Coaching Momentum

"Momentum is the silent force that turns small steps into giant leaps. Nurture it, and watch the impossible become possible."

We have all seen the outcome of **momentum**. We have felt it, too—that electric surge when our team has the "momentum." It's an unseen driving force propelling actions toward a goal, an energy moving the team toward a score.

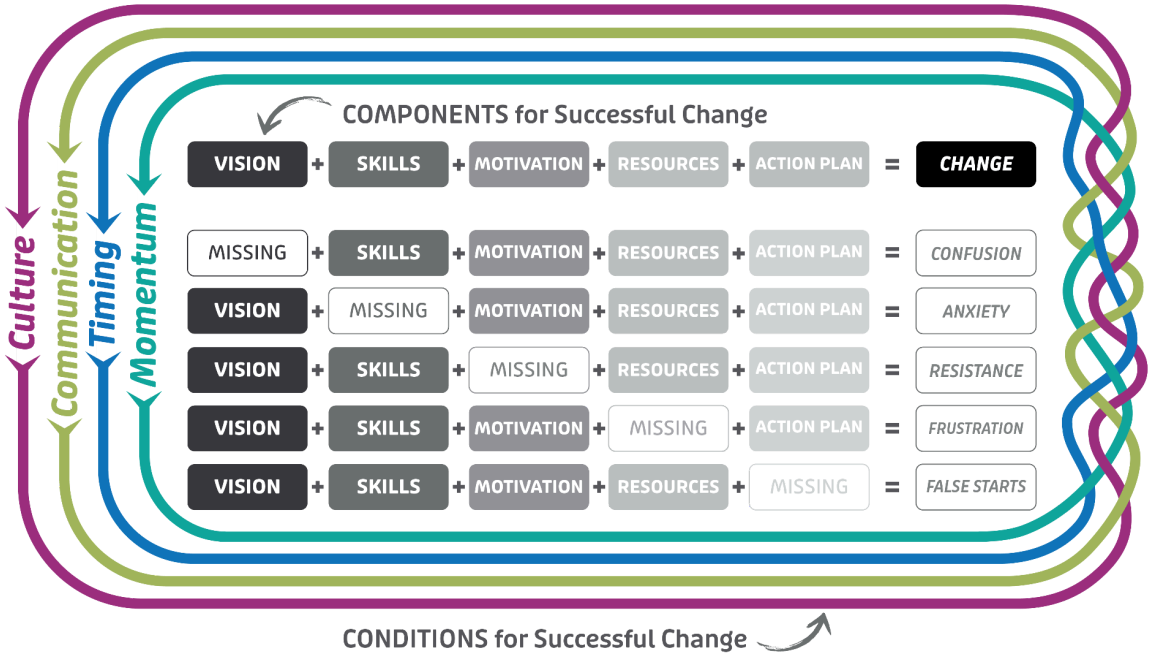
We have also seen the impact when momentum is "lost." There's no force to contend with, no driving energy—only a flat, stunned silence that leaves both players and fans reeling.

Momentum is real.

As we coach others through leading complex change, it is critical that we recognize "momentum" as a key "condition of success." In our **Change Matrix**[2] below *(adapted from the Knoster Model)*, we see that this condition – this driving force – impacts all components of successful change.

THE CHANGE MATRIX

Essentials for Success



It takes intentionality to coach leaders through building and sustaining momentum. Three stages can provide insight into how we might approach coaching through building momentum:

1. **Walk daily** in the work.
2. **Stand firm** in the commitment.
3. **Settle in** to the value added.

Consider a game of volleyball, for example. If, as players, we are to "**walk daily in the work**," we must practice, hone the skills needed to generate energy, and overcome challenges along the way.

As we master the practice of walking daily in the work, we learn to "**stand firm in the commitment**." On days when practice feels like a struggle and distractions press in, we stand firm in our commitment.

Finally, as momentum becomes routine, we "**settle in to the value added**." We become comfortable on the court—not stressed, but confident, adjusting as needed. We recognize the momentum that exists, and instead of stepping out of it only to have to rebuild, we settle into it, **allowing the momentum to propel us toward our goal**.

As we coach clients in building and sustaining momentum for the change initiatives they lead, the following questions may serve as a guide for each stage:

1. Walk Daily in the Work.

- What specific actions might you take on a **daily** basis to actively engage with this work?
- How will you approach each task to ensure steady progress toward your goals?
- What challenges do you anticipate as you start this journey, and how will you address them?
- How will you hold yourself accountable to show up fully in this work every day?
- What would it look like to be fully immersed in this process?

2. Stand Firm in the Commitment

- What motivates your commitment to this goal, and how will you keep that top of mind, to **stand firm**?
- What motivates your team members' commitment to this goal, and how will you support that?
- What values or principles anchor you to this work?
- How will you recognize moments of doubt, and what strategies will you use to stay committed?
- Who or what can support you in remaining resilient when faced with obstacles?
- In what ways will you demonstrate your commitment to others involved in this process?

3. Settle in to the Value Added

- How will you recognize when you and your team are "**settled in**" to this work?
- What does success look like in terms of the impact you aim to create?
- How can you track and celebrate the value you are adding along the way?
- Looking forward, how will this value sustain both you and those impacted by your work?

These questions can help the client connect deeply with each stage, allowing them to focus on creating a **MOMENTUM that PROPELS the PROCESS forward**.

In the words of my niece, high school athlete and volleyball player:

"Momentum Matters!

We must create it and hold onto it like it matters!"

- Ms. Emily Gaines

Citations:

1. ChatGPT editing, personal communication, November 12, 2024
2. Adapted from https://agilityportal.io/blog/knoster-model-for-change