



for the record

Guttman Development Strategies, Inc.

Seven roles that executive coaches—and their clients—should avoid at all costs. Howard M. Guttman provides insight into a hot management topic.

The 7 Deadliest Roles Coaches Can Play

1. Playing Confessor

Coaching is not about absolution, but about behavior change.

2. Playing Freud

Coaches don't get paid to fathom the "inner self," but to assess what's observable.

3. Playing Houdini

Don't pretend there's magic in coaching. Explain your process to your client and to anyone else who needs to be involved.

4. Playing Solomon

Don't think you've got all the answers. For the best insights, look to those who interact with your client on a regular basis.

5. Playing Tarzan

You don't get paid to carry your client's monkey. He or she must carry the burden and learn how to lighten the load.

6. Playing Apologist

Coaching is not about making excuses for your client, but about changing performance so excuses will no longer be necessary.

7. Playing Terrorist

Coaches don't win through intimidation, sabotage, or by rattling clients. Your only job is to help clients, not to destroy their ego—or career.

And what is a legitimate role for coaches to play?

Socrates is a terrific role model. He knew how to raise the tough questions and prompt introspection, but his solutions were grounded in empirical reality.

Howard Guttman is author of *When Goliaths Clash: Managing Executive Conflict to Build a More Dynamic Organization*, published in 2003 by AMACOM. He is the principal of Guttman Development Strategies, a Ledgewood, NJ-based management consulting firm specializing in building high-performance teams, executive coaching, and strategic and operational alignment. (www.guttmandev.com)

For interviews with Howard Guttman or to discuss other editorial possibilities, contact Peter Tobia, Market Access, at 215-402-0731 or e-mail pmtma@aol.com.