☐ ~~Lecture the masses~~

☑ Coach one-on-one

Forget those fiery halftime locker-room speeches (or their business equivalent, the motivational meeting). That's not where the coaching really takes place. You do your most effective teaching and motivating one-on-one, face-to-face, without ever raising your voice.

Keep these three elements of a good coaching session in mind for those one-on-one encounters (whether they're scheduled or spontaneous):

1. **Establish a clear purpose.** If the employee initiates the conversation, let her set the agenda. If it's your call, be clear about what you expect the talk to accomplish.
2. **Establish ground rules.** Make sure you have a common understanding of the time frame. Is this going to take ten minutes or an hour? Also make sure it's clear that you're speaking as man-

37

ager to employee (not "buddy-buddy" or "off the record").

3. **Keep focused.** If the meeting is happening in your office, don't answer the phone, touch the stack of papers on your desk, look at your computer, or fiddle with the stapler. Give the encounter your full attention.

You'll be tempted. If so, turn off the computer monitor and set all the papers aside. You'll reduce your temptation and also show your respect for and interest in your employee.

Here are three more ideas for making your one-on-one coaching effective:

Define the issue clearly: No mystery here. Just make sure you're both talking about the same thing. If the subject is "office inefficiency," you may think you're talking about getting the mail distributed earlier in the afternoon, and he may think you're attacking his office management skills.

Stick to one issue at a time: You won't get a handle on office management in one conversation. But, you might make some real progress on getting the mail distributed by 1:30 P.M.

Keep it in the present tense: Don't bring up the great system they had where you used to work or the way they did it when Gladys was managing the office. Stay in the here and now.

"When you're coaching one-on-one, whatever you do or say should support your connection with your employee."