Clarion Review

Business & Economics

Coaching by Values: A Guide to Success in the Life of Business and the Business of Life
Simon L. Dolan
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Four Stars (out of Five)

In recent years, coaching has grown in importance (and popularity) in many areas of life, well beyond its traditional role in sports. Job seekers employ coaches to refresh résumés, seek employment, or change careers; high school students use coaches to assist them with college applications and interviews; physical fitness enthusiasts are coached by personal trainers; and business executives rely on coaches to guide them through thorny public-relations issues.

This widespread interest in coaching makes Simon Dolan's *Coaching by Values* particularly relevant. Dolan, who has extensive coaching experience in business, approaches the topic with a scientific eye, referencing numerous sources to first offer a comprehensive overview of coaching in general and then define and detail the concept of coaching by values.

Dolan's opening chapter is a thorough introduction to coaching. As such, some readers already involved in coaching may find the chapter only mildly interesting, while others may view it as somewhat dry and scholarly. Nevertheless, it does establish a basis for the subsequent presentation of material.

The remainder of the book tackles the notion of coaching by values, which, Dolan writes, "addresses real human needs, it has real meaning, and it makes sense on both the individual and organizational level." Dolan goes into considerable detail, addressing how values are formed, how values influence culture, why it is important to reshape and realign values, the relationship of values to success, and more. While his intent is to convey information that would be useful in a business setting, it becomes quite clear that Dolan's approach to coaching by values is just as applicable to one's own personal life.

The author includes a number of useful self-evaluation exercises, in addition to sections at the end of each chapter to help the reader restate and summarize the material. A nice feature of the book is the addition of several "original contributions"—short essays by other

management and coaching experts that are useful supplements to Dolan's own writing.

In the book's final chapter, Dolan departs from the rigor of his methodology to speculate on such topics as "the neurobiology of values," "values and spirituality," and "values in the New Age." Here, he writes expansively about the broader value of adopting "global values in action that bind us together." The chapter is both insightful and intriguing.

Written with a sense of passion and purpose about a meaningful and important topic, *Coaching by Values* is not a breezy business book. It will take work on the part of the reader to fully comprehend the depth of Dolan's discussion and to understand how best to apply his methodology. The reader who works through this book should be better off for the effort.

Barry Silverstein