

PASTOR: What about YOUR spiritual growth?

Gain Perspective, Balance, Insight

CHRISTIANITYTODAY.COM

Explore ChristianityToday.com:

Home [OT/Reg](#) [Church/Ministry](#) [Bible/Ap](#) [Communit](#) [Sho](#) [Entertainment](#) [Schools/Ed](#) [Shopping](#) [Food](#) [Help](#)

LeadershipJournal.net

a service of
CHRISTIANITY TODAY
INTERNATIONAL

PreachingToday.com

Leader's Insight

Main | Archives

Site Search

enter here

Building Leaders

Community Life

The Pastor

Preaching/Worship

Trends & Columns

Culture Watch
Trendex
Ideas That Work
Book Reviews
Leadership Weekly
Gordon MacDonald
Kevin Miller
Ben Patterson
Marshall Shelley

Resources:

Church Research
Reports

Help Us Help You

Church Resources

Message Boards

My Church's Top Priority

A Barna survey of pastors produced this list of 12 priorities for 2005. Which is your church's top priority?

- Children's ministry
- Community service
- Congregational fellowship
- Discipleship/spiritual development
- Evangelism
- Family ministry
- Missions

Home > Church Leaders> Leader's Insight

The Power of A Personal Coach

My experiment in trying to become a more effective Christian leader.

by Kevin Miller

July 25, 2001

I had read about "personal coaches," consultants who work one-on-one with executives, pastors, and other leaders to increase their effectiveness. But I had never considered trying one. I think the name scared me off. "Personal coach" smacked of "personal trainer," a status symbol for wealthy Hollywood stars.

But about 8 months ago, my work was moving me into a new role, and I felt uncertain about my ability to adjust. The department had grown (from 2 people to 7 people in the past 3 years), and I was shifting from "leading doers" to "leading leaders." What should I do to effectively lead them? What had to change in my daily work patterns?

So driven by a desire not to goof up, I asked a personal coach to help me. Thus began one of the most productive learning experiences I've had. I count my coaching time more valuable than almost any conference I've attended. Surprise.

Let me tell you what happened, in case you want to work with a mentor or coach to increase your own abilities as a Christian leader.

My coach, Bill Hoyt (executive director of [NexStep](#)) explained in his introductory letter, "Working with a professional coach usually generates accelerated personal growth. Most clients hire a coach to accomplish several specific goals." Thus, he asked me 4 questions, which I had to answer before our first meeting:

1. What are the 1-3 most important things you'd like to accomplish as we work together over the next 90 days? Please be very specific.

[E-mail th](#)

[Bookmar](#)

[Printer v](#)

Subs

The Practi
for Churc



Save

- Risk-free
- Give a gift

Fin

HOLIDAYS &
• [Lent/Palm Week](#)

• [Black Histo](#)

HOT ISSUES

• [Top 10 Film](#)

• [Best Christ](#)

2004

• [Decoding L](#)

Shop

ChristianBoo
Books|Music

Bible Studies
Christian His
Leadership T
Small Group
Librería Cris

- Prayer
- Preaching
- Teen/young adult ministry
- Visitation/counseling
- Worship
- I'm not sure

[Vote](#)

SEE POLL RESULTS

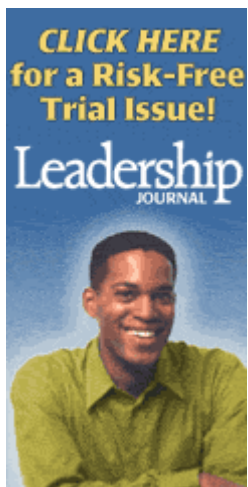
Results of this poll are not scientific.

Related Channels

- Bible & Reference
- Books & Culture
- Christian History & Biography
- Christianity Today
- Men of Integrity Daily
- Small Groups
- Church Site Creator

Featured This Week

- [High Hopes](#)
- [More Sex, Please](#)
- [The Theology of Plan B](#)



2. What, if anything, is likely to get in the way or prevent you from accomplishing any of these things?
3. What's the most important thing you need from me as we work on these objectives?
4. How will you know your investment in coaching has been worthwhile?

We talked by phone for 30-45 minutes every week or every other week. I was responsible to make the call. I set the agenda by telling Bill what challenges I was facing or where I wanted to grow. Bill listened and asked lots of questions, mostly to clarify my goals, situation, or motives. Then he gave me homework. (I know, I know, we all hate that, but I have to admit it did help me.)

For example, I explained to Bill that I was spending more and more time in meetings and wasn't getting time for valuable, but less urgent tasks: write, read for personal and professional growth, plan, and just plain think.

Bill helped me carve blocks of time in my calendar for the entire year and admonished me, "You can move a block but never remove a block." Then he suggested I spend some blocks of time outside the office, where I could focus without interruptions. I didn't like the idea: wouldn't my staff resent it when they needed me but couldn't find me? So I tentatively shared the concept with my key team members, and they actually encouraged me to give it a try.

On those block days, about once a week or every other week, I do 4 things:

1. Projects I need to write or do in larger chunks of time
2. Planning for the department
3. Personal development, reading that will help me become more effective
4. Prayer.

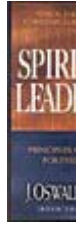
I now look forward to these days, and on them I am twice as productive as on any other day. What really surprised me is that even though I accomplish more work, I finish a block day feeling refreshed.

That's just one example of what I've gained from a coach, and I suspect I wouldn't have gained it from merely reading a book. Why?

In coaching:

- The learning is customized. You pick the topic you need to discuss, when you need to discuss it.
- Someone holds you accountable. You change because you know that otherwise you're going to have to explain why you didn't.

Feature



Spirit Leadership

Rev by J. Oswald Sanders
Reg: \$
Now:



Wild at Heart
DVI
Reg: \$
Now:

Screenfl School P

Northwest Univ Online Gradu

Turn the in your church into a **TE**

Inc Thou Challe

Free Ne

Sign up for t Leadership V newsletter to week, you'll illustrations, practical adv devotional fo leader's soul

[your e-mail](#)

- You can pace your learning. A few times I scheduled calls farther apart because I needed more time to assimilate the new procedures my coach gave me. You can also quit when you're done. I now call Bill only once every 6 weeks for a tune-up.

I encourage you to experiment, if you haven't already, with a mentor or coach. I know it's not easy to find just the right coach. Look for someone who will handle your concerns confidentially, who doesn't affect your employment, who is wise, who won't be afraid to challenge you.

If you're unsure about working with a coach, as I was, set a limited number of coaching sessions. But I have become a strong believer in the power of a personal coach. Give one a try.

Kevin Miller is editor of Leadership Weekly, editor-at-large of Leadership Journal, and a featured speaker at the National Pastors Convention in February 2002

www.NationalPastorsConvention.com for all the details, to request a free brochure, and to register.

To contact Bill Hoyt, e-mail technocleric@earthlink.net.

To reply to the editors of this newsletter, write Newsletter@LeadershipJournal.net.

Sign up for the [Church Leader's Newsletter](#) and receive a new article plus useful information in your inbox every week!

Copyright © 2001 by the author or Christianity Today International/Leadership Journal.
[Click here](#) for reprint information on Leadership Journal.
July 25, 2001

Browse More Leadership

[Home](#) | [Building Leaders](#) | [Community Life](#) | [The Pastor Preaching/Worship](#) | [Trends & Columns](#) | [Help Us Help You](#)
[Church Resources](#) | [Message Boards](#) | [Archives](#) | [Contact Us](#)

Try an Issue of *Leadership* RISK-FREE!



Name

Street Address

City/State/Zip

E-mail Address

Subscribe



No credit card required. Please allow 4-6 weeks for delivery. Offer valid in U.S. only. [Click here for International orders.](#)





If you decide you want to keep *Leadership* coming, honor your invoice for just \$22.00 and receive three more issues, a full year in all. If not, simply write "cancel" across the invoice and return it. The trial issues are yours to keep, regardless.

Give *Leadership* as a gift
[Buy 1 gift subscription, get 1 FREE!](#)

FREE Newsletter

Sign up for Leadership's e-mail newsletter, **Leadership Weekly**. You'll receive illustrations, resources, practical advice, and a devotional for the leader's soul every week!

your e-mail

-  [E-mail this page](#)
-  [Bookmark this page](#)
-  [Make this your home](#)
-  [Back to top](#)

CHRISTIANITYTODAY.COM

[Home](#) [OT Mag](#) [Church/Ministry](#) [Bible/Life](#) [Communities](#) [Gift](#) [Entertainment](#) [Schedules/Deals](#) [Shopping](#)

Magazines:

- Books & Culture
- Campus Life
- Christian History & Biography
- Christian Parenting Today
- Christianity Today
- Leadership Journal
- Marriage Partnership
- Men of Integrity
- Today's Christian
- Today's Christian Woman
- ChristianityTodayLibrary.com

Resources:

- BuildingChurchLeaders.com
- Church Products & S
- ChristianBibleStudies.com
- ChurchSiteCreator.c
- Christian College Guide
- PreachingToday.com
- Christian History Back Issues
- PreachingTodaySern
- Christian Music Today
- Seminary/Grad Schc
- Christianity Today Movies

**PASTOR: What about
YOUR spiritual growth?**



**Gain
Perspective,
Balance, Insight**



www.ChristianityToday.com
 Copyright © 1994–2005 Christianity Today International
[Privacy Policy](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Advertise with Us](#) | [Job Openings](#)