

Facilitator

Guide

for

Grow Strong
Leaders and
Teams

Dennis E. Coates, Ph.D. and Meredith M. Bell



Facilitator Guide for Grow Strong Leaders and Teams

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Quantity sales. The *Facilitator Guide* is used to launch programs that develop high-impact leader and team communication skills using the books, *Connect with Your Team* and *Peer Coaching Made Simple*. Special discounts are available on quantity purchases of these two books by corporations, associations and others. For details contact us at: info@GrowStrongLeaders.com or 757-656-4765

The Big Picture

Before you learn about your role as facilitator, here's why this new approach to leader and team development is needed:

- Communication is at the heart of leadership and teamwork. For optimum performance, *everyone* needs to improve the way they interact with others.
- Almost no one learns these essential communication skills before entering the workplace.
- A traditional training program isn't the answer. *Knowing* what to do isn't enough. A person needs to be able to *use* the skill automatically in a busy workplace.
- The only way to improve a key leader-team communication skill is to practice it in person-to-person interactions every day.
- Making lasting improvement in skills takes time. To sustain a persistent effort, people need accountability, encouragement, and feedback.

While many organizations invest in executive coaches for top leaders, they haven't had an economical way

to provide this kind of development opportunity for *everyone*—until now.

The “Grow Strong Leaders and Teams” program fills this gap in the most effective, inexpensive way possible:

- ***Focuses on the highest impact interpersonal communication skills***
- ***Includes team members***
- ***Applies the skills daily at work***
- ***Uses a system of peer coaching to support a long-term effort***

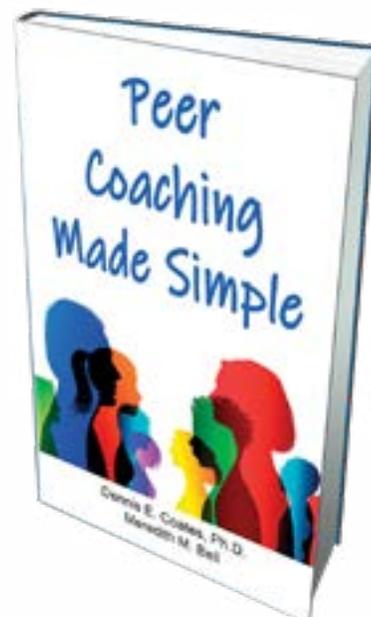


Your Facilitator Role

“Grow Strong Leaders and Teams” is a long-term skill-building process. So, you won’t be presenting training. Instead, you’ll be guiding a program of on-the-job practical application and peer coaching.

You’ll have three resources to support your facilitation:

- [*Connect with Your Team: Mastering the Top 10 Communication Skills*](#) includes step-by-step instructions, sample dialogues, and practical tips that participants use on the job. This book is also a resource for peer coaches to remind participants of the fundamentals.
- [*Peer Coaching Made Simple: How to Do the 6 Things That Matter Most When Helping Someone Improve a Skill*](#) explains how participants can hold each other accountable and support each other while they practice the skills at work.
- [An orientation video](#), featuring the authors of the books.





Simply showing the video and distributing the two books won't be enough to ensure participants will read the books and apply the skills. That's why the facilitator role is so important to the program's success.

Initially, you'll meet with a team or a group of leaders to explain the goal of the program and how it works, because it's unlike a traditional workshop or training course. After you get things started, the learning happens as participants apply the skills in the real world of work—using the skills on the job until they become comfortable habits.

In this program, peer coaching partners will support each other as they continuously improve the way they communicate. It's a process that will take months and could even continue indefinitely, becoming a part of your organization's culture.

Your ongoing role is to keep the process on track, whether you're an internal or external consultant, coach or trainer. You'll facilitate three kinds of meetings:

- An initial **orientation meeting** to launch the program
- A **follow-up session** to check on participant focus and peer coaching partnerships
- **Periodic gatherings** to check progress, and encourage participants to share insights and recommendations



Initial Orientation Meeting

Before the Meeting:

1. Identify participants and announce the meeting.
2. [Play the orientation video.](#)
3. Buy the two books for each person.

Both books are available on Amazon.com. For quantity discounts, contact Meredith Bell at meredith@GrowStrongLeaders.com or (757) 656-4765.



During the Meeting:

1. Summarize how the program works.
2. Play the orientation video, which features the authors, Denny Coates and Meredith Bell.
3. Describe the purpose of their peer coaching sessions, which can take place in person, by phone, or through an online platform. They will:
 - » Hold each other accountable for their commitment to practice aspects of the skill.
 - » Help each other learn from their efforts to use the skill.
 - » Encourage each other, especially when their efforts have been frustrating.
 - » Commit to new efforts, to be discussed at the next meeting.
4. Instruct the participants to focus on *just one* of the ten communication skills in ***Connect with Your Team***, and commit to applying that skill at work with others until it's a comfortable habit. Then they can select a different skill to improve.
5. Announce the follow-up meeting and ask participants to prepare by doing the following:
 - » Read the first three chapters of ***Connect with Your Team*** and scan the remaining chapters to choose their initial development focus.
 - » Read the brief book, ***Peer Coaching Made Simple***, and prepare to ask questions.
 - » Choose a “coaching partner” and agree on how they will meet to coach each other.
 - » Be ready to tell you their initial focus and who their coaching partner will be.
6. Tell participants that in the months ahead you'll meet with the group from time to time so they can discuss their progress, ask questions, and share suggestions.



Follow-up Meeting

This meeting can be brief. Its purpose is to ensure that everyone is off to a good start. It can be a traditional in-person meeting, or it can be held on an online platform. You could even handle it with email.

To help you monitor progress, ask participants to tell you:

- Who they are partnering with
- What their initial focus for improvement is

Make a record of this information.

Ask if there are questions about the books or the process. Be sure to study the two books carefully so you're prepared with helpful answers.

Announce the frequency of future monitoring meetings.





Monitoring Meetings

Once you've launched the program, you'll need to check on how participants are doing and encourage them to stay the course.

This is best accomplished through periodic meetings, which you can host every month or two to allow them to bring up any concerns or issues, share success stories, and maintain a level of confidence in their coaching.

To help everyone get the most out of the session, you can ask open-ended questions such as:

- "How's the program working for you so far?"
- "What aspects have you enjoyed most?"
- "What issues have you experienced?"

- “Has anyone else had this problem? How have you handled it?”
- “How has the book on peer coaching helped you?”

When anyone speaks, respond by listening to understand and by encouraging others to open up and contribute their ideas for making the coaching effort more successful.

Remind participants that the two books are essential coaching resources, structured to help them stay focused on the fundamentals. Study the books until you’re familiar with the contents, so you can refer participants to appropriate chapters.

Always end with encouragement, assuring them that you’re available to support them.



In Summary...

It takes time to master a skill, and along the way you can expect people to experience both successes and frustrations. With a peer coaching partner to support them, participants will get the encouragement they need to stick with it until a specific skill becomes their comfortable, automatic response. With enough “reps” and refocusing on the basics, their brains will rewire, making the skill their go-to behavior pattern.

Then they can focus on another priority skill. In fact, peer coaching is a powerful way to reinforce *any* kind of skill development.

You may need to remind them that becoming the best leader or team member they can be is a challenging, long-term effort; but they can prevail, and the payoffs are huge.

Questions? We’re committed to your success!

Contact Meredith Bell at meredith@GrowStrongLeaders.com or 757-656-4765.

Dr. Denny Coates and Meredith Bell, authors of [*Connect with Your Team*](#) and [*Peer Coaching Made Simple*](#), have been business partners for more than 30 years. During that time, they’ve had a singular focus: help organizations improve the way people communicate with each other at work. Their proprietary assessment and development tools have helped millions of people worldwide improve leader and team communication skills.