence is by asking questions, and not telling. That’s the whole Socratic approach. Back again to the political thing when we have to debate on global warming: To what extent does man impact it? Is it really warming? The South Pole’s getting colder: all of that stuff. One side says, “It’s settled science.” And that’s just an oxymoron to begin with—science is never settled. So if someone was going to make that statement to me, I’d say, “Settled science? The earth was flat 500 years ago. That was settled science. The earth was the center of the universe. That was settled science for a long time.” And then it wasn’t. So by the very nature of making a claim like that—it’s settled science—I can take that apart in an instant because it’s a fallacious claim. But if you can see things through the eyes of a model, and you see things unfolding that way, it leads naturally to asking good questions.

So when people say, “Do you always just ask questions?”—Look, let’s say I were to reframe what somebody said, I can reframe back what they said, and then the question would be, “Is that accurate?” If they say, “Well, not quite,” then my question would be, “What would be, then? What did I miss?” But again, this all has to be done with integrity and the desire to help. I just can’t emphasize too strongly: This cannot be seen as, “I’m going to show you that I’m smarter than you are,” or “I’m going to belittle you.” Instead, it truly has to come from, as I say in the book, a basis of integrity. You want to be a fair player. And you want to create the best possible outcome for all concerned. The conventional way to describe it is creating win-win. And can you work toward that?

Going back to global warming, somebody says, “It’s absolutely man’s fault.” Then you have the other side that says, “Man doesn’t have anything to do with it.” If you’re arguing with either side of that... I’m going to quote Mark Twain here. He says, “Don’t argue with a fool because onlookers won’t be able to distinguish between the two of you.” And so I may say to somebody, the question might be, “It sounds to me like no matter what I say or with new evidence that gets presented, your mind is made up and you’re not willing to change your mind. Is that an accurate assessment on my part?” How do you answer that question? And if they say, “Yes,” then the conversation’s over. But what I’ve learned to do is walk away from silly situations where you can’t possibly have an impact. **[THIS MAY BE A GOOD SPOT TO END PART 1]**

SGS: What are the top 3 or 4 strategies that people can use to create the safe space necessary to really see another perspective and listen?

CC: I'm a big believer in clarity. I say I'd rather have clarity than agreement. So with that little tidbit of information, if we get clarity on the desired result that we want, and we take the time up front, we can discuss and debate how to get there, as long as we're clear on the desired result. Now in any situation there's going to be different goals we have. How do we go about getting to different things and becoming cognizant of these things?

For different goals, you have topic goals, relationship goals, identity goals, and process goals.

Topic goals: What are the words actually saying? What are the words people are using?

Relationship goals: What's the relationship you have with this person, and what's the relationship that you want it to be? Is it what you want it to be?

Identity goals: How do this person see you versus how do you want to be seen?

Process goals: How are we going to go about resolving our different points of view? Is it going to be an autocratic approach, where the person with the power makes the decision? Is it going to be a democratic approach where the majority rules? Or are we going to attempt to come to consensus? What is consensus? How do you define consensus?

And I'll often ask people how they define consensus, as it's a word that's used a lot out there today. And it's interesting listening to most people define consensus as, "The majority of people agree." And I say, "The majority: Is that 51% or 98%?"

SGS: You talk about gaining consensus in the book before acting. What does consensus mean then, how is it defined, and how does understanding that and seeking it give people an advantage in accomplishing what they need to do?

CC: One of my expressions, again, is "Words have meanings." You have to define the meaning of consensus. Come to an agreement with the people you work with: "Let's define consensus." You can look it up in the dictionary and extrapolate from that what it means to you in this particular situation. The way I define it is: You commit to the decision that is made, even if you argued against it in the decision-making process, and even if you still disagree with it. So consensus doesn't mean the majority.

One of the things you have to come to peace with is that the person with the power in the room is the decision maker in Corporate America, in companies. The owner, the President: they're the ultimate decision makers. They may

delegate that decision to others, but ultimately it's their decision. It's our job as coaches to say, "I think you're going in the wrong direction. How can I influence that decision?" In other words: What is it that I'm aware of that they're not? And what is it that I need to do to influence the decision in the direction that I think it should go?

Now, at the end of the day, a question I ask is: "Do you feel you had a fair opportunity to influence it? Were you heard and understood?"

And if the answer to that is "Yes," then the powers that be made a decision to go in the other direction.

The first thing I tell people is, "How would you rate your effectiveness at communicating your point of view? Did you have a fair opportunity to influence the decision? Were you listened to? Were you understood? Did you articulate your point of view in a way so they understood what you meant?"

And if the answer to that is "Yes," then you have a choice. You can either buy into the decision that was made, even if you still disagreed with it, or you can leave. And those are choices we all have to come up with.

SGS: Defining consensus relative to the people in the room is definitely more meaningful than defining it as agreement or a 51% share. Usually in meetings, or in those types of conversations, we hear people say, "Well this is the successful outcome that I'd like to have," or, "These are the goals that we want to achieve." Can you share the difference between an outcome, or a goal, and the concept you share in the book of creating an ideal final result? Why do you feel that it is the approach to take in situations where you're trying to define either for yourself, or for a group, what comes at the end?

CC: I think you hit on a couple little key things there. I like the words. I think the words help people think a little differently, versus just goals or objectives, which I think tend to be vague. Now that doesn't mean at the end you may be very clear on your objectives and the goal, and you've gotten to the ideal final result just using those words. I like ideal final result because it makes people *think* a little differently. How would we define success? What are measurements along the way to show us that we're on that track? How will we know when we cross the goal line?

I'm a big believer in making people stop for a moment and think. I think we've come a long way in not wanting to make people uncomfortable. So if you ask a difficult question—that makes people think—they have to pause and think. And sometimes we get uncomfortable with that silence, and so we answer the question ourselves. Or we ask two or three questions at the same time, and the

person will answer the question they want to answer. And so you've never drilled down.

I think the skill of having that underneath ideal final result: What are some other questions? How would we define success? What will it look like? If you could wave a magic wand, what would you do differently? What are measurements and milestones along the way, so we'll know we're on track? What are the resources we have? What are the resources we're going to need? What would make this successful for you and your group?

I had a former client of mine who I was working with say to me, "What do you do with someone who's really articulate, and they're very persuasive, and you know it's always just about them. And they're really able to put together a good argument, a good claim, and they back it all up, and it's always just about them in their group. How do you counter them? What's a question you could ask?"

And I thought for a second, and I said, "Well, you could listen and say, Listening to what you said, it's very persuasive in terms of you doing A, B, C, and D. And I really see how that benefits you and your organization really well. I commend you on that. What I'm not seeing as clearly is how does that benefit the organization, or our customer? What am I missing? I mean, that's a great presentation for you, but somewhere I'm lost in how that benefits the customer, or the other part of the organization in the big picture."

And now, instead of arguing with them, or telling them they're wrong or self-centered, come back with a question. What am I missing? And see if they can answer the question. And be open, and listen.

When people say words, it leads to being able to ask a question. I had a senior VP of an insurance company, who was big, 6 foot 5—he was accused of being a bully and hollering and screaming and all that. So we get going and we go through the interviews, he builds something to collaborate better and treat people with respect. We build an action plan. And he doesn't much like me—he doesn't want to be doing this—but the President said, "Look, you're creating a hostile work environment, and you have to learn how to work with people better. As valuable as you are, we just can't continue to have this hostile work environment."

So he calls me on a Monday morning, and he says, "I'm sitting in a meeting on Friday and the VP of marketing is just flapping his gums. And I'm sitting there thinking: he's off the rails. But I could hear you on my shoulder saying, Let him get all the air out. Don't argue with him. What's a question I could ask?"

And then I thought, you know, in my action plan, that this VP of marketing has a copy of, I list one of my bullets that says, "I will distinguish between my opinion

and facts, and I will ask others to do the same.” And he gets all done talking, and I looked and I said, “Now is that your opinion, or do you have some empirical data to back up your point of view?” He said the room went silent. And he looked at me and he said, “It’s my opinion.” He replied, “Well, that’s nice, but we’re going to need a little bit more.” And he said to me, “I leaned back in my chair and I thought, My God is this going to be fun.”

You know, you can talk about all this in a vacuum. But when someone calls you and tells you, “Here’s what I did differently”—and you used the word “uncomfortable.” I love when an executive says to me, “Well, that makes me uncomfortable,” and my response is, “I have no interest in your comfort level.” That’s irrelevant to me. You’re a big boy or girl with a lot of money. And you told me that you wanted to get better. If you think that this is going to be comfortable for the next year, you know, you’re dreaming. Get another coach.

Any time we push ourselves out of our comfort zone, there’s a certain amount of anxiety, especially for successful people who what they’ve done has gotten them to where they are. It’s the willingness to say, “Look, I’m going try to hit this 4-iron 190 yards over water. And instead of putting down a 25-cent ball, I’m going to put down a \$3.50 Pro-V1.” Well, you know, if somebody’s going to hit the ball over, I visualize this, and then if they put down a 10-cent golf ball, a driving range ball, you know they don’t have the confidence to do it. So confidence is key, and how do you take that confidence and not let it turn into arrogance?

SGS: In the book you talk about change being difficult even when we know that we have to change and fundamentally want to improve. You use **Lao Tzu’s** quote, “The journey of a thousand miles begins with one step,” to illustrate that change must take place in small but perceivable steps so that our fear response isn’t triggered. How do you use this concept with the people you work with to change their behavior, and how do you get them to incorporate it into their leadership styles to change the behavior of the people they work with?

CC: I think you go right back to a lot of what we talked about, but in the coaching process—the Stakeholder Centered Coaching process that Marshall Goldsmith has made famous, and Frank Wagner and I are the guys who really put together the workshops—it’s taking it down to that micro level of creating a daily sheet, where you start to say, “Do this.” Because the way we’re wired, we can only hold so much in that pre-frontal cortex part of our brain. You know, a lot of studies have been done: You can hold six or seven unrelated items at a time, just like cramming for a test.

So you can read a book and you can take some notes, but you have to get these down into the hard wire of your brain, so you can utilize them in the moment. I mean how many times have we come out of a meeting and said, “I

wish I said this,” or, “I wish I said that,” or “I wish I hadn’t articulated this way.” We’re all familiar with the concept of regret: “I wish I had done this. A choice made. A choice not made.” So the daily sheet, to really answer your question, is part of the magic potion.

Marshall talks a lot about it in his new book, *Triggers*, and I talk about it and there are copies of them in *The New IQ*. It really is taking the action plan that you put out together, and creating a daily sheet and measuring yourself. So for instance, when I start to work with somebody, we build an action plan, based on the stakeholder’s suggestions, and then it’s almost like an actor’s subtext. The author writes the words that you have to say as the actor, and what’s the subtext you’re playing? Marlon Brando, in *A Streetcar Named Desire*, had the image of Stanley Kowalski, the character he played, as a caged tiger. He’d go to the Bronx zoo a couple times a week, and just sit there, and watch that caged tiger walk back and forth and back and forth, and that was the image he had in his head, going on stage at night as a caged tiger.

So it’s the same similar thing in a daily sheet. Let’s say in the morning you read it over. And then at night you say, “Did I ask innovative questions today? Did I assist someone’s readiness level today? Did I aim to create a win-win solution today? Did I come across as trying to help somebody else today? Did I create ground rules today?” So if you have to answer those questions—“Did I do this today?”—every day, you’re a successful person. It takes 2 or 3 weeks until you have those placed into your hard wiring, and you go into meetings looking for things. And if you know people know you’re going to ask that question—about it being an opinion or being backed up by empirical data—then they’ll also come more prepared to meetings. It’s the discipline to do this, and getting people to do it is the difficult part.

SGS: In the book you talk about assessing people’s readiness and a leader needing to do that as part of helping change occur. Can you share with the readers what readiness is, and how to assess and know that their team is ready to implement change?

CC: That goes right back to my work with situational leadership. If I go back to 1980, the word was “maturity,” and maturity was a component of ability and willingness. And then Paul Hersey changed the word maturity to “readiness.” Kenny Blanchard changed it to the word “development.” So readiness as a concept, in situational leadership, is - the person’s readiness on a specific task you’re asking them to do.

Let’s say you’re writing a marketing proposal. And you’re going to have somebody else do that. You have to ask yourself: Do they have the ability to do that, and how do I know that? Do they have the task-specific experience? Do they have the task-specific training? Are they clear in the priority of the specific task at this

point in time? And willingness. What are the components of willingness? Does the person have the task-specific confidence to do this? Do they have the desire to do it? Did they have an incentive to do?

So those are the components of readiness—right out of Situational Leadership. And based upon your answers to those, if they don't have the ability to write this proposal, then how am I going to coach them to do it? How am I going to help them be able to do it? Because so often leadership training says, "You have to delegate, delegate, delegate." Well, if you delegate after somebody who doesn't know how to do it, you're going to get a bad decision quickly.

The whole idea of situational leadership is how you contrast for styles. What can I delegate to you? And what of the great questions around that is, when you work with somebody, let's say, "We need to build this porch on the house. Have you done it before? How successful were you? What do you think a budget would be?" Getting answers to these questions center around readiness. On my website I think there's an article on situational leadership that lays all those out for 2 or 3 pages. So that's the concept of readiness as seen through Situational Leadership.

SGS: We talked about your approach with clients, your strategies, and your tips and methods for bringing about change and how your book gives people practical way to begin to use them in their lives. What advice would you give them as they begin to implement those strategies, and start to do some of the practices in the book in terms of creating an Ideal Final Result for themselves? How can they tell they're being successful?

CC: Great question. I think in terms of the Stakeholder Centered Coaching process—what are the most difficult things to get a successful leader to do? And the daily sheet is certainly one of them. And again, not completing it is not an option I give somebody when they start working with me. So let me just talk about that for a second.

Once that daily sheet is created—and there are six or eight items on there—like "Did I defer to somebody's point of view," "Did I differentiate between my opinion and fact?" Things like that, depending again on the goal you pick. They have to fill that out every day. And then they email it to me at the end of the week. A little spreadsheet. Every day. And literally it only takes... less than a minute?

So no one can give me the excuse they don't have time to do it. And if they do, the only thing I can extrapolate from that is it wasn't important enough for them to spend a minute in a day to do. I love to also say to an executive, "The quality of your excuses are exquisite." They'll come up with blaming this or that. And I'll say at the end, "Anyone else you want to blame?" And they'll say, "No, I think I

covered everybody.” And I said, “What part of this problem do you own?” And they’ll say, “No one’s asked me that question before.” And I say, “Well, I just did. You told me all the other that impacted why this didn’t happen. What part of this problem do *you* own?”

So much of what’s in the book, and what I do, and what I really wanted to get into the book, is that these are all learnable skills. When people say, “How do you get going?” I say, “Memorize 10 questions,” and in the back of the book there are probably 10 pages of questions. Read through them, and highlight some. Like opinion versus fact: On a scale of 1 to 10, where would you put yourself? No matter what number somebody gives, “I’m committed on about a 7 level,” you say, “OK, well what would it take to get it to an 8 or an 8 and a half?” There’s a question. You’re trying to drive them to think.

Now, the next one after the daily sheet: There’s a monthly check-in that you have to check in with your stakeholders. This is another magic move. Again, it’s a little spreadsheet. And I teach people to say this: “You know that I’m working at fill-in-the-blank. Building consensus. In the last month or so, have you noticed a difference?” That’s a question. And the person you’re asking might say, “Well, quite frankly I haven’t.” And they’re going to be truthful—maybe you’re just starting this. You can say, “OK, fair enough, we haven’t been together that much. As you know, as one of my stakeholders, periodically I’m going to be asking you this. By the way, any suggestions for me moving forward on how to be more effective driving consensus?” You shut up and you listen. That conversation takes 2 minutes or less.

So again, this is not about, “Let’s set a meeting and talk about me.” You could do this walking down the hall, or at the end of a phone call. And then monthly they have to send to me the comments that the stakeholders have given them. This is the way I force people into doing the things that they told me they wanted to do. These are just tactics to use to do it.

Now, let’s say the person says, you ask the question again: “You know that I’m working at delegating more effectively. In the last month or so, have you noticed a difference?” The person can say, “Yeah, I have.” Then the follow-up question: “Is there anything specific you can point to?” They may say, “I can’t think of anything right now.” And I’d say, “That’s alright, fair enough. Periodically I’m going to be asking you. By the way, any suggestions moving forward?” Getting an executive to do that is monumentally challenging. And they don’t have the option if they’re going work with me. I don’t get paid unless they improve, so there’s no option on this.

When I’m interviewing for an engagement, I lay it right out there, because what I don’t want is someone saying, “Well, I didn’t know I was going to have to do this.” And I love saying to them, “I want to make this as easy as possible.” Back

to what Marshall and I say: You pick the right people who want to get better at things. You get somebody who thinks they're being put upon, they don't want to do this, it's another HR deal—you can get them to do *some* things, but will the success be sustained? Probably not.

An analogy I use is, you know, you put on the suit you want to wear to a wedding in a month, and it doesn't fit. And you've gained 7 or 8 pounds, and you just can't wear it, and you don't want to go buy another one. And for the next 3 weeks, you lose 5 or 6 pounds to get into it, and then what happens at the wedding? You start putting the weight back on again. Unless you say, "You know what, I'm going to wear this suit every week, so I'm going to have to maintain this weight."

But what we know is that 2/3s of people who lost significant weight put it all back on 2 years later. To quote Newton, "Every system in the universe looks to go back to a state of homeostasis"—where it's comfortable. That's our weight—we're comfortable at a certain weight. Our behavior: we're comfortable with it. So I love when somebody says, "Well, I'm uncomfortable doing it," and as I said before, I say, "I have no interest in your comfort level. My job is to push and pull and get you to where you tell me you want to do—not to keep you comfortable. If you want to stay comfortable, get another coach."

SGS: These concepts we've discussed and those in the book certainly transcend the corporate setting. How can people use the same strategies within their personal relationships or outside of the office? What would you say to those people who are not necessarily leaders as to why innovative questions and the Stakeholder Centered Coaching process can work for them in their personal life?

CC: You said, "People who are not necessarily leaders." But leadership is merely trying to influence somebody to do something. So one of my questions always to people is, "Do you attempt to influence your boss?" And I've never had anybody say no. And so in that situation, you are attempting to lead. Leadership, in one word, is influence. Leadership potential is power. And we all have different power bases that we can use to influence somebody to do something.

If you have the position of power, you can say, "Look, I'm the President and do what I told you. I'm your father—do what I told you and don't argue with me." So we can use that power if we're the powerful person in the room... for a while. Now you'll get compliance, but will you get that person's commitment long term? Probably not. Are there times when you use your position to make power to make a decision to move forward? Absolutely.

There's a point at which you say, "OK, is there any information that I haven't gotten? We need to make a decision. Time is the new currency of business." One of my favorite expressions is, "Good enough decisions, aggressively execute, improve as you move. *Speed* is the new currency."

So when we say "leadership," doing this can be life changing—not just at work but with the people you love, people that are important to you, to your kids. My kids are 35 and 32, and they call me for advice. And one of the things I'll often say is, "Well, do you want my opinion on what I would do if I were you, or do you want to bounce your ideas off of me?" They know I'm not going to lecture. I can be decisive. I am decisive. And I can push them to be decisive. But they know I don't just lecture them as their father. They're adults now, and they have to make choices on their own. I help them think it through, which is also what I do with other people.

So leadership, regardless of where you are in the organization, how do you use it? How do you influence up? If you're going to influence up, the first thing you have to say is, "What's important to the person above me?" I get too often people trying to lead up, but go in and talk about, "Let me tell you what I need, let me tell you what I need," versus really starting to think about the person that's in the room who's going to make the decision is the person above them. They better be making sure they're positioning this in a way that makes sense to them.

The whole concept of the power is important. I talk a bit about that in the book also: legitimate power awards, punishments, connections, information, expertise, and charisma.

I mean there are a half a dozen power bases that we talk about. So, you know, know what your power bases are, and then how do you use them? An analogy I often give is: You're the CEO and your computer crashes, and up comes the IT guy from the bowels of the organization, and he says to the CEO, "Look, here's what you need to do if you don't want this problem again." And the CEO sits there and says, "OK, OK." I mean he's not going to say, "I'm the boss here—let me tell you what I'm going to do."

So you need to know your subject matter expertise, what you bring to it, and even more importantly, how you position it that way. I think it was Ronald Reagan who had a great quote. He said, "You can get anything done in Washington if you let other people take the ownership of the worst." That's an art, to lead up, as well as leading across. So often we position it from our point of view, without having the perspective and empathy for the other person's needs. And there are some other things we talk about in the book: How do you develop that empathy and that perspective taking? Which are key.

SGS: As our time together draws to a close I wanted to give you the opportunity to talk about what you wanted the reader to walk away with after reading the book? Is there an overriding message that you want people to walk away with?

CC: If there's an overriding message walking away, I want people to be able to say, "I can influence situations better than I have in the past." You know, often I'll hear people say, "It takes two to have an effective conversation." My response is, "Well, that's great if you have two. But I disagree with that. I think you can have an effective conversation with one person, if that person knows how to shape a conversation by asking the right questions."

If someone comes in very emotional, how do you help to diffuse that and get them refocused? By statements you make. "I can see this has upset you. What were you hoping I could do?" The worst thing to say is, "Well, there's nothing to be upset about." If someone's upset, they're upset.

Again, we only think, feel, and behave. You cannot control your feelings. You see what happened in Paris over the weekend and you turn on the TV—what's going through your head, and your feelings, are not controllable. Now your behavior is what we as adults need to be able to control. I may be turning inside tremendously. What do I need to do if I need to get in front of an audience? If you're an actor and you have to go on Broadway, you have to go on. The audience doesn't much care if you've had a tough day. It's show time.

I had a person call me all upset one time—a Silicon Valley executive—and he's angry, his boss is angry with him, and everything else. And he starts in, and then he's all done, and he asks, "Any advice?" And I said, "Yeah, I have some advice for you, but let me put it in context. You work for a great company. You're worth a bazillion dollars. You have a great family, a great life, a couple great kids. You make a terrific living. I suggest you hang up the phone, walk in the men's room, look in the mirror, and say 'God Bless America' and stop whining. Your boss has upset you. What part of this problem do you own?" And he said, "Well, that's sensitive isn't it?" And I said, "You know, if you called for a shoulder to cry on, you called the wrong guy. So what is it that you're going to do?"

Now, again, I think you have to let people express their feelings, feel them. And that's fine for 30 seconds or a minute. Thirty minutes of listening to someone whine over something is a little too much. My question is, "What are you going to do about it?" And another question is, "What were you hoping I could do to help?" And that's so much a part of what the book is, and the essence of what our coaching is. Now it's like any book—you can read it and you can understand it—but at the end of each chapter there are little "to-dos," there's the concept of the daily sheet, there are questions in the back: general questions, ideal final result questions, scale questions, Top 25 questions. Just look at them and highlight. If you did nothing else but go to the back of the book and read over all

those questions, and really come up with ten questions—where you say, “I’m going learn these, I’m going take them from the pre-frontal cortex part of my brain, and I’m going get them into my hard wiring and just learn them”—you’ll be amazed at how good you can get.

Other suggestions—people say, “How else do you do this?”—I say, “You know what? Watch somebody interview somebody on television. And think about the questions, if you were in the interview’s seat, what are the questions you would ask? Watch any of these presidential debates. What questions *didn’t* get asked that if you were there you would’ve asked.”

Larry King could get anybody on his show because he asked softball questions and made everybody look good. It’s not a criticism. It’s just an observation. Another way to do it is to read anybody’s speech—read the President’s speech. In a speech it’s one way. You can make any claim you want in a speech. “We have Isis contained.” Well, that’s a claim. What evidence do you have to back that up? How are you connecting the dots to make that claim? And so you can practice getting good at this if you want.

So I would hope somebody coming out of the book highlights questions. That’s why you can get it electronically. Maybe you can underline and highlight and condense and do all of that. But when I read a book like this—I mean I have a pencil, I stop, I read, I make notes, I put post-its in it. Then I summarize it. And then I go back and I’ll condense it down to 4 or 5 pages and I’ll read that over, I’ll put it on a little disc, I’ll listen to it in the car, and it goes into my brain.

You know, I work on my short game in golf. I took the first 70 pages of **David Pelz’s *Short Game Bible***, and condensed it down to about 3 of 4 pages, and it’s there. So I think there’s a big difference between understanding and being able to do. And that’s where self-discipline and self-control really come into play. If I were to analyze myself: I have much more self-discipline than self-control.

SGS: Putting things into practice, asking yourself key questions, and creating your own daily sheet and the other tips you shared are great practical ways people can begin to bring about the change they seek and begin influencing others more effectively. Thank you.

CC: It’s amazing how it can change your life. It truly can.

SGS: What’s next for Chris Coffey and how best can people find out about what you’re working on and planning for the future?

CC: I’ll just go back to my simple philosophy: “Learn as if you’re going to live forever. Live as if you’re going to die tomorrow, and be happy now.” Again, you can tie in The Ten Commandments, The Constitution, a lot of stuff into that. All

of that would need to be defined from my point of view. So for me, you know, people ask me when I'm going retire. And I say, "Retire and do what?" As much as I love golf and skiing, I can't do it all the time. The two most important days of your life are the day you're born and the day you find out why. And I'll go back to senior year of prep school and John McLaughlin said, "You're going to be a teacher," and I just dismissed it outright.

And that's really what I am. So when people ask me what I do, very often—if I'm playing golf with strangers—I just say that I'm a teacher, and there's an end to it versus "I'm a coach." Then you have to describe everything, and I'm out here to play golf. Now if somebody asks me that on a plane and I think it might be business, I might say, "Well, I help successful people have a positive change in behavior that's sustainable and recognizable by others, and if they get better at the end of the year, then I get paid." That leads to, "What do you mean you get paid?" Then you talk more.

But for me, moving forward, I want to continue to add value. One thing I'm looking forward to is being a grandfather. I mean, I'm not. I'm not even close. My son or daughter don't have any children in the hopper that I'm aware of. I'm envious of Frank Wagner who's got seven grandchildren, and Marshall's daughter Kelly just had twins, so now he's got two grandkids. And I'm still waiting, so I'm looking forward to that. I think that would certainly change my life, and my golf game would probably suffer a bit, but maybe not. I'm a pretty happy, optimistic person. Life is good. So for me it's more of the same, and the key thing is adding value.

SGS: Chris, we've come to the end of our time together and I want to take this opportunity to thank you for sharing your experiences, knowledge and tips with all of us today. I've enjoyed our conversation.

CC: Any time. People call, and I'm more than happy to share what I know. I had one person, just as anecdotal, from a company. We were on the phone similar to the way we are now, and I was sharing all of this, and about twenty minutes into it she stopped and she said, "You know, I have to ask you a question. I'm an external coach. Why are you willing to share with me everything you do?" I said, to quote Buckminster Fuller, "I think sharing is having more." Everything on my webpage is available to you. In fact, Buckminster Fuller, on his gravestone, has one thing, and it says: "Call me trimtab." Do you know what a trimtab is?

SGS: No, I'm not familiar with that term.

CC: A trimtab is a sailing term. So every big boat—every aircraft carrier or big yacht—has a rudder that you turn, but at the bottom of the rudder there's another little tiny rudder that just starts it to go. And it's called the trimtab. And so he just said, "Call me trimtab." And I thought, "Wow. How profound." So if I

think of myself, what are little tipping point behaviors or tips that I give people, that they call and thank me for? It's just changed how I do things. So in lots of ways I think of myself as a trimtab, and people take it as they go.

So for the people reading this, I have a brand new website up. After I think 12 or 13 years, I finally had it redone. It's <http://christophercoffey.com>. There's a page on there if anyone wants to contact me or ask for more input on different things I talked about. Also there are the first 25 or 30 pages of the book you can download and read and see if it's something you'd like to read more of. And that's how to reach me.