



Core Beliefs of Coaching for Equity

You may have entered coaching with clear and explicit beliefs about working with adults; you may be at the early stages of exploring your beliefs; or perhaps you have never considered what principles drive your coaching. Wherever you locate yourself on this spectrum, we encourage you to take some time to consider and hone your core beliefs as a coach.

At the National Equity Project we have developed a set of 10 beliefs that guide our work:

1. Educational transformation and equity can be achieved - we are “merchants of hope.”
2. It is necessary to be explicit about our vision and our values. We are change agents committed to educational equity and high student achievement.
3. Our role as coaches is to build the will, skill, knowledge, capacity, and emotional intelligence of leaders - formal and informal, inside and outside the school building - to take action for equity.
4. People - when given necessary support and conditions - have the capacity to solve the problems of inequity and low achievement in their schools.
5. To support people to change, you have to meet them where they are and build mutually respectful and trusting relationships.
6. People should be provoked, supported, and expected to create the space for deeper discourse about policies, practices, and behaviors and their impact on children.
7. It is necessary to model the improvement of practice through ongoing inquiry, honest reflection, critical review of performance, and corrective feedback.
8. Bias based on race, class, gender, language, and sexual orientation is a serious issue facing U.S. society and education but is usually not discussed. Talking and facilitating conversations about bias is necessary, not to lay blame, but to figure out better ways to educate our children.
9. Attentive listening and the release of painful emotions supports healing which is essential to facilitate changes in attitudes and behaviors. This process is critical as we work to make sense of our experiences and the experience of others.
10. Progress on issues of educational inequity requires improved alliances between educators across difference - including but not limited to ethnic, racial and language groups; gender; sexual orientation; disability; and economic class background.

As you consider these ten provocations, *which resonate with you? Which give you new language or ways to think about your coaching? Which challenge your implicit or explicit assumptions about people, change, or equity work? What are your core beliefs about working with adults? If you made these beliefs visible to yourself every day, how might your own actions and behavior shift?*

We don't intend to sell you our beliefs, but rather to encourage you to explore and bring your own into higher relief. This clarity will serve you well as you enter the rocky landscape of school systems. When called on to make a hard coaching decision, your beliefs will guide you.