Advanced 2.0 Coach Training Guide

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Life Coach 2.0 Training Guide

For more information, please visit www.coachtrainingedu.com.

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Table of Contents

Introduction

Welcome to the 2.0 Coach Training Course

I designed this course with two outcomes in mind: first, to provide an arena for you to find your coaching style. Coach training is a pathway for intense personal and professional growth. Both in my own life and in the lives of the thousands of coaches I've trained, I've found that personal and professional growth run parallel. When entering a helping profession, you'll find that your challenges become some of your biggest assets, which give clues to your particular style, and strength to offer the world.

The second outcome for this course is to give a deeper understanding of coaching through the work that has been done in positive psychology. The CTEDU 1.0 Coach Training courses were designed to be immediately applied. The organizing principle was practical: how could we equip people as quickly as possible to be effective, outstanding coaches? The organizing principle of the 2.0 Coach Training course shifts to theoretical: how can we equip people with an understanding of the latest research and developments in positive psychology and other research-based findings in a way that applies to coaching? I invite you to consider the topics of positive psychology and the discussion on theory as a framework for your curiosity.

For instance, when considering Hope Theory, understanding the ideas of Self Theory's several selves could help you craft questions that create client-led insights. For example, "What's the similarity between your "planning" self (the self that dreams and sets the day's tasks) and your "doing" self (the self that rolls up your sleeves and does the actual work)? What are the differences? How much overlap?" The list of questions guided by your curiosity informed by the theory is endless. The point is to help you ask more insightful questions that significantly benefit your client's life.

I wish you a fantastic journey through your advanced coach training.
John

The Learn-Be-Do of the 2.0

This course provides a deeper theoretical framework and a broader set of skills and tools to add to your coaching story. Throughout this course, you will take a deep dive into the coaching mindset, discover the intricate Pathways involved in Hope Theory, stretch beyond goal setting to goal flourishing, and add several featured tools to your coaching toolbox. Along the way, you'll work with a cohort of coaches who will cheer you on, offer valuable feedback, and provide support to help you reach the next level of your coaching career. As with many tools, it's helpful to work concepts through different frameworks, almost like an idea-emotion-action checklist. Here's a Learn-Be-Do breakdown of the 2.0 Advanced Coach Training Course:

Learn

Advanced Coaching Tools.

Steeped in positive psychology, the advanced tools in this course build on the foundational skills and tools from the CTEDU 1.0 Coach Training program. You'll explore the theoretical evidence backing each skill or tool, and learn how to implement them into your coaching practice.

In-Depth Look at Positive Psychology Theory and Practice.

This 2.0 course takes you past the basics of Hope Theory and the Unified Theory of Coaching to explore the research that supports each concept. Throughout the book, you'll be exposed to the studies and the research that support the tools and the skills in the course, and you'll develop a fresh perspective of the core theories behind the coaching profession.

Be

Connect with Trainers and Colleagues.

This 2.0 course is an opportunity for you to expand your coaching community, network with experienced trainers, and create deep and lasting connections with fellow coaches. The feedback in the 2.0 program is pivotal to your learning and growth.

Clarify Your Coaching Brand.

Through internal reflection and group feedback, you'll look at the deeper mechanics of coaching and gain more clarity about your natural strengths. This clarity will help you further define your brand--or style--and how you'd like to lean into that style. Embracing your style will help you to identify your ideal client and effectively communicate your coaching expectations.

Do

Gain Professional Life Certification.

Have confidence in your ability to create a recording that surpasses the Professional Certified Coach (PCC) standards set by CTEDU and the International Coaching Federation (ICF). This program is designed to prepare you to meet and fully exceed those standards. A certification puts your life coaching career on a solid foundation, whether you are integrating coaching into your current role or starting an independent practice.

Build Your Coaching Career.

The *Build Your Life's Work* workbook offers a 24-week plan to establish a life coaching practice. While going through the exercises and grounding yourself in more in-depth theory, you will have the opportunity to explore launching your life coaching practice, establishing a coaching program at your organization, or becoming more effective as a coach in your current organization. The weekly support you'll receive over the next six months is a golden opportunity to take meaningful steps to propel your career to the next level.

A Quick Note on the Origin Story of Coaching

While coaching is only a few decades old, its roots are buried deep in the history of social and clinical psychology. The field of coaching originated after World War II with the Third Wave of Psychology: Humanistic Psychology. Abraham Maslow and Carl Rogers, two of the most influential psychologists of their time, were primarily responsible for this wave, introducing client-centered approaches to psychological interventions. This wave of psychology refused the notion that we are to examine only the parts of ourselves we identify as problematic, and instead studied the whole of a person.[1] This opened both practitioners and patients up to the possibility of discussing more than just feeling bad or sick. Soon, wellness and ways to live a more optimal life became a normal part of counselor-client conversations, which laid the foundation for life coaching.

A few decades later, in an unrelated arena, professional athletes and people in the business world were looking for ways to improve their inner mental game to achieve stronger external results. In 1974, after some research of his own, Timothy Gallwey published *The Inner Game of Tennis,* which helped spark a movement of athletes treating their inner game, the one played within themselves, as seriously as the one played against an opponent. While visualization techniques were already common among Olympic and professional athletes, the popularization of these techniques helped them seep into the business and corporate world. The competitive edge for those who practiced visualization was undeniable, and more people began seeking ways to adopt these techniques in their lives.

Around the same time, Martin Seligman, a psychologist who would later start a positive psychology center at the University of Pennsylvania, stepped onto the scene. After a jolting realization while gardening with his young daughter, Seligman decided to shift his focus to study human strengths instead of their weaknesses.[2] He defined it as “the scientific study of the strengths that enable individuals and communities to thrive.”[3] Thus, positive psychology was

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[1] Williams, P. (2012). Looking back to see the future: The influence of humanistic and transpersonal psychology on coaching psychology today.

[2] https://positivepsychology.com/founding-fathers/

[3] https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/

born, which provided a scaffolding of research that informed the foundation of the coaching profession.

In the early 1980s, Thomas Leonard, the budget director at a small personal-development organization in San Francisco, began to see some of his clients seeking out “inner help.” Uninterested in basic financial tips and tricks, his clients instead sought out ways not only to address their finances, but also their lives as a whole. Understanding the importance of giving your clients what they ask for, Leonard began to draw on his knowledge from psychology, the business world, and some of the tools used and developed by his company to guide his clients to the answers they were seeking within themselves.[4] He began calling himself a coach shortly thereafter, and only a few years later, in the early 1990s, he and others founded the International Coaching Federation (ICF) in the United States.[5]

The ICF’s purpose was to give life coaching a consistent set of standards. Many of these standards, as well as the orientation of the ICF, are geared toward the business world. However, as life coaching began to spread and more companies began training coaches, the variety of life coaching specialties and opportunities multiplied. Today, life coaching is still one of the fastest-growing industries, propelled by humanistic and positive psychology, which provide the scientific framework for many of life coaching’s concepts and tools.

The future of life coaching is bright, especially with the ability for coaches to share knowledge, best practices, and an understanding of the life coaching profession. The next decade will bring about an ever-increasing adoption of the profession in other fields as other practitioners, educators, and professionals realize the value of integrating coaching concepts into their work.

While we’ve given you the origin story of professional coaching, this isn’t where the story of coaching ends. This book isn’t just a training guide; it also contains the tools and skills you need to write a personal coaching story that you will be proud to share with those whom you serve. While we will weave the story of coaching through the Essential Coach Qualities, share the stories of positive psychology’s connection to our world, and teach lessons around learning and meaning-making, our goal is to share the most useful tools and guidelines for development with you. Let’s work to further the next chapter of the coaching profession.

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[4] https://www.lifecoachingprofessionally.com/history-of-life-coaching.html

[5] https://coachingfederation.org/history

I.

THE COACHING MINDSET

CHAPTER 1: Self Theory & Growth Mindset

Self Theory

What

Sitting in his comfortable therapist chair, Carl Rogers heard his client say something to the effect of, "I'm just not feeling quite like myself." The phrase piqued Roger's curiosity. It wasn't unlike some of the other things he'd often heard patients say.

"I am just not who I want to be."

"I feel like I'm letting myself down."

Rogers puzzled over these phrases. If we weren't "feeling like ourselves," he wondered, then who were we feeling like? If we weren't who we wanted to be, then who were we? With these initial pricks of curiosity, Rogers went on to create a comprehensive theory that essentially described how humans develop their personalities, and how best to achieve something he called, "the good life."

Under Rogers' theory, the self is a fully conscious being who is made up of one's self-perception. This perception is especially important in relation to how people see themselves as distinct from others. Unfortunately, this self-perception also often includes the judgments and approvals of others. Throughout our lives, we develop what Rogers terms “conditions of worth,” or external values and beliefs that aren’t in line with our true values and needs.[6]

These inconsistencies in our self-perception provide challenges as we work toward a concept he called “actualization.” Rogers argued that our subconscious has a deep understanding of what is and isn’t good for us--what he termed an “actualizing tendency.” This tendency is what drives us to become the best version of ourselves. The problem arises when our ideas of our “selves” are polluted by the conditions of worth we’ve allowed to infiltrate our self-perception.

Upon further study, Rogers discovered that certain early interventions predicted how much incongruence a person might feel between their self-perception and their actualized selves. The first intervention was a concept he called “positive regard,” which he classified into two categories.

- **Unconditional positive regard.**

  This refers to the full love and acceptance of a person, regardless of who they are or what they’ve done.

- **Conditional positive regard.**

  This refers to the full love and acceptance of a person based on conditions, such as having wealth or good looks.

Rogers believed that when people are treated with more conditional positive regard, they are more likely to rely heavily on their conditions of worth, making these conditions more ingrained in their self-perception.

While we may be unaware of the conditions of worth we add to our self-perception over time, we are likely to be aware of an overall sense that something is “off.” Going back to Rogers’ initial question, we are likely to feel that we aren’t quite “ourselves.” This feeling can be an initial indicator that it’s time for a change.

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[6] Ewen, R. B. (2010). Carl R. Rogers Self-Actualization Theory. In *An Introduction to Theories of Personality* (pp 183-201). Taylor & Francis Group.

Why

Rogers' initial work on Self Theory opened up an entire world of possibilities for modern therapy, and provided a framework for modern coaching. One such framework is called Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which proposes that optimal well-being and functioning occur only when three basic needs have been met: relatedness, competence, and autonomy. Coaching is uniquely positioned to address these basic needs.

A. Relatedness.

First, coaching provides a solid foundation for trust and connection. The coach's job is not only to listen to their client, but also to be a mirror, a sounding board, and a motivating presence that allows the client to feel truly seen. This sense of connectedness allows the client to open up and dive deeper into the issues they may be facing. From here, coaches can help clients work toward a similar feeling of connectedness with other important people in the client's life.

B. Competence.

Every person needs to feel that their talents and abilities can contribute to something they find valuable. Coaches are particularly gifted at helping clients identify and cultivate their strengths, supporting them in leveraging and utilizing their abilities to accomplish their goals. These goals, however, should be self-directed, and should come entirely from the client.

C. Autonomy.

Autonomy refers to our need to engage with the things we find most interesting--to work toward the goals we find most satisfying. A coach can help clients deconstruct their reliance on their conditions of worth and bring a stronger awareness to their actualized self-perception. In other words, a coach can help clients sift through their thoughts until they identify the ones that are influenced only by their internal needs and desires, not by outside influences.

Self-Determination Theory sees the self as being in a constant state of continuous improvement. As a slight deviation from Rogers' theory, SDT accepts that people will undoubtedly integrate external expectations and values (or "conditions of worth") into their sense of self, making it a normal part of life. This is especially true for younger people, whose sense of self tends to rely heavily on friends and family influences. However, if a person works to bolster their relatedness, competence, and autonomy, their self-perception is likely to shift toward the embodiment of their more internal expectations and values.

How

Internal vs. External Self-Perception Chart

This exercise can be used when your client is struggling to find their own voice, or is having trouble identifying which thoughts, goals, or values truly belong to them.

1. **In the first column of the chart below, have your client write down each thought, goal, or value they are struggling with.**

2. **After they've gotten everything out of their head, have your client indicate if they feel the thought, goal, or value is internally derived (personally meaningful) or externally derived (meaningful to an "other" or to society).**

   If they feel it is both personally and externally meaningful, have them write a checkmark in both boxes.

3. **Coach around your client's learning as they complete the chart.**

   Sample questions:

   - What jumps out?
   - What is the most important takeaway from this table?
   - How do you want to apply this learning to other areas of your life?

Note: It's important for clients to assess the balance between internally and externally derived thoughts, goals, and values. If the balance is skewed too much to external factors, consider coaching around how the client determines the meaning of their thoughts, goals, and values.

Thought/Goal/Value	*Internally Derived*	*Externally Derived*

Internal vs. External Self-Perception Venn Diagram

1. **Like the Internal vs. External Self-Perception chart, the Internal vs. External Self-Perception Venn Diagram can be used when your client is struggling to identify which thoughts, goals, or values truly belong to them versus what they've internalized from others.**

2. **Introduce the concept with the following example:**

   Bob has gone to the doctor for a routine check-up, but the doctor informed Bob that he needs to lose weight. Losing weight is not a value of Bob's, but he knows he has to do it because his doctor told him it could impact his health. It's an external value. However, over time, Bob comes to enjoy his workouts and his new diet. He subconsciously adopts the value of weight management as an internal value.

3. **Start by asking your client about the thoughts, goals, or values they know come from themselves internally (these should be personally meaningful).**

   Have them record these thoughts, goals, and values in the left circle.

4. **Next, ask them about the thoughts, goals, or values they know come from others (meaningful to an "other" or to society).**

   Have them record these in the right circle.

5. **Ask your client to assess each of their thoughts, values, and goals.**

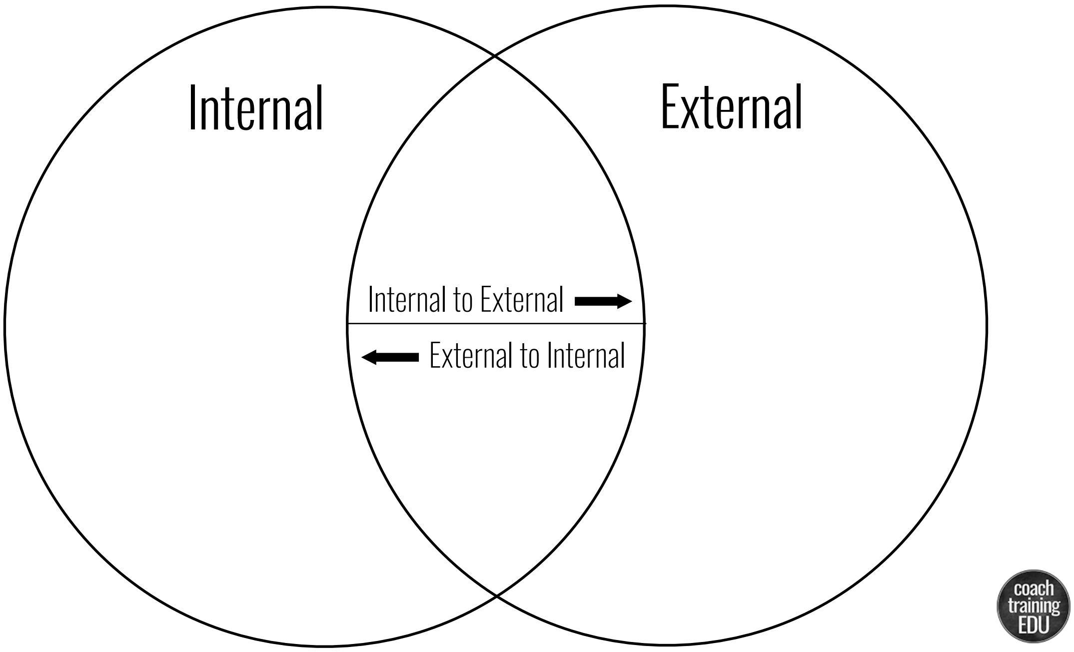
   Have them assess which of them might be in transition, either from internally- to externally-derived, or vice versa.

6. **Coach around your client's learning as they complete the chart.**

   Sample Questions:

   - What jumps out?
   - What is the most important takeaway?
   - How do you want to apply this learning to other areas of your life?

Note: It's important for clients to assess the balance between internally- and externally-derived thoughts, goals, and values. If the balance is skewed too much to external factors, consider coaching around how the client determines the meaning of the thoughts, goals, and values in their life.



Fixed vs. Growth Mindset

A mindset is a culmination of the thoughts, beliefs, and assumptions that influence our actions. These mindsets have three distinct parts:

1. **What we believe about ourselves.**

   This includes beliefs about our abilities, strengths, talents, and skills.

2. **What we believe about our relationship with the world.**

   Like Hope Theory's Pathways, this includes how we view our ability to make a way for ourselves in the world.

3. **How these beliefs show up in our daily actions.**

   This goes one step further than just the inward beliefs and thoughts that float in and out of our consciousness on a daily basis. Instead, it's about the beliefs and thoughts that we show to others.

Developed by Stanford University psychologist Carol Dweck, one of the most popular theories is the distinction between growth mindset and fixed mindset.[7] A fixed mindset denotes a person's belief that their ability, whether athletic, intellectual, or otherwise, largely stays the same. A person with a fixed mindset largely believes that their abilities thrive on talent alone, not on effort or persistence. The story that people with a fixed mindset tell themselves is that their intelligence will remain relatively stable over the course of their lives. They can do little to increase or decrease their intelligence level. Concepts such as IQ tests and SATs promote a fixed mindset.

A growth mindset, however, denotes a person's belief that their capabilities can always be improved. People with a growth mindset assume that natural talents, from intelligence to athleticism, are fluid. When a growth mindset is applied, natural talent may play a secondary role to practice and effort. The effort to cultivate and maintain a skill set is more important than natural talent alone.

Raising Awareness

As a coach, it's our responsibility to approach a client as if they have all the necessary resources--the perspectives, energy, motivation, and knowledge (or ability to gain knowledge)--to achieve their goals. Coaches believe that clients are naturally resourceful and creative. A coach's job is to reflect this brilliance back to the client while helping them continue to put in the effort to achieve their goals.

The brilliance of coaching is that it helps people raise awareness of their character strengths and how those strengths can be used and strengthened over time. By helping clients see their strengths and abilities as characteristics that can be developed, clients are more likely to persevere through the more difficult challenges that might arise in pursuit of a goal.

Exercise: Mindset Tune-Up

1. **Consider the Growth/Fixed Mindset Chart.**

   As you go through the Growth/Fixed Mindset chart (see below), encourage your client to compare the characteristics listed in each row. Ask them to identify how each statement pairing applies to their life.

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[7] https://www.growthmindsetinstitute.org/2018/03/08/growth-and-fixed-mindset-definition/

For example, have your client compare the first statement under Fixed Mindset, “Believes both intelligence and talent are static” with the first statement under Growth Mindset, “Believes both intelligence and talent can be developed.” Ask your client how they see both statements showing up in their life. You can also ask your client to consider to what degree they agree or disagree with each statement.

2. **Explore Fixed Mindset.**

   A fixed mindset increases pressure on performance. If the client believes that their ability or talent is fixed, then the outcome cannot be changed in the future, no matter what they do to change it. This focus on fixed ability then becomes integrated into the client’s identity.

3. **Explore Growth Mindset.**

   A growth mindset emphasizes effort. It is the belief that a future goal can be accomplished with enough work, practice, energy, and effort. This can help take pressure off of an outcome, as the client knows that their practice can improve their future performance.

4. **Encourage your client to add elements to the chart that help them create a unique, empowering perspective for themselves.**

   Further explore the Growth/Fixed Mindset chart with your client, and coach around anything that shows up.

Growth/Fixed Mindset Chart

Fixed Mindset	*Growth Mindset*
Believes both intelligence & talent are static	Believes both intelligence & talent can be developed
Desires to prove your intelligence	Desires to improve learning or skill
Avoids challenges	Embraces challenges as opportunities to grow
Gives up easily	Persists in the face of setbacks
Sees effort as fruitless, or as something you do when you're not good enough	Sees effort as the path to mastery
Ignores useful critical feedback or criticism	Learns from feedback and criticism
Feels threatened by the success of others	Finds lessons and inspiration in the success of others
May plateau early and achieve less than your full potential	Reaches ever-higher levels of achievement

Exercise: Growth Mindset Expansion

This tool is particularly useful if your client is struggling with their confidence in developing a particular skill, ability, or talent.

1. **Using the Mindset Confidence Quiz (see below), explore your client's current level of confidence in developing each particular area.**

   Coach around your client's answers to each statement.

   Sample Questions:

   - What stands out to you?
   - What are you learning about yourself?
   - Who are you being?
   - Who do you need to be to achieve this goal?
   - What characteristics do you need to embody to achieve your goal?

2. **Ask your client to identify one thing they can do in the next week to begin developing their skill, talent, or ability.**

   Coach around this action step, and help them to make it as specific as possible.

   Sample Questions:

   - What effort do you need to put in this week to make a difference?
   - How can you stay focused on the process?
   - How will you push through any difficult challenges that arise?
   - How often will you work toward this goal in the next week?

3. **Once your client has identified their action step and the effort it will take to achieve their goal, follow up with accountability.**

4. **Begin the next session with the Mindset Confidence Quiz.**

   Have your client reassess themselves on each statement, discussing how their thoughts have changed in the past week. Provide encouragement and acknowledgment if their mindset has adjusted, even if by only a small degree.

Note: You can revisit the Mindset Confidence Quiz throughout their coaching sessions, referencing back to it as your client works toward their goals.

Exercise: Mindset Confidence Quiz

Using the spectrum below, indicate how much each of the statements below is like you or not like you:

Not like me at all ⟷ ***Very much like me***
I enjoy the end result of knowing more than I enjoy the process of learning.
With effort, I can learn and grow.
If something looks difficult, I avoid doing it.
I'm excited for the process of learning a new skill, even if it's messy.
It's important for me to perform well.
I need to be successful early to keep going; otherwise, I stop.
Feedback feels like a personal attack.
Mistakes are an inevitable part of the process; they don't say anything about my ability.
Hard work and effort are all that are needed to accomplish a goal.
Challenges and difficulties often frustrate me.

CHAPTER 2: Approaches to Feedback

Whether delivering or receiving feedback, the feedback process is a vulnerable one. Feedback requires trust, openness to dialogue, and the ability to listen with curiosity to achieve the desired outcome. This is why we recommend taking a moment to design (or redesign) your alliance before any intense feedback is received or delivered during the coaching process.

Design the Alliance

Designing the Alliance was introduced in the CTEDU 1.0 Coach Training program. For a full review, please refer to the Design the Alliance chapter in the *1.0 Coach Training Guide*. In addition to Designing the Alliance at the beginning of a coaching agreement, you can design an alliance specific to feedback, or incorporate a feedback alliance as part of your larger alliance conversation.

Alliance for Feedback:

Before you go into a challenging conversation around feedback (e.g. after a 360-degree review), it may be beneficial to design (or redesign) an alliance specific to feedback. As with any designed alliance, it is vital to maintain confidentiality, and to encourage an open conversation.

Sample Questions:

- How would you like to receive your feedback?
- What are you most concerned about in regard to feedback?
- What is your relationship with feedback?

- What would you like your relationship with feedback to look like?
- How can I help make feedback sessions more productive? More fun?

Alliance for This Course:

During this course, you and your cohort of 2.0 coaches will be expected to deliver and receive feedback. At times, these conversations may feel uncomfortable, as do all exercises in personal growth. By designing an alliance with your trainer and your coach colleagues, you will be able to fully lean into the coaching and feedback processes to further develop your coaching skills. Suggested topics to address:

1. **Strategic goals for course completion**
    - What do you want to get out of this course?
2. **Other larger goals outside of the course (e.g. establishing a coaching program as part of an organization, or launching an independent practice)**
    - What larger goals do you have for using the course to support you in achieving your goals?
    - What are the specific milestones for these goals?
3. **Communication and support**
    - How do you want to connect with your classmates outside of class?
    - What are the best ways for your trainer to support your growth through this course?
4. **Receiving feedback**
    - What process do you want to develop for delivering and receiving feedback?
    - What accountability will support you as you work toward implementing helpful feedback?
5. **Personal Development**
    - What decisions do you want to make with yourself?

- What systems do you need to develop to gain and maintain momentum?
- How can you be proactive in seeking out the knowledge and skills to propel yourself forward?

6. Additional information

- What additional requests or ideas do you have for the group?

The Challenge of Feedback to One's Identity

Think back to the last time you received feedback. What was the feedback in reference to? How did it make you feel? If you're like most people, you're likely thinking of something related to your job or career, but the reality is that we receive feedback much more often than we realize. Sometimes, this feedback feels threatening, especially if it addresses our sense of identity. However, feedback is a critical part of life and growth. From this perspective, there are four main things to look for when collecting or receiving feedback.

1. **Fragility vs. Robustness in Feedback**

   This is where the phrase "Don't shoot the messenger" is most relevant. Sometimes feedback makes us feel defensive, and we find ourselves pushing back against the person delivering the information. Sometimes we even intimately link the person and their feedback, making it harder to separate the person from their message. This often leads to feelings of resentment or anger. This is where we need to thank our egos for trying to protect us when they sense an attack, assure our egos that we are safe, and separate the message from the messenger to identify the heart of the message within the feedback.

2. **Seeing Feedback as an Attack**

   Depending on one's history with feedback, it may be easy to see feedback as an attack on one's identity. Method and tone of delivery can also add to this struggle, since the way feedback is delivered can be misinterpreted in damaging ways. When we see feedback as an attack on our character, we lose sight of potential growth opportunities. Even if we disagree with the feedback, there is always some hidden gem to mine and use to our benefit.

3. **Misidentification of Feedback Purpose**

   Another common thing to look out for is the purpose of the feedback. Feedback is often given for several different purposes, and a misunderstanding of its purpose can cause unnecessary friction or frustration. Some common feedback purposes include:

- **Appreciative feedback:** When someone offers feedback in the form of gratitude.
- **Advice/Growing feedback:** This is what coaching looks like, and its purpose is to help you grow and develop.
- **Evaluative feedback:** This is the critical kind of feedback meant to offer suggestions for correcting behavior.

4. Growth Mindset and Feedback

For some people, feedback feels permanent: it speaks to who you are and who you will be forever. This is a fixed mindset, and while it can be internally troubling, it can also cause interpersonal issues. When receiving feedback, the best thing you can do is to adopt a growth mindset. Understand that the feedback you are receiving is something you can use to enhance your identity.

Giving Feedback

There are many feedback types to consider when you're preparing to offer feedback to another person. It's crucial to make conscious choices about what kind of feedback you're giving, and why the feedback is necessary. You will also need to provide context for the feedback conversation. In addition, if you're the person offering feedback, you are responsible for the way your feedback is received, even if you can't completely control how the other person responds. This means approaching every feedback session with compassion, empathy, and understanding.

Feedback Types

Informal vs. Formal Feedback

Informal feedback is often delivered unprompted, or in the moment. This kind of spontaneous feedback requires trust since it is often delivered in the midst of an action or behavior.

Formal feedback is planned or scheduled, like a performance evaluation. This kind of feedback often reviews one's goals, achievements, and improvement areas.

Constructive Feedback

Constructive feedback is specific, often focusing on a specific issue or situation. It includes four types:

1. **Negative Feedback:**

   This kind of feedback focuses on problematic past behavior that should not be repeated.

2. **Positive Feedback:**

   This kind of feedback focuses on successful or positive past behavior that should be repeated.

3. **Negative Feed-forward:**

   This kind of feedback focuses on future behaviors that should not take place.

4. **Positive Feed-forward:**

   This kind of feedback focuses on future behaviors that should take place.

Self Feedback

This is the kind of feedback we give ourselves. It's our running internal dialogue based on how we think we are doing.

Action Feedback

This is the kind of feedback we get from riding a bike or typing on a keyboard. An incorrect stroke of the key, or hitting a bump on our bike, gives us immediate feedback about that mistake.

Persuasive Feedback

This is the kind of feedback we use to persuade someone to do something, or to see a particular point of view. This kind of feedback often includes some form of wooing to help bring people to see the views of a particular side.

Confrontational vs. Critical Feedback

Confrontational feedback often includes comments that are meant to make you feel bad. These comments are not constructive, and often undermine the person on the receiving end of the feedback.

The word *critic* comes from the ancient Greek *kritos,* meaning to *pick out, decide,* and eventually, *to judge*. It's the ability to pick out aspects of something and decide its merit. This process of analysis is designed to point out the good and the bad in a particular situation or set of behaviors.

Group vs. Individual Feedback

A study out of the University of Minnesota[8] showed that feedback given in a group had both positive and negative connotations. Group feedback can help teams who are working together to identify group problems and develop group solutions. However, group feedback can also feel isolating, especially if it shines a light on only one team member's performance. Giving group feedback should be done with intentionality and care, ensuring the feedback applies evenly to all group members.

However, the study found that giving feedback directly to individuals proved more effective along several markers, including motivation, achievement, and influence. Feedback is important because it impacts how both individuals and the team perform. Providing group feedback that applies only to one team member is not only isolating, but the other team members will see it as a waste of time. On the other hand, giving individual feedback ahead of time can be helpful for preparing an employee for a team feedback session.

Self-Servicing vs. Empathetic Feedback

Recall Chapter 4 in the *1.0 Coach Training Guide* on motivation styles. Self-motivation means being motivated for the sake of yourself, while empathetic motivation means being motivated for the sake of others. The same can be said for feedback. Self-servicing feedback is feedback that makes *you* feel better, while empathetic motivation is feedback that takes the other person into consideration. These can also be referred to as Level 1 vs. Level 2 Feedback.

- **Level 1 Feedback:**

  This kind of feedback is given through the lens of the self. Key characteristics of Level 1 Feedback:

  - Given to make yourself look good.
  - Shows up as an attempt to prove a point.
  - Will make you feel better about something you did.
  - Can provide an excuse for behaving in a certain way.

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[8] Julie Archer-Kath, David W. Johnson & Roger T. Johnson (1994) Individual versus Group Feedback in Cooperative Groups, The Journal of Social Psychology, 134:5, 681-694, DOI: 10.1080/00224545.1994.9922999

- **Level 2 Feedback:**

  This kind of feedback is given through the lens of others. Key characteristics of Level 2 Feedback:

  - Given to help solve a problem or to help the recipient grow or develop.
  - Offered with a sense of kindness and consideration for the feedback recipient.
  - Sometimes more difficult than Level 1 feedback.

Receiving Feedback

Tool: The Gem, The Muck, and the Plan

Feedback isn't everyone's favorite word. To some, it might mean preparing to hear something difficult or even harsh. For others, it's something they would prefer to avoid. Yet some still see feedback, no matter how harsh or critical, for what it really is: a way to gain more self-awareness. This mindset allows you to clear out the muck and identify the gem in the feedback. Using the gem, you can then create a plan to address the aspects of feedback that hold the most value.

The Muck

When it comes to feedback, muck is any aspect of the feedback that is distorted or not useful. For the most part, you don't need to clean up, get stuck in, or dwell on this muck. Instead, you simply need to be able to identify the aspects of the feedback that are going to hinder your ability to identify the hidden gem in the feedback.

Types of Muck

1. **Context Distortion**

   This kind of muck occurs when someone's reaction does not mirror the response you were expecting. They simply don't understand enough context surrounding the event to provide you with adequate feedback, yet they still offer their thoughts.

   For example, let's say you've just landed the biggest contract you've ever gotten. You're ecstatic, and you reach out to your best friend to share the news. While your best friend knows your world, they don't have the full context to understand the importance of the contract. So, instead of celebrating with you, their response is more critical, highlighting the potential pitfalls that might get in the way of successfully executing the contract. This is context distortion: they don't have enough information to understand the magnitude of the announcement.

2. **Sender Identity Distortion**

   This kind of muck occurs when the person delivering the feedback isn't considered a "reliable" distributor of the feedback. This kind of distortion usually occurs when the sender has a "do as I say, not as I do" attitude, which can cause the feedback to become distorted.

   For example, let's say you come home from work and you're greeted by a significant other or roommate who is frustrated that you left your breakfast dishes in the sink that morning. While this feedback might be perfectly warranted, it could cause a sender identity distortion if your significant other or roommate is also guilty of similar behavior.

   Additionally, certain kinds of feedback land differently based on the type of sender. A parent telling a child to do their homework might land differently than if a coach or peer communicated the same message.

3. **Receiver Identity Distortion**

   Receiver Identity Distortion involves the impact of feedback on the receiver's perception of themselves. This kind of feedback is too challenging to the story we tell ourselves about ourselves.

   For example, let's say someone tells you that by not offering to mow your neighbor's lawn, you're acting selfishly. If you don't see yourself as a selfish person, you're more likely to experience a Receiver Identity Distortion, often accompanied by feelings of frustration or confusion. In this example, the feedback can have an unintended impact on one's self-perception. Conversely, if someone tells you that mowing your elderly neighbor's lawn makes you a hero, you may also experience Receiver Identity Distortion. This is especially true if you don't see yourself as heroic at all, just someone helping out their neighbor. The distortion can occur in both positive and negative directions.

4. **Perception Distortion**

   This is feedback that seems off or completely incorrect. This kind of muck typically occurs when the person delivering the feedback is either confused or doesn't have the full picture.

For example, let's say you receive an email from a potential client asking for your pricing. In the email, they offer feedback that they prefer websites that are more forthcoming with the cost of their offerings. However, you *do* have a pricing page on your website. This is perception distortion. They missed something that was there, and offered feedback based on their misperception of your website.

Still, even if their feedback is incorrect, that doesn't mean you shouldn't look closer. Perhaps the pricing needs to be in a more prominent location or labeled more clearly. Either way, the feedback can still be useful.

The Gem

The gem is the nugget of gold that comes from the feedback: the pieces of the feedback that will make you a better person, employee, businessperson, etc. Even with the harshest feedback, there is always a gem to uncover. Now that you've cleared the muck, it's time to identify the gem.

Types of Gems

1. Personality Gems

Personality gems are the nuggets of information that help you to develop and enhance aspects of your personality. These gems can be embedded into the feedback in any number of ways, but most frequently include:

- Critical feedback (e.g. "I don't think you've been a good listener lately.")
- Encouraging feedback (e.g. "You've shown a lot of perseverance lately.")
- Assessment-based feedback (e.g. "You scored highly on scales of bravery.")

No matter the medium through which you receive the feedback, it's important to find the nuggets of personality gems that can make you a better version of yourself.

2. Action Gems

These types of gems focus mostly on something you could be doing. Perhaps the feedback highlights the use of a planner or the need to read a business development book. This form of feedback often comes in the form of recommendations to help bolster a specific area of your life.

3. **Thoughtful Gems**

   These gems are a little harder to identify, since they often aren't provided in the form of direct feedback. Essentially, these gems make us think or ponder about a topic or a future state.

   For example, a coach might provide feedback along the lines of, "I hear you say you want your own business, but I haven't seen you make much progress toward that goal." While there's no easily identifiable action or personality gems in this feedback, it is designed to make the client think. It's left open-ended so the client can explore what comes up for them, since any number of thoughts about the future of the business, life priorities, or motivation might arise from this observation.

The Plan

Once you clear out the muck and identify the gem in the feedback, it is much easier to craft a plan for moving forward. Consider how you want to apply the feedback to positively impact your life moving forward. As you plan, you'll want to include the following elements:

1. **Future-focused**

   Identify something you can work toward implementing that will have a long-term impact.

2. **Identify Actions**

   Identify the different actions you can take to solidify the feedback and make it useful for you.

3. **Future Differences**

   Identify the way things will be different in the future as a result of implementing this feedback.

4. **New Perspective**

   Identify what new perspective you will have moving forward.

   - What new perspective does this feedback help you create?

5. **Gem's Impact**

   Identify the impact the gem will have on you, the area of life you're working on, and your future.

6. **Self-Assessment**

   Notice your behavior changes. What are they? How are they helping you?

CHAPTER 3:
The Professional Coach

Essential Coach Qualities

The Essential Coach Qualities are a foundational element of this advanced coach training. While there are many tools that may or may not be used in an individual coaching session, a masterful coach consistently demonstrates all of these qualities in every coaching session.

Essential Coach Qualities	
Definition	***Skill-Check Questions***
Professional	
A coach sets ethical coaching agreements with clarity and cultural awareness. The central aspects of this competency are establishing clear expectations between the coach, client, and sponsor (if present); maintaining confidentiality; designing an alliance; and addressing accountability.	• How well did the coach clarify expected outcomes or address accountability on a client's recent action steps? • How well did the coach use the T.I.M.E. model when setting a strategic or session agenda?

Empathetic	
A coach actively and empathetically listens, while using imagination and intuition to stay curious and attuned with a client. This helps a coach pick up on subtle shifts in a client's emotion. An effective life coach asks questions designed to elicit insight rather than gather information for the sake of the coach.	• How well did the questions elicit new insights for the client? • To what degree did the coach recognize subtle shifts in a client's energy, tone, or perspective?
Empowering	
A coach sees the client as the expert on their own life, inviting the client to be proactive in crafting both the coaching session agenda and eventual action steps. In this sense, a coach is a guide who empowers the client's own leadership. A coach adapts coaching tools to fit the client's unique situation.	• How well did the coach focus on the client, not the problem? • How well did the coach balance expert knowledge and information, while empowering the client? • How well did the coach adjust standard coaching questions and tools to fit the client?
Curious	
A coach remains curious, even when clients experience strong emotions or realize epiphanies. A skilled coach keeps an open mind and asks questions that lead to new insights, exploring a deeper agenda when looking at the session topic. A coach uses Powerful Questions that are short and open-ended, and the coach invites the client to do most of the work of uncovering insights in a coaching session.	• How well did the coach ask short, open-ended questions using a balance of Learn-Be-Do questions that addressed a client's Agency and Pathways? • To what degree was the coach willing to lean into intuition while staying curious and holding space for the client to explore?
Courageous	
A coach creates a safe space and demonstrates connection and vulnerability, while also at times being firm and sometimes asking uncomfortable, but effective, questions. Effective coaches model courage during coaching sessions to set the stage for their clients to do the same.	• How well did the coach address prickly points, ideas, or observations? • To what degree is the coach willing to take risks and share intuition and ideas without attachment to being right?

Confident	
A coach is confident in the client, inviting the client to do most of the work of exploring ideas and emotions. A coach trusts the coaching process and embraces pausing and silence while holding space for the client to arrive at useful action steps. Strong coaches show confidence that their client can build appropriate accountability.	• How well does the coach demonstrate trust in the coaching process and comfort with pausing and silence during a coaching session? • To what degree does the coach trust that the action step will come from the client if sufficient learning and insight happens?
Inspiring	
An effective coach helps clients discover inspiration within themselves and use it to power their journey of self-development. A coach inspires clients to take bold actions between coaching sessions while balancing Learning with Doing by designing ways to help clients stay accountable and follow through on action steps.	• How effective was the coach at helping the client develop inspiring Well-Designed Actions? • To what degree does the action ("Pathways") include aspects of Learning and Being ("Agency")?

Professional as an Essential Coach Quality

1. **A coach establishes clear expectations about the coaching process and adheres to high ethical standards.**

   A professional coach establishes clear expectations about coaching and the coaching process with the client (and the sponsor [e.g. a parent, university, or organization], if present). Establishing expectations also requires a coach to manage the various roles a coach may play in a client's life. For example, an advisor might also be tasked with coaching students in a university setting, or an executive coach with extensive experience may be called in as a consultant. Professionalism is demonstrated by the coach's ability to define coaching succinctly, set outcomes, and delineate the different roles they might play when working with clients, students, or athletes.

2. **A coach maintains confidentiality, respects a client's experience and identity, and knows when to refer clients to other professionals.**

   A professional coach is required to maintain confidentiality, and avoid conflicts of interest. In addition, coaches must uphold the ethical standards of boundary-setting and the referral process when necessary. This also includes creating clear expectations and agreements with the sponsor, if present.

3. **A coach sets clear outcomes for the overall coaching relationship, and also sets effective agendas for each coaching session.**

   Coaches must establish an effective agenda at the beginning of each coaching session to set a strong foundation for the meeting. A professional coach will elicit the agenda from the client as a means to empower them to look proactively at their life and choose their focus area. Asking the client to set the agenda underlines the principle that the client is the expert in their own life. An effective agenda includes exploring a topic (T), the importance of the topic (I), a way to measure the effectiveness of the coaching session (M), and the coach's echo to ensure understanding and clarity of the agenda (E). Together, this creates the T.I.M.E. model CTEDU uses when setting an agenda.

4. **A coach designs an alliance with a client to empower the coaching relationship.**

   "Designing the alliance" refers to the coach's ability to directly address the coach-client relationship. This includes the client's needs from the coach, the type of feedback to give throughout the sessions, frequency of check-ins, etc. A Designed Alliance is your opportunity to empower your client to make suggestions and give feedback to make their coaching package most meaningful for them. It's also a time for you to ask your client their preferences regarding coaching style, question categories, and accountability.

   Sample Questions:

   - What is your long-term strategy?
   - What value do you want to get from this coach-client relationship?
   - How does that relate to your larger objectives?
   - What adjustments do I need to make to ensure that you're getting what you need from coaching?

5. **A coach addresses and co-creates systems to help clients maintain accountability and follow through on action steps.**

   Managing accountability and progress is a skill that coaches display by combining curious questions with direct communication to ensure the follow-through of the well-designed actions/plan. Helping clients think about accountability and its importance helps boost the chances that they will complete the designed action plan. Accountability makes up a large portion of value for the client.

   Sample Questions:

   - How did you do with your previous action step?
   - How can I help hold you accountable?
   - What version of yourself do you have to be to accomplish this action?
   - What is your relationship to accountability?
   - What would make it easier to hold yourself accountable?

Skill-Check Questions to Assess Essential Coach Quality: Professional

- How well did the coach use the T.I.M.E. model when setting a strategic or session agenda?
- How well did the coach clarify expected outcomes or address accountability on a client's recent action steps?
- Did the coach address the client's previous accountability early in the session?
- To what degree does the coach trust a client to follow through on accountabilities?
- Does the coach ask questions about the value of the coach-client relationship in the larger context of the client's objectives?
- Does the coach help the client develop larger strategic goals and design action from a long-term perspective?

Exercises for the Professional Coach

Integrity Outside of a Coaching Session

After decades of research, Seligman and Peterson (2004) outlined a definition of integrity in the book *Character Strengths and Virtues* (pages 249-250). According to the researchers, "Individuals with a character strength of integrity would agree with the following:

- It is more important to be myself than to be popular.
- When people keep telling the truth, things work out.
- I would never lie to get something that I wanted from someone.
- My life is guided and given meaning by my code of values.
- It is important for me to be open and honest about my feelings.
- I always follow through on my commitments, even when it costs me."[9]

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[9] Peterson, C. & Seligman, M. E. (2004). *Character Strengths and Virtues: A Handbook and Classification.* Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Integrity Inside a Coaching Session

Integrity and morality are strongly linked. Integrity means adhering to your word and accepting the consequences when you don't follow through on your promises. Integrity comes from the Latin word *integer*, which means *untouched* or *whole*. The math term *integer* refers to a *whole number*. In Latin, the adjective can also be used as a verb, *integrare*, which means to *make whole* or *replenish*. Essentially, if you have integrity, it means that you are whole, unspoiled, and complete.

When we think of integrity in this way, the word *authenticity* isn't far behind. Indeed, many of the life coaching skills you've learned thus far are designed to help clients pursue their authentic selves. Some of these skills include Level 2 Listening, Values, and Perspectives.

One of the most beautiful aspects of life coaching is that it allows clients to determine their goals and outcomes for themselves. It forces clients to eliminate all of the noise, and to focus solely on becoming their authentic selves. This authenticity comes from curious and open-ended exploration of the client's deepest desires. From this space, authentic action follows, which can feel resonant and powerful for the client.

The word "authenticity" comes from the ancient Greek word *authentikos*, meaning *from one's own hand*. Sadly, authenticity didn't always have the upbeat connotation it does today. In ancient Greek times, it often meant that a tyrant or murderer had done something horrible with their own hands.

With this etymology in mind, it's clear that authenticity embodies two truths:

1. It comes from the actual person it should come from.
2. It includes both the good and the bad.

These truths fit perfectly within the structure of life coaching, which goes beyond "good" and "bad," to assess what's useful and what isn't useful. Coaches are seen as most authentic when they describe both the benefits and drawbacks of life coaching.

Exercise: Develop Your Brand

Your brand is a story you create about your work: your coaching philosophy, style, mission, etc., are all bound up in your coaching brand. When a coach starts to feel competent in each of the fundamental elements of coaching, a natural style will begin to appear.

1. Start with Your Story

A story is a compelling way to relate to your desired audience, and a well-designed sales story can help you close potential leads. While there are several types of sales stories, three of the most compelling stories are your motivation, origin, and transformation stories.

A motivation story captures your reason for becoming a coach in the first place. In this story, you'll consider the lives of the people you hope to impact, and what's important about that particular audience. You might consider a moment in time when you helped someone in your target audience, and how that interaction fuels your coaching practice.

An origin story tells your audience why you chose to coach in the first place. This story will contain your journey to taking your first steps as a coach. You might include what led you to this coaching program, and why you chose to follow through. You might consider retelling the moment you realized you wanted to become a coach.

A transformation story goes one step further than the origin story, and tells your audience how coaching has impacted your life. Here, you'll consider all of the ways you've grown, both personally and professionally, as a result of coaching, and how you plan to help others experience this type of growth. You might consider a story about a particularly strong coaching session, or a moment in coach training that inspired you.

In the book *Sell With a Story*, the author, Paul Smith, highlights the six essential elements of a story:[10]

A. A time indicator.

Sample Questions:

- When was the first time you helped someone in your target audience?

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[10] Smith, P. (2017). *Sell with a story: how to capture attention, build trust and close the sale.* AMACOM, American Management Association.

- When did you first realize you wanted to be a coach?
- When did you first notice that your life was changed by coaching?

B. A place indicator.

Sample Questions:

- Where were you when you had these revelations?
- Consider describing the setting of those moments.

C. A main character.

Largely, these stories might include you as the main character, or you might choose a previous client or coach to play the main character in your story.

Sample Questions:

- Who is the main character in this story?

D. An obstacle.

Sample Questions:

- What problem was the person you first helped facing?
- What was happening in your life that caused you to question your future? Or what was happening in your life that led you to coaching?
- What did coaching help you overcome?

E. A goal.

Sample Questions:

- What did that person you first helped want to achieve?
- What were you looking for when you first sought out coaching?
- What did coaching help you realize you truly wanted out of life?

F. Events.

This one is the most important. It's not enough to have all of the other elements without having the events that happened to support them. Something needs to happen. Therefore, the most basic question you can ask yourself for each of these story topics is: What happened?

2. Explore elements of your preferred coaching style.

For example, some coaches have a more direct, business-oriented style, while others have a more laid-back and spacious approach to coaching. Either works. To determine your style, pay attention to your presence in coaching sessions. Seek feedback from your clients, and identify the natural strengths that arise while you're coaching.

3. Develop your coaching philosophy.

As you continue to explore the elements of your coaching style, consider how this style impacts your sessions. How do your beliefs and values show up through your coaching style? While you will always continue to refine your strengths and style, a coaching philosophy is a great way to communicate your values to prospective clients. This philosophy can, and likely will, change as your strengths and styles shift over time, which will only broaden and build your coaching skills.

4. Develop ways to communicate your stories, style, and philosophy to others.

After you've written your stories, determined your style, and developed your philosophy, it's time to communicate these things to prospective clients or co-workers. Start by considering formality. How formal do you want your agreements and coaching sessions to feel? Based on your stories, style, and philosophy, this could include anything from a formal onboarding meeting to a "Let's jump in and get started right away!" attitude.

Next, you'll want to consider location. Will you meet in an office or coffee shop? Mostly online or mostly in-person? Where you meet can have an impact on the feel of your sessions.

Next, consider your scheduling process. Will you have a calendar that anyone can add themselves to, or will there be an email process with approvals?

Finally, consider how you plan to communicate with clients between sessions. How often will this take place? Who will initiate these interactions? Will they be by phone, email, or text message?

Everything from your coaching style to the logistics of your program will have an impact on the way your clients see you. By default, this will also reflect how a client sees themselves if they decide to work with you.

Internal Family Systems

What

Living inside our brains are mini versions of ourselves, each with their own roles and responsibilities. These mini versions, called parts, function in relation to one another, which means that if one "part" is not functioning well, it can have adverse effects on the other parts. This theory is according to academic and family therapist Richard Schwartz, who helped develop the Internal Family Systems model (IFS) for therapy and counseling. This IFS model combines systems thinking, an awareness of the links and interactions between parts in a system, and multiplicity of the mind (the idea that everyone has multiple distinct personalities).

While there are parts within us that have positive, healthy functioning, there are other roles our parts play that can be very harmful. There are three common harmful roles that threaten everyone:

- **Managers/Protectors.**

  These parts aim to keep us safe by any means necessary. Unfortunately, this largely means going to extremes, like helping you build walls so you don't get too close to others, or criticizing you to encourage you to work harder. If this last piece sounds familiar, it's because you met a Manager in your CTEDU 1.0 Coach Training program: the Inner Critic.

- **Exiles.**

  These are the parts of us that have been harmed in some way. They carry with them feelings of regret or shame, and the memories that accompany those emotions. Since these experiences are a source of pain for us, Managers will step in and lock these parts away, refusing us access to these memories and emotions.

- **Firefighters.**

  When an Exile gets loose or begins to fill you with an overwhelming amount of emotion, Firefighters will step in to put out the fire. The quickest and easiest way to put out a fire caused by an Exile is through addictive behavior, such as alcohol, food, or even social media binging.

Not all roles are unhealthy or problematic. There are motivation roles that manifest in parts like the Future Self, who help us to see and plan for a brighter future. The key to Internal Family Systems is to work with the parts who are practicing unhealthy or extreme roles, to help them find new and healthy roles to play.

Why

The importance of IFS is that it separates the “Self” from its parts. The Self is who we are once all of the parts have been pulled away. The Self is defined by some compelling traits, such as “compassion, lucidity, and wisdom.”[11] The Self knows how to help the various parts that make us who we are; no teaching or training is required. As in coaching, IFS believes in a strong trust of the client to work with their various parts and to give them what they need to function better within their minds. Essentially, clients become their own coach for the various parts they interact with on a daily basis.

A. Healing Presence.

The Self isn’t a stagnant state of observation. Instead, it acts more like the CEO of the person. When the Self is present, the more tightly-wound parts are more likely to step back and feel a sense of calm. When the Self is in charge, these parts have less work to do, and its presence can lead to a decline in depressive symptoms.[12]

B. Confidence.

The Self understands that the various parts act up temporarily. Eventually, a part will calm down, and things will go back to normal. With this in mind, the Self is able to keep overwhelm at bay, making it easier to make confident decisions to move the person

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[11] https://ifs-institute.com/resources/articles/evolution-internal-family-systems-model-dr-richard-schwartz-ph-d

[12] https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/27500908/

forward. People who are more self-led often find themselves feeling increases in self-compassion[13], optimism, and hardiness.[14]

C. Self-Awareness.

When the Self stays in control, a person is able to see how the various parts are interacting with one another. They can even sense when something external to the Self might trigger a particular part, preparing resources to help keep that part under control before the trigger occurs. With this kind of awareness, it's not surprising that self-led people often see increases in work satisfaction and communication.[15]

Problematic parts can become obstacles to achieving our goals, which makes the self-awareness piece crucial. The more aware you are of your parts, their needs, and how to meet them, the more likely you are to stay centered in your true "Self."

How

Energy Metamorphosis

This exercise is best used when you hear your client say something along the lines of, "a part of me feels like…", or if you hear a particular emotion that continues to emerge.

1. **As the coach, you will need to maintain two key skills throughout this exercise:**

    - **Maintain Confidence.** Some people chafe at any hint of any exploration of their feelings or emotions, or at any request to use their imagination. Being able to ground the exercise in proven therapeutic techniques helps. Your confidence in the specific studies that prove the technique's effectiveness has an impact on your quality of listening and on the client's experience. If you'd like to reference the research with

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[13] https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/23950186/

[14] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/11555115_The_Relationships_Between_Self-Leadership_and_Enhanced_Psychological_Health_and_Work_Outcomes

[15] https://www.researchgate.net/publication/11555115_The_Relationships_Between_Self-Leadership_and_Enhanced_Psychological_Health_and_Work_Outcomes

your client, you can reference the specific studies outlined above [in the "Why" section] or go with a summary:

> *This exercise comes from Internal Family Systems Therapy, which posits that each person is made up of several parts. This is not to be confused with multiple personalities. Instead, our minds are governed by the "Self," or the CEO, of our conscious and unconscious thoughts. When healthy, our parts feel in alignment and the "Self" feels more in control. However, the parts can act up, and when they do, it's important for the person to find strategies to give power back to the "Self."*

- **Double-check Level 2 Listening.** Use the framework of the exercise, but mindfully check that you are in Level 2. When using exercises that have specific structures, it's helpful to be mindful of the need to follow your client if an insight or other coaching opportunity presents itself.

2. **Introduce your client to the exercise by asking them an inviting question.**

   Sample Questions:

   - If this emotion were an object, what would it be?
   - What happens when you put all that energy into your hand like you were holding it right here? (Indicate that you are also holding the energy in your hand.)

3. **Imagine the same object in your own hand, as if you were the student trying to figure out what was in your hand.**

   Sample Questions:

   - What's the emotion like?
   - What color is it?
   - What is the object?
   - How big/small is it?
   - How light or heavy?
   - How dark or bright?
   - If it had a soundtrack, what would it be?

4. **Then move to similar lines of questions from the Inner Critic or Future Self exercises.**

   Sample Questions:

   - What's its message?
   - What do you want to do with it?
   - What happens if you make it bigger? More intense?
   - What happens when you make it smaller? Less intense? Like a faded-out version of itself?
   - What happens when you make it disappear? Where does it go? Where does it want to go?
   - What happens next?
   - What replaces it? What do you want to replace it?
   - What blocks it from leaving completely?
   - What does it want to change into?
   - If you were to ask it what it wants, what would it say?

5. **Empower the client.**

   Sample Questions:

   - What do you want to do with this energy?
   - What do you want to transform it into? Where do you want to put it?
   - A few common paths and options:
     - **Option 1:** The client wants to throw the energy away. Go with it. Let them. Then ask what they want to replace the energy with.
     - **Option 2:** They want to transform the energy. You can invite them with questions such as:
       - What would you like to transform the energy into?
       - How does the energy want to change?
       - How do you want to change this energy?

6. **Follow-through:**

   Direct your client to release/transform/move the energy wherever they want. Remain curious, and invite your client to name the new space.

   Sample Questions:

   - What happened when you released the energy?
   - What shifted internally?
   - What resources are available to you in this space?
   - What do you want to call this new space? Invite your client to name the space, like you would a Future Self or an Inner Critic.

7. **Move into action steps.**

   Sample Questions:

   - What action can you experiment with this week that would help you take this insight for a test drive?
   - What action would rely on you being in this new space?
   - What would help you recover back to this space?
   - How many times this week would you like to practice energy metamorphosis?

CHAPTER 4: Empathetic Listening

Empathetic Listening

Empathetic listening is a foundational element of life coaching. At advanced levels of coaching, coaches ask very few information-gathering questions; instead, most questions come from a place of curiosity for the client's sake. Experienced coaches also take advantage of shifts in emotion to ask questions that raise awareness of limiting and empowering perspectives.

Standards of Empathy as an Essential Coach Quality

1. **A coach listens actively, seeking to understand clients within the context of their lives and to create a safe space for clients to share freely.**

   Empathetic listening is at the very heart of coaching. It's the only skill a coach will use every second of a coaching session, and it requires a coach's uninterrupted attention. This proactive activity calls for a coach to actively imagine what it is like to be the client. Such a stance on listening takes trust in the coach's imagination, intuition, and natural curiosity to help the coach arrive at the next most powerful question.

   Sample Question:

   - Although you're not directly saying it, it seems to me that this is also really important to you?

Skill-Check Questions:

- Did the coach listen for opportunities to ask questions beyond just fixing or addressing the problem?
- Did the coach ask the question based on listening between the lines?

2. **A coach generates questions from the client's perspective, asking questions designed to elicit insights.**

When you listen from an empathetic perspective, it makes sense to ask questions from the viewpoint of your client. A coach can demonstrate this skill by avoiding information-gathering questions, and instead asking questions designed to elicit an insight. Information-based questions might look at what has worked in the past, or gather information to help formulate a recommendation. Insight-based questions focus on what the client may not yet have considered.

Sample Questions:

- What is it like saying that out loud?
- What do you hope to learn about yourself in the next week?
- What do you want to say to yourself two months from now?
- What's the relationship between what you're saying now and what you said a few minutes ago?

Skill-Check Question:

- How well did the questions provoke new insights for the client, as opposed to seeking information or implying solutions?

3. **A coach recognizes subtle shifts of energy, as well as patterns and themes in a client's life.**

Another way a coach can demonstrate this skill is by recognizing small shifts in a client's perspective, energy, or emotion. Listening from an empathetic perspective for an extended period of time allows the coach to begin recognizing changes and shifts in a client that they themselves may not have noticed. By bringing awareness to the present moment to ask about the shift, a coach can help their clients to be more mindful, raising awareness of patterns that could be useful to discuss. This kind of listening makes clients feel seen and heard, and it creates a strong bond between the client and the coach. This kind of relationship cultivates trust and builds an environment in which the client feels safe sharing, digging deep, and exploring difficult-to-navigate aspects of their lives.

Sample Questions:

- It seems that your energy shifted just now. What happened?
- I noticed you brought your hands to your face. What are you experiencing right now?

Skill-Check Question:

- To what degree did the coach recognize subtle shifts in energy, tone, or perspectives?

Exercise: Extreme Active Listening

For this activity, you will need three people: two coaches and a client. The purpose of the first coach is to stretch their active listening muscle without the pressure of also having to craft a powerful question. The purpose of the second coach is to practice crafting powerful questions. The client should behave as naturally as possible, focusing on a topic from their life to experience authentic value.

1. **Three distinct roles: Client, Listener Coach, and Question Coach.**
2. **The Question Coach asks the Client, "What would be most useful to look at in the next 15-20 minutes?"**
3. **The client should answer with a real topic from their lives.**
4. **The Listener Coach listens intently, actively imagining what it is like to be the Client.**

   After the client is done speaking, the Listener Coach completes this sentence: "While deeply listening, I am most curious about…"

5. **The Question Coach then asks a question based on the Listener Coach's curiosity.**

6. **The client answers each question, and the exercise continues for approximately 15 more minutes.**

7. **Switch roles and repeat.**

To increase the difficulty of this exercise, it's possible to have the Question Coach turn off their sound while the client is speaking. Once the client is finished speaking, they can turn their volume back up to hear the Listener Coach's curiosity statement and to ask a question.

You can also ask the Client to turn down their volume while the Listener Coach is speaking so they only hear what the Question Coach asks.

This exercise is designed to help you explore your active listening skills, and to identify the effect of breaking apart listening and questioning to see how it impacts the coaching session.

Level 3 Listening

What

We've all experienced the eerie or uncomfortable feeling of walking into a room right after a fight between friends or a couple. We can sense the energy or the tension that still exists in the room without ever having to hear a word from the people who had occupied the space before us. This is similar to Level 3 Listening.

Level 3 Listening involves the complex ability to listen to your client and to yourself, while also picking up on the subtle shifts in energy not only in your client, but between the two of you as well. It's the ability to listen with your whole body to pick up on the emotions and energy shifts in yourself that might relate to your client.

Why

Deep listening makes people feel seen and valued, which can make a significant positive impact on someone's well-being. This depth of empathetic listening leads to deeper personal connections, helping the client to feel more comfortable and relaxed when sharing vulnerable information. In addition to these benefits, deep, empathetic listening leads to reduction in tension, higher levels of communication, a more active mind, and a bolstered self-concept.[16] As you will see in the section on Hope Theory, our perceptions shape our clients' beliefs about their strengths and abilities. With an enhanced self-concept, it becomes easier to believe in the future they are building for themselves.

The goal of Level 3 Listening is to cultivate a curious listening style, one that involves a natural interest in the client, instead of judging what the client is saying. It also involves letting go of our own biases, solutions, and advice in service of the client. When coaches try to provide solutions or advice, it's common to see Level 3 Listening break down. This can be attributed to the possibility that the coach is pushing a solution for their own sake--perhaps to move the

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[16] Wilde, S. M., Cuny, K. M., & Vizzier, A. L. (2006). Peer-to-Peer Tutoring: A Model for Utilizing Empathetic Listening to Build Client Relationships in the Communication Center. International Journal of Listening, 20(1), 70–75. doi:10.1080/10904018.2006.10499092

conversation along--rather than for the sake of the client. Staying in Level 3 Listening requires a curious mindset and the ability to follow up on your curiosity with a powerful question.

How

Listening deeply allows us to tap into a skill called “reflective listening.” Reflective listening involves the ability to identify what’s truly going on with a person, and then communicate a deeper understanding of their situation. It is NOT relating to them through our own emotions (i.e. “Oh, I completely relate to that. I’ve been really tired lately, too.”). Instead, reflective listening means that we see and hear what the person is going through, then reflect the emotions or message back to the person who is speaking.

In coaching, this reflection comes with the natural curiosity of the coach. Instead of a statement, the coach’s job is to reflect the emotion in the form of a powerful question.

- **Step 1:**

  Pull yourself out of Level 1 Listening, and enter into Level 2 Listening.

- **Step 2:**

  Ask powerful questions from a place of curiosity.

- **Step 3:**

  Keeping your attention squarely on your client’s response, imagine you are on the other side of the room observing the interaction between you and the client.

- **Step 4:**

  Continue to ask powerful questions from a place of curiosity, while also noticing any shifts in your or the client’s energy, mood, body language, etc.

- **Step 5:**

  Respond with reflective questions. As you notice shifts in energy, mood, or body language, reflect the emotion or message you are seeing, then ask a powerful question.

Example 1: Client's Energy Shift

While listening to a client in Level 3 Listening, you notice that your client is less talkative than normal. Every so often, they sigh heavily or yawn during the discussion.

Sample Questions:

- You sound fatigued today. What's been going on?
- You don't seem yourself. What emotions are present with you right now?

Example 2: Coach's Energy Shift

While listening to a client in Level 3 Listening, you notice a rising feeling of excitement in your gut, though your client doesn't seem to be expressing excitement. Still, you recognize that the shift in your energy has something to do with the client.

Sample Questions:

- I got a sudden burst of excitement about this discussion. What do you think about that?
- I'm noticing an excitable energy around this topic. What's most exciting to you right now?

Level 3 Feedback

Another way Level 3 Listening can be helpful is in the midst of a feedback conversation. Level 3 Listening is powerful during these conversations because its job is to pull out the context within a conversation. This can be very helpful, especially when it comes to issues surrounding inclusivity. There may be things you don't quite understand from your client's perspective, but Level 3 Listening will help you to identify the subtle shifts that might provide you with context-related questions.

When it comes to both giving and receiving feedback, you need to hear beyond what the person is saying to notice every other aspect of the conversation. What does their body language say about the way they are giving or receiving feedback? How is your body language or facial expression impacting the conversation? In coaching, you need the whole picture--the contextual clues surrounding both the sender and receiver--to be an effective communicator during a feedback session.

Characteristics of Powerful Questions

1. **Short.**

   The benefit of asking short questions cannot be overestimated. The more your client is talking, the more value your client will gain from the session. Aim to ask questions of ten words or less.

2. **Open-Ended.**

   Powerful questions are open-ended and begin with the words: *What, Why, How, Where,* and *When*.

3. **Client-Oriented.**

   Questions should be designed to evoke insight, not information. A powerful question is designed to ask your client something they have not yet considered. Asking factual or easily-answerable questions will not move the coaching conversation forward. The best powerful questions encourage deep thought and lead to meaningful insight.

10 Categories of Powerful Questions

1. **Being.**

   These questions concern a client's characteristics, perspectives, and energy, both in the present and when they are at their best.

   Sample Questions:

   - What characteristics do you most rely on?
   - What version of yourself do you want to be?
   - What energy do you want to bring [to a situation]?

2. **Learning.**

   These questions focus on what a client is learning about themself or the situation.

Sample Questions:

- Faced with this challenge, what are you learning about yourself?
- What do you most want to learn about yourself in the next week?
- What are you learning about success in this situation?

3. Doing.

Doing questions focus on a client's actions.

Sample Questions:

- What action do you want to take?
- What's the next step?
- What's stopping you?
- How do you sustain this action?

4. Define.

These questions ask your client to name or define something. They help your client give a name to an idea so it can be used more easily in the future.

Sample Questions:

- What name do you want to give this perspective?
- What is success?
- What is failure?
- What does productivity look like?
- What are you feeling in this moment?

5. Contrast.

These questions ask your client to make a distinction between ideas, feelings, or things. They encourage clients to define a concept by comparing and contrasting its similarities and differences from other concepts.

Sample Questions:

- What's the difference between success and fulfillment?
- What's the relationship between effort and results?
- What makes the difference between effort and results?

6. Imagine.

These questions encourage your client to think of a hypothetical situation where they can test out new ideas. These questions often begin with "What if..." or "What would...", and they are meant to help clients tap into their creativity to solve problems.

Sample Questions:

- What if you released that stress for one day?
- What would happen in 10 years if you did this every day?
- What would the perfect day look like?

7. Reason.

These questions are designed to get to the deeper reasons behind an action or a situation. These questions can start with, "What are the reasons behind...," or, "Why..." You can also use these questions during observations, such as, "I noticed a shift in energy. What's behind that shift?"

Sample Questions:

- Why?
- What are the top 5 reasons?
- Why is this so important?

8. 90-Degree Turn.

These questions ask your client to take a concept and apply it to other areas of their life. It makes the concept the common thread, rather than the individual topics.

Sample Questions:

- What happens if you apply this value to another area of your life?
- What would this perspective do if you applied it to your health?

9. **Opposite Day.**

   This kind of question asks the opposite from what you would normally expect in a conversation. The purpose is to shake up your questions, as well as your client's thinking.

   Sample Questions:

   - What's the benefit of a stubbed toe?
   - What's the worst part of being successful?
   - What is the huge benefit to this setback?

10. **Acknowledgment.**

    These questions include an acknowledgment in their structure. This is powerful because it forces the client to accept the acknowledgment and potentially add to it.

    Sample Questions:

    - If you had to teach someone else how to be successful, what would be the steps?
    - What does it take to be so courageous?
    - How did you manage to be so persistent?

Exercise: Pick a Number

1. **This exercise requires three coaches.**

2. **Choose who will be the Coach, who will be the Client, and who will be the Observer.**

3. **The Coach uses the T.I.M.E. model to set an agenda and then begin coaching.**

4. **The Observer gives the Coach a random number from one to ten.**

   The number corresponds to the common categories of Powerful Questions. For instance, if the observer says (or types in the chat) “Seven,” the Coach is directed to the category of Reason.

5. **The Coach asks a question from that category.**

   In this instance, the Coach might ask, “Looking back on this agenda a year from now, what would be the most important reason to accomplish this quickly?”

6. **After the Client answers, the Observer provides another number to the Coach.**

7. **Repeat for the allotted amount of time.**

II.

UNIFIED THEORY OF COACHING: HOPE THEORY

CHAPTER 5: Overview of Hope Theory

Hope Theory on Emotions & Thoughts

As discussed in the CTEDU 1.0 Coach Training program, Hope Theory consists of three key components:

1. **Desired goals**
2. **Pathways to achieve those goals**
3. **Agency**

In summary, Hope Theory is our belief in our ability ("Agency") to create and use "Pathways" that will help us reach our goals.[17] By this definition, Dr. Charles Richard Snyder, creator of Hope Theory, positions his theory as a cognitive process controlled by our thinking, rather than one driven by emotions. Although this has been contested by some researchers who claim that optimism is a cognitive concept, while hope is more emotional,[18] Hope Theory does a great job of drawing connections between our thoughts about ourselves and our ability to achieve future

[17] Snyder, C. (2002). Hope Theory: Rainbows in the Mind. *Psychological Inquiry, 13*(4), 249-275. Retrieved August 18, 2021, from http://www.jstor.org/stable/1448867

[18] Worgon, T. (2013). Hope theory in coaching: How clients respond to interventions based on Snyder's theory of hope. *International Journal of Evidence Based Coaching and Mentoring,* 7. 100-114

goals. Snyder bases his theory on the idea that humans are goal-driven, and the concept of hope helps us achieve these goals.

When it comes to our thoughts and emotions, Snyder believes that our internal thoughts help us create the Pathways we need to achieve our goals. While emotions may be involved in the process of goal attainment, our success is ultimately determined by how we think about ourselves and our abilities to achieve goals. It's our thinking that alters, destroys, or creates our perceptions of ourselves and the world around us. Our emotions are a response to those perceptions.

While the belief that thoughts come before emotions is valid for a majority of the Hope Theory process, there is one exception where an emotion might inform thinking. This is likely to take place at the beginning of the process, when a person is clearly defining their goals, and the emotions surrounding those goals are high. These high-levels of emotions can sometimes influence your client's thoughts around their goal pursuit. From a coaching perspective, it's important to help your client make distinctions between their thoughts and their emotions as they move toward their goals.

Building on Perspectives

As was introduced in the CTEDU 1.0 Coach Training program, perspectives are a set of beliefs and attitudes through which we perceive a situation or topic. The perspectives we adopt are important, since they shape the actions we take and the reality we create for ourselves.

- **Perspectives & Goals:**

  Our perspectives often shape the way we see our future and the goals we create for ourselves to reach an ideal future. If we view our future through a negative or problematic perspective, setting meaningful goals will be difficult, if not impossible. When perspectives get in the way of a client's desired goals, teasing out alternate perspectives that empower the client to see their future in a more positive light is crucial to building their ideal future.

- **Perspectives & Pathways:**

  The most difficult aspect of goal achievement is when the client reaches a challenge in the pursuit of their goal. Their actions will largely depend on their perception of the challenge, and whether it is something that feels attainable. Coaching around a client's perceptions of challenges and obstacles can be a great way to help them shift their perspective.

- **Perspectives & Agency:**

  Perspectives about ourselves and our abilities in the world can be either powerful or crippling. Clients can craft incredible goals and airtight Pathways, but if their perceptions of their Agency cause doubt, it will feel impossible to begin. If clients are struggling with Agency perceptions, coaching around the lens through which they view themselves--and developing a more empowering self-perception--will help them move forward.

Hope Theory and the Learn-Be-Do Model of Coaching

A Quick Review of Learn-Be-Do

The Learn-Be-Do coaching model is a way of categorizing questions into an organized framework that allows coaches to identify useful questions. It consists of three distinct parts:

- **Learn.** This aspect of the model addresses what the client is learning about themself during the coaching session.
- **Be.** This aspect of the model denotes the client's core characteristics or habits of personality.
- **Do.** This aspect of the model refers to the action the client plans to take at the end of a session.

The Learn-Be-Do model helps coaches to avoid falling into the trap of problem solving rather than focusing on their client. The goal of the model is to help new coaches visualize the importance of balancing action with Learning and Being.

This 2.0 Coach Training course takes the Learn-Be-Do model to the next level by analyzing what happens when we blend these aspects together. It also looks at what happens when we combine the Learn-Be-Do model with Hope Theory. These tools will help you organize your curiosity to ask dynamic, creative, and inspiring questions.

Exploring Agency: The Awareness Cycle

The Awareness Cycle happens when a client moves clockwise around the Learn-Be-Do model of Coaching. Moving in this direction tends to draw clients inward, and increases awareness of the present moment. This cycle is also particularly useful for bringing awareness to the strengths and weaknesses of one's personality. Combined with the Achievement Cycle's natural emphasis on action, the Awareness Cycle is a balance of Learning, Being, and Doing.

Hope Theory starts with an Awareness Cycle and leads to an Achievement Cycle. Clients who have higher degrees of hope and belief in innate Agency (Be to Do), take on bigger challenges and show more resilience in the face of challenges (Do to Learn). More difficult challenges lead to increased awareness (Learn to Be), and the Awareness Cycle continues.

Learn to Be

Learning for the sake of Being involves learning and exploring to develop a deeper awareness of one's self. It involves exploring different personal characteristics, and addressing personality aspects as habits of thought and emotion.[19] Learning to Being helps people appreciate the present moment rather than wishing something was different. This approach balances the intense future focus and vision work in coaching to help clients explore a deeper appreciation of the present moment. This increased sense of awareness will also lead clients to cultivate interpersonal resources that lead to better future performance.

Be to Do

Being for the sake of Doing explores which characteristics are useful to employ in the project at hand. It takes the increased awareness of Being and applies it to creating a strategic action plan. It asks the question, "Who do I need to be in order to do what I want to do?" This question invites the exploration of empowering versus limiting beliefs and perspectives. Addressing character traits and perspectives as they are applied to action steps helps your clients raise awareness of the mindsets and attitudes they can cultivate for the future. Being for the sake of Doing helps your client look inward first, then apply their increased sense of awareness toward getting stuff done.

Do to Learn

Doing for the sake of Learning means taking action with the goal of gaining more self-awareness. It means approaching a project with the mind of a scientist. The key is to take conscious and purposeful action for the distinct purpose of learning for the sake of growth. This kind of learning leads to greater self-awareness of what is and is not moving your client forward. This is

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[19] Frederickson, B. L. (2009). Positivity. New York, NY: Crown.

the final step in the Awareness Cycle. It helps clients gain new knowledge to apply in the future, and it naturally leads clients to adopt a growth mindset.

Exploring Goals & Pathways: The Achievement Cycle

The Achievement Cycle occurs when a client moves counterclockwise through the Learn-Be-Do cycle, starting first by considering what a client wants to DO in order to BE the person they desire to grow into (Do to Be). Moving in this direction tends to bring the focus of coaching toward action, and creates a deeper understanding of the systems that are in place. This cycle also increases learning around what needs to happen for clients to achieve desired outcomes.[20]

From the perspective of the Achievement Cycle, hope increases when clients adopt a Being mindset that is conducive to learning: growth mindset, vulnerability, openness to feedback (Be to Learn). Then, clients learn to perform new actions more effectively, which builds more Agency and the skills to do more challenging work (Learn to Do).

Do to Be

Doing for the sake of Being involves accomplishing goals so that you can achieve a certain level of success in an important area of your life. This could mean getting accepted to a prestigious program or university, or doing the work to become a successful writer. Doing for the sake of Being points you toward the goal. Looking in this direction helps you find your reason for accomplishing your goal--your Why--and encourages you to take purposeful action.

Be to Learn

Being for the sake of Learning is the essence of the growth mindset. People who adopt a growth mindset and seek out opportunities to continue learning tap into a way of Being that leads to fulfillment and achievement. Being for the sake of Learning requires the awareness that there is always more to learn. This creates room for curiosity and risk-taking, because you are not attached to validating your skill set as much as you are focused on your continued growth.

[20] Kashdan, T. B., & Steger, M. F. (2007). Curiosity and pathways to well-being and meaning in life: Traits, states, and everyday behaviors. Motivation and Emotion Motiv Emot, 31(3), 159-173.

Learn to Do

Learning for the sake of Doing is the final step in the Achievement Cycle. This is the practical application of knowledge. It means gaining a new skill set so you can achieve and complete increasingly ambitious projects. It completes the Achievement Cycle by building the skill set that will lead to the most appropriate actions for your goals and Being.

Exercise: Inside the Room versus Outside the Room Questions

"Inside the Room" questions ask about what's happening right now, right here. It's the processing of ideas and emotions in the present moment. These kinds of questions are useful when exploring habitual perspectives and emotions around certain assumptions and character traits. These questions focus on areas and elements that are in front of the client right now.

Sample Questions:

- What character trait are you drawing on right now?
- What do you notice about your energy level at this moment?
- What's the message behind the tears?

"Outside the Room" questions ask about events, plans, and actions that have taken or will take place. These questions usually ask about things not in the present.

Sample Questions:

- What do you need in the next two weeks?
- In your life, where are you when you need to make your most important decisions?
- What kind of habits do you have in the morning?
- What does your morning routine look like?

Asking “Outside the Room” questions directs clients to think about areas and elements in their life that they need to imagine. They need to use visual areas of their minds to think about their available resources.

A coach’s job is to balance “Inside the Room” vs. “Outside the Room” questions along with Learn-Be-Do questions.

1. Start with looking at the Hope Theory diagram and the Learn-Be-Do model.

Ask your client what they want to focus on.

Sample Questions:

- What would be most useful?
- What challenge do you have coming up? In the next two weeks? Two months?

2. Explore Agency and the Awareness Cycle.

Sample Questions:

- In order to achieve this goal, what do you need to learn?
- What character trait do you most need in order to be successful?
- What do you need to do to make sure you are learning what you need to learn?

3. Explore Pathways and the Achievement Cycle.

Sample Questions:

- What do you need to do in order to become the person you desire to grow into?
- Who do you need to be in order to learn effectively?
- What skills do you need to learn how to do?

4. Be aware of asking "Inside the Room" versus "Outside the Room" questions. Explore elements of each model as it informs your listening and questions.

This section introduced you to three new tools to use during a session: Hope Theory, Learn-Be-Do, and "Inside the Room" vs. "Outside the Room" Questions. Challenge yourself to ask questions that combine the various categories.

For example, ask an "Inside the Room" question that addresses Learning and Pathways:

Sample Question:

- When you think about what you most need to learn in order for your plan to be successful, what do you notice about your stress/excitement levels?

Another example would be to ask an "Outside the Room" question that addresses Being and Agency.

Sample Question:

- Two weeks from now, what quality do you see yourself developing most?

Hope Theory & Future Self

The Future Self exercise is an inherently hopeful exercise. It begins by asking the client to imagine an ideal future version of themselves. In other words, your client is being asked to think about their ideal selves as their own goal. After the visualization is complete and the client has a detailed picture of who they want to become, the work of setting action steps (Pathways) begins. All of this hinges on the Agency of the client and how they plan to apply this Agency to their Pathways.

When it comes to developing the vision of a future self, incorporating "stretch goals" by encouraging your client to think big about their future is a way to promote individual growth. Having a big dream that makes your client want to jump out of bed in the morning is a great way to motivate your client to create achievable action steps.

Higher levels of hope have been associated with one's ability to take large, exciting goals and break them down into smaller subgoals.[21] When a client has an exciting goal to achieve, like a perfectly structured Future Self, it's easy to overlook the small steps it will take to get there. This is where your coaching can impact their ability to achieve the goal: you encourage them to see their goal as a series of subgoals, rather than as one large, looming goal.

Hopeful self-talk is crucial for developing a client's Agency. After a client has developed a strong Future Self and their Pathways begin to take shape, it's important that their internal dialogue supports and encourages them throughout the journey. From a coaching perspective, this means asking questions to assess their inner thoughts and dialogue. If their self-talk starts to become negative or doubtful, helping them reflect on successful past goal attainment will bolster their Agency and help them maintain their motivation moving forward.[22]

[21] Cheavens, J.S., Feldman, D.B., Woodward, J.T., & Snyder, C.R. (2006). Hope in cognitive psychotherapies: on working with client strengths. *Journal of Cognitive Psychotherapy: An International Quarterly.* 20(2). 135-145

[22] Ibid., 48.

Hope Theory & Inner Critic

The Inner Critic exercise highlights the connections between thoughts and emotions, and how the interplay of these components either silences or magnifies the voice of the Inner Critic. The Inner Critic plays a crucial role in a client's Agency, as this is often the voice that speaks up before any others have a chance to speak. As mentioned earlier, it's our internal thoughts that help us to create our goals and Pathways, which then produces the emotion we might need to keep us motivated.

When it comes to silencing our Inner Critic so we can bolster Agency, there are a few strategies that will work:

1. **Help your clients make a commitment to themselves.** When a client starts to think of their goals as being their responsibility to achieve, rather than just something they'd like to achieve, their motivation to persevere rises.
2. **Encourage clients to laugh at their Inner Critics.** Inner Critics hate being wrong, and laughing at their voice is a good way to throw them off their game. This can be especially impactful when the client has met a challenge in their Pathway. When the Inner Critic inevitably shows up, encourage your client to laugh and reframe the Inner Critic's message as something that can be used to overcome the challenge.
3. **Coach your client to be adaptable.** In any goal pursuit, roadblocks will always appear. Encouraging your client to expect roadblocks will make these obstacles that much easier to handle when they do show up. If a roadblock can't be moved, coach your client to find alternate Pathways, or to establish new subgoals that will still get them where they are going. Adaptability is the enemy of the Inner Critic.[23]

[23] Magyar-Moe, J.L., & Lopez, S.J. (2015). Strategies for accentuating hope. In S. Joseph (ed.) *Positive Psychology in practice: Promoting Human Flourishing in Work, Health, Education, and Everyday Life* (pp 483-502). John Wiley & Sons.

Hope Theory & Accountability

One essential way to develop more hopefulness in your client is through a process called "hope finding." Hope finding is the process of giving the client the ability to develop strong expectations that you, as their coach, will help them with their goals.[24] While this might sound simple, the key word is "expectations." The client should be able to set high expectations that their coach can and will help them achieve the goals that they've set for themselves.

This can be done through a process called "hope enhancing." Essentially, it is the responsibility of the coach to ensure that their clients develop the adaptability and mindset they need to achieve future goals. Coaching around things like energy maintenance, optimism, and creating clearly-defined goals are just a few strategies that coaches can use to develop more hopeful clients.

Accountability is critical in both processes, especially as it pertains to the coach's ability to hold clients accountable. This includes co-designing useful accountability measures, setting expectations around what happens if action steps are not taken, and coaching around ways to maintain motivation when things get hard.

Exercise: Gratitude Practice

When it comes to bolstering hope, it's important to have an increased awareness of one's thoughts and emotions. One way to bolster stamina in individual thinking is to create a bank of gratitude. Having a bank of gratitude to look at in times of challenge is a way to regulate the heavy emotions that can come with these challenges.

While we don't typically require materials for coaching, this particular exercise would benefit from a dedicated notebook and a box of some kind.

- **Step 1: Start by having your client write in their notebook all of the things they are grateful for.**

  Sample Questions:

  - Who do you most appreciate? Why?

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[24] Ibid., 49

- What makes you fortunate? Why?
- What skills, talents, or abilities do you have that you're grateful for? Why?
- What have others contributed to your life that you're grateful for? Why?
- What challenges have you faced that you're grateful for? Why?
- When do you feel the most grateful? Why?
- What is something that's happened in the last 24 hours that you're grateful for? Why?
- What opportunities have you been given that you're grateful for? Why?
- What brings you happiness? Why?
- How do you show your gratitude?

Note: Asking "Why" is a crucial way to lock in the learning they get from the things they're most grateful for. Knowing the reason why your client is grateful offers new insights they otherwise might not realize. Don't skip the "Why" aspect of step 1.

- **Step 2: Encourage your client to think of the times others have expressed gratitude for them.**

  What reminds them of the gratitude they've received from others? For example, do they have notes, cards, or gifts from others that were given as expressions of gratitude? If so, coach around how these moments of expressed gratitude made them feel. What was their energy like after they received these mementos of gratitude?

- **Step 3: Get creative.**

  Ask about the box your client chose, and how they want to use it as a "bank" for their gratitude. If they decide to decorate it, ask them what it will look like when it's complete.

  Sample Questions:

  - Where do you want to keep your gratitude box?
  - How will you remember when you need to use it most?

Remember that having a gratitude bank is a way for your client to manage their thoughts and emotions when challenges arise. Thinking influences the way a client sees goal pursuit, and emotion is tightly connected to motivation. Using a gratitude box is a way to help clients reframe their thinking and regulate their emotions to move through roadblocks in their Pathways.

CHAPTER 6: Outcome (Start with the End in Mind)

Imagine it's the Olympic games, and you are one of the top contenders for the 400-meter sprint. Imagine the kinds of thoughts going through your head as you step up to the line to get ready for the starting gun. Now, as you're standing at the starting line, imagine you've been gifted with the thoughts you're going to have at the end of the race. Which set of thoughts do you prefer to have when beginning the race?

If you're like most people, you'll likely prefer to start the race with your "hindsight" thoughts (the ones you have after running the race). These thoughts allow you to see everything you did correctly, as well as the things you could have improved. With the benefit of hindsight, you now have the ability to adjust your perspective. At the beginning of the race, all you know is your current mindset and the path laid out before you. At the end of the race, you're now filled with the knowledge of those things you couldn't predict, like someone stepping into your lane, or even wind resistance. The goal was the same with each set of thoughts—win the race—but the way you approached the race was different, depending on which set of thoughts you chose at the beginning of the race.

It's thought exercises like this that highlight the benefit of tools like Vision Recording and Future Self. We can place ourselves into the mindset of who we are in the future, doing our best to imagine all of the details. This will allow us to adequately prepare for that idyllic future. While we can't have all of the hindsight that comes with actually reaching that spot in the future, we can tap into a version of ourselves that already has it all figured out. This helps us to both identify our goals and clarify our Pathways for moving forward. Having a strong understanding of both the outcome goal (our intended destination) and the process goals (the milestones along our journey) is crucial.

Process vs. Outcome Goals

While there is research to suggest that process goals are a bit more powerful and easier to achieve than outcome goals, having both outcome goals and process goals is important. Outcome goals are those large, overarching goals that focus strongly on the final outcome. If you go back to our example of the Olympic race, the outcome goal would be "I will win the 400-meter sprint at the Olympics." A process goal is any goal that focuses on actions and processes that will contribute to the final outcome. In our Olympics example, one process goal might be "I will maintain a steady pace throughout the race," or "I will adjust my speed and lane changes to stay ahead of my opponents."

Sometimes, however, outcome goals are not quite as easy to identify as process goals.

Goals & Values

When we're asked to think about our goals, we often think of the larger, overarching goals that dictate the direction of our lives. But recent research has defined goals in a variety of ways, ranging from short-term to long-term, subgoals and end goals, approach vs. avoidance goals, etc. While all of these goal types have a purpose, research has found that the type matters less than the goal's congruence with the individual. In other words, goals that align with the individual's values and interests are more likely to receive the attention and effort they require.[25] Achieving self-concordant goals (goals that involve intrinsic motivation and are congruent with the client's true self) is also highly associated with higher levels of well-being.

This research has significant implications for the coaching profession. Goals are one of the most essential aspects of the coaching process, since clients will often measure the success of the coaching against their goal achievement.

[25] Linley, P.A., Nielsen, K.M., Wood, A.M., Gillett, R., & Biswar-Diener, R. (2010). Using signature strengths in pursuit of goals: Effects on goal progress, need satisfaction, and well-being, and implications for coaching psychologists. *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 5(1). 6-15

Goals & Strengths

According to research from the Values in Action Institute on Character, there are 24 common character strengths across culture and geographic region. These strengths, filtered by six different strength types, are present in each person with varying potency. Since the discovery of these character strengths, a large body of research has emerged and largely supports a very important notion: The use of character strengths has positive implications for well-being, stress, optimism, and achievement.[26]

Recent studies have shown links between character traits and educational success,[27] higher GPA scores,[28] and job performance.[29] One of the few empirical studies on strengths found that overuse and underuse of strengths can lead to decreased life satisfaction, less flourishing, and greater depression.[30] But one of the most compelling studies found that character strengths were associated with better goal progress and performance.[31]

This is crucial knowledge for a coach. In a coaching session around designing goals and/or Pathways, coaches should ensure that clients are considering ways to leverage their strengths throughout the process. Not only will goal attainment be much more achievable, but well-being and psychological need fulfillment will benefit as well.

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[26] *The 24 character strengths.* Find Your 24 Character Strengths | Personal Strengths List | VIA Institute. (n.d.). Retrieved September 15, 2021, from https://www.viacharacter.org/character-strengths

[27] Wagner, L., Holenstein, M., Wepf, H., & Ruch, W. (2020). Character strengths are related to students' achievement, flow experiences, and enjoyment in teacher-centered learning, individual, and group work beyond cognitive ability. *Frontiers in Psychology.*

[28] Strengths that predicted GPA in college students were perseverance, self-regulation, prudence, judgment and love of learning (Lounsbury et al., 2009).

[29] Harzer, Claudia & Ruch, Willibald. (2014). The Role of Character Strengths for Task Performance, Job Dedication, Interpersonal Facilitation, and Organizational Support. Human Performance. 2014. 183-205. 10.1080/08959285.2014.913592.

[30] Littman-Ovadia, H., & Freidlin, P. (2019). Positive psychopathology and positive functioning: OCD, flourishing and satisfaction with life through the lens of character strength underuse, overuse and optimal use. *Applied Research in Quality of Life*. http://doi.org/10.1007/s11482-018-9701-5

[31] lbid., 52

Defining Problems

Einstein once said, "If I had an hour to solve a problem, I'd spend 55 minutes thinking about the problem and five minutes thinking about solutions." Just a few states away, one of America's most famous inventors, Charles Kettering, said, "A problem well stated is a problem half-solved." Decades later, another great mind, Steve Jobs, said, "If you define the problem correctly, you almost have the solution."

Over and over, the greatest minds in history assert that problems cannot be solved without being properly defined. Of course, these great minds were referring to problems of innovation and technology, but research has shown that a well-defined problem in any aspect of life is the key to its solution.[32] This means examining all aspects of the problem, including the root causes that might be hiding below the surface. This is what it means to be a coach: why we say it's better to coach the client than the problem itself. The problem with problems is that they are rarely, if ever, as simple as they sound on the surface.

For example, let's say that a colleague or a student comes to you with the following problem: They are struggling to develop a daily schedule that will help them to be more productive, and they'd like you to help them create a schedule that will work. Of course, our knee-jerk reaction is to suggest a planner, help them schedule their day in fifteen- or thirty-minute increments, maybe even help them prioritize the tasks on their plate. All of these are sufficient ways to solve this problem. And, very likely, your student or colleague will thank you for your help and go on their merry way, until their schedule falls apart a few days later and they need your help all over again.

Coaching (and the research) argue that, in this particular case, no work was done to define or analyze what might lie beneath the problem. What was stopping your student or colleague from making their own schedule? What's been getting in their way of having a consistent schedule to this point? What's changed in their life that requires them to reassess the current schedule? This is what it means to dig into the deeper agenda. Instead of jumping into problem-solving mode, our coaching instincts are meant to help our clients uncover the root cause of their problems.

[32] Ancel, G. (2016). Problem-Solving Training: Effects on the Problem-Solving Skills and Self-Efficacy of Nursing Students. Eurasian Journal of Educational Research, 64, 231-246, http://dx.doi.org/10.14689/ejer.2016.64.13

Defining Problems with Hope Theory

One of the trickiest questions in life is: What is it that I *really* want? Often, what prevents us from answering this question are the problems that arise as we begin the process of developing our self-awareness. Defining these problems can be tricky, since they often depend heavily on the context surrounding them.

Types of Hope Theory Problems

Problems of Agency

Agency consists of the assumptions you have about who you are and what you can learn in the process of goal achievement. Because Agency involves our inner thoughts, there are many problems that a client might experience. However, there are three main categories of Agency problems:

- **Honoring Values.**

  As mentioned earlier, being out of alignment with one's values carries a host of problematic outcomes. When assessing problems of Agency, asking questions such as, "How are you honoring your values?" or "What clarity do you need around what you stand for?" can remind clients to realign with their greater purpose, helping them to build stronger Agency.

- **Strengths Use.**

  There is a myriad of research that suggests that the underuse of strengths leads to issues like depression and anxiety. When this happens, our thoughts about who we are and what we can achieve are clouded. If issues of strengths arise in a coaching session, it can be helpful to ask questions like, "How are you leveraging your strengths?" or "What strengths will help you?"

- **Internal Narratives.**

  We tell ourselves stories about ourselves every day. From the food that we choose to consume to the high-level decisions we make, we create narratives that help us determine how we see and perceive our abilities. The first part of this problem category is awareness. These narratives can be so automatic that we aren't aware of their existence. Asking questions such as, "What internal story are you telling yourself right now?" can help clients identify these stories. The second part of this problem category is changing problematic narratives. Coaches should be on the lookout for these stories, and directly address any narratives that sound harmful. Asking questions like, "How is this narrative harming/helping you?" or "If you could change one thing about this narrative, what would it be?" are a great place to start.

Problems of Pathways

Pathways are the action plans the client develops to help them achieve a predetermined goal. Problems with Pathways can show up in two distinct ways: External and Internal.

External Pathway problems

- **Obstacles.**

  The process of creating and developing an action plan can sometimes feel daunting, especially in high-stakes goal-striving. When obstacles arise, they can feel that much more crushing. The first way to combat obstacles is to plan for them ahead of time. Asking your client to think through the potential pitfalls of their plan so they can create additional action steps to address them can be an effective way to mitigate stress later in their goal pursuit.

- **Systems.**

  A system is a well-planned process, consisting of both tangible and intangible things, that helps us to tap into a natural flow and achieve a goal. When these systems aren't working correctly, they can be more of a hindrance than a help. To address issues of systems, start by first assessing the utility of a current system, then identifying adjustments to make them stronger.

Sample Questions:

- How are these systems serving your goal pursuit?
- What changes need to be made to your systems to make them more effective?

Internal Pathway problems

- **Blind Spots.**

  Blind spots are the pieces of our personality and character that we have trouble seeing on our own. They often show up when we overextend ourselves, biting off more than we can chew, or creating complex Pathways that we ultimately won't follow. They can also show up in self-defeating thinking or behaviors. It's the job of the coach to hold up a mirror to these blind spots, to help the client develop strategies to address them.

  Sample Question:

  - What might you be missing?
  - What thoughts might be getting in your way?

- **Confirmation Bias.**

  This is the tendency for people to seek out information that confirms their existing beliefs, and to push away evidence that invalidates those beliefs. While confirmation bias is a well-known construct, many people behave in this way without awareness, causing them to miss critical information that might improve their situation. Here, direct feedback followed by a powerful question is an effective way to help clients identify their confirmation bias and think more critically in the future.

  Sample Question:

  - You say you don't procrastinate, but you have not yet completed this action. What is causing the delay?

Problems of Goals

There are three stages when it comes to goals. The first stage is the preliminary decision-making process. This involves determining which goals to consider, and the value of possible outcomes.

The second stage is the immersive process of doing the work to achieve the goals. The third and final stage consists of reflection and learning. With three stages, there are many opportunities for problems to arise.

- **Problems with outcomes.**

  According to Johathan Haidt's Happiness Hypothesis, humans are notoriously bad at determining what will make us happy.[33] We sometimes select desired outcomes that we believe will make us happy, only to achieve those outcomes and feel underwhelmed. What Haidt found in his research is that we are actually most content when we are in the midst of making consistent and positive progress toward a goal. In a coaching session, this insight can be leveraged to help clients continue to strive for growth and development, even beyond goal achievement.

- **Problems of meaning or purpose.**

  Chapter 13 of this book introduces you to Martin Seligman's theory of PERMA. According to Seligman, Positive emotions, Engagement, Relationships, Meaning, and Achievement are the five cornerstones of well-being. While coaching addresses all of these concepts, one of them shows up most profoundly in the goal process: meaning. Think about the last time you set a goal for yourself. Did you feel connected to it? If so, how did that impact your motivation? If not, how did that impact your motivation? Chances are that your motivation to accomplish the goal was much higher if you felt like the goal carried meaning. When we are in pursuit of things that don't make us feel fulfilled, we lose a sense of meaning in our life. However, when we assign meaning to our goals, no matter how big or small those goals are, we begin to flourish.

- **Problems of reflection and learning.**

  Reflection is arguably the most important aspect of the goal striving process. By taking a moment to step back and assess our progress, we open ourselves up to the learning we can take from the process. This helps to deepen our understanding of ourselves, learn new strategies to leverage our strengths, and identify ways to develop new skills. Still, reflection and learning are often the most neglected aspect of the goal-striving process. And when they are addressed, they're often rushed. Encouraging clients to slow down

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[33] Haidt, J. (2006). *The happiness hypothesis: Finding modern truth in ancient wisdom.* Basic Books.

and reflect intentionally on their progress and success is vital to their ongoing growth and development.

Applying Hope Theory to Problem Solving

Before any problem can be solved, it needs to be properly defined. From there, the determination can be made as to how to address it. When assessing problems to help with our decision-making processes, it can be helpful to adopt the IDEAS 5-step process.[34]

- **I - Identify the Problem.**

  Identifying the problem is the most important step in the process. Only once you have a solid grasp of the problem can you identify the areas of the problem that need to be addressed first. This process looks very much like the T.I.M.E. model. You must identify the topic (the problem) and determine the importance (the priorities) to help your client work toward a meaningful (measurement) solution.

  Sample Questions:

  - How do you know that you're addressing the right problem?
  - What is the most important part of this problem?
  - How will you prioritize addressing the problem?

- **D - Deepen Understanding.**

  From a coaching perspective, this means gathering all of the information and resources necessary for the client to approach the problem.

  Sample Questions:

  - How will addressing this problem make a difference in your life?
  - What resources do you need to address this problem?
  - What character strengths can you leverage to overcome the problem?

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[34] Ancel, G. (2016). Problem-Solving Training: Effects on the Problem-Solving Skills and Self-Efficacy of Nursing Students. Eurasian Journal of Educational Research, 64, 231-246, http://dx.doi.org/10.14689/ejer.2016.64.13

- **E - Enumerate Options.**

  After a client has gathered all of their necessary information, they can begin creating action steps ("Pathways") toward resolving the issue. This means laying out all of their options and identifying any potential obstacles so they can work toward a resolution.

  Sample Questions:

  - What options do you have for addressing the problem?
  - What obstacles do you need to be on the lookout for?
  - How can you plan for potential obstacles?

- **A - Assess.**

  With all of this information in mind, the client can assess which Pathways are best for them to take, and begin to craft specific action steps for the Pathways they choose to follow.

  Sample Questions:

  - What's one action step you can take this week?
  - What are the milestones between now and a resolution?
  - What is the best path forward?

- **S - Scrutinize.**

  This step happens after the client has begun on a Pathway; you will check in at their next session. This is where reflection proves crucial. As the client works through their problem and is able to get back onto the Pathway toward their original goal, their progress should be assessed continually. A coach's job is to help set appropriate action steps and accountability to ensure that there is continuous improvement.

  Sample Questions:

  - What's working?
  - What's not working?
  - What adjustments do you need to make to achieve your goal?
  - What are you learning about yourself?

CHAPTER 7: Character

Strengths-Based Coaching

In the early 90's, Martin Seligman began addressing one of psychology's major flaws. The purpose of psychology theory and practice was to identify what is wrong with people and help them fix these shortcomings. What Seligman was more interested in, however, was what is "right" with us, and how we can leverage these things to help us both overcome setbacks and become better versions of ourselves.

Of course, the concept of strengths wasn't necessarily a new one at that time. A psychologist named Bernard Haldane began looking at what he called "human aptitudes" as early as the late 1940's. Abraham Maslow, one of psychology's most notable figures, was also curious about psychology's focus on shortcomings vs. potentialities as early as the 1950's. Still, the practice of psychology itself was turned on its head when Seligman stepped onto the scene and developed positive psychology as a way to look at strengths and channel them for a potential future gain.

By pulling strengths into coaching, we get to focus on the best of our clients. We have the privilege of shining a light on all the things that make our clients talented, strong, and able to accomplish anything they set their mind to. Strengths-based coaching means finding and identifying your client's strengths, then helping them to find ways to leverage these strengths to overcome obstacles and accomplish their goals.

What

Strengths-based coaching offers a more positive approach to problem-solving and goal achievement than focusing on the problem itself. It invites the client into the conversation, allowing them to recognize both who they are and who they want to become in a way that feels uplifting and achievable. It encourages them to identify their strengths.

A large body of literature revolves around strength identification, and though there are some disagreements across researchers, most agree that strengths consist of two parts:[35]

- **Strengths are something you are good at.**

  Strengths are the talents and abilities that come most naturally to you. Like writing with your dominant hand, these strengths often feel effortless.

- **Strengths are something you deeply enjoy doing.**

  While you may be good at something, it doesn't truly qualify as a strength unless there is passion or meaning behind the strength.

Strengths-based coaching emphasizes that the client should be at the center of the process. This means that the coach needs to see and understand the world through the client's eyes. Getting access to the client's perspective and approach in life is crucial to helping a client achieve a meaningful transformation.

Once this understanding is in place, it is up to the coach to empower their client to reach a sense of self-actualization. As previously discussed, self-actualized individuals are in alignment with who they believe they are, and how they behave in the world. The road to self-actualization is not paved with weaknesses or self-doubt. Instead, this road is paved with the ability to identify and leverage strengths to overcome any obstacles that might be present on the client's journey toward self-actualization.

Now, this is not to say that your client cannot focus on improvement areas or even outright weaknesses. They certainly can work on developing in these areas, and they often do as part of strengths-based coaching. The key difference in strengths-based coaching is that a client's weaknesses are not the focus. Instead, the coach and the client can discuss ways to use and

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[35] Gordon, S., & Gucciardi, D. F. (2011). *A Strengths-Based Approach to Coaching Mental Toughness. Journal of Sport Psychology in Action, 2(3), 143–155.* doi:10.1080/21520704.2011.598222

develop their strengths as a way to address their weaknesses. The utility of strength-based coaching is two-fold: both to find ways to use strengths for goal achievement, and to identify and develop strengths that were not previously recognized by the client.

Strengths-Based Coaching [36]	*Traditional Skills Training*
Strengths Spotting: This is especially important for the coach, since it is their job to hold up the mirror and reflect back any strengths they see in their client.	**Problem Identification:** The importance is placed on the problem itself, and not on the person experiencing the problem.
Strengths Focus: This means that the coach should keep the client and everything that's right with them at the center of the coaching. These strengths should be highlighted throughout the process, and used to help clients bolster their Agency, develop strong Pathways, and achieve goals.	**Weakness Focus:** With weaknesses as the focus, the coach is likely to focus on "fixing" what's broken, focusing the attention on the problems and not on the client or their abilities. This focus on weaknesses is not conducive to Hope Theory.
Whole-Person Perspective: Strengths-based coaching sees clients as whole people who are able to solve their own problems and achieve their own goals.	Client Needs to Be Fixed: Traditional skills training sees clients as people who need expert advice and opinions to deal with life's problems and goals.

Why

A. Identifying strengths leads to a larger number of internal resources.

A large part of the coaching process is identifying potential resources that the client can use to help them fix problems, reach goals, and grow personally and professionally. Each new resource becomes a potential tool for the client to use as they design Pathways and action steps. Strengths are no different, especially if they've gone unnoticed in the past. Leveraging strengths is another way to gather the resources your client will need to be successful.

B. Strengths-based coaching has mental health benefits.

In a 2011 study, a strengths-based coaching program was shown to increase levels of hope and engagement in a group of primary school students.[36] A focus on strengths also allows us to build a greater sense of resilience and meaning, which can enhance our performance and give us a better chance to achieve our goals.[37] Developing our strengths is a way to address some of our psychological needs,[38] which can bring us a greater sense of well-being and life satisfaction.

C. With a strengths-based coaching model, the client is empowered to solve their own problems.

By placing the client at the center of the coaching practice, the coach sends a powerful message to the client: You have everything you need to manage your own success.

How

While having a strengths-based framework is simply a way to approach a coaching session, there are a number of exercises you can use to help your client develop and leverage their strengths to help them succeed. Before developing your client's strengths, however, it's important to first assess their strengths and how they are currently being used in their life.

Below are three of the more popular strengths assessments in the positive psychology world. They each have pros and cons. Based on the descriptions of each, you can co-design with your client which assessment feels like it will fit them best. Or, you can choose another assessment that will be more useful for your client.

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[36] Madden, W., Green, S., & Grant, A. M. (2011). A pilot study evaluating strengths-based coaching for primary school students. *International Coaching Psychology Review*, 6(1).

[37] Van Zyl, L. E. & Stander, M. W. (2013). A strengths based approach towards coaching in a multicultural environment. In J. White, R. Motching & M. Lux (eds), Theory and Practice of the Person-Centered Approach - Interconnections Beyond Psychotherapy. New York, NY: Springer

[38] Ibid, 61

Assessing Strengths

Core Motivation

1. **Definition.**

   This assessment is based on the Enneagram, and introduces nine different personality types. Each type is followed by a paragraph describing the strengths and weaknesses for that type. It attempts to describe what drives someone, and how their actions and emotions show up in response to this drive. Core motivation was reviewed more thoroughly in Chapter 4 of the *1.0 Coach Training Guide*.

2. **Pros.**

   Core motivation is a great tool to get a full snapshot of a client's strengths and weaknesses. Having a type for clients to identify with enables them to understand themselves and others more deeply. Also, this assessment is free through CTEDU.

3. **Cons.**

   Clients are often more than one type, and can feel like a combination of several different characteristics from various types. While this can bring about great awareness, it does sometimes complicate a coach's ability to use as a resource and reference in later sessions.

Values in Action (VIA)

1. **Definition.**

   Martin Seligman and Chris Peterson developed the VIA (Values In Action) assessment after working for years to discover a core list of strengths that applied to all people across culture and time. The final list of 24 strengths was assessed against historical references, theoretical traditions, assessments, correlates of the strength, and interventions. The VIA framework groups strengths into distinct categories, including cognitive strengths, emotional strengths, strengths of community, protective strengths, and spiritual strengths. This free assessment aims to help people learn more about their top qualities.

2. **Pros.**

   This assessment yields a list of the client's top strengths: the things they default to in just about any situation. This provides a great place for a coach to start, since the client can use these strengths to build others while continuing to grow and develop their top strengths. This assessment is free online.

3. **Cons.**

   The full assessment can take a bit longer. Additionally, this assessment works best when the client completes it on their own. Then the coach and client can review the results at a later time.

Clifton Strengths

1. **Definition.**

   Developed by Don Clifton, this assessment is meant to measure your talents, which are defined as "your natural patterns of thinking, feeling, and behaving."[39] At the completion of the assessment, your talents are sorted into 34 themes that are grouped by four distinct categories: strategic thinking, relationship building, influencing, and executing.

2. **Pros.**

   This assessment comes with a robust, 25- to 30-page report that outlines your results, explains precisely what your results mean, and provides suggestions for how to leverage these results and what to watch out for.

3. **Cons.**

   This assessment does take a bit of additional time to get through. In addition, this assessment caters to the workforce, helping managers assess the strengths of their teams. (For executive coaches working with managers, this could be a "Pro.") For the full assessment, there is a fee.

[39] Gallup, I. (2021, July 19). *How the CLIFTONSTRENGTHS Assessment Works.* Gallup.com. Retrieved September 17, 2021, from https://www.gallup.com/cliftonstrengths/en/253676/how-cliftonstrengths-works.aspx

Exercise: Internal Resourcing

What

Internal resourcing is a common phrase used in HR departments around the country. It means to look inside a company or team to assess what they are capable of handling without external interference. This is commonly found in the hiring process when companies seek to hire and promote from within a company instead of hiring an external candidate.

In coaching, internal resourcing is a similar concept for our clients. Essentially, this is the process of turning inward to determine what internal resources--the things within us that bring us peace, energy, aid, or comfort--we have available to us at any given time. From a strengths-based perspective, this means identifying the characteristics of ourselves that are most equipped to help us manage a goal or setback.

Why

A. Develops stronger Agency.

By encouraging clients to look inward first, we are communicating that we believe in their ability to fix their own problems. Using internal resourcing helps us empower our clients and bolster their ability to believe in themselves.

B. Builds strengths.

One key strength we want our clients to build is self-awareness. This exercise forces the client to be reflective about their life and the way they interact with the world. Internal resourcing will help bring more awareness to the strengths and opportunities that are waiting within our client.

How

A great way to encourage clients to think in terms of internal processing is to use a SWOT Analysis. A SWOT Analysis asks people to think of their internal strengths (S), internal weaknesses (W), external opportunities (O), and external threats (T). This can be done in general, to help clients assess their life on a broad scale. Or it can be done as a way to assess a specific problem. Consider using the chart below to help your client think through their internal resources.

1. **If applicable, ask the client to define the purpose of the analysis.**

   If you're using this tool to address something more specific than just general internal resources, have them describe the specific purpose of the assessment. If not, you can skip this step.

   Sample Questions:

   - What is the purpose of this analysis?
   - How would you describe the purpose of this assessment?

2. **You can start anywhere on the analysis. Here, we start with Threats.**

   From a coaching perspective, it may be best to end on a positive note. With that in mind, it might be best to start with Threats and work your way around to Strengths. In the box provided, ask your client to fill out the threats they feel they are facing, both internally and externally.

   Sample Questions:

   - What changes are occurring in your environment?
   - What worries you most about the next few weeks?
   - What major challenge are you facing in the next few weeks?

3. **Move to Opportunities.**

   Next, it's important for the client to think about the potential opportunities they have at their disposal. This can be in spite of or in addition to the threats they already feel they are facing.

Sample Questions:

- What can you provide that others cannot?
- What do you do better than others?
- What opportunities for growth are available to you in the next month?

4. Move to Weaknesses.

While we don't want to overly focus on weaknesses, they are important to address. These might be things your client can work on or will need to develop to address some of the challenges they are facing.

Sample Questions:

- Where are you lacking motivation?
- In what ways are you wasting time and/or resources?
- How do your emotions or thoughts work against you?

5. Finally, move to Strengths.

You will want to spend a bit more time here, since this is where they will begin to mine for their internal resources that will help address the other three boxes. Here, you want to focus on helping your client identify both general strengths, as well as the strengths that will help them in a specific challenge (if applicable).

Sample Questions:

- How do your thoughts and emotions work for you?
- What would others say are your biggest strengths?
- What are your top three personality traits?
- How do you leverage your strengths on a regular basis?

6. Develop an Action Plan.

With all of the learning they've done throughout the analysis, encourage your client to develop an action plan that leverages their strengths.

Sample Questions:

- How can your strengths help address the threats you're facing?
- How can you leverage your strengths to develop some of the weaknesses you identified?
- What tangible items do your internal resources need to be successful?
- What is one thing you can do this week to build on your resources?

7. Create a plan or system for accountability.

Define analysis reason (if applicable):	
Strengths:	Weaknesses:
Opportunities:	Threats:
Action Plan:	

Exercise: Best Possible Self

What

The Best Possible Self intervention was developed by Dr. Laura King in 2001. This intervention used writing and imagery to encourage participants to think of a future where they have achieved all of their goals. Different from the Future Self activity, the "Best Possible Self" required students to take themselves through their own imagination, without prompting, to develop a vibrant picture of their future. King created this intervention to replace trauma writing, which helped people explore their thoughts and emotions surrounding a traumatic experience. Even though trauma writing was painful, it did boast long-term positive effects, including fewer illnesses and doctor visits, fewer symptoms of depression, and increases in well-being.[40]

Why

King sought to develop an intervention that allowed people to experience the same benefits without having to relive a traumatic experience. She was successful. People who participated in the Best Possible Self activity, as compared to a control group, had increases in positive affect and well-being, and fewer healthcare visits.[41]

How

1. **Introduce the concept of Best Possible Self to your client.**

   If you've already done Future Self, explain that this exercise will be different in that you will be using a narrative to inform your client's insights. Alternatively, this exercise can be used instead of the Future Self exercise, if it fits the needs of your client better.

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[40] Pennebaker, J. W. (1997). Writing about emotional experiences as a therapeutic process. *Psychological Science, 8*(3), 162-166.

[41] Ibid, 74.

2. Provide these instructions.

"Choose a time period in the future, and think about what your life might look like then. Imagine that all of your goals have been met and that you've largely achieved all of the things you've set out to achieve. You've worked hard, remained motivated, maintained your determination, and ultimately succeeded at achieving your life goals. Everything you've ever wanted is right in front of you. Take a few moments, and write down everything you're imagining. Be as vivid and detailed as possible. The goal is to write the story of what your life looks like in the future."

Note: It's important to provide sufficient time for your client to write the narrative of their future. Don't rush them. Simply ask them to inform you when they've finished.

3. Coach around their narrative.

Once they've finished writing, ask them a blend of Learning and Being questions.

Sample Questions:

- What insights do you need to have to get to your Best Possible Self?
- How do you balance performance and learning?
- Looking at it from a strengths-based perspective, what strength do you want to focus on?
- What strength do you want to lean into and develop further to help you move toward your Best Possible Self?

4. Solidify the learning.

Encourage them to think of a creative way to manifest this Best Possible Self when they need it most. Come up with a name for the Best Possible Self, and a way to remember their story.

5. Develop action steps.

Narratives often bring up a lot of emotions and realizations that a client may not have had otherwise. Be sure to encourage your client to include action steps that are cognitive in nature.

Sample Questions:

- How do you want to deepen your Best Possible Self narrative this week?
- What realizations require further reflection on your part?

CHAPTER 8: Pathways

Curiosity & Pathways

The Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology states: *"Curiosity can be defined as the recognition, pursuit, and intense desire to explore novel, challenging, and uncertain events. When curious, we are fully aware and receptive to whatever exists and might happen in the present moment. Curiosity motivates people to act and think in new ways and to investigate, be immersed, and learn about whatever is the immediate target of their attention."*[42]

Essentially, curiosity is an essential part of living "the good life." In a 2010 study, researchers found that curiosity was related to increased positive emotion, allowing us to feel more satisfied with our lives.[43] A curious mind is one that is ready for adventure. It seeks out new ideas, experiences, and information in the pursuit of a worthwhile goal. This aligns with the Broaden-and-Build Theory, which states that positive emotions open us up to all of our possibilities and opportunities, helping us to build up both internal and external resources.[44]

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[42] Snyder, C. R., & Lopez, S. J. (2009). *Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

[43] Todd B. Kashdan, Paul Rose & Frank D. Fincham (2004) Curiosity and Exploration: Facilitating Positive Subjective Experiences and Personal Growth Opportunities, Journal of Personality Assessment, 82:3, 291-305, DOI: 10.1207/s15327752jpa8203_05

[44] Fredrickson B. L. (2004). The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions. *Philosophical transactions of the Royal Society of London. Series B, Biological sciences, 359*(1449), 1367–1378. https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2004.1512

Additionally, curiosity bolsters our achievement abilities, both in school[45] and at work.[46] When we view a challenge as a threat to our abilities, we are more likely to shrink away from the challenge, allowing it to exercise control over our behaviors and emotions. However, by approaching challenges from a place of curiosity, and exploring the various Pathway options, we are more likely to sustain our motivation and effort, and ultimately succeed.

Curiosity serves coaching on two fronts. First, as a coach. Curiosity is one of the seven Essential Coach Qualities for the following reasons:

1. **A coach asks powerful questions designed to elicit a deeper awareness; explore a client's current assumptions, ideas and emotions; and look toward the future.**

   Curiosity comes from the Latin word *cura*, which means to care or ask about. Combined with empathetic listening, curiosity is a way of deeply caring for someone else. It allows the client to explore more of themselves and what is most important in their lives. Asking Powerful Questions that balance Learning, Being, and Doing allows clients to generate meaningful goals, develop strong Pathways, and bolster their Agency.

2. **A coach continues to ask meaningful questions that help clients go beyond current understanding, transforming judgment into curiosity, and helping clients to clarify and define new insights and ideas.**

   Most frequently, this shows up in a coach's ability to stay curious and help clients discover a deeper agenda. Curiosity allows the coach to ask thought-provoking questions, increasing the client's likelihood of stumbling upon a meaningful insight. A skilled coach is able to listen for opportunities to ask questions that alter perspective, uncover and challenge limiting beliefs, and prompt new discoveries of their internal world. The ultimate goal is to help the client transform their judgment into curiosity.

The purpose of curiosity in coaching is to become the student of the client. In other professional relationships, the natural inclination is to place oneself in the position of the expert. In coaching, however, the coach and client are equals. This implies a give and take, where advice may be

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[45] von Stumm S, Hell B, Chamorro-Premuzic T. The Hungry Mind: Intellectual Curiosity Is the Third Pillar of Academic Performance. Perspectives on Psychological Science. 2011;6(6):574-588. doi:10.1177/1745691611421204

[46] Reio, T. & Wiswell, A. (2001). Field investigation of the relationship among adult curiosity, workplace learning, and job performance. *Human Resource Development Quarterly, 11(1), 5-30.*

appropriate in rare circumstances, but the coach is primarily focused on drawing out meaningful information. In other words, the coach functions from a place of such deep curiosity that they become the student of the client, learning as much as they can from the client's experiences. From this learning, coaches can formulate powerful questions to elicit meaningful insight.

The Power of Curiosity

The second way curiosity serves coaching is through a coach's ability to generate curiosity in their clients. Because coaches are trained with a deeper understanding of curiosity and its benefits, coaches have the necessary tools to help clients become more curious about their own lives. When our brains are exposed to new things, especially new things that make us feel excited, they release dopamine--a feel-good hormone that lifts our spirits. This uplifting feeling can also serve as a source of motivation and inspiration to help clients achieve their goals. The science extolling the benefits of curiosity are impressive:

- Curiosity is perhaps the foundation of human beings' intrinsic motivation.[47]
- Curiosity helps us to persist longer in challenging tasks.[48]
- Curiosity helps us to experience more enjoyable social outcomes.[49]
- Curiosity expands our knowledge, skills, goal-directed efforts, and sense of self.[50]
- Curiosity increases our tolerance for distressing states and being outside comfort zones.[51]

Curiosity enables our clients to see the world with a fresh set of eyes, allowing them to consider thoughts and ideas they'd not previously examined. New ideas create new thought and emotion patterns, which influence our actions. This results in different and hopefully more effective, results. Curiosity serves as a spark for this process, while also keeping the process fresh, fun, and effective for the client.

Curiosity has two key components:

1. **A striving to learn about something, whether internal or external.**
2. **A mindful immersion in the present moment while considering future responsibilities.**

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[47] Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Intrinsic and Extrinsic Motivations: Classic Definitions and New 5 Directions. Contemporary Educational Psychology, 25(1), 54-67.

[48] Sansone, C., & Smith, J. L. (n.d.). Interest and Self-Regulation. Handbook of Personality and Self-Regulation, 6 192-217.

[49] Kashdan, T. B., & Roberts, J. E. (2004). Trait and State Curiosity in the Genesis of Intimacy: Differentiation 7 From Related Constructs. Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 23(6), 792-816.

[50] Ainley, M., Hidi, S., & Berndorff, D. (2002). Interest, learning, and the psychological processes that mediate 8 their relationship. Journal of Educational Psychology, 94(3), 545-561.

[51] Spielberger, C. D., & Starr, L. M. (1994). Curiosity and exploratory behavior. In H. F. O'Neil & M. Drillings 9 (Eds.), Motivation (221-243). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum.

Both of these components require a focus and mindfulness that enables clients to explore without judgment and with a sense of courageousness. The positive emotions associated with curiosity enable a sense of calm confidence that encourages an open curiosity about the client's surroundings. This type of confidence can help reduce feelings of anxiousness. In his book, *Curious? Discover the Missing Ingredient to a Fulfilling Life,* Todd Kashan emphasizes that if we consciously focus on being curious, we can reduce feelings of anxiety.[52] Curiosity, then, becomes a cyclical process, allowing us to focus on maintaining interest in the task, remaining engaged, and further feeding our curious minds.

With this curiosity, clients can construct and experiment with the various Pathways that may lead them to their ultimate goal.

[52] Kashdan, T. B. (2009). Curious?: Discover the Missing Ingredient to a Fulfilling Life. New York: William 10 Morrow.

The Intersection of Curiosity and Pathways

The way we live life ultimately comes down to one thing: the choices and decisions we make. To live a flourishing life, we need to encourage our clients to make better decisions. This is where Pathways can be effective, since they are made up of a series of decisions aimed at achieving something meaningful to the client.

Pathways are both prescriptive and descriptive. In one way, Pathways create a plan to work toward a long-standing goal. In another way, they inform the client about their character, shining a light on the traits that will best serve them as they continue to pursue their goal. In other words, while Pathways might seem simple on the surface, the intersection of learning and insights under the surface are very complex. This requires the client to drop any judgment surrounding Pathway development, and to approach their Pathway design from a place of curiosity.

A great way to approach Pathways with curiosity is to ask your client:

- What is your hypothesis about which Pathway will work?
- What experiment can you put into place to test if the Pathway is viable or not?

Encouraging your client to set up mini experiments--to play--allows them to see Pathway development as a place to exercise curiosity and creativity. While your client is developing the design of these experiments, it's important to ask questions around character traits and feedback.

Sample Questions:

- What character traits will you need to leverage if you choose this Pathway?
- How will you gather feedback about this Pathway?
- How will you use the feedback you receive from this Pathway?

This approach to Pathway development and experimentation aligns with coaching's focus on growth mindset, the research on Flow, and flourishing. Additionally, it aligns with the ICF's updated coaching guidelines, which state that action is as much about testing learning as it is about the accomplishment or achievement of a goal. By emphasizing Pathway development, you are also emphasizing that the accomplishment at the end of the coaching session isn't the only point of developing a Pathway: it's equally about what you learn and who you become during the process of achieving a particular goal or end state.

Sourcing Different Selves

Future Self

The Future Self is such an effective exercise because it can be used for all future coaching sessions. It can be used to assess progress, redesign Pathways, and further develop or adjust existing goals. The Future Self perspective is influential when it comes to Pathways. Our Future Selves have the benefit of being able to look back on our lives to help us identify what worked, what didn't, what resources we needed to leverage, and the characteristics we needed to embody to get to where our Future Selves are today.

Instead of having the client develop a Pathway with their future in mind, you might consider asking questions about the hindsight the Future Self obtained, having already traversed these Pathways.

Sample Questions:

- What does your Future Self say about this Pathway?
- What resources does your Future Self think you need to be successful with this Pathway?
- What obstacles does your Future Self foresee along this pathway? How can you plan for them now?
- What strengths do you need to embody? Who do you need to be for this Pathway to be successful?

Inner Critic

It's important to start this section with a caveat. If your client does not have a good relationship with their Inner Critic yet, this may not be the best "self" to leverage. However, if your client was able to create a new system for working with their Inner Critic, then it may be helpful to involve the Inner Critic in the process.

When operating at full health, Inner Critics are programmed to protect us from potential pain and harm, and to alert us to potential problems in our path. As your clients develop their

Pathways, encourage them to tap their Inner Critic to help catch some of these things before they emerge in the future.

Sample Questions:

- What does your Inner Critic think about this Pathway?
- What problems does your Inner Critic foresee?
- What pain points might your Inner Critic try to protect you from during the process?

Best Possible Self

While the Best Possible Self and the Future Self are similar in nature, the key difference is the fact that the Best Possible Self is written into a narrative. Approaching Pathways through the Best Possible Self can help clients to think about the stories they're telling themselves, and to compare that narrative to the story they are hoping to write.

This approach would be best to address limiting beliefs that pop up as your client is designing the Pathway. For example, you might hear your client mention a Pathway that they think would be ideal, but then retract the idea after overthinking the obstacles. This would be a great place to employ their Best Possible Self.

Sample Questions:

- What story are you telling yourself about your capabilities?
- What story do you want to write instead?
- If your Best Possible Self were writing this narrative, how would the story go?

Exercise: Empowered Pathways

Developing empowered Pathways begins by understanding the difference between two project types: Do-or-Die Projects vs. Do-or-Try Projects.

Do-or-Die Projects

In this instance, both the project and its outcome are extremely important. Whether it be a work requirement or something that must be done to advance your client's business or career, you'll know it's a Do-or-Die Project if they don't have any choice but to pursue the project. With this kind of project, the gravity of the Pathways change, making it more difficult to experiment with them.

To explore empowered Pathways for Do-or-Die Projects, encourage your client to break the project down into mini-projects that, when executed together, make up the larger, more crucial project.

Do-or-Try Projects

These projects are not as critical to the client as the aforementioned project type. With Do-or-Try Projects, your client has much more freedom to experiment with the Pathways, making this type of project more of a space to play. By breaking down Do-or-Die Projects into mini projects, your client may also be creating mini Do-or-Try Projects, giving your client more freedom to experiment on a smaller scale.

Creating the Pathway

1. **Identify if the project is Do-or-Die or Do-or-Try.**

   If your client's project is Do-or-Die, encourage them to break the larger project into smaller, mini-projects that they can experiment with. If the project is Do-or-Try, then they are ready to start experimenting!

2. **Start with the hypothesis.**

   Encourage your client to think of the Pathways that are available to them. As they are considering all of their options, ask them, “What is the hypothesis about these Pathways that you want to test?”

3. **Identify possible vs. probable outcomes.**

   Depending on the experiment, your client will want to identify all of the possibilities that could come from the experiment ("possible outcomes"). It’s also wise to temper expectations so your client can create reasonable action steps. Having them identify what’s most likely to happen (or the "probable outcomes") will provide them with a framework for creating a strong plan moving forward.

   Sample Questions:

   - If you pursue this experiment, what are all of the possibilities at your disposal?
   - What is most likely?
   - What possibilities do you most want to pursue?

4. **Explore the insights your client hopes to gain from testing their hypothesis.**

   Ask a blend of Learning and Being questions focused on ways your client can leverage feedback, make adjustments, and try new experiments. This part of the coaching should be high energy, fun, and inspiring for the client. Designing the experiment should feel playful and creative. As the coach, this is where you will want to dig deep into your curiosity.

   Sample Questions:

   - How will you collect feedback?
   - When will you make adjustments (if needed)?
   - How can you change the experiment if new information becomes available?
   - Who do you want to involve in the experiment?
   - How will this experiment help you to achieve your goals?
   - What do you hope to learn about yourself through this experiment?

5. **Design strong action steps.**

   After you thoroughly explore your client's experiment, help them design action steps to see the experiment through to completion. Start by focusing on two or three steps in the pathway that they can complete within 1-2 weeks.

CHAPTER 9: Fear & Courage

The Essential Coach Quality of Courage consists of vulnerability, awe, and gratitude. More experienced coaches have a unique ability to take risks and directly address the more "prickly" aspects of a coaching session. As a coach develops their skills, they will more readily go straight for the prickly points, understanding that profound insights lie behind these uncomfortable topics. They trust their client, themselves, and the coaching process to a degree that allows them to take risks and release attachment to the outcome.

The Courageous Coach

1. **An effective professional coach is able to create a safe space that invites sharing and boldness.**

   Coaching requires comfort with vulnerability and risk-taking, displayed by asking more difficult questions. A coach's courage emerges when they are willing to address the tough topics and help clients confront the elephant in the room.

   Sample Questions:

   - Does the energy of the coaching feel safe?
   - Does the coaching conversation reflect intimacy and strength in the coach/client relationship?
   - Does the coach work with the energy present in the coaching conversation?
   - Does the coach interact with the client and the client's energy, rather than stick to a scripted exercise?

2. **A coach is willing to be direct and state their observations, insights, and suggestions without being attached to the client's agreement/ disagreement.**

   While suggesting solutions for clients is typically not an acceptable practice, there may be times when a coach will have ideas or suggestions for their client to ponder. Courage addresses a coach's ability to concisely share these insights with a client. This involves sharing your thoughts, then asking a powerful question. Asking a follow-up question after sharing an insight or observation allows the client to remain in control of the session and confirms your collaborative coach-client relationship (instead of promoting you to "expert").

   For example, you might say, "I think you're avoiding a larger issue. What are your thoughts?" Or, you might say, "I think you need to take this step. What do you think?" Here, it's important to release attachment to the client's agreement/disagreement with your thought, empowering your client to own their opinions and actions. If your intuition or idea doesn't align with your client, they will typically follow up with an adjustment to the idea, or a suggestion that fits them better. Trust your client by supporting their response, even if it means disregarding your idea. Even when clients choose not to take your suggestions, your questions still have the power to evoke insights.

   Sample Question:

   - Was the coach bold in asking insightful or risky questions?

The Call to Be Bold and Vulnerable

Sometimes, you will have the opportunity to tell your clients the blunt truth. Other times, you will have the opportunity to exhibit your vulnerability. Both of these opportunities allow us to show up as our full, authentic selves. The dance between the two can be powerful for our clients to witness. By seeing your courage and vulnerability on full display, your clients can gain important insights and feel comfortable showing up authentically as well.

Courage and vulnerability are robust character traits that lead to powerful leadership and profound personal transformation. In this chapter, we will explore Brene Brown's work, *Daring Greatly: How the Courage to Be Vulnerable Transforms the Way We Live, Love, Parent, and Lead*. Her work will guide us in developing a deeper sense of awareness to help us craft more curious and insightful coaching questions.

Boldness and vulnerability are intricately connected. When a coach is willing to take risks by asking tough questions or using their intuition, they have to be more comfortable with the accompanying vulnerability. When a client, whether politely or pointedly, lets you know that your question or intuition isn't as accurate as you had hoped, welcome that feedback. Then, simply respond with another question. Your comfort with the unknown, and not needing to be right, will help you to take risks for the sake of your client, while also demonstrating how to be vulnerable.

What & Why of Courage and Vulnerability

Courageous vulnerability is not oversharing or disclosing information for the sake of information. Instead, Brown defines vulnerability as uncertainty, risk, and emotional exposure.[53] This kind of vulnerability often opens us up to the possibility of pain or being attacked. Whenever we take a risk, put ourselves out there, or wait for a response to something meaningful, we are acting vulnerable. It takes courage to put yourself in this role and allow yourself to feel uncomfortable.

[53] Brown, B. (2017). *Daring greatly: How the courage to be vulnerable transforms the way we live, Love, parent, and lead.* Penguin Random House Audio Publishing Group.

Scarcity and the Big 3 Symptoms

Vulnerability is a beautiful thing, especially in the coaching profession. Without it, it can be difficult to dig more into the depths of our client's thoughts and emotions. Research suggests that it is in our nature, as humans, to desire vulnerable connections with others.[54] In recent years, however, society has attacked vulnerability, viewing it more as a weakness than a strength.

While there are many theories as to why vulnerability is seen as a weakness, the most obvious culprit is negative emotions. Vulnerability often makes us feel uncomfortable, and can result in painful or frustrating outcomes. According to Brown, the main culprit behind these negative emotions is scarcity. Scarcity is the idea that something is lacking: either we aren't enough, someone else isn't enough, or there isn't enough of something to go around. Scarcity breeds fear, which perpetuates a harmful cycle of useless and sometimes harmful assumptions and painful emotions. Scarcity evokes three main feelings:

1. **Shame.** This means attributing mistakes or negative feedback (such as being bullied or receiving harmful negative comments) to one's "fundamentally flawed" identity.

2. **Comparison.** This involves looking at others and thinking that their lives and core identity are magically or methodically better than yours and your achievements.

3. **Disengagement.** This means avoiding or protecting yourself from the risks of anything you want to pursue.

In her book, Brown dives into some heavy discussion about the flawed nature of people. And while it does veer a bit into counseling, she also raises a few strong discussion questions for coaches to consider:

- In life coaching, we emphasize that the client is naturally creative, resourceful, and whole. How does that assumption counter feelings of shame? How does this show up in your coaching?

- When is it appropriate to address shame? When isn't it appropriate?

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[54] Young, K. (2020, August 17). *Vulnerability: The key to close relationships.* Hey Sigmund. Retrieved September 22, 2021, from https://www.heysigmund.com/vulnerability-the-key-to-close-relationships/

Addressing a Client's Vulnerability

People tend to do one of three things when faced with feelings of vulnerability or shame:

1. **Move away:** Withdraw
2. **Move toward:** Seek to appease
3. **Move against:** Fight

Awareness of what style your client defaults to is useful when designing questions around their learning. Bringing awareness to a client's vulnerability can help the two of you to design stronger action steps in the future.

Talking about what you feel shame about has been known to reduce feelings of shame.[55] Discussing shame helps clients to put their shame into perspective, separating their behaviors from themselves and allowing them to assess their behaviors without judgment. Creating a safe environment for a client to share their feelings of shame will build trust and further develop the coach-client relationship.

Exercise: Facing Fear

When we fear our vulnerability, we are less likely to open up, explore our emotions, and make meaningful changes in our lives. Fear can be a crippling emotion, preventing us from pursuing our dreams and accomplishing our goals. When clients present with a fear-based perspective toward their vulnerability, inviting them to explore this fear is a great way to help them move forward.

1. **Understanding fear.**

   Before a client can make any decisions about their vulnerability, they need to understand where their fear comes from. The key here is never to encourage clients to move quickly from fear or anxiety to a state of calm. Research shows that not only is a

[55] Sack, D. (n.d.). *5 ways to silence shame.* Psychology Today. Retrieved September 22, 2021, from https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/where-science-meets-the-steps/201501/5-ways-silence-shame

quick transition incredibly hard to do,[56] but running away from fear erases the ability to search for clues as to where the fear or anxiety is coming from. Is the fear coming from a place of excitement, such as prior to a speaking engagement? Or is it coming from a place of true anxiety, such as after an uncertain performance appraisal? Assessing what's behind the fear is an important first step for developing action.

Sample Questions:

- What's behind this fear?
- What message does your fear have for you?
- What perspective does this fear put you in?
- What other emotions are linked to this fear?

2. Give your fear a face and name.

Like our Inner Critic, our fear often presents with troubling messaging, and these messages can increase our feelings of shame or anxiety. By personifying our client's fear, we give them a chance to pull the fear away from themselves so they can address it directly.

Sample Questions:

- Close your eyes and imagine your fear in your mind.
  - What does it look like?
  - What color is it?
  - What shape is it?

3. Identify Meaning.

The next step is to assess the meaning that surrounds the fear. It's important to both ask about the meaning of the fear itself, as well as what it might mean if your client is able to move past the fear. In this step, you can encourage your client to address the fear directly.

Sample Questions:

[56] Brooks, A. W. (2014). Get excited: Reappraising pre-performance anxiety as excitement. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, 143*(3), 1144–1158. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0035325

- What meaning does this fear hold in your life?
- What would it mean if you were able to move past this fear?
- If your fear were standing in front of you right now, what would you want to say to it?

4. **Coach around Learning and Being.**

   After you've explored meaning, continue coaching around what your client is learning about themselves and who they want to become. You might consider inviting in the Future Self to help assist your client in addressing their fear.

5. **Develop action.**

   If possible, help clients develop action steps that are tied to the meaning they identified earlier in the session. Having action bound by meaning makes them much more likely to follow through.

Exercise: Visualizing Fear to Risk

What

Think back to the last time you had to do something that elicited a fear response. Perhaps it was something related to excitement, like mountain biking or running a Spartan race. Perhaps it was something related to anxiety, like giving an important speech or having a promotion meeting with your supervisor. At that moment, did you ignore your fear or lean into it?

Chances are, you tried to ignore the fear, pushing it down into the depths of your stomach to deal with later. What's even more likely is that you tried to put something between you and the thing that elicited your fear. The problem is that ignoring your fear, or pretending that you can keep it away forever isn't feasible. Leaning into fear is often much more rewarding.

Visualization techniques are a great way to lean into fear before the fear-inducing event even takes place. Allowing yourself to meticulously visualize the sequence of events, and feel the fear creep up as you edge closer to the fear-inducing moment, enables you to face the fear directly. By putting your mind into the future, you can focus not on what's instinctual, but instead on a carefully-crafted technique that will keep you safe and bolster your success.

Let's take mountain biking, for example. Sometimes, it's necessary to jump your bike over a gap in the rocks. To do this effectively requires a lot of speed--a scary amount of speed--and the ability to lean over the handles of the bike so that your momentum will bring your front tire safely to the ground. When fear gets in the way, bikers will try to pull up on the bike to keep something between themselves and the ground, but that can end in disaster. You literally have to lean into the jump to land safely.

The same concept applies to other areas of our life. In business, when people are afraid of something, they will put something between themselves and the fear, which ultimately ends up causing more challenges and problems than if they had leaned into their fear. The most common way we construct barriers is in difficult conversations with others. Instead of leaning into fear, we put humor or irritation between ourselves and another person, which often results in poor outcomes.

Why

Using visualization techniques like those common in sports psychology can help lower the fear response and allow you to respond more effectively to the situation you're facing. Visualization techniques have been known to bolster self-confidence and lower feelings of anxiety.[57] If you think about a basketball player stepping up to the free-throw line, or a kicker getting ready to kick a field goal, you might see their ritual play out in real-time. Internally, two things are happening: They are meticulously reviewing each step they need to take for their throw or kick to be successful, and they are lowering their heart rate. Both things are required to achieve their goal.

This same technique can be used in almost any fear-inducing moment. You visualize your bike picking up speed as you make your way to the jump point. You watch yourself, with perfect form, make the jump across the rocks and land safely on the other side. Your heart rate lowers and the fear begins to dissipate. Instead of fear, you're having fun. The jump now feels smaller and the speed doesn't feel so fast.

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[57] Predoiu, R., Predoiu, A., Mitrache, G., Firanescu, M., Cosma, G., Dinuta, C., & Bucuroiu, R. A. (2020). Visualisation techniques in sport - the mental road map for Success. *Discobolul – Physical Education, Sport and Kinetotherapy Journal, 59*(3), 245–256. https://doi.org/10.35189/dpeskj.2020.59.3.4

How

1. **Listen for your client to mention an upcoming event or situation that elicits a fear response.**

2. **Ask permission to use this visualization technique.**

3. **Encourage them to close their eyes and walk through each piece of the situation.**

   If it's a difficult conversation, you might ask them to visualize the whole sequence, anticipating what the other person might say and asking your client to practice their response.

4. **When you hear fear rise in your client's voice, encourage them to lean into the fear.**

   Sample Questions:

   - What is most challenging about this part of the scenario?
   - What would it look like to embrace the fear?
   - What resources do you need to feel less fearful?

5. **Once your client has gone through the visualization of the fear-inducing aspects, encourage them to visualize themselves recovering.**

   Sample Questions:

   - How can you continue to move forward?
   - What did you learn about yourself?
   - How will you apply this learning to future similar situations?
   - How can you optimize your response in the future?

6. **Help your client to generate action steps that cover two things:**

    - Have them consider what grounding techniques they might use to bring down their heart rate. Athletes sometimes do a small ritual that often involves deep breathing.
    - Encourage them to continue practicing their visualization between this session and their fear-inducing event. The more they practice, the more prepared they will be, and the more natural their ideal action will feel. Their frequent visualization of their ideal outcome will make them far more likely to choose the steps that they have been practicing, instead of being hijacked by their fear response when they reach their challenging situation

CHAPTER 10: Decisions and Actions

Confidence in Coaching

Using pause is an excellent way to demonstrate confidence both within and outside of a coaching session. Pausing allows a coach to place more of the coaching work on the client, empowering them to become their own problem-solvers. As a coach progresses in their practice, they become more comfortable with silence, and trust that an action plan will flow naturally from the client.

An experienced coach is very comfortable with silence, often allowing for long pauses that enable the client to further reflect and explore their answers. Being comfortable with pausing slows the client's thinking, providing more space for the client to dig deeper into their thoughts. Pause also allows the coach to listen empathetically to a client without indulging in the anxiety of quickly crafting a new question.

1. **A professional leans into the three coaching trusts (Trust the Client, Trust Yourself, Trust the Process) and embraces pausing.**

   New coaches often find themselves trying to force new insights, rushing through questions, or paraphrasing before asking a powerful question. Expert coaches trust the coaching process. Experienced coaches are comfortable with allowing long pauses, sometimes as much as ten to twenty seconds of silence, before asking the next question. This comfort comes from the knowledge that clients likely need more time to process deeply insightful coaching questions. The silence is a show of respect for the client's need to process more slowly, and a sign of trust in a client's ability to do so.

2. An expert coach trusts the client's resilience and brilliance.

An experienced coach understands that a client is resourceful and capable. The coach's role is not to over-step, but instead to let the client do the heavy lifting to develop their own solutions. More experienced coaches avoid problem-solving and focus instead on asking simple, curious questions to derive insights, solutions, and action steps directly from the client's learning. Coach confidence is displayed through the continued exploration of Learning, Being, client Agency, client characteristics, and perspectives. An experienced coach knows that the client's inner exploration will lead to a natural and effective action plan.

Sample Questions:

- Out of everything we discussed in today's session, what action do you want to take?
- In taking this action next week, what do you hope to learn?
- How does this action relate to your larger agenda?

Pause to Win the Decision

The power of pause shows up in one's ability to stay present in a challenging emotion--even pausing in it--and then choosing to move forward. While some people might see pausing as time management, it's really a form of pain management.[58] Leaning into pause means managing the temporary pain that comes from our discomfort with a particular emotion. It requires us to pause in the discomfort even as our brains scream at us to find a distraction, such as social media or food, to help us zone out and alleviate the pain.

The habit of pausing when we feel this discomfort, and putting in the work to make key life decisions, is less about time organization and more about our commitment to stay engaged. It's this engagement with the emotional labor of working through the tough moments that helps us to make the best decisions for our lives.

The Power of Pause

In *Thinking Fast, and Slow*, Daniel Kahneman writes that the brain has two different systems of thought.

- **System 1**

  System 1 is fast and automatic. It's constantly running, which makes it prone to mistakes and errors. This is the kind of thinking we employ when presented with automatic processes like solving the problem: 2 + 2. Our answer is automatic.

- **System 2**

  System 2 is a slower process that requires focused attention and energy. It occurs when you stop to think or ponder about a problem or topic. This is the kind of thinking that occurs when we are presented with a more complex problem, such as 174 x 1648 x 476. It requires us to slow down and think through the process of solving the problem, and not just the problem itself.

[58] Nir Eyal. Indistractable: How to Control Your Attention and Choose Your Life. Bloomsbury Publishing Plc. 2019.

The amygdala is the brain's center for emotions, emotional behavior, and motivation. It comes from the Greek word for almond. This almond-shaped brain matter is part of our primitive center, which is responsible for emotions like fear and our fight-or-flight response. It's a relic from prehistoric times when our choices were to eat or be eaten.

For example, let's say that you're a prehistoric human traveling with your tribe when you stumble across a tiger. If your brain is operating properly, it will immediately slip into System 1 thinking and give you one command: run. The goal is self-preservation. Our brains are wired to keep us safe.

As the blood and oxygen arrive to service the amygdala, the prefrontal cortex (center for reasoning) slows down or shuts off, and adrenaline kicks in. Vestiges of the amygdala still surface in modern times when we feel stress, fear, and even joy. When we instinctively pull our hand away after touching a hot pot, or reach out to hug a friend we haven't seen in a long time, that is evidence of the amygdala in action.

However, the amygdala can sometimes hijack us, especially during times of stress. This is true of students whose minds go blank before tests, or managers who freeze before work presentations. Have you ever found your brain registering static during a coaching session? This is the amygdala taking control.

When we experience discomfort, our brain's instinct is to look for an easy solution or distraction. Distractions can be easy tools for pain management, and are often used with little effort. If we want to make better choices with our time, it's important to sit in our discomfort, even temporarily, to pause and allow the procrastination or distraction urge to pass. From there, you can choose to do more meaningful work and important tasks.

Exercise: Winning the Decision

- **Step 1: Clarify which decision needs to be made.**

  Sample Questions:

  - What is the task at hand that you need to accomplish?
  - What result are you after?

- **Step 2: Design the pause.**

  The idea isn't to try to make the herculean effort to jump into the task right away, but instead to build pause into your system or process.

- **Step 3: Get to work.**

  After pausing, the next step is to start working.

- **Step 4: Repeat the first three steps to build a habit of doing important work.**

It is much easier for someone with a daily writing habit to sit down and write for an hour than it is for someone who hasn't written in weeks. Building stamina is more than half of the challenge in establishing a habit. It takes time and effort to develop a habit, but once the habit of pausing and refocusing without distraction emerges, the pause will feel more natural. Desired results reinforce useful habits. Useful habits lead to more desired results, and the cycle continues.

Exercise: Lean into Pause

One goal coaches have during a session is to help our clients transition from System 1 thinking to System 2 thinking. We want them to slow down and take the time to truly ponder the bigger questions facing their lives. In a coaching session, you can play with the length and frequency of pausing to give clients the space and time they need to think deeply. A coach's ability to be confident in the process gives clients a safe and productive space to develop a deeper sense of awareness and begin developing new ideas. Clients feel more heard and understood when space is held for them to think and process.

- **Step 1: Pause after asking each question.**

  Ask a simple, curious question, then stop speaking. Allow a long pause for your client to think before answering the question. Often, if we've asked an insightful question, our clients will need the space we provide them. Many new coaches jump in too early, feeling the need to clarify or suggest another question if their client doesn't answer quickly. Avoid this urge, and embrace the pause.

- **Step 2: Pause before asking the next question.**

  When your client has finished answering your question, it's important to take the time you need to craft a powerful follow-up question. Sometimes, if you pause long enough, your client may keep talking, almost as if they are answering the question your mind was silently crafting. Pausing in these moments offers space for your client's growth.

The Elephant and the Rider

In Jonathan Haidt's popular 2006 novel, *The Happiness Hypothesis,* he addressed the fact that humans have two primary driving forces: our rational system and our emotional system.[59] Each of these systems plays a crucial part in our ability to achieve our goals. In his book, Haidt described the two systems as "The Elephant and The Rider," whereby we visualize the rider seated on top of the elephant. By working together, these two parts are responsible for our success.

He compared our rational system, the part of our brain responsible for problem-solving and rational thinking, to a rider. It's the rider's responsibility to analyze situations and find Pathways to help us determine the best way forward. Our emotional system, however, is like an elephant, providing the means and the motivation to get to a final destination. Why an elephant? Because our emotional system has a lot of power. It bolsters our motivation, protects us from unforeseen problems, and plays a large part (several tons' worth!) in our ability to propel our persistence forward.

When we think about the elephant, we need to think about the potential obstacles in our Pathways. If the road ahead is bumpy, uncomfortable, or uncertain, the elephant is going to be resistant to taking the journey, no matter how exciting the final destination might be. This is important to consider when designing a Pathway with a client. Looking ahead to identify any roadblocks, and developing a plan to address them early, is an important strategy for working with the emotional system.

When we think about the rider, we need to think about the logistics of our Pathways. How will the rider get from point A to point B? What's expected along the way? Assessing this kind of information will make the rider more confident and sure of their journey, which in turn puts the elephant more at ease.

If your client is seeking behavior change, they need to create an environment that allows both the rider and the elephant to work together. By first assessing Pathway logistics, you boost the rider's confidence. With this confidence, the rider can go to the elephant and motivate it to join them on the journey by tapping into emotional responses like excitement and pride. Finally, your client needs to identify and address potential obstacles, giving more confidence to the rider and more motivation to the elephant.

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[59] Haidt, J. (2006). *The happiness hypothesis: Finding modern truth in ancient wisdom.* Basic Books.

Deep Rules

What

Before we can address the elephant or the rider, we need to make sure that our underlying beliefs, the unconscious beliefs that crop up at sometimes inopportune moments, are given their fair share of attention. Think about the last time you overreacted negatively to an event in your life. For example, you lashed out at your partner because they forgot to empty the dishwasher, or you refused to speak to a friend or sibling after they canceled plans with you. It's likely you had a sense that you were overreacting, but you just couldn't help it.

In the book *The Resilience Factor*, Dr. Karen Reivich and Andrew Shatte describe overreactions as unrealized underlying beliefs. These beliefs revolve around the way we feel the world should work, and how we work with the world.[60] For example, an underlying belief might be "My time should always be respected." These kinds of thoughts differ from the thoughts that flow through your mind regularly, since these thoughts are easy to direct your attention to at any given moment. Instead, underlying thoughts lay below the surface, which is why Reivich and Shatte describe them as icebergs.

Why

Underlying beliefs hold the ability to be both helpful and harmful. Underlying beliefs about being kind and loving to others help to build relationships and bolster wellbeing. Other beliefs, perhaps about mistrust or skepticism of others, can cause problems in relationships and can destroy our self-esteem. Underlying beliefs inform our thoughts, directing our attention and behavior in service of the belief. With this much control over our behavior, it is crucial for our well-being that we can properly identify these beliefs before they wreak havoc in our lives.

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[60] Reivich, K., & Shatté Andrew. (2003). *The resilience factor: 7 essential skills for overcoming life's inevitable obstacles.* Three Rivers Press.

How

Exercise 1: Identifying Underlying Beliefs

Identifying underlying beliefs is no easy task. It requires a lot of digging in areas that are sometimes unpleasant for clients to explore. However, a lot of positive impact can come from an awareness of these underlying beliefs, if the client is willing to dig.

1. Ask your client to describe an instance in which an overreaction occurred.

Encourage them to describe this instance using exactly the same tone they used when it originally happened.

2. Explore your client's thoughts.

Sample Questions:

- What thoughts were going through your mind?
- What was the tone of these thoughts?

3. Explore your client's behavior.

Sample Questions:

- What did you do after the incident?
- What emotions did you feel after the incident?
- How did these emotions impact your behavior?

4. Compare your client's behavior to their thoughts.

The idea here is to help your client understand how tightly connected their thoughts are to their behaviors. If they know they overreacted, they already know that their thoughts and behaviors were likely out of line. This step is designed to help your client understand which triggering thought or behavior led to the overreaction.

Sample Questions:

- When you look back on your day, what do you think about your behavior?
- How did your thoughts justify your behavior?
- How did your behavior justify your thoughts?
- How did your emotions line up with your thoughts? With your behaviors?

5. If your client realizes that their response was out of proportion with their thoughts, or that their emotional response wasn't what they expected, it's time to dive deeper into their beliefs.

For example, perhaps your client was upset because their partner didn't empty the dishwasher, and they reacted by blowing up at them for always leaving the dishwasher full. There are several ways you can approach this overreaction.

Sample Questions:

- What was behind this reaction?
- What about this situation was so frustrating for you?
- What does leaving the dishes in the dishwasher signify?
- What's the message your partner communicates to you when they leave the dishes in the dishwasher?

6. From here, your goal is to dig into the layers of their beliefs.

By asking questions like the ones listed below, you can help your client peel back the underlying belief that's buried deep in their psyche.

Sample Questions:

- What does that mean to you? ("That" being their thoughts, behaviors, or attitudes toward the triggering incident.)
- What makes this important to you?

7. Address the underlying belief.

Once your client has identified their underlying belief, it's time to analyze its utility.

Sample Questions:

- How is this underlying belief helping you?
- How is this underlying belief harming you?
- What aspect of this belief can you leverage?

8. **Design Action.**

   Now that your client is aware of their underlying belief, they can more easily identify when it might become a problem in their life. Encourage them to create an action plan that holds them accountable to themselves in difficult situations. It can also be useful to create a system to access their authentic self when they're triggered. In addition, encourage them to identify the resources (including people) who can support their intended plan, and whom they can call on when needed.

Exercise 2: Honoring Values

Another place where deep rules can emerge is when we desire something we consciously feel we shouldn't desire. (e.g. We want to scroll through social media for a few minutes, we want to play just one more level of Candy Crush, we want to dive into the ice cream instead of grabbing a healthy snack, etc.) It's important to acknowledge the part of you that wants the distraction, and to address the reason behind the need.

Warring values come up a lot around morning routines. We know that getting out of bed at the first sound of our alarm will help us to be more productive, but we snooze anyway. We know that scrolling through social media will delay the start of our day, but we do it anyway.

When this happens, we often punish ourselves and feel disappointed in our behavior. But there is another approach that might help restore balance.

1. **Listen for when your client is struggling with distractions.**

2. **Instead of helping your client move away from the distraction, encourage them to identify what's driving their desire for the distraction.**

   Sample Questions:

   - What part of you wants this distraction?
   - How can you show this part some compassion?

- What value is this part attempting to honor?

3. Help your client identify a system to help them achieve their desired goals.

Based on their previous answers, they may want to consider adding the distraction into their system.

Sample Questions:

- How can this distraction be a part of your system?
- What would it look like to incorporate the distraction into your system?
- How could you creatively leverage your need to honor *x* value?

4. Identify what's most exciting about the next day, then encourage them to place that toward the end of their task list.

In doing so, you're building motivation toward the things they are most excited to tackle. The distraction or excitement piece becomes a tool to get through the tasks or routine sooner.

Sample Questions:

- What would your day look like if the thing you're most excited about happened toward the end of the day?
- What's possible if you delay gratification until later?
- What would you accomplish if you allowed yourself to indulge in the distraction after you completed your tasks?

5. Design action.

There are a lot of action options that may come up from this discussion. Encourage your client to pick the top two or three actions that they can take within the next week.

CHAPTER 11: Habits, Actions, Inspiration, and Accountability

Inspiration in Coaching

1. **A professional coach inspires clients to take bold action steps and design effective systems.**

   An effective coach guides clients to create exciting action steps that are both manageable and meaningful. This quality shows up most clearly in the strength of the well-designed actions co-designed by the coach and client. A well-designed action includes four elements: positively stated, effective size-to-time ratio, success is controlled by the client, and the measurement of success is tangible.

   Skill-check question:

   - To what degree is the client the one designing the action?

2. **A coach effectively ties Action with Learning and Being, addressing both a client's Agency and possible Pathways.**

   A coach should be able to help the client relate their action steps to their Agency ("Learning" and "Being"). Creating action steps that go beyond task completion to help them learn more about themselves, the effectiveness of a certain perspective, or how to use tasks to develop more skill sets are deeply meaningful. Action steps that include both action ("Doing") and Learning will help bolster bolder action in the future.

   Skill-check question:

   - Does the designed action help the client develop greater awareness of learning?

3. **A coach co-designs accountability with clients, and addresses the strategic and session agendas effectively.**

   Coaches should be adept at identifying the most effective ways for both the coach and the client to follow up on action during the next coaching session. Designing an Alliance around accountability ties back into the first coaching quality, Professional, and completes the coaching core quality loop.

   Skill-check question:

   - How well does the designed action relate to both the session agenda and the deeper agenda?

Inspiration and Action

Think of the last time you felt inspired. Perhaps you just finished listening to an insightful podcast, or heard that someone whom you admire displayed a generous act of charity. Chances are, however, that you did not go seeking to feel inspired. According to psychologists Todd M. Thrash and Andrew J. Elliot, inspiration is spontaneous, arriving without pursuit.[61] Spontaneity is just one of inspiration's three core components.

Have you ever felt a sense of inexplicable clarity after a moment of inspiration? If so, you're not alone. Thrash and Elliot found that inspiration also invokes a feeling of transcendence, pushing us past our materialistic desires to think beyond ourselves.[62] This transcendent feeling wakes us up to the possibilities that surround us, making us more open to the pursuit of our hopes and dreams. However, inspiration does not stop with a hope or a dream. Instead, the third and final core aspect of inspiration involves an action: using the inspiring moment as motivation to pursue a meaningful goal.

Inspiration offers several powerful outcomes.

1. **Inspires creativity.**

   A study done by Thrash and Elliot compared patent-holding inventors with non-patent-holding inventors on their levels of inspiration. The patent-holding inventors reported a higher frequency and intensity of inspiring moments. What was more impressive was that the inventors who reported the highest frequencies of inspiration also held the largest number of patents. Similar findings were exhibited with creative writers: the higher their scores on inspiration, the more creative their work.

2. **Inspires progress.**

   A study done by Marina Milyavskaya asked students to identify three goals they wanted to achieve in one semester.[63] Her study found that students who scored higher on

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[61] Kaufman, S. B. (2014, July 23). *Why inspiration matters.* Harvard Business Review. Retrieved September 29, 2021, from https://hbr.org/2011/11/why-inspiration-matters

[62] Thrash, Todd & Elliot, Andrew. (2003). Inspiration as a Psychological Construct. Journal of personality and social psychology. 84. 871-89. 10.1037/0022-3514.84.4.871.

[63] Milyavskaya, M., Ianakieva, I., Foxen-Craft, E., Colantuoni, A., & Koestner, R. (2012). Inspired to get there: The effects of trait and goal inspiration on Goal Progress. *Personality and Individual Differences, 52*(1), 56–60. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2011.08.031

measures of inspiration also made more progress on their goals. More interestingly, inspiration and goal progress were cyclical. Inspiration led to goal progress, which led to higher increases in future goal inspiration.

3. Inspires well-being.

Inspiration can have lasting effects on one's well-being, with studies showing that exposure to inspiration can predict long-term well-being, even up to 3 months later![64]

To be an effective coach, it is crucial to be aware of inspiration's role in creativity, progress, and well-being. Though inspiration is something that happens, as opposed to something we can create, there are things our clients can do to ensure that inspiration is something they experience more often.

1. **Openness to Experience.** Research shows that Openness to Experience, a psychological construct that indicates open-mindedness and imaginative thinking, makes people more open to moments of inspiration.

2. **Preparation & Effort.** To receive inspiration, one must be prepared for it to enter their life. Practicing mindfulness and engaging in activities that increase the likelihood for inspiration to occur are two ways to prepare one's mind for inspiring experiences.

3. **Small Victories.** Breaking large goals into smaller, more achievable steps, is more likely to result in a series of small victories. Each victory will build on the next, inspiring your client to continue on to their next step toward goal achievement.

4. **Inspiring People.** Inspirational people in your client's life, from famous innovators to familial role models, can have an infectious ability to bolster inspiration. Encouraging your clients to seek opportunities to learn about and/or spend time with the people who inspire them can help clients to develop a bank of inspiration.

Inspirational coaches don't simply inspire with their questions and words alone. They also employ a variety of strategies for clients to seek out and welcome moments of inspiration outside of their coaching sessions.

[64] Thrash, T. M., Elliot, A. J., Maruskin, L. A., & Cassidy, S. E. (2010). Inspiration and the promotion of well-being: Tests of causality and mediation. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 98*(3), 488–506. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0017906

Habits and Action

When it comes to habits, there are two popular (and somewhat overlapping) schools of thought. The first school of thought was presented by James Clear in his 2018 book, *Atomic Habits*. In his book, Clear has two key messages surrounding goal pursuit:

1. **Create a goal that includes identity.** For example, instead of saying that you want to finish writing your book, say you want to become a published author. Focusing on who you want to become ("Being") carries more weight and generates higher levels of motivation than goals that are not identity-bound.

2. **Focus on the system, and not on the goal.** Of course, the goals are important, but goals without an effective system will never be achieved.

Clear argues that setting goals helps us to identify the game we want to win, and systems are how we continue playing the game. Goals require repeated, intentional behavior that we consistently work toward refining and improving every day. One percent daily, if we are being exact. According to Clear, improving daily by even one percent adds up quickly, allowing us to grow exponentially.

Clear offers four simple rules for creating habits that lead to effective behavior change:

1. Make it obvious.

One way of doing this is through a method he calls "habit stacking," where you link a desirable new habit to a habit you already execute. The formula for this method is: "After [Current Habit], I will [New Habit]."[65]

2. Make it attractive.

This is where rewards are helpful. Finding a way to bring enjoyment—giving you a fresh dose of dopamine—will give you more motivation to see the habits through.

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[65] Clear, J. (2018). *Atomic habits: An easy & proven way to build Good Habits & Break Bad Ones.* Penguin Random House LLC.

3. **Make it easy.**

   Repetition will be your friend for this rule. By repeating a behavior, that behavior then becomes more automatic, making it easier to repeat the next time it needs to be done.

4. **Make it satisfying.**

   The best way to stick to this rule is to begin with small habits that are immediately gratifying. If we are successful, even if it's a small success, we are much more likely to repeat the habit again later.

Another popular name in habit research is BJ Fogg, author of *Tiny Habits*. This book is the culmination of 20 years of habit research performed at Stanford University. Fogg's research largely falls in line with Clear's approach to habit formation. First, however, Fogg addresses the challenges we face when we begin to develop new habits.

The first challenge is that we are inevitably going to have a slip-up in our habit formation journey. Life happens, and it's impossible to plan for everything we might face in our lives. The problem isn't that we will slip up; however, it's that we tend to be extremely hard on ourselves when these slip-ups happen. This harshness can sometimes lead to a complete retreat from the habit itself, resulting in a failure to implement the habit successfully.

The second challenge we face is our broad ideas of how habits work. For example, we say we want to improve our writing routine, but we don't identify the behaviors we need to put in place to make that routine successful (e.g. eating something before we begin writing). When creating new habits, we need to identify the behaviors to implement and/or change, not just the end goal.

Finally, the third challenge is that humans rely too heavily on their motivation and willpower to achieve goals. While motivation and willpower can be short-term solutions, they don't sustain us long-term. Our motivation waivers, and can abandon us when we need it most. This is why Fogg developed the concept of "Tiny Habits".

Like Clear, Fogg believes that we need to start small, with behaviors that take less than thirty seconds to complete. Also like Clear, Fogg believes that these new habit behaviors should be tied to what he terms an "anchor moment," which is similar to Clear's notion that new habits should be tied to existing habits. Fogg also sees the benefits of reward for the habit, though he strongly encourages people to provide themselves with the reward immediately after the behavior is complete. This reward doesn't need to be anything fancy; something as simple as crossing the behavior off of a list, or treating yourself to a moment of playtime with your pet will suffice. Fogg calls rewards "shine," like the sunshine required for trees to grow. The more rewards you give your habits, the more likely you are to see them grow into something substantial.

Fogg takes all of this one step further to develop what he terms the "Fogg Behavior Model." In the decades of Fogg's research, he was able to condense behavior change into a simple formula:

Behavior Change = Trigger + Ability + Motivation

Fogg leads a great thought experiment on this concept, in which he asks this question: Your cell phone rings, and you don't answer it. What are all of the reasons why you may not have answered the phone?

Fogg argues that any reason you might give would fall into two general categories: Reasons of Ability (you were in the shower, you were in a meeting, etc.) and Reasons of Motivation (you didn't feel like speaking, you didn't like the person calling, etc.).[66]

The phone ringing is the trigger, but if you don't have the ability or motivation to pick up the phone, nothing happens. Fogg asserts that behavior change cannot happen without all three of these components. By anchoring a new habit to an existing one, you provide yourself with a trigger; by keeping the habits small, you give yourself the ability; and by rewarding yourself after the habit is complete, you bolster your motivation.

Exercise: Building New Habits

Building new habits is no easy feat. Here is a quick tool to help coaches utilize the research to help clients build a new habit.

1. **Identify the goal or desired outcome.**

   Sample Questions:

   - What do you desire to achieve?
   - What's one thing in your life you'd like to get better at?

[66] Fogg, B. J. (2020). *Tiny Habits: The small changes that change everything.* Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.

2. **Identify the behaviors that will make that outcome possible.**

   If your clients want to develop a writing routine, for example, they will need to think about behaviors that will set them up for success. Sleep routine, diet, a clean environment, etc. are all things to consider in this process. If they want a better sleeping routine, they'll need to consider the timing of their food, their entertainment choices before bed, and a wake-up routine. These little behaviors are crucial to the success of the overarching goal.

   Sample Questions:

   - What needs to change to make this habit possible?
   - What gets in your way of achieving this habit?
   - How can you adjust your current behaviors to make this habit successful?

3. **Identify the habits that are needed for these behaviors to be successful.**

   Does your client need to create a habit of shutting down their phone before sitting down to write? Do they need a habit of meditating before they crawl into bed? What habits are they looking to create around these behaviors? Once their habits have been identified, have them break down their habits into their smallest possible form. According to Clear and Fogg, you're looking for tiny habits that take anywhere between 30 seconds and two minutes, but no longer than two minutes.

   Sample Questions:

   - What habits can you create from those behaviors?
   - What's the smallest habit you can create?
   - What could you do in 30 seconds to help move toward your goal?

4. **Stack the habits.**

   Now that your client is aware of the habits they're hoping to form, it's time to choose a signal. Ideally, this signal is tied to a habit that already exists. For example, your client may have an established habit of eating breakfast daily. If they want to begin setting boundaries around their phone usage (their new habit), perhaps your client should tie their boundary-setting to their breakfast: finishing breakfast signals shutting down their phone and leaving it in their bedroom.

Sample Questions:

- What existing habit could you tie your new habit to?
- How does an existing habit relate to your new habit?

5. **Choose a reward.**

   How does your client want to reward themself for completing their new habit? Highlight that little rewards will be most helpful, since sustaining large rewards may be unrealistic.

   Sample Question:

   - What reward will you give yourself for sustaining your new habit?

6. **Develop action.**

   Now that your client has a system in place to start their new habit, discuss what action they'd like to take first, and how they plan to hold themselves accountable.

   Sample Question:

   - What's one thing you can do this week to kickstart your habit?

Exercise: Brutal Little Habit Book

Keeping up with five habits per day is much more difficult than it sounds. And having a set amount of time to work with increases that difficulty and encourages accountability. For this exercise, encourage your client to dedicate a notebook (physical or digital) to their habit pursuit.

1. **Listen for your client to mention their need to set and follow new habits.**

2. **Encourage your client to choose five habits they'd like to work on throughout your coaching program.**

   - These habits should range in challenge level from easy to difficult. Bear in mind that "ease" and "difficulty" will depend on the personality and abilities of your clients.
   - Clients should choose two easy habits, one medium-level habit, and two difficult habits.

3. **Have your client choose a set period of time to track their ability to follow their habits.**
    - **NOTE:** the point here isn't necessarily for them to keep up with all of their habits every day, though that is the ultimate goal. The idea to start with is for them to track their progress and assess patterns.

4. **At a future-determined session, ask your client to assess their patterns.**

    Sample Questions:

    - What helped you on the days you were most successful?
    - What got in the way?
    - What did you learn about yourself?

5. **Using their assessment, help them develop and tweak their action steps for following through on their habits.**

6. **Throughout your coaching sessions, continue to check in on their habit progress.**

Optimistic about Accountability

Positive psychologists have defined optimism and pessimism through one's explanatory style, or the way they see their interaction with events in the world. Essentially, optimists see bad events as temporary, happening in one area of their life, and external to their view of themselves. Pessimists, on the other hand, are likely to see bad events as permanent, impacting all areas of their life, and completely their fault.[67]

An optimistic mindset encourages people to see challenges rather than threats, and empowers them to identify a clear and reasonable path forward. Optimism is very useful, allowing one to see challenges accurately and develop a plan to overcome them.

A large part of planning and following up with accountability is designing actions that also include aspects of Learning. Accountability comes in measuring the action steps taken, assessing goals and Agency, and then repeating this process. Maintaining an optimistic outlook allows clients to perceive their accountability as a challenge to be overcome, and as something they have control over and possess the resources to achieve.

Sample Questions:

- What is your relationship to accountability?
- Why do you procrastinate?
- What helps you to stay accountable?
- What characteristics can you rely on to get you out of the cycle of procrastination?
- What strengths of personality can you use to continue moving forward?
- What limiting beliefs do you have to let go of to be the best version of yourself?

Exercise: Zooming In and Zooming Out

Balancing your use of questions that ask for fine details (questions that zoom in on a specific idea or emotion) with questions that take a more comprehensive perspective (questions that zoom out

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[67] Gillham, J. E., Shatté, A. J., Reivich, K. J., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2001). Optimism, pessimism, and explanatory style. In E. C. Chang (Ed.), *Optimism & pessimism: Implications for theory, research, and practice* (pp. 53–75). American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/10385-003

to see the big picture) adds to your effectiveness and creativity as a coach. Jumping between questions that zoom in and questions that zoom out is a fantastic way to provide quick and varying perspectives on a situation.

Zoom-In questions focus intensely on a specific comment or shift in energy.

Sample Questions:

- You just let out a big sigh. What prompted it? What did you want to let go of? What are you still holding on to?
- You've used the word commitment several times. What is your relationship with commitment?

Zooming-out questions are equivalent to the Bird's-Eye-View.

Sample Question:

- What do you notice when you look at yourself and your surroundings from the perspective of a bird looking down from the sky?

You can play with Zoom-Out questions both in space—such as the Bird's-Eye-View—and time. Sample Questions:

- Taking into account the past 15 minutes, what do you notice about your situation from the perspective of the Bird's-Eye-View?
- When you look back on your previous year, what are the highlights? What are your takeaways?
- What is most important to you when you consider the next decade ahead?

Questions that play with both space and time help you shake up your client's habitual thought patterns. Their answer can open new Pathways of thought and emotion that can be applied to these patterns to encourage divergent thinking and deeper insights.

1. **Focus on Pathways.**

   Begin a life coaching session using the Hope Theory diagram below.[68] Ask your client questions about each area (Agency, Pathways, Goals, and Obstacles), while focusing on

[68] Snyder, C. R. (2002). Hope theory: Rainbows in the mind. Psychological Inquiry, 13(4), 249-275.

Pathways. (In a usual coaching session, actions usually come later in the session, but for the sake of practice, it's helpful to jump to action steps and possible Pathways.)

2. Zoom In.

Ask questions that zoom in for detail about specific action plans (time of day, emotion right before and after taking the action step, step-by-step plans, etc.)

Sample Questions:

- What time of day will this pathway be most effective?
- What personality traits will you need to leverage for this pathway to be successful?
- How will your emotions impact this pathway?

3. Zoom Out.

Balance those questions with questions that assess more of the client's whole life and their scope of exploration and discovery.

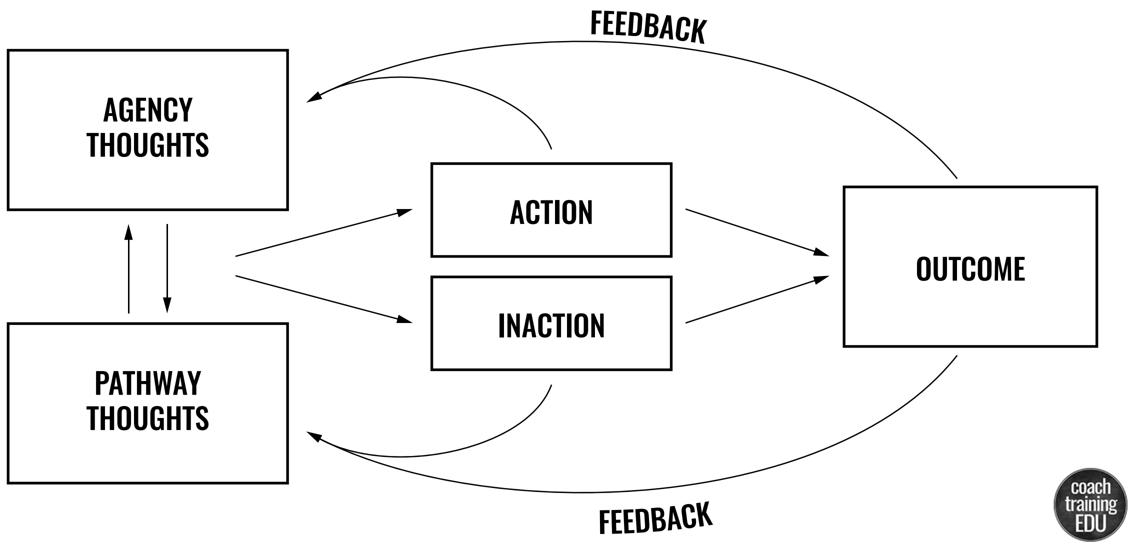
Sample Questions:

- What's the Bird's-Eye-View of these action plans?
- How does Agency play a role in the perspective you are taking on Pathways?
- What is the larger strategic plan?
- What are you learning about yourself from this situation that you'll still use five years from now?

4. Balance.

Play with going back and forth between zooming in and zooming out, and be mindful of the impact your questions have on your client. Maintain awareness of how mindfulness plays a role in your listening as a coach.

Hope Cycle


FEEDBACK
AGENCY THOUGHTS
ACTION
INACTION
OUTCOME
PATHWAY THOUGHTS
FEEDBACK
coach training EDU

CHAPTER 12: Review Session

Coaching Assessment

Eliciting feedback is a necessary part of the learning process. It allows you to better understand the skills you want to develop. The following is a quick assessment tool for you to use when listening to a recording of yourself coaching. These assessment questions are based on the Essential Coach Qualities, and will allow you to assess what's going well and where you can improve. During this class session, you will have the opportunity to receive feedback from your peers based on this assessment tool.

Coach Assessment Questions

Professional

- How well did the coach clarify expected outcomes or address accountability on a client's recent action steps?
- How well did the coach use the T.I.M.E. model when setting a strategic or session agenda?

Empathetic

- How well did the questions provoke new insight for the client (as opposed to seeking information or implying solutions)?

- To what degree did the coach recognize subtle shifts in a client's energy, tone, or perspectives?

Empowering

- How well did the coach focus on the client, not the problem?
- How well did the coach balance expert knowledge and information with empowering the client?
- How well did the coach adapt the client's language and adjust standard coaching questions and tools to the client?

Curious

- How well did the coach ask short, open-ended questions? How well did these questions balance Learning, Being, and Doing and address a client's Agency and Pathways?
- To what degree was the coach willing to lean into intuition while staying curious and holding space for the client to explore?

Courageous

- How well did the coach address prickly points, ideas, or observations (either directly or through pointed questions)?
- To what degree is the coach willing to take risks and share intuition and ideas without attachment to being right?

Confident

- How well does the coach demonstrate trust in the coaching process? How well does the coach demonstrate comfort with pausing and silence?
- To what degree does the coach trust that the action step will come from the client?

Inspiring

- How effective was the coach at helping the client develop inspiring well-designed actions?

- To what degree does the action ("Pathways") also include aspects of Learning and Being ("Agency")?

Practice

Coaching Notes:

Check in with your client about their original agenda for this training program.

Sample Questions:

- What was your agenda at the beginning of the program?
- How are you doing in your pursuit of this agenda?
- What do you need to continue to do or start doing to meet that agenda?
- What do you want to do with your coach training?
- What is your agenda with your certification?

After the session, go back and listen to your client's recording. Go through the Coach Assessment Questions to see how well your client is meeting their original agenda.

III

GOAL FLOURISHING

CHAPTER 13: Meaning, Happiness, & Future Self

Meaning & Happiness

In 2011, Martin Seligman published the book *Flourish*, which introduced the PERMA model, which stands for Positive Emotion (P), Engagement (E), Relationships (R), Meaning (M), and Accomplishment (A). In *Flourish*. Seligman posits that positive experiences in all five areas are required to build a life of happiness and well-being. This model includes assessments that can help clients evaluate their level of flourishing and work toward future alignment with a flourishing Future Self.

While this chapter will focus mainly on Meaning, the "M" in PERMA, here is a brief snapshot of the full model:

> **P: Positive Emotion:** In the PERMA model, positive emotion goes beyond happiness to include emotions like hope, joy, pride, and gratitude. Seligman believes that positive emotions can be cultivated through exploration and savoring.[69] Enhanced positive emotions have been linked to lower depressive and anxiety symptoms, as well as more social resources.[70]

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[69] https://positivepsychology.com/perma-model/

[70] Taylor, C. T., Knapp, S. E., Bomyea, J. A., Ramsawh, H. J., Paulus, M. P., & Stein, M. B. (2017). What good are positive emotions for treatment? Trait positive emotionality predicts response to Cognitive Behavioral Therapy for anxiety. *Behaviour research and therapy, 93,* 6–12. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.brat.2017.03.006

E: Engagement: Engagement relates closely to Csikszentmihalyi's concept of flow, and includes remaining present with the moment, and being fully immersed in what's right in front of you. Engagement has been shown to enhance levels of well-being and life satisfaction.[71]

R: Relationships: Humans are naturally drawn to others, which means that our relationships with others matter immensely. Research suggests that positive social relationships are linked to stronger physical and cognitive health outcomes.

M: Meaning: Ask anyone what they want in life, and they will tell you it's to pursue their passion, or to find the meaning of life. Seligman has clarified this as the desire to belong to something beyond ourselves as a resilience anchor that helps us stay focused during challenging times. People who feel a strong sense of meaning in their lives also experience higher levels of life satisfaction.[72]

A: Achievement: Achievement is what happens as a result of working hard toward an end goal. It includes strengths like self-motivation and discipline. This kind of goal achievement goes a long way toward developing a deeper sense of well-being.

[71] Fallon R. Goodman, David J. Disabato, Todd B. Kashdan & Scott Barry Kauffman (2017): Measuring well-being: A comparison of subjective well-being and PERMA, The Journal of Positive Psychology, DOI: 10.1080/17439760.2017.1388434

[72] Park, N., Park, M., & Peterson, C. (2010). When is the search for meaning related to life satisfaction? *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being, 2*(1), 1–13. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1758-0854.2009.01024.x

Meaning

What

The big questions that face almost every culture around the globe are: “Why am I here? What is my purpose? What is the meaning of life?” These questions permeate through pop culture references, in scare tactics about living your passion, and through our schools and education systems. Just about everywhere we look, we are inundated with messages about meaning and its importance. So, it’s no surprise that it’s in the top five indicators of well-being and life satisfaction.

Meaning is an intricate web that weaves together all of the resources we use to make sense of our lives. The beauty of meaning is that there isn’t just one simple answer to what brings meaning to our lives. Instead, meaning is a complex narrative that we write to help us develop and mold our understanding of the world and our place within it.

Making Meaning

In the late 1990s, researchers Richard Tedeschi and Lawrence Calhoun began studying people who appeared to experience significant levels of growth after incredible loss or trauma. People who endured war, grave illnesses, and natural disasters were among some of the people Tedeschi and Calhoun studied. They found that while these survivors were experiencing deep psychological struggles, they also experienced positive growth. This growth manifested in the realization of new talents, recognition of one’s inner strengths, and a more profound sense of meaning.[73]

Nearly twenty years later, Dr. Ann Roepke became curious about the opposite effect. If it was possible for people to experience a profound sense of personal growth after a traumatic experience, was it possible for people to experience this same sense of growth after an extremely positive experience? The short answer is yes—intensely positive events can also result in similar levels of growth as intensely negative events. People who experienced these positive events displayed higher levels of spiritual connection, were involved in stronger relationships, and had

[73] Collier, L. (2016, November). *Growth after trauma.* Monitor on Psychology. Retrieved September 23, 2021, from https://www.apa.org/monitor/2016/11/growth-trauma

higher scores of self-esteem.[74] Roepke refers to this phenomenon as post-ecstatic growth, and this research continues today.

The thread that weaves intricately through both of these concepts is meaning. It's not so much the event or experience itself (good or bad) that matters, but the meaning that the person assigns to the event that results in their growth. The more meaning is attributed to the event, the more impact it will have on their lives.

As humans, our brains are naturally wired to make meaning of the things that happen in our lives on both a small and large scale. Every event gets analyzed and categorized to help us form our understanding of ourselves and how we fit into the world. And this all happens subconsciously. However, our brains are often wired for safety, to protect us from any potential harm that might come our way. So, even when we experience something meaningful, if it might nudge us out of our comfort zones, our brains are more likely to manipulate the analysis to fit our current worldview.

For example, think of someone in your life who feels uncomfortable with compliments. When they receive a compliment, what do they do? At a minimum, they likely try to brush it off or dismiss it as a "one-off" moment. At their worst, they may analyze the compliment, picking it apart until they find something that fits better with their current worldview. Again, this largely happens subconsciously. Without noticing what's happening in the moment, the person is missing an opportunity to make meaning of the compliment.

Why

While developing a sense of meaning might sound daunting or unrealistic at times, the benefits of putting in the work to find meaning are exceptional. A 2009 study found that mortality rates for people who felt they had a purpose in life were lower than those who did not feel they had a strong purpose in life.[75] Other studies have shown that meaning and purpose bolster positive emotions and encourage more supportive relationships.[76] A sense of purpose has also been

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[74] Roepke, A. (2013). Gains without pains? Growth after positive events. The Journal of Positive Psychology. DOI:10.1080/17439760.2013.791715

[75] Boyle, Patricia A. PhD; Barnes, Lisa L. PhD; Buchman, Aron S. MD; Bennett, David A. MD (2009). Purpose in Life Is Associated With Mortality Among Community-Dwelling Older Persons. *Psychosomatic Medicine, 71*(5), 574-579. doi: 10.1097/PSY.0b013e3181a5a7c0

[76] Steger, M. F. (2012). Experiencing meaning in life: Optimal functioning at the nexus of spirituality, psychopathology, and wellbeing. In P. T. P. Wong (Ed.), *The human quest for meaning* (2nd ed., pp. 165–184). New York, NY: Routledge.

shown to help us overcome moments of greater suffering, since our purpose helps anchor us to the greater meaning we attribute to our lives.

The research on post-traumatic and post-ecstatic growth alludes to he fact that meaning awareness and attribution could result in greater personal growth, even at a smaller level. What would happen if you stopped to think about how something as small as a positive review on a business page adds meaning to your life? How does this review impact your mood for the day? What are the ripple effects? How would this add meaning to your relationships with others? You can see how these small everyday positive events can lead to small nudges in growth, especially when they are compounded with one another.

These findings have a massive effect on the lives of coaching clients. Meaning isn't just important for well-being; it's also important for the longevity and enjoyment of each moment in our lives.

The Irony of Happiness

The people who actively pursue happiness for the sake of happiness don't usually find it. Yet, people continue to seek out the next happiness thrill with little to no interest in discovering what's really getting in the way of their happiness.

You may have noticed that Seligman doesn't directly address happiness in the PERMA model. Instead, his focus is on building a sense of well-being to move toward flourishing. Of course, happiness is often a side effect of flourishing, but why is it not the main focus? As it turns out, we aren't very good at predicting what will make us happy. According to psychologist Daniel Gilbert, we are often faced with two types of bias when it comes to future forecasting.

1. **Impact bias** occurs when we overestimate the intensity of our emotional response to a particular event or stimuli.

2. **Focalism** occurs when we underestimate how something external, like an event, will affect our emotions and thinking.

Both of these biases play a key role in what Gilbert calls *affective forecasting*, or attempting to predict what will make us happy in the future.[77]

This works in reverse, as well. When asked how problematic or troubling events will make us feel in the future, we often overestimate how upsetting they will be. While this emphasizes how resilient we've become as humans, the negative aspect is that unpleasant events can make us feel frustrated and sad. And both biases are important for coaches to understand while working with a client.

You might find yourself working with a client who is anticipating their emotional response to an upcoming event. While we don't recommend downplaying their fears and apprehension, coaches can leverage their knowledge of impact bias to guide their clients toward more realistic emotions surrounding their expectations.

On the other side, you might find yourself working with a client who has achieved or is close to achieving their goals, and they are struggling with their lack of euphoria. They might be grappling with a sense of inadequacy or fear that they've pursued the wrong goal. These emotions are worth exploring, especially as they pertain to what might be missing that prevents these emotions from coming to fruition.

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[77] Wilson, T. D., & Gilbert, D. T. (2005). Affective Forecasting: Knowing What to Want. Current Directions in Psychological Science, 14(3), 131–134. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.0963-7214.2005.00355.x

Seligman's PERMA model attempts to answer the question: What really makes someone happy? Often, what's missing from a client's life or goal is a sense of meaning or purpose. But goals can sometimes feel daunting or even scary, and in an attempt to hold onto temporary happiness, we abandon our goals too soon. People who are willing to accept temporary unhappiness in the pursuit of something meaningful are more likely to find longer-lasting happiness.

Happiness is a fleeting emotion—and just one of many positive emotions humans are capable of experiencing. The key to understanding happiness is that it doesn't come from something we obtain; instead, it comes from something we create. Things and achievements might yield momentary pride, but happiness comes from within, from pursuing that which is most meaningful.

How

The findings on meaning development for personal growth are exciting. As coaches, our job is to help our clients slow down and truly analyze their worldview. How do the small events in life change how our clients see the world? Our goal is self-awareness, and adding an awareness about how clients attribute and apply the idea of meaning is a key step toward personal growth.

Here are four exercises that might help your client develop more meaning in their lives:

Exercise 1: The PERMA Wheel

This exercise works similarly to the Wheel of Life. The main difference is that clients or students assess their level of satisfaction with each aspect of the PERMA model.

1. **Start by introducing the concept of PERMA.**

   Provide a brief explanation for each aspect of the wheel.

   - **Positive emotions:** This goes beyond happiness to emotions such as pride, joy, gratitude, amusement, hope, inspiration, peace, awe, love, etc. If a client chooses, they can rate their satisfaction with each positive emotion individually on another chart; however, the PERMA Wheel aims to get a baseline of their overall satisfaction with positive emotions.

- **Engagement:** This speaks to how the client engages with the world and the tasks around them. How often are they experiencing flow? How often do they immerse themselves into their work, a task, or an event?
- **Relationships:** As with the Wheel of Life, the client might feel more comfortable separating this wedge into distinct relationship categories. The most important thing for your client to assess is their level of satisfaction with the support, love, and value they feel from their relationships.
- **Meaning:** How satisfied is the client with their sense of purpose? To what degree do they feel connected to something larger than themselves? This can show up in just about any aspect of their lives.
- **Accomplishment:** This goes beyond everyday achievements and speaks to a client's satisfaction with their goal pursuit and completion. To what degree does the client feel they've mastered something? How satisfied is the client with their level of motivation for finishing something, even when it's not pleasant?

2. Next, introduce the PERMA Wheel and its usefulness for assessing their satisfaction with each aspect of the PERMA model.

Explain that this wheel will allow them to analyze how each area of the wheel is connected, and address anything that might stand out after the assessment.

3. Have them draw a circle split into five even slices.

Have them label each section of the wheel to coincide with the PERMA model (with one aspect of well-being for each wedge).

4. Ask your client to rate their level of satisfaction with each wedge on a scale of one to ten, with ten being the most satisfied.

5. Once they've completed their assessment, follow up with powerful questions.

Sample Questions:

- What jumps out at you?
- Looking at this wheel from a Bird's-Eye-View, what do you notice?
- What learning is happening as you fill in this wheel?

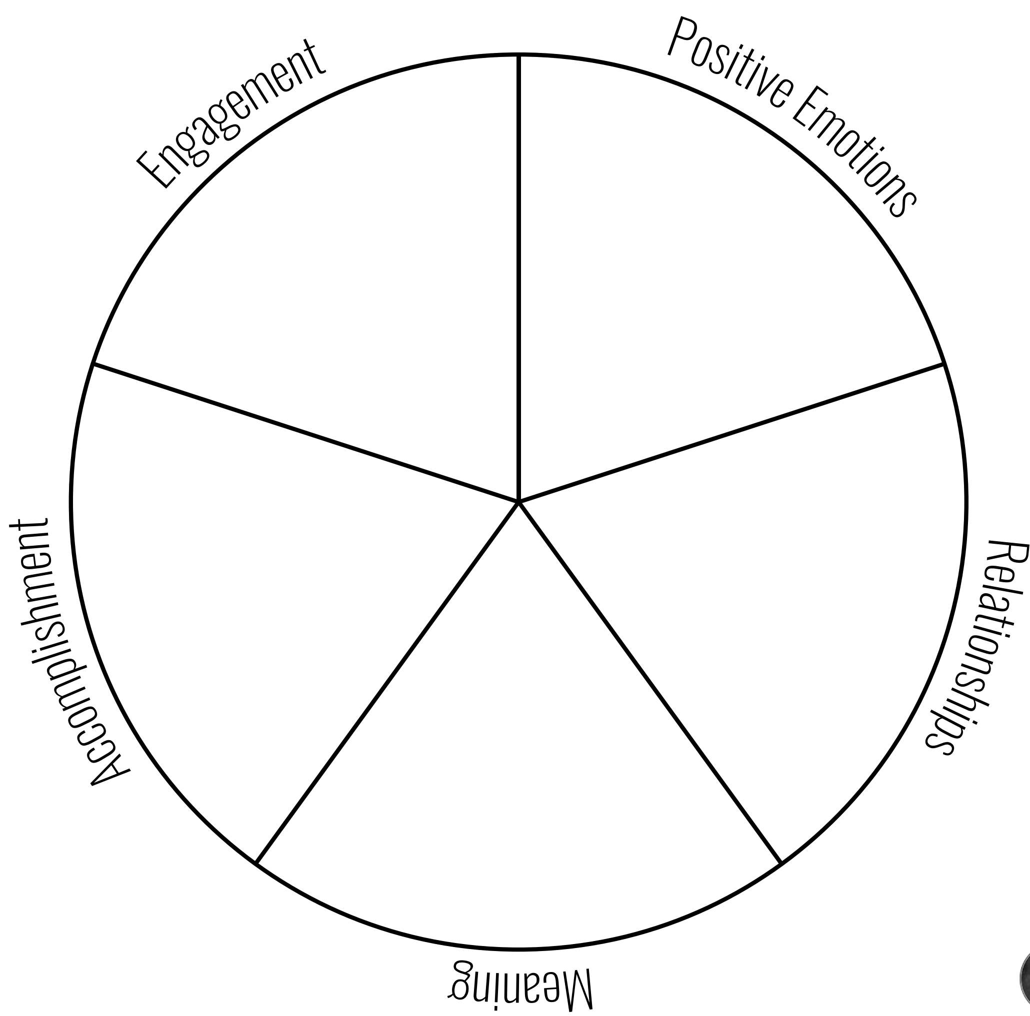
NOTE: As with the Wheel of Life, it's important not to automatically jump to the lowest number on their wheel. Let them decide what's most important for them to focus on.

6. **Continue to coach using powerful questions. Encourage the client to think of ways to increase their level of satisfaction in a given wedge by only one or two notches.**

   Coaching wheels are useful since they help clients think of improvements in increments rather than as large, overwhelming changes.

7. **Create one or two well-designed actions.**

8. **Encourage the client to save and date their wheel to refer back to it at later sessions.**



Exercise 2: PERMA Profiler

The PERMA profiler[78] is a brief, free online assessment tool created by Dr. Martin Seligman that measures the five pillars of the PERMA model. Anyone can take this assessment at www.authentichappiness.org after registering for the site. (Don't worry, there is no financial risk, and there are tons of personality assessments offered for free at this site.)

If you notice your client is struggling with one or more PERMA pillars, or if you feel that they could benefit from a Bird's-Eye-View of their overall well-being, consider using this tool.

1. **Introduce the concept of PERMA.**

   Provide a brief description of each pillar (see the previous exercise).

2. **Ask your client if they think they would benefit from a PERMA assessment.**

3. **Have them take the PERMA™ assessment on the Authentic Happiness website before the next coaching session.**

   Let them know that the assessment should take them less than ten minutes. Instruct them to bring their results to their next session.

4. **Begin the next session by asking them what jumped out about their assessment.**

   NOTE: This tool can be used more generally by sticking with their line of thinking, or it can be used more specifically by asking them to focus on a specific aspect of their assessment. Trust your client's intuition, and follow their lead.

5. **Continue asking powerful questions around the client's Learning and Being.**

   Sample Questions:

   - How does positive emotion show up in your life?

[78] Butler, J., & Kern, M. L. (2016). The PERMA-Profiler: A brief multidimensional measure of flourishing. International Journal of Wellbeing, 6(3), 1-48. doi:10.5502/ijw.v6i3.1

- What resources do you need to feel more engaged in your work?
- What's holding you back from feeling more accomplished?

6. **The first goal is to help your client become more self-aware about how these pillars show up in their lives.**

   The second goal is to encourage them to think of ways to increase (or decrease, in the case of negative affect) their scores incrementally to feel a more fulfilled and flourishing life.

Exercise 3: Continuity with Future Self

Our Future Selves are an excellent resource to turn to when we need to cultivate more meaning in our lives. They already know what we can become, what we need to get there, and what those accomplishments will mean for our lives. If your client is struggling with making meaning out of a situation, or is looking for meaning to help them work toward a goal, Continuity with Future Self is a great tool to use.

1. **Start by asking your client to recall their Future Selves.**

   If you haven't created a Future Self with them yet, please refer to your CTEDU 1.0 *Coach Training Guide* for a reminder regarding how to help a client meet their Future Self.

2. **As a warm-up, ask powerful questions about their Future Self's values and accomplishments.**

   Sample Questions:

   - What did it take for them to get where they are?
   - What resources did they need?
   - What character strengths did they develop to achieve their goals?

3. **Ease into how these changes have impacted various aspects of your client's life.**

   Sample Questions:

- How did it feel to overcome so many obstacles?
- How have others in your life benefited from achieving your goals?
- What other areas of your life have benefited from your achievements?
- What have your achievements meant to you? What have they meant for your family?

4. **After your client has thought through the meaning that their Future Self created by accomplishing their goals, move toward powerful questions that address their current meaning in life.**

   Sample Questions:

   - What do you need to cultivate now to build meaning for your Future Self?
   - What do you still have to learn?
   - How will your Future Self benefit from your current actions?

5. **Co-design one or two clear action steps toward finding ways to build more meaning into their lives.**

6. **Follow up with questions about accountability.**

Exercise 4: The Meaning Wheel

Post-ecstatic growth refers to growth that happens after deeply meaningful positive events. However, meaning shows up even in the smallest of events, as long as we take the time to seek it out. If you notice a client is glossing over the positive events in their life, especially the small ones, consider using the Meaning Wheel.

1. **Start by having your client identify a positive event that's happened in their life over the past week.**

   It doesn't have to be large; something small will work.

2. **Next, introduce the Meaning Wheel and its usefulness for assessing meaning in small positive events.**

3. **Have them draw a circle split into eight even slices.**

   Have them label each section of the wheel with the following labels:

   - Career
   - Finances
   - Family
   - Significant other
   - Friends
   - Community
   - Health
   - Fun
   - Growth

4. **Ask your client to assess the wheel before you begin.**

   - Are there any categories they would like to add or change?

5. **Ask your client to write one or two sentences about how the positive event impacted each area of their wheel.**

6. **Once they've completed their assessment, follow up with powerful questions.**

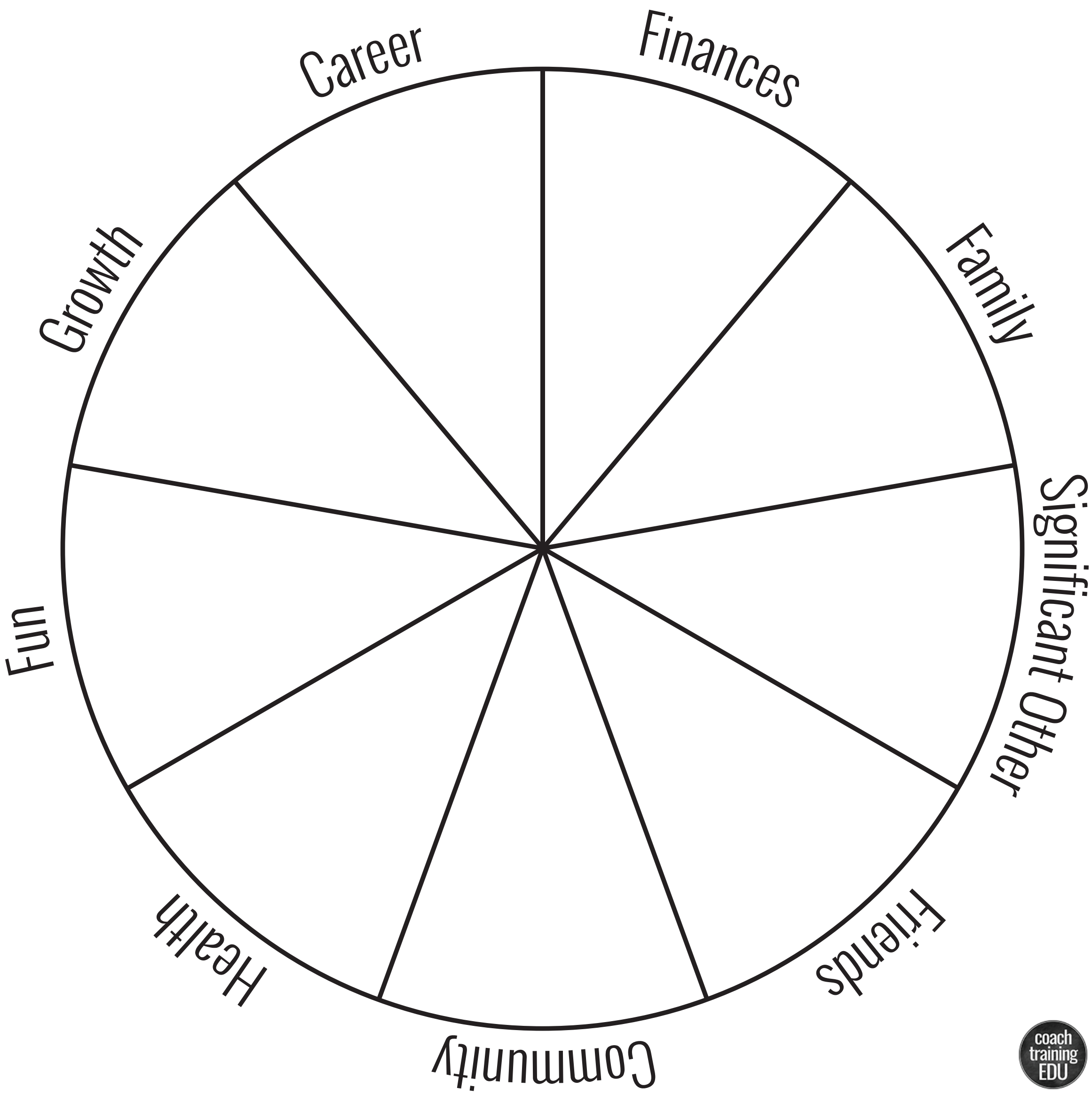
   Sample Questions:

   - What jumps out at you?
   - Looking at this wheel, what meaning do you now make of this positive event?

7. **Continue to coach using powerful questions, and encourage the client to think of ways that small positive events can have positive ripple effects across all areas of their lives.**

8. **Create one or two well-designed actions.**

9. **Encourage your client to save and date their wheel so they can refer back to it at later sessions.**



CHAPTER 14: Flow & Engagement

Consciousness as Foundation

Coaching is about helping people maximize experience. That optimal experience could be defined as being in a state of flow. In 1990, Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi (pronounced cheek-cent-mi-ha-ye) published a book titled *Flow,* which summarized much of the current research on peak performance and a state of consciousness termed *Flow*[79]. The term *flow* describes a highly ordered state of consciousness. It's a zone where awareness is fully engaged and action is fluid. Students enter this state when studying becomes joyful and focus is natural. Athletes strive to enter this state when performing at the highest levels. Business executives experience flow when they're at the precipice of an innovative idea. In flow, the action is the reward. This sparks both proactive and intrinsic motivation at the same time. It's the state of optimal performance and optimal experience. The prime accomplishment of consciousness is to create order from chaos and to be aware that we are doing it.

[79] Csikszentmihalyi, M. (1990). *Flow: The Psychology of Optimal Experience.* New York: Harper & Row.

Mindset of Flow

On a basic level, the experience of flow requires three key ingredients:

1. Full presence
2. Full immersion
3. Full enjoyment

To experience flow, you need to be fully present, fully immersed in the moment, and fully engaged in an activity you find enjoyable. This combination is similar to experiencing the Learn-Be-Do model at the same time. This kind of immersion requires constant learning and feedback on the effectiveness of one's actions. The first step to experiencing flow is to adopt a mindset that is conducive to the state. At its core, a flow mindset requires:

1. The release of future rewards. Allow the activity itself to be the reward.
2. A growth mindset that doesn't compute failure. The goal is to embrace the struggle and to seek out new challenges.

Let's examine the more recently studied concept of an autotelic personality to take this one step further. Csikszentmihalyi describes flow as autotelic, which comes from an ancient Greek word meaning "self-goal." In an autotelic activity, the action is the reward. An autotelic activity is intrinsically motivating, and this motivation is derived from the joy of the action itself.

In a recent study, researchers identified seven key markers of an autotelic personality[80]:

1. **Curiosity and interest in life.** An interest in asking questions and learning more about the world.
2. **Persistence:** Ability to stay focused on the present task.
3. **Low self-centeredness:** Not preoccupied with thoughts surrounding one's image.
4. **Intrinsic motivation:** Motivation for personal enjoyment, not for an external reward.
5. **Enjoyment and transformation of boredom:** An ability to identify and leverage opportunities to take on a new challenge.

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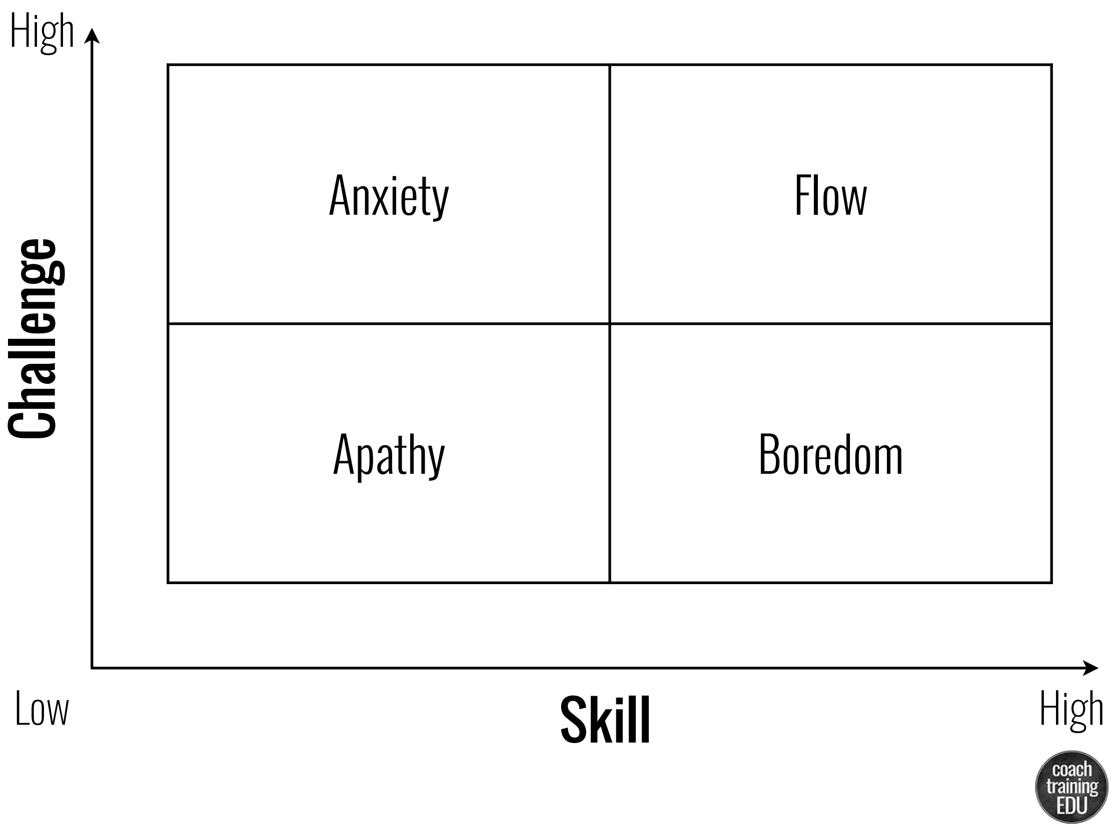
[80] Tse, D. C. K. & Wing-yan Lau, V. (2018). The development and validation of the autotelic personality questionnaire. *Journal of Personality Assessment*.

6. **Enjoyment and transformation of challenges:** An ability to develop new skills.
7. **Attentional control:** A practiced ability to sharply focus on an immediate task while also scanning one's surroundings for new challenges.

Think of flow in terms of four quadrants:



Having a balance of both challenge and skill or ability to meet the challenge is the typical formula to create flow. However, people who adopt an autotelic personality develop strategies to seek enjoyment in both challenging and boring situations. Essentially, they've developed ways to transform these situations into something that allows them to experience flow.[81] The research has already shown that higher levels of flow lead to higher levels of well-being, which means that adopting the characteristics of an autotelic personality may also lead to higher levels of well-being.[82]

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[81] Tse, D. C. K. & Wing-yan Lau, V. (2018). The development and validation of the autotelic personality questionnaire. *Journal of Personality Assessment*.

[82] Tse, D.C.K., Nakamura, J., & Csikszentmihalyi, M. (2021). Living well by "flowing" well: the indirect effect of autotelic personality on well-being through flow experience. The Journal of Positive Psychology, 16(3). 310-321. DOI:10.1080/17439760.2020.1716

Exercise: Adopting an Autotelic Mindset

1. **Start by having your client identify an area of their life in which they would like to experience more flow.**

   This could be in their career, a hobby, or something as simple as spending time with family. Have them write this area at the top of their Flow Chart (see next page).

   Sample Questions:

   - Where does your life need more flow?
   - What area of your life would most benefit from more frequent flow states?

2. **Have your client identify the quadrant where they spend the most time for that particular area.**

   For example, if they want to feel more flow at work, but their boss hasn't been giving them challenging tasks, they might feel bored or apathetic.

   Sample Questions:

   - What is getting in the way of your ability to access flow?
   - What quadrant do you feel best represents your current relationship with this area?

3. **On the lines in the quadrant associated with their current relationship to the given area, brainstorm ways to seek enjoyment or transformation that will move them toward a state of flow.**

   For example, if they feel bored at work, help them brainstorm ways to seek out new challenges. If they feel anxious, help them brainstorm ways to develop new skills.

   Sample Questions:

   - What resources do you need to transform your current state to a flow state?
   - Who can you ask for help?
   - If you zoom out of the problem, what challenges await that you may not have noticed before?

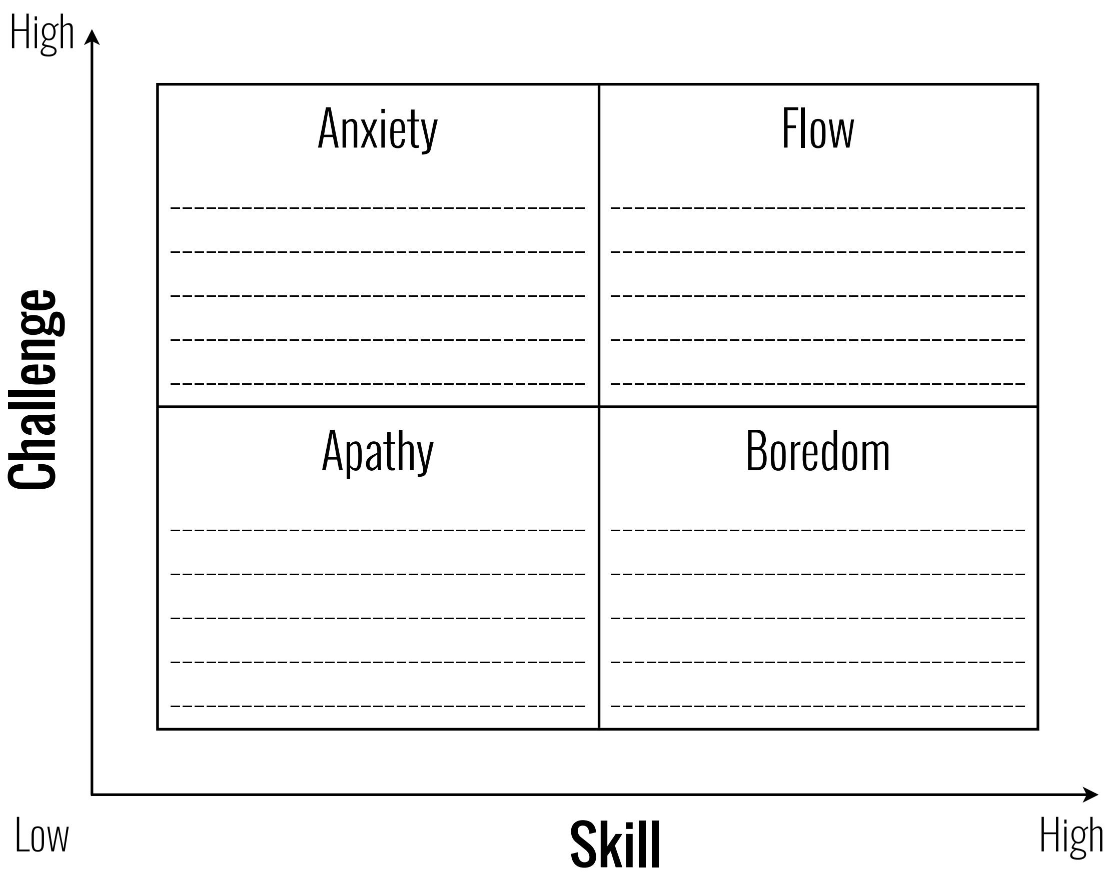
4. **Continue with the coaching session.**

    This is an excellent opportunity to coach around your client's relationship with curiosity, persistence, intrinsic motivation, and attentional control.

5. **At the end of the session, use the new chart to help your client develop well-designed actions for the coming week.**

6. **In the next session, follow up on your client's action, and make necessary adjustments.**

Area you'd like to experience more flow:



Elements of Flow

Creating an awareness of the qualities[83] of a flow experience will help your clients to experience flow more frequently in two key ways:

1. Recognizing these qualities in flow activities that they already engage in will help clients to identify those activities that they want to engage in more frequently.

2. Helping clients to incorporate these qualities into activities that haven't quite reached "flow" status yet will help them to create new flow activities.

Nine Qualities of Flow

1. Increasing Challenge Meets Increasing Skill

Flow is experienced in the sweet intersection where the skill set matches the challenge.Too little challenge or too much skill can lead to boredom. Too little skill leads to frustration or anxiety, while too much challenge leads to overwhelm.

2. Merging of Action and Awareness

Flow requires action. Even meditation asks people to focus their attention in a specific direction. The experience of flow accompanies a loss of self-consciousness, while at the same time the sense of self expands to include the activity. This often results in certain aspects of the task feeling like they are on auto-pilot. The writer and the pen (or keyboard) seem like they are working together. The mountain biker seems like they are working in concert with the mountain.

3. Clear Intentions

Flow requires a clear outcome in the immediate, present moment. The intention or goal isn't a far-off finish line but rather a small, attainable goal that keeps the flow going. It means staying in the zone, pushing the boundaries, and feeling yourself stretch to keep the flow going. A musician might set a goal to practice for twenty minutes. A manager might set a goal to organize a

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[83] Van der Linden, D., Tops, M., & Bakker, A.B. (2021). Go with the flow: a neuroscientific view on being fully engaged. *European Journal of Neuroscience,* 53. 947-963. DOI: 10.1111/ejn.15014

company spreadsheet. An immediate goal provides rules, which help order consciousness. This is one of the foundations of flow.

4. Useful Feedback

Flow requires immediate feedback, but not necessarily the formal kind. Instead, this is the kind of feedback that happens in the moment when we monitor our performance, sometimes without realizing that we are doing so. Feedback can be registered in the way that a ball leaves our hand, the way words sound on a page, or the feeling we get during an exciting coaching conversation. Sometimes, this feedback is provided after a practice session. Having a general plan for collecting feedback is crucial to maintaining a steady flow state.

5. Concentration

Flow requires nearly total immersion in the task at hand. This kind of concentration can lead to exhilaration, as if the world just fell away to leave only you and your task. This total immersion is similar to what professional athletes experience when performing in front of a roaring crowd. While it might be loud and chaotic around them, they remain focused on the sounds that matter for the game. Movie directors mimic this effect in those feel-good sports movies when the sound gets quiet except for the breath of the athlete.

Surprisingly, our brains also use less energy while in flow than when we are not in flow. In a recent study, participants were split into two groups. One group had rated themselves as frequent experiencers of flow. The second group said that they rarely experienced flow states. Those two groups were then given the same awareness test, which included flashing lights and images. During the activity, their brain activity was measured. Both groups performed about the same in accuracy and speed. However, those in the non-flow group used more of their brains to complete the task than did those the high-flow group. This led researchers to hypothesize that people who are used to experiencing flow states are more adept at blocking out unnecessary distractions. Without these distractions, the mind can do more with less energy.

6. Exercise Control

This simply means that adequate performance can be maintained throughout the flow state. For example, a writer can maintain a certain level of writing competencies (i.e., plotting or character development) when they are in a state of flow. This also shows up in the arts, with artists exhibiting high levels of achievement by demonstrating beautiful control over their brush, or vocalists who can sing their heart out while maintaining perfect control over their voice.

7. Transformation of Time

While in flow, any semblance of time typically falls away. People in flow states often note surprise at the amount of time that's passed between the beginning and end of their flow session. Other people sometimes note time expansion, where what usually takes a few seconds takes a few minutes as someone in a flow state savors the experience.

8. Absence of Worry

Being in a flow state means that you are hyper-focused on a particular task. Often, people experiencing flow are so absorbed in what they are working on that anything unrelated to the task falls away. People in a flow state think less about themselves, less about the problem they were worried about this morning, and even less about their environment. Everything outside of the task is ignored for the sake of remaining in flow.

9. Autotelic Property

Flow is a rewarding state of mind, and its addictive features encourage people to continue seeking out flow states.

Exercise: Assessing the Elements of Flow

Ask your client to choose a topic conducive to creating more flow in their life.

1. **Start by using the T.I.M.E. model.**

2. **When you get to an area of your client's life or a project they are working on where they want more flow, create a name for it.**

   For example, let's say the client is putting together a workbook. They know that they need to spend about 2 hours per week on writing for the rest of the month, and they would like to get into a flow state while writing. You could name the project: "Writing Flow" or "Flow Workbook." This way, it's easier to refer back to the project, and the client has an easy way to keep the project in mind. These mental hooks matter in the hours and days after coaching sessions to help clients organize their ideas.

3. **Ask your client to keep their project in mind as they rate themselves on a scale of 1-10 for each of the nine elements of flow.**

   1 should be "not experiencing flow," and 10 should be "fully immersed in flow."

4. **Continue coaching the exercise similar to a Wheel of Life or other assessment tool.**

   Suggested Questions:

   - When do you naturally find yourself in a state of flow?
   - What conditions are present?
   - What happens to your mindset when you pick a goal that requires learning or developing a greater skill set?
   - What are ways to eliminate distractions when you have to focus on work?
   - What is your perspective on increasing challenges that increase with your skill level?
   - What's the best balance between difficulty and skill level for you in this project?

Cycle of Engagement

The Cycle of Engagement describes the process people go through when faced with challenges. Each stage of the process has its own set of characteristics, and learning how to navigate each stage yourself will help you to guide others through the cycle in the future. This is a great place to leverage your core motivation to identify strategies for each stage of the cycle. The four points of the cycle are as follows:

1. **Engaged:** This is the part of the cycle that feels like flow. Here, you are at your most effective, and are actively engaged in being at your best.

2. **Resistance:** This is the thing that pulls you out of your state of flow. This could show up in the form of a limiting belief, an unwelcome interruption, stress, anxiety, etc.

3. **Disconnection:** This often follows submission to the resistance. We feel disconnected from the challenge, and we feel bad about ourselves, our situation, or others.

4. **Recovery:** This includes your initial realization that you've become disconnected, and your current decision to re-engage and get back to the challenge at hand.

In the 2.0 Coach Training Resources, you will find a pdf of the Core Motivation book. This book includes a description of how each of the Core Motivation types typically moves through the Cycle of Engagement.

Engagement & Flow

Another key element in Seligman's PERMA model is Engagement (E). Engagement in this sense means that you are fully immersed in a challenging task that demands the use of your skills and strengths.[84] It goes beyond simply being present in the moment to fully devoting all of your attention to the task. Engagement leads to a state of flow, allowing your skills to match your challenges.

People who experience higher levels of engagement are more likely to overcome their challenges, since they have an enhanced ability to cultivate creativity and broaden their skills to face new challenges. People who are more engaged seek out challenges and problems to help

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[84] *Perma™ theory of well-being and perma™ workshops.* PERMA™ Theory of Well-Being and PERMA™ Workshops | Positive Psychology Center. (n.d.). Retrieved September 28, 2021, from https://ppc.sas.upenn.edu/learn-more/perma-theory-well-being-and-perma-workshops

them grow. They understand that growth requires problems to help guide learning and development.

Greet Resistance as an Ally

Resistance, anything that trips us up and forces us off our game, is bound to happen. This inevitable part of life can feel insidious and treacherous, making life difficult to navigate. Still, obstacles are a built-in part of the human experience that we have an opportunity to master. Human beings need to put themselves in tough, tricky situations because those situations help us grow the most. However, even with this knowledge, we fear failure and ultimately push these experiences away to avoid loss.

Doing something hard is one of the only ways to experience intense flow. While you can get milder experiences of flow while reading a book or engaging in a conversation, the most meaningful and rewarding state of flow demands a show of mastery. If you begin to feel a state of resistance, lean in. It means you're on the cusp of something great.

Recognize Disconnection

Sometimes, the resistance can arrive so strong and fast that we barely have time to register resistance at all. Other times, we feel it come on slowly. If we can catch it before it derails our state of flow, that's great. If we don't catch it that quickly, our emotions are the next best place to seek out clues regarding what pulled us out of our flow.

We might feel a sense of shame or guilt for being pulled out of flow. Confidence also takes a hit in these instances, making us question our self-worth or abilities. No matter the cause, our emotions will tell us what needs to be addressed so we can slide back into our state of flow.

Recover

Recovery might sound simple in theory, but it is much more difficult to achieve in practice. Once we are there, being in a state of flow is effortless. However, getting ourselves back into flow after we've experienced a disconnect is much more difficult.

Recovery requires three mini-steps.

1. The first is to recognize that a disconnect exists.
2. The second is to address the disconnect. You can do this by using the exercise below, or by setting reminders that put you back into a perspective that allows your state of flow.
3. The final step is to re-engage: to allow yourself to be fully immersed back into the challenge.

The 3 Places to Find Flow

When You are Engaged

When your skillset matches the challenge, flow follows. But when the unexpected happens or the challenge level spikes, you have a choice. You can remain engaged, staying present with the challenge and the moment. You can keep your focus on what's right in front of you, being mindful of your emotions and thoughts.

Or, you can disengage. This usually involves conjuring up a future worry or a past regret, allowing your attention to stray to something else. Sometimes, disengaging is the right choice to make, allowing us to take a much-needed break that perhaps we didn't realize we needed. In this case, it allows us to give our brains and hearts a break until we are ready to jump back in and get back to business. Other times, disengagement is a distraction from the goal. When this happens, it's important to find a way to recover.

Recovering from Flow to Flow

Let's say you are currently in a state of flow. Things are going smoothly, when resistance rears its ugly head. But, instead of disconnecting and allowing your brain to wander off, you stay mindful and engaged. You use the experience of resistance to increase the intensity of the flow.

There is beauty in facing an uncertain problem but sticking with it regardless. This kind of perseverance typically leads to a breakthrough, allowing the problem to dissolve and keeping you in that exhilarating state of flow.

The Journey from Disconnect Back to Flow

The journey back to flow can take minutes or days. The trick to returning to flow after you've been disconnected from it is to put yourself in the best position to recover quickly.

We do this work on a regular basis. A good night's sleep, a good meal, or even a good workout are all things that allow us to recover from disconnect back to flow. Other times, you have to work harder for it. This is what Grit is made of. Grit is where you find the courage, motivation, or inspiration you need to return to a state of flow, regardless of the disconnect. The key to returning to flow is finding something that makes you feel good enough to get back in the game.

Exercise: Cycle of Engagement

The purpose of this exercise is not to stay engaged every minute of the day. Life happens. The mind wanders. The key to this exercise is to help clients understand how to quickly move through the Cycle of Engagement to get back into a state of flow or engagement.

While returning quickly to a state of flow takes an immense amount of mental and emotional discipline, the more disciplined you are, the easier it will become. Think of this cycle like an physical exercise: the more you work through the cycle, the stronger your ability to return to engagement becomes.

On the other side of engagement is judgment. Clients often judge themselves for not being able to remain in a state of flow. This exercise will allow them to spend more mental and emotional resources getting back on track instead of feeling bad about themselves.

1. Explore your core motivation type.

Read the paragraphs and descriptions of each type to determine which one fits you best. You can be multiple types; however, usually one or two types will jump out.

2. Explore your state of being engaged.

Think back to a time when you were in flow.

Sample Questions:

- What challenges did you overcome?
- What was your self-talk?
- What characteristics did you notice in yourself?
- What was that experience like?
- Where does your confidence in yourself come from?

3. Explore triggers and resistance.

Understanding what knocks you out of flow is just as important as understanding what helps you to enter a state of flow.

Sample Questions:

- What usually knocks you out of flow?
- How much stamina do you have to stay in flow?
- Why did that prompt you to stop being engaged?
- What was it about the resistance that made it difficult to move forward?

Note: Notice the use of past tense. Avoid putting limiting beliefs in questions with a present or future orientation. Instead, use past tense to reference limiting beliefs, and focus your question on helping your client move forward.

4. Explore the disconnect.

Sample Questions:

- Where does your mind go in the face of resistance?
- What message do you tell yourself when you're procrastinating?
- What habits keep you from doing the important work?

5. Explore the process of recovery.

Sample Questions:

- What prompts you to get out of being disconnected?
- How are you using Motivation Away? (From Chapter 4 of the *1.0 Coach Training Guide*)
- How are you using Motivation Toward? (From Chapter 4 of the *1.0 Coach Training Guide*)
- What is your resilience plan?
- How do you know that you're recovering?
- Why does this plan work so well?
- What are the key ingredients to a quick recovery?

CHAPTER 15: Resilience

Resilience Intelligence

Resilience is derived from the Latin word *re-*, which means "back-and-forth," and *salire,* which means to *jump* or *leap*. A frequentative of *salire, saltare* means "to dance." Resilience literally means "to jump or leap back" or "to dance back." We each need the challenges in our lives to bring out the best in us. As the metaphor suggests, being resilient is not about being so tough that we don't bend. Instead, resilience is a flexible and agile experience of finding a way to bounce back from a setback, hopefully with a little style.

Resilience can be learned. People who score higher on resilience scales seem to have a certain instinct that helps them thrive under stress or at the very least protects them from stress.[85] These people even welcome hard work and preparation and tend to have better outcomes in challenging work environments.

According to research by Dr. Karen Reivich and Dr. Andrew Shatte, seven different factors can help people further develop their ability to be resilient.[86] Though this research has since evolved to include new factors for determining resilience (Reivich's resilience training program includes over 20 empirically validated skills and strategies for bolstering one's resilience), many of Reivich and Shatte's original strategies remain strong indicators of resilience development. The more often people tap into these factors, the higher their resilience intelligence. This chapter offers a

[85] Shatté, A., Perlman, A., Smith, B., & Lynch, W. D. (2017). The Positive Effect of Resilience on Stress and Business Outcomes in Difficult Work Environments. *Journal of occupational and environmental medicine, 59*(2), 135–140. https://doi.org/10.1097/JOM.0000000000000914

[86] Ibid. 87.

tour through some of the factors that contribute to resilience, including internal mindsets, habits, and relationships.

What

Resilience consists of a variety of individual traits that can be cultivated and developed, including things like character strengths and positive relationships. In fact, resilience intelligence is a culmination of many of the previous skills mentioned in this book. By implementing these resources, people find themselves operating at a higher level of resilience, allowing them to emerge stronger, more fulfilled, and more grateful after a challenge has been successfully addressed. In turn, these challenges serve as a Pathway toward realizing our potential and push us to places we never thought possible. Human beings were designed to be resilient, and the following factors and choices can help bolster our resilience.

Foundations of Resilience

Dr. Reivich's resilience training program shows that there are many tools and strategies that allow someone to act in resilient ways. However, for the sake of coaching our clients, two main elements must be in place before a big challenge arrives.

- **Agency.**

  As we already know, Agency is our belief in our abilities to create and complete our Pathways. While Agency is typically referenced in relation to goal achievement, Agency is just as important to overcoming a challenge or setback. The higher the degree of belief in one's ability to meet the challenge or learn the skills required to meet the challenge, the higher the degree of resilience intelligence. Within Agency, there are four key ingredients:

  - **Self-awareness.** Agency requires us to understand our strengths, to know which areas of our life require improvement, and to have an idea of how to bridge the gap between the two. This level of self-awareness allows us to feel more confident in our abilities[87], which leads to better decision-making skills[88] and a stronger work ethic.[89]

- **Optimism.** Optimism requires us to see challenges as temporary and as something we can overcome. This is not an idealized view of optimism, but one grounded in reality, where we seek out the aspects of the challenge that will help us grow. Optimism allows us to see through painful aspects of the challenge and helps us to identify the things we can control, tap into our resources, and work toward meaningful solutions.
- **Growth Mindset.** When it comes to our Agency, it's important to believe that we can continue to grow. If we choose to align with a fixed mindset, we are conceding to the idea that our potential is fixed, leading us to approach each challenge as a test of talent rather than as a way to learn and grow.[90]
- **Self-Control.** A 2012 study that examined some of the most resilient people in the world (e.g., Navy SEALs, people from the "greatest generation," etc.) found that self-control was one of the most highly-rated resilience characteristics.[91] Impulsive decisions are rarely the right ones, but having control means exercising self-regulation, something many people find difficult. Still, a clear mind that can regulate one's thoughts, emotions, and behaviors is an essential quality of resilience.

It's important to note that while these characteristics appear individual in nature on the surface, they are hard to generate without a supportive environment. Truly, a supportive environment, access to resources, and your personality work together to enable the experience of resilience.

- **Positive Relationships.**

Relationships are a resource, so cultivating positive relationships—relationships that empower and encourage you--is crucial to your resilience. One of the major factors of

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[87] Silvia, P. J., & O'Brien, M. E. (2004). Self-awareness and constructive functioning: Revisiting "The human dilemma." *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 23*(4), 475–489. https://doi.org/10.1521/jscp.23.4.475.40307

[88] Ridley, D. S., Schutz, P. A., Glanz, R. S., & Weinstein, C. E. (1992). Self-Regulated Learning: The Interactive Influence of Metacognitive Awareness and Goal-Setting. *The Journal of Experimental Education, 60*(4), 293–306. http://www.jstor.org/stable/20152338

[89] Church A. H. (1997). Managerial self-awareness in high-performing individuals in organizations. *The Journal of applied psychology, 82*(2), 281–292. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.82.2.281

[90] Ryff, et. al. (1998). Resilience in Adulthood and Later Life.

[91] Everly, G. S., Jr, McCormack, D. K., & Strouse, D. A. (2012). Seven characteristics of highly resilient people: insights from Navy SEALs to the "greatest generation". *International journal of emergency mental health, 14*(2), 87–93.

happiness and fulfillment in the workplace is the presence of meaningful relationships.[92] Parents, relatives, church community, coworkers, friends, counselors, and coaches can provide support and boost resilience when needed.

The key factors that make positive relationships so effective are the strength of the relationship and the quality of the support offered.[93] Social support has a protective factor against things like depression and anxiety, helping to spread out our burdens amongst those who care about us most.[94] Resilient people seek out and nurture positive and supportive relationships, and they know when to turn to their support system for help. Support is essential to success, and people who practice their resilience know to let go of cultural expectations around individualism to instead ask for the help they need.

Stages of Resilience

- **Acceptance: Willingness and ability to assess the full scope of the challenge.**

  In *How Resilience Works*, Coutu starts by looking at an individual's ability to accurately assess the difficulty of the situation.[95] It takes courage to look at the full scope of a challenging situation, especially when one must face potentially unpleasant realities to address the situation with resilience. Some might say that resilience picks up where the grief cycle ends. After someone has gone through denial, anger, bargaining, and depression, they finally reach acceptance, and their resilience can begin to pick up the pieces.

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[92] Cross, R. (2019, September 10). *To be happier at work, invest more in your relationships.* Harvard Business Review. Retrieved October 1, 2021, from https://hbr.org/2019/07/to-be-happier-at-work-invest-more-in-your-relationships

[93] *Resilience: Relationships.* Mental Help Resilience Relationships Comments. (n.d.). Retrieved October 1, 2021, from https://www.mentalhelp.net/relationships/resilience/

[94] Teo, A. R., Choi, H. J., & Valenstein, M. (2013). Social relationships and depression: Ten-year follow-up from a nationally representative study. *PLoS ONE, 8*(4). https://doi.org/10.1371/journal.pone.0062396

[95] Coutu, D. (2016, July 11). *How resilience works.* Harvard Business Review. Retrieved October 1, 2021, from https://hbr.org/2002/05/how-resilience-works

- **Responsibility: Ownership of the future outcome.**

  Dwelling in regret or stewing in revenge drains resources and creates obstacles to resilience. This step is not meant to discount the pain and anger a victim or survivor may feel but to highlight our very human ability to rise up despite painful and traumatic experiences. It encourages us to take responsibility for the actions we take next.

  Healing from the past and taking ownership for future outcomes empowers individuals to use more of their energy to solve the problems at hand. This leads to being more proactive and creative, which allows us to tap into resources we may not be considering.

- **Determination: Where there is a why, there is a way.**

  The hard truth is that not every task or goal is worth the effort to grit it out. Sometimes, the wiser choice is to find something different to pursue. However, if there is meaning attached to our goal, then taking the extra step of defining the goal's purpose can bolster our resilience.

  The quality of the motivation is usually determined by the meaning and purpose behind the goal. Intrinsic and empathetic motivations are usually more long-lasting than conditional motivation. Having an empowered perspective can spark positive action, even in the face of setbacks.

The Path to Recovery

- **Troubleshooting: Creativity matters, and feedback is gold.**

  People in this stage start gathering more information and resources, trying out ideas, and welcoming feedback. Creativity and persistence are hallmarks of this stage. The more an individual can be creative and develop shorter, more frequent feedback loops, the more likely they are to be resilient.

  For example, imagine someone who is trying to recover from an injury. The more feedback they gather, such as measuring daily results, the more likely they are to make better decisions in the future.

  Procrastination happens when we aren't feeling resilient in the face of negative feedback. The more resilient choice is to set up a series of mini-experiments where the expectation is to learn and grow from each trial run.

- **Gratitude: What doesn't kill you makes you stronger.**

  The final stage of resilience is growing and adapting your skill set to meet the challenge while embracing a sense of relief, happiness, and gratitude. Life's setbacks can help develop some of our best qualities and help push our potential further than previously thought possible. Developing stamina when meeting challenges translates to a deeper belief in one's abilities to meet future setbacks.

Why

A. Build resilience intelligence.

Human beings are naturally resilient. Knowing what factors help build resilience gives people a deeper sense of self-awareness, leading to more resilient behavior.

B. Ask focused questions.

The various aspects of resilience provide a guide for you to address the various stages of resilience with your client.

C. Ask for help.

Often, people do not reach out for help or use their available resources due to a mistaken belief in rugged individuality, embarrassment, or misplaced pride. Building relationships and tapping networks for resources are some of the most useful actions to take before and during a setback.

D. Frame setbacks as temporary.

By helping clients to recognize failure or procrastination as part of the process, they avoid the trap of believing that they are somehow flawed. Clients feel more prepared to move forward rather than dwell on past setbacks.

E. Build plans based on past success.

The magic of the session comes from helping your client develop a plan to address future challenges. Helping your client recover from procrastination or lack of action allows them to develop more resilience. The habit of embracing increasingly difficult challenges builds a greater capacity to bounce back from setbacks.

How

Exercise: The Resilience Pyramid

1. **Ask your client to assess a goal they want to work on (e.g., health, fitness, career, etc.).**

   Use the Resilience Chart to help your client visualize their resilience structure.

2. **Use the Resilience Chart as you would use an assessment wheel.**

   Summarize the following descriptions for your client (see below). Have your client rate themself on a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is very poor, and 10 is very high, in each area of the chart. Here is each area's description:

   - **Agency.** Whether or not you think you can be successful has a huge impact on motivation, stress levels, and your ability to get into flow. This area assesses what your client thinks about their ability to be successful.

     Sample Question:

     - *What do you believe about how you can work through and learn from a challenge?*

   - **Positive Relationships.** The strength of one's community is essential to resilience. It's your client's ability to build a strong support network and gather the resources necessary to withstand setbacks.

     Sample Question:

     - *To what degree have you built your support network?*

   - **Acceptance.** Optimism requires a push and pull between what you can control and what you need to accept. Accurately assessing the challenge allows you to collect the resources you need, both internal and external. Acceptance requires your client to assess their willingness to accept a challenging project into their life. From there, they can evaluate what aspects of that challenge are within their control to address.

Sample Question:

- *What is the full scope of the challenge?*

- **Responsibility.** Blaming external aspects short-circuits resilience, especially when you share in all or part of the responsibility. While external factors may contribute to a challenge or setback, taking responsibility for your role in the challenge (if any) will lead to a more resilient mindset. This mindset will allow you to accept that roadblocks are inevitable and prepare for them accordingly.

  Sample Question:

  - *How are you taking responsibility for the future outcome?*

- **Determination. This area addresses your client's clarity of purpose.** The quality of purpose impacts the quality of motivation.

  Sample Question:

  - *Why are you pursuing this goal? How compelling is that reason when things do not go your way?*

- **Troubleshooting.** This section looks at your client's habit of gathering feedback and looking at the available data to make better decisions. Gathering feedback helps your client to adjust and develop a stronger skill set.

  Sample Question:

  - *How will you gather feedback to try out new ideas?*

- **Gratitude.** This final section is about being grateful, even for the challenges and setbacks. When clients can get into a space of feeling grateful even when things go wrong, they demonstrate a high degree of resilience.

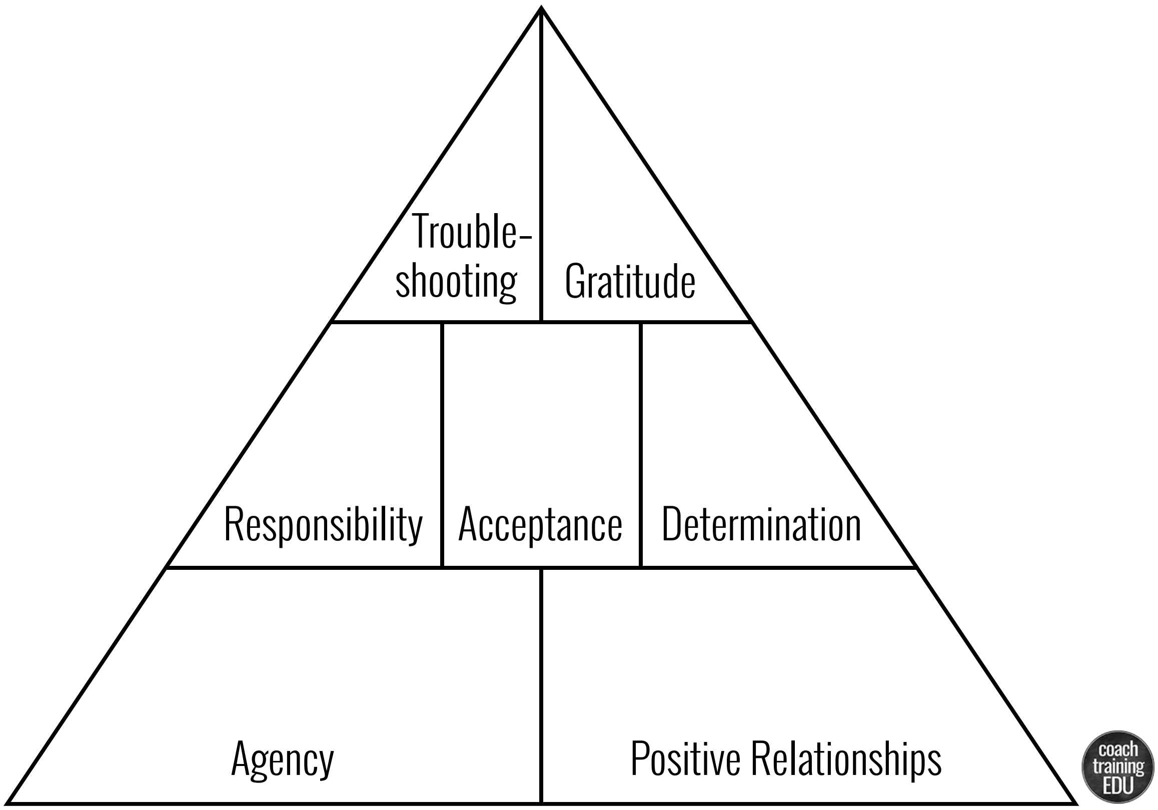
  Sample Question:

  - *To what degree are you grateful, even when things don't go your way?*

3. **After exploring the points above, ask your client to shade in the percentage of the area that corresponds to their 1 to 10 rating.**

4. **Just as you would with any other assessment wheel, explore what your client is learning from using this tool.**

5. **Use the tool and the insights as a launching pad to refine the session agenda or explore other resilience areas.**



Cup and Ball

What

The Cup and Ball model grew out of ecology, where the ball represents the system in its current state, and the cup (or cups) represents stability. This stability is usually a point of homeostasis. For example, when it's wet outside, trees will take measures to store water so that they don't drown. Conversely, trees will use the stored water to keep themselves alive when it's dry. They take in the same amount of water regardless of weather conditions, which allows them to grow and flourish. Even when there's a drought and trees die, they still leave behind seeds that invite new life to grow and flourish.[96]

The challenge happens during a fire, when high temperatures result in seed damage that prevents new growth. When this happens, the ball, or system, is pushed to a new cup, or stability/resilience point. The Cup and Ball model is a visual representation of what ecosystems go through. It helps ecologists document balance points to help identify what happens when things are out of balance. From there, researchers can put measures into place to bring balance back to the system.

The same model can be applied to human behavior and resilience. There are two key ways this works.

The first is in helping to maintain stability and resilience. For example, let's say that a health concern emerges. While it's manageable, it will require a bit of resilience to overcome the obstacles of the health concern. In this case, resilience might look like a support system—people who will help you in your recovery.

When you look at the Cup and Ball model, you'll see that the cup has a backstop that helps the system stay in balance. In this case, the people in your life serve as the backstop, keeping you resilient to recover quicker.

This is why utilizing our resources, building systems, and creating support networks is crucial, especially in the face of a major challenge. Identifying these resources, systems, and networks

[96] Hamilton, E. H., & Haeussler, S. (2008). Modeling stability and Resilience After Slashburning across a sub-boreal to subalpine forest gradient in British Columbia. *Canadian Journal of Forest Research, 38*(2), 304–316. https://doi.org/10.1139/x07-098

before something happens is key. Coaches, for example, are excellent backstops who help clients identify and maintain their balance.

The second way you can apply the Cup and Ball model to your life is when something happens that requires a new balance point.

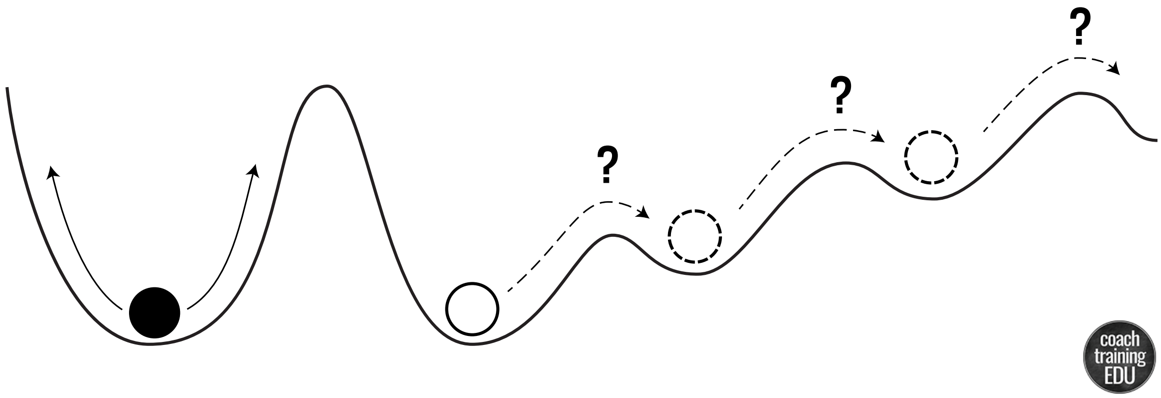
For example, let's say that you want to do something you've never done before, like run a marathon or write a novel. This will start to push on your stability because the current state doesn't support your ability to accomplish this goal. You can't continue to run only one mile per day or write occasionally. The current state of your preparation isn't quite enough. Instead, you need to find a way to a new cup, one that has the resources required to make your new goal happen. You will need to put in the work to run several miles per day, building up to marathon-level training. You will need to write daily, learn how to plot a novel and develop relatable character arcs. To do these things, you'll need fresh resources, some of which may not exist in your current state.

What often happens is that people will desire to have these resources in their current stasis point, and they will look for shortcuts to make it happen. This gives them the excuse to avoid doing the work required to climb into the next cup.

Why

As coaches, it's our role to help clients understand that resistance increases, not decreases, as we get closer to a new stasis point. It's truly like climbing a steep mountain—the more challenging terrain is right before you reach the top. But when you embrace the rough terrain, even if you slide back a few times, you're more likely to end up in the new cup sooner. Just like when you start your trek down the other side of the mountain, the benefits of your accomplishments will fuel you forward.

There are two main ways to accomplish big goals that push you into more resourceful cups. The first is to work as hard as you can to crest the mountain all at once. The second is to chunk down your journey into smaller goals, creating the ability to step into smaller cups first. These smaller cups serve as a stairway to the top of the mountain.



How

1. **Listen for moments in your client's life where they are either working through a difficult challenge or working toward a challenging goal.**

   In both cases, the prompt is the need for more resilience.

2. **Help your client to define both ends of their journey.**

   Sample Questions:

   - What do you want to achieve?
   - Where are you currently?

3. **Work with your client to identify the resources they will need to bridge the gap between their end point and their current state.**

   Sample Questions:

   - What resources do you need?
   - What resources do you already have?
   - How will you leverage your internal resources?

4. **Identify how your client wants to arrive at their desired outcome.**

   You want them to choose whether or not they want to build mini steps into the process or if they're ready to take a larger leap toward the top of the mountain.

Sample Questions:

- What would it look like to create a step-by-step process?
- How would building a stairway to your outcome help you achieve your goal?
- How quickly would you like to move toward your goal?

5. **Build confidence and resilience by helping your client to anticipate and expect resistance.**

   Sample Questions:

   - How will you approach additional challenges as they arise?
   - What mindset do you need to have when you face an obstacle?

6. **Identify who your client wants on their team.**

   Social networks are crucial to resilience.

   Sample Questions:

   - Who in your life do you trust to help you through this?
   - When will you reach out?
   - Who do you need to reconnect with before taking this journey?

7. **Design action.**

   There are a lot of opportunities for action with this kind of tool. One piece of action that should be included is to have your client start reaching out to the people in their life whom they will need during the process of reaching their new goal.

IV
BUILDING YOUR COACHING TOOLBOX

CHAPTER 16: Elements of a Life Coaching Tool

The Need for Coaching Tools

Coaching tools are an assortment of options for helping our clients build the life they dream of having. You can have a vision for a beautiful home, but without the right tools, you may never get there.

While holding space and asking powerful questions is often enough to get the job started, coaching tools provide an opportunity for clients to dig deeper into what they are learning, allowing them the time and space to reflect on their thoughts, emotions, and behaviors. The best part about coaching tools is that they offer clients the ability to pull their problems out of their heads and analyze them as external to their "self." This separation of "problem" and "client" gives clients the power to manipulate and address their problems without judgment.

Coaching tools are built for personal growth and development. Powerful insights often arise when clients are able to examine their problems and challenges through a fresh perspective, a perspective offered by the framework of coaching tools. By exploring their mindsets, assumptions, and beliefs through these tools, clients will find improved self-awareness, self-confidence, and increased motivation to attain their goals.[97]

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[97] K. Griffiths, "Personal coaching: A model for effective learning", Journal of Learning Design, vol 1, No 2; 2005 p.55-65.

The beauty in this vast array of available coaching tools is that coaches can mix and match the tools and exercises to serve their clients best. But even the best coaches sometimes find it difficult to choose a tool that will work best with a particular client or niche. When this happens, a coach may consider developing their own coaching tool. The guidelines outlined in this chapter will help you develop your own coaching tools.

Guidelines for Creating a Life Coaching Tool

The key to a successful coaching tool is to follow these three rules:

1. **Simple.** Some of the most effective and useful coaching tools are simple, making them easy to understand and follow. While it can be tempting to put together something complicated, having a simple tool will boost your client's ability to follow through and maximize client learning.

2. **Insightful.** Coaching tools should help clients pull out insights that will impact their well-being and success. It's okay if these insights are straightforward, such as clarifying the energy they want to create or pinpointing the correct direction. Every coaching tool aims to help clients derive a meaningful insight that they can apply to their lives to enact meaningful change.

3. **Action-Oriented.** Your tool should conclude with an action that your client can take toward achieving their goal. Actions can be tangible, such as calling someone or going for a run. They can also be intangible, such as implementing a new perspective or employing a new mindset. Either way, clients should be able to do something with the learning they garner from the tool.

While these guidelines might appear obvious, implementing all three can sometimes present a challenge. In our desire to dig into meaningful insights, we can get trapped in a more complex tool than we originally intended. To move our clients to action, we can sometimes miss their insights. Keeping all three rules in mind will yield the greatest success for your clients.

Elements of a Life Coaching Tool

Every life coaching tool is unique. Some coaching tools help clients personify their thoughts and emotions, while others require additional materials, like journals or scrapbooks. Even with these differences, there are certain elements that every coaching tool shares.

Learning Outcome

The most important element of any coaching tool is defining the learning outcome. What do you want your clients to come away with after they've completed the tool? What do you hope they learn or remember? What is the intention of the tool?

Before you begin to design a tool, you need to know what you're designing it to accomplish. What is your tool's "Why"? For example, the purpose of the Future Self tool is to build a sense of who the client wants to become, encompassing everything from career to personality. This creates a perspective for clients to pull from when they need a future-oriented mindset.

Research-Based

The coaching profession grew out of cognitive psychology and has since grown roots in positive psychology and sports psychology. The research in each area is astounding and can provide important insights when creating a new tool.

Before creating a coaching tool, investigate the research on your desired learning outcome. Find ways to incorporate the research into your tool so you know it's grounded in theories that have been thoroughly vetted by the research community. This might look like a brief two-sentence opening explaining how the tool works and why it's effective.

Tool Types

Almost every tool will fit into one of three categories:

1. Visual

Visual tools use or create visuals for the client to derive their learning. The idea is to create a tool that models the mechanics of the client's particular situation. This helps the client put context around what's happening in their lives.

One way to do this is through the use of a *mapping tool*. The Wheel of Life is a comprehensive example of a broad mapping tool, allowing clients to see their life from a Bird's-Eye-View. By mapping their satisfaction with various areas of their life onto the wheel, clients can assess how well they are doing on a larger and smaller scale. The Assumptions Chart is a good example of a more specific mapping tool. This tool lets clients map their feelings and actions surrounding an assumption onto a flow chart. By visually seeing how their thoughts and actions create a cyclical pattern, they can build a more positive perspective for future encounters with the same situation.

Another kind of visual tool is *narrative* visualizations. The Future Self exercise is a perfect example of this kind of tool. This tool encourages the client's imagination to take over, allowing them to create a Future Self they'd be proud to step into one day. The coach normally prompts this kind of visualization, but the client's visualization should come entirely from the client. When a client is free to conjure up their own images, they are more likely to feel empowered to follow through on the actions they designed from these visualizations.

2. Distinctions

Distinction tools are specifically designed for two key purposes:

1) To compare two seemingly different thoughts, concepts, etc.

2) To help people make distinctions between something that seems monolithic.

The idea with distinction tools is to break concepts that seem too difficult to manage all at once into smaller pieces. This allows clients to analyze each piece individually without feeling like they need to take on one overwhelming subject.

A Venn diagram is a great structure for distinction tools. Venn diagrams allow clients to address the unique nature of two distinct concepts, as well as what these concepts share. One example of a tool that would use a Venn diagram would be distinguishing a client's Future Self from their Present Self. Often, when clients develop their Future Self, they feel so far removed from the Future Self's accomplishments that it's hard to see their Present Self as someone worthy of their

Future Self. Using a Venn diagram allows clients to see what parts of their Present Self are already a part of their Future Self.

When we want to break down something monolithic into smaller parts, we often think of the Wheel of Life. It takes our entire life and breaks it into digestible pieces. Clients can then choose which area of their life to focus on. But the Wheel of Life isn't the only option.

One simple tool is called EVIG. It stands for Energy, Vision, Intention, and Goals. It can be used as a way to break down clients' concepts of "success" for upcoming projects they'd like to tackle. It has five simple parts.

1. Energy.

   Start by asking the client about their desired energy.

   Sample Questions:

   - What energy do we want to feel around this success?
   - What energy do you want to feel right now?

2. Vision.

   Next, ask your client to identify the tangibles that tell them they've been successful.

   Sample Questions:

   - What is possible for you if you're successful?
   - How will your life change if you're successful?
   - What specifically will you see and hear to know you've been successful?

3. Intention.

   Intention is about leaning into your growth.

   Sample Questions:

   - What is it that I'm stretching toward?
   - How is this situation stretching me?

4. Goals.

   Conclude by asking your client to identify the action steps or goals needed to help them achieve success.

   Sample Question:

   - What's the action step or goal (immediate or next two days)?

5. Give.

   Now, flip the acronym, and EVIG becomes "Give." Accomplishing a goal means nothing if your client isn't invested.

   Sample Question:

   - What do you want to give to yourself and the process?

By asking about these four areas, we can break down an overarching or looming success we want to achieve into something that feels much more manageable.

Distinction tools are handy, especially for approaching goals. They help us break things down into smaller pieces, offering coaches endless opportunities for coaching.

3. Instructional

Instructional tools are tools that coaches will want to use more rarely during their coaching practice. Instructional tools require the coach to do some level of teaching or training before the tool can be used. This is a bit of a gray area, as it tends to merge into the consulting realm. Still, coaching sometimes requires coaches to offer more explanation, as long as the coach immediately offers the information back to the client for analysis. After you've provided information, you should follow up with a powerful question to put the client back in charge.

Sample Questions:

- What comes up for you when you think of that?
- What would make this a better fit for you/your situation?
- What else needs to be explored?

A good example of this is when a coach might help a client move into a Growth Mindset. If a client isn't familiar with the concept, the coach may need to first explain the concept before focusing their powerful questions around the topic.

Essentially, instructional tools often ask clients to ultimately make a distinction, but with more information offered prior to their analysis. Take the Motivation Styles exercise from the CTEDU 1.0 Coach Training program, for example. This tool requires coaches to explain the difference between the various motivation styles before the client can make appropriate distinctions.

4. BONUS: Mix & Match

Tools can also be a mashup of tool types. For example, the Wheel of Life is both visual, by helping clients map out their life in a wheel, and distinctive, helping clients break down the concept of their life into smaller parts.

Blended tools tend to become complicated. When creating a tool that blends tool types, be sure to properly implement the tool development rules.

Action from Learning

Yes, this is a rule and an element—it's that important. Every coaching tool should conclude with the client creating an achievable action step or plan from their learning. That last piece is most crucial. If you've designed the new tool well, your client will experience new insights and learnings that they will want to implement right away. Leverage this desire to help them generate action steps they can feel excited to complete.

Tested

Before implementing any new tool into your coaching program, be sure to test the tool with friends and family to ensure that you are getting to the desired learning outcome. While coaching isn't an exact science, and clients will likely arrive at the learning outcome in different ways, knowing the tool's strengths and weaknesses will help you further develop the tool into something that will have a lasting impact on your clients.

Team Coaching Tools

There are two paths to keep in mind when developing tools for teams:

1. **Tools for functional teams.**

   Tools for functioning teams are typically used to help the team build more rapport. Tools in this category tend to be more fun and carefree since the team can play with the tool in more unique ways. Because there is nothing to "fix," functional teams can collectively develop insights that can be applied to various aspects of their team relationship.

2. **Tools for dysfunctional teams.**

   Tools for dysfunctional teams typically require some kind of empathetic breakthrough. When a team is operating at a more dysfunctional level, there is a need for increased empathy and kindness. When considering tools for malfunctioning teams, something that addresses the heart of their relationship amongst one another is typically a strong starting place.

Exercise: Craft a Coaching Tool

When you decide to develop your own coaching tool, you can follow these guidelines to ensure that you have a robust tool in your toolbox.

1. **Define your learning outcome.**

   - What do you want your client(s) to get out of using the tool?
   - What aspect of your client's life/personality/problem does this tool address?
   - Upon completion of the tool, what should your client expect to learn?

2. **Do your research.**

   Once you've thoroughly defined the learning outcome/objective, it's time to do the hard work. Research scholarly articles that relate to your topic. Consider how the articles relate, what they say about your topic, and what interventions exist for your learning outcome. Determine how you want to implement the research into your tool.

3. Determine your tool type.

While the three tool types we discussed house the largest majority of coaching tools, they are not necessarily the only tool types that exist. During the research process, you may find a tool or an intervention that might work better. The key to determining a tool type is to ensure that it matches the intention of the tool. A mapping tool type may not work well if you're simply trying to make a distinction between two concepts. A distinction tool may not work well if you're trying to cue your client to visualize their Pathway or Agency.

4. Design your tool.

Now that you have your learning outcome and research, you can begin implementing them into the tool type you've chosen for your new coaching tool. Be mindful of the flow and pacing of the tool, being careful to focus on Learning and Being before moving toward Doing.

5. Clarify Client Action.

While the tool should focus on Learning and Doing, the action (Doing) part is where the magic from that Learning and Doing happens. Consider coming up with a creative way for your client to track their action. Instead of a question, you can solidify their learning by creating a journaling activity or having them track an action step by leaving physical reminders around their living space. Creativity is key when it comes to creating effective tools.

6. Double-check the rules.

Once you've finished crafting your tool, double-check that it meets the three standard rules of a coaching tool:

- Is it simple and easy to follow?
- Does it drive insights?
- Is it action-oriented?

7. Test. Test. Test.

Testing the tool with friends, fellow coaches, or family before using it with clients is extremely important. Even the most well-designed tool can still show signs of weakness during thorough testing. Continue to assess against the three coaching rules, making certain that your test clients find insights and develop action without too much heavy lifting on your end. By prioritizing this step, you'll be equipped to make the necessary tweaks and changes to further develop your tool into something meaningful and effective.

CHAPTER 17: Karpman's Drama Triangle

Narrative Perspectives

Narrative therapy[98] adopts the perspective and practice of looking at a client as the main character starring in their own life. From this perspective, coaching focuses on how our clients live out the stories they tell about themselves and the world.

Inevitably, these stories become internalized, adopted, and habituated to such a degree that they become part of unconscious decision-making and foundations for personality tendencies. Such narratives become so powerful that they may take a lifetime of awareness, mindfulness, and dramatic experiences to undo. Other times, such tendencies can change in an instant: a flash of insight or the presentation of the right question at the right time can change entire internal narratives.

These dramatic character shifts are the key ingredients to great stories, and human beings are excellent at storytelling.

[98] Madigan, S. (2019). *Narrative therapy.* American Psychological Association.

The Drama Triangle

Karpman's Drama Triangle[99] is one tool that enables us to see the varying roles we play in our own dramas. This triangle, originating from drama theory and transactional analysis, seeks to describe our roles in interpersonal relationships.

A triangle was chosen because it represents the three types of characters that all people play in their own lives: the Persecutor, the Rescuer, and the Victim. These three characters are constantly vying for power and control of the outcome in a conflict. Dr. Stephen Karpman, who first developed the triangle, called it a "drama triangle" instead of a "conflict triangle" because the roles the people are playing in the conflict don't represent reality. For example, the victim isn't truly a victim, but they perceive themselves as such. The roles can alternately be defined as "the villain," "the hero," and "the damsel in distress."

1. **The Persecutor ("the villain").**

   A Persecutor has an elevated view of their own opinions and is more likely to self-identify as a victim of the incapability of others. They experience high levels of anger and frustration at the actions of others and feel endlessly inconvenienced. The Persecutor's often impulsive actions fuel the Victim's self-imposed reality.

2. **The Rescuer ("the hero").**

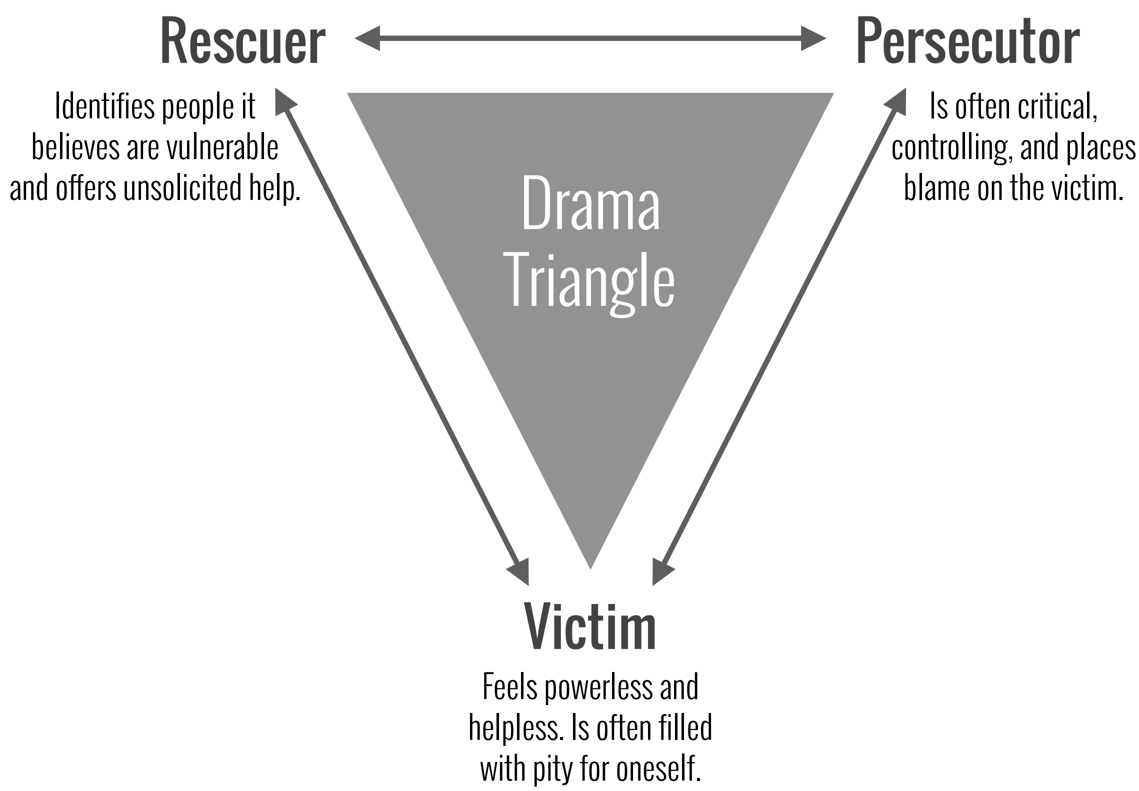
   Rescuers typically find their identity in coming to the aid of others, whether or not the other person has requested such aid. The Rescuer's desire to help isn't necessarily predicated by an actual need. Rescuers will often look for problems to solve and sacrifice beyond what is reasonable to satisfy their need for helping others and maintaining a hero persona. They usually believe that all of their actions are intrinsically good. They do not realize that the way they're rescuing is actually more of a service to themselves than to the victims they seek to help.

3. **The Victim ("the damsel in distress").**

   The Victim is strategically put on the bottom of the triangle because it is the Victim's need that keeps the entire system in play. The Victim's refrain is, "Poor me!"; and they're often stuck in a cycle of negativity and helplessness. Victims often feel that they cannot

[99] Karpman, S. (1968). Fairy tales and script drama analysis. Transactional Analysis Bulletin, 7(26), 39-43.

defend themselves from the oppression that inevitably comes their way. Thus, they constantly enlist help from the Rescuer to defend their cause.



Origins of the Triangle

The Karpman Drama Triangle is a creative way to explain our internal world during challenging times.[100] While doodling football plays and musing about the various roles in dramatic scripts, Karpman's mind began to wander toward Eric Berne's concept of transactional analysis.[101] Karpman began to apply the knowledge he'd acquired under Berne's guidance to his tinkering with sports and scripts. The end goal was to create a diagram — The Karpman Drama Triangle — that could help mental health professionals and individuals identify the parts they often play during a conflict.

Transactional Analysis

Transactional analysis describes interactions between people as "transactions," hence the name. Therapy based on transactional analysis focuses on updating the "life script" that a person plays out in their head and correcting negative scripts with more harmonious and empowered scripts.

You may have heard of the concept, "I'm OK; you're OK." This phrase was coined by Eric Berne and is one of four scripts a person might use to describe their current state in the world.

1. **I'm OK, and you're OK.** In this state, people feel good about themselves and their world.
2. **I'm OK, and you're not OK.** In this state, people typically feel good about themselves but find unhealthy faults in the world around them.
3. **I'm not OK, and you're OK.** This state is often used in negative comparisons, where people see themselves as "less than" other people in their lives. People in this state will often accept problematic behavior in their relationships.
4. **I'm not OK, and you're not OK.** In this state, people believe both themselves and the world are in a bad place, making this one of the more dangerous scripts for people to use.

Transactional analysis proposes that people are fundamentally "OK" and that their feelings and emotions are valid and deserving of respect. As with coaching, transactional analysis posits that people can overcome challenges and make rational and healthy decisions. So, when problematic

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[100] Karpman, S. (1973). *1972 Eric Berne Memorial Scientific Award Lecture.* Lecture.

[101] Berne, E. (2014). *Key Concepts in Transactional Analysis.* International Transactional Analysis Association. Retrieved October 19, 2021, from https://www.itaaworld.org/key-concepts-transactional-analysis

scripts become apparent in a client's life, transactional analysis works to disassemble the problematic scripts and replace them with healthier thoughts and behaviors.

If this concept sounds familiar, it's because it's covered in CTEDU's 1.0 Coach Training program. In coaching, we look at things like Perspectives, Assumptions, and Limiting Beliefs to address and correct the narratives that we play in our minds.

Power of Personification

Karpman's Triangle is unique in that it helps us identify the characters we play when we interact with others. By identifying these characters as a role rather than as an integral part of ourselves, we can remove ourselves from the character, allowing us to analyze its purpose. By giving the character a name, such as "The Persecutor" or "The Victim," we get further clues into their wants and needs. This allows us to analyze how these roles contribute to our interactions with others.

Personification is a powerful way to analyze behavior. Think back to the Inner Critic exercise from the CTEDU 1.0 Coach Training program. By pulling our Inner Critic out of our minds and turning it into a cartoon or caricature, we can minimize its effects. Some people who do this learn better ways to manage and work with their Inner Critics. Instead of cowering away from the Inner Critic's voice, we are able to listen more intentionally, sometimes even challenging its words as we continue to move toward a "Signature Perspective." Identifying a "Signature Perspective" requires the ability to put distance between our negative self-talk and our true inner dialogue. We recognize that the Inner Critic, while a part of us, is not who we truly are.

Karpman's Triangle employs similar aspects of personification, allowing us to poke holes in the stories the characters are trying to force us to follow.

Movement in the Roles & The Inner Critic

The Inner Critic often serves as our real-time (and often unrecognized) internal informant who dictates what role we should be playing in the drama. This Inner Critic can and will switch our role as it sees fit to bring life to its message.

An Inner Critic who desires to be pitied, tells us that we aren't doing enough, and makes us feel attacked will often shove us into "The Victim" role. However, feeding this Victim mentality also sometimes turns us into both the Persecutor and the Hero. For example, when we feel like we aren't enough, we will often accuse ourselves of having many shortcomings, yet simultaneously feel proud of ourselves for recognizing that we could do better. We move through the triangle, all while self-identifying as "The Victim."

When our Inner Critics desire to be particularly harsh and point out all of the bad things in a given situation, we often insert ourselves into "The Persecutor" role. Inner Critics who desire a feeling of being loved and needed will use "The Persecutor" role to demonstrate how valuable they can be to others, sometimes giving off a "better than" vibe to those around them.

Inner Critics can also breed inappropriate Rescuers. These Rescuers show up when we desire to demonstrate how helpful we can be, but they encourage us to shrink away when things become too challenging. Sometimes Rescuers even take on a toxic desire to help change the world by being offensive or disempowering toward others.

As you can see, the roles in Karpman's Drama Triangle don't stay stagnant. What's worse is that not only do the people operating in the three roles not necessarily see themselves in those roles, but they actually move throughout the three roles in a sort of dance. The Victim, especially when they are not a true victim, can serve as the Persecutor by employing manipulative and game-playing behavior. The Persecutor is the one who is painted as the Villain, but the Victim is the one pulling the strings. And around and around the characters go.

Coaching & The Triangle

Karpman's Drama Triangle can be applied to coaching in a unique way when you encourage your client to see the entire Drama Triangle at work internally. Each person is often moving fluidly between one of these three roles. These roles don't necessarily always originate out of a negative place. For instance, a Rescuer can call us to be vulnerable, but vulnerability can quickly edge us into victimizing ourselves or others.

Where our clients stand in this triangle isn't a decision for the coach to make. Instead, it's important to allow your client to play with the triangle, truly analyzing it from every angle to determine when and how they arrive at each character. Understanding what thoughts or behaviors trigger certain characters to arrive on the scene will allow them to manage these characters outside of coaching sessions.

The key here is to be sure that we empower our clients rather than trying to rescue them ourselves. The irony is that empowerment feels even better than rescuing—it's stronger and more robust. It's the value of teaching someone how to fish rather than being the temporary hero by providing a one-time fish.

Exercise: Managing the Drama Triangle

To help your client break free from the Drama Triangle and see things as they truly are, the first step is to focus on awareness of this internal dynamic.

1. **Briefly outline the triangle.**

   The idea is not to imply that every situation fits into these elements. Rather, simply seeing the elements can help deepen one's understanding of a situation. Later, when a comment is made that implies self-victimization, these assumptions can be challenged on the basis of this triangle.

2. **Isolate a problematic situation.**

   In the instance of time management, for example, a self-imposed "Victim" could say: "I don't have enough time. There are too many things that I need to do. I'm not good at it." The excuses could flow.

Sample Questions:

- What is a challenging situation you are currently facing?
- What about this situation is challenging?

3. Ask your client questions informed by each of the areas of the triangle:

Sample Questions:

- In [the situation you are currently facing], what percentage of your mentality sees yourself as "The Victim"? What percentage are you demonstrating vulnerability?
- What happens when the problem itself is "The Villain"? How is the problem putting you in the distressed role? Who is the hero you are waiting for?
- What happens when your Best Possible Self arrives as the hero?
- Who or what have you made into the Villain?
    - *(Usually, it's the problem.) Imagine from a business standpoint the Villain is poor SEO, another competing company, the lack of clients, or some undesirable character trait you falsely think you possess.*
- What kind of Inner Critic do you have? What category does it most often fall into? What qualities are redeemable?
    - *For instance, a Rescuer may think, "Maybe learning this skill will make my resume sharper." If pursued mindfully from an empowered position, this is not a bad perspective. You believe you can make excellent decisions and do the work that needs to be accomplished.*

4. Analyze your client's standpoint.

Sample Question:

- What percentage of your current approach is coming from a healthy and centered standpoint?

5. Envision the Future Self.

The Future Self has to do with what you want to be, not what you will do. Give it a description and a nickname, similarly to how you personified your Inner Critic. Envision this Future Self in 15 years.

Sample Questions:

- What does this person's typical day look like?
- What does their home look like?
- What message does your Future Self have for you?
- How does this message interrupt your negative self-talk?

Coach in the Triangle

A coach's goal is to get out of the triangle and refrain from *ever* playing a role in the triangle. It may seem like the coach should be the Hero, leading the client to victory. But true coaching is empowering your client to be their own hero.

This is why solving your client's problem or offering a solution feels bad. Becoming the Hero means the person receiving the advice has entered into the Victim role. The message becomes, *I'm so awesome because I can help you,* and it puts the coach in the "better than" box. This is where approach becomes so important. Level 3 Listening can enable us to remove ourselves from the conversation to determine if we are acting as a hero or simply asking questions that allow the client to discover their victory.

CHAPTER 18: Arbinger's Boxes

Arbinger Institute

Almost two decades ago, the Arbinger Institute published its first book, *Leadership and Self-Deception*. In this book, the Arbinger Institute explores the fictional story of a man as he faces work and home challenges. These challenges are largely relatable, which highlights the way the man subtly sabotages his own happiness, often opting for feelings of self-righteousness over empathy and compassion.

Founded in 1979, the Arbinger Institute is now a robust training, consulting, and coaching company that works with both individuals and companies on conflict resolution, positive mindsets, and proper collaboration.[102] Since its inception, the Arbinger Institute has become a household name worldwide.

The Institute was built by Dr. C. Terry Warner, a brilliant human scientist who studied the problem of self-deception. Through his work, he found that people operate from two distinct mindsets when interacting with the world, which we will explore in the sections below. He created the Institute with the intention of helping others to discover their mindset and how to get "out of the box."

[102] The Arbinger Institute. (N.D.) The Intellectual Foundations of the Arbinger Institute [White paper]. https://arbinger.com/SecureDownload?file=Whitepaper_Intellectual_Foundations.pdf&type=whitepaper&utm_source=website&utm_content=intellectual+foundations+whitepaper

Self-Deception & Boxes

According to the Arbinger Institute, “self-deception [is] not knowing--and resisting the possibility--that one has a problem.”[103] In other words, when we are self-deceived, we willingly climb into a box that shapes how we see those around us. Most commonly, our perception of others is as objects, things without their own set of emotions, thoughts, and desires. When we are inside the box, we are wholly wrapped up in our personal world, the way we see it, and the way we expect it to interact with us.

Unfortunately, getting into the box is a lot easier than you might think. Even the most self-aware people willingly step into the box without a second thought. And entering the box has a cascading effect.

First, we enter the box by behaving toward others in a way contrary to our thoughts and values. By doing this, we often adopt a feeling of victimhood, which leads to seeing the world in a way that justifies our original self-betrayal. This perspective distorts our reality, and over time, it results in carrying certain boxes around with us without our knowledge.

What makes this entire process even worse is that by entering the box, we provoke others to enter their own boxes, encouraging fights and giving everyone a reason to remain in their boxes. When we are out of the box, we see people as people. We can sense their needs and emotions and see them as important and deserving of respect.

Think about the last time you were running late for an important meeting or appointment. You jump in line at Starbucks, and the person in front of you seems to be ordering their beverage at a glacial pace. They take their time looking at the menu, ask questions about the different coffee options, and perhaps even start some small talk with the barista. You tap your foot furiously as you feel your blood boil. The person continues to make small talk, taking up precious moments, and you feel yourself snap inside. Perhaps you even verbalize your anger. Never mind the fact that the person in front of you just lost their spouse of 25 years, and talking to their favorite barista brings them a small semblance of momentary joy. You’re too far into your box to care--this person is just an object, an obstacle in your way. This is what it means to get into the box.

When we operate from a place of self-deception from within our boxes, we tend to inflate others’ faults while simultaneously inflating our own virtue. This means that we see our problems and needs as more important and more valuable than the needs of those around us. In the box, we

[103] Ibid.

are more likely to be self-focused and to place the blame for problems on others rather than on ourselves.[104] This leads to more conflict and can perpetuate cycles of mistreatment.

As with Karpman's Drama Triangle, our boxes connect to the stories that we tell ourselves and how those stories impact our lives. When we (even unconsciously) tell ourselves that our needs, goals, and desires matter more than the needs, goals, and desires of others, we inevitably end up in a box of self-deception. To get out of the box, we need to tell ourselves a different story.

[104] Arbinger Institute. (2015, March 25).

Getting Out of the Box

Getting out of the box boils down to one thing: your desire to honor others as people. However, honoring others as people is much easier said than done. We often try methods that seem correct but still preserve the story we tell ourselves about the grandeur of our own self-worth. For example, some people try to change the way others behave, keeping the focus away from their involvement in any interpersonal conflict. Others will try to implement certain behavior changes or even increase their level of communication, but none of these tactics will get you out of the box.

The only thing that will pull you out of the box is your desire to see other people as worthy of the same treatment, respect, and empathy that you feel you deserve. Being inside a box is a metaphor for resisting other people. It's only the vulnerability and empathy of loving others that will pull us out of the confines of our boxes.

*It's important to note that being inside a box does not mean that other people's behavior doesn't also need correcting. With so many people in boxes, it's actually more likely that the other person also needs a perspective change. However, the fact that other people also need to change is not an excuse to stay inside your box.

Exercise: Breaking Out of the Box

When it comes to helping clients break out of their boxes, the first step is to create awareness. The biggest problem with self-deception is that we are not aware that it's happening. We carry around our boxes without a second thought, often due to conditioned habits and behaviors.[105] The first step is to shine a light on the potential box your client has retreated within.

1. **Listen for indications that your client may be inside an Arbinger Box.**

   This might present in the following forms:

   - Blaming others without any self-reflection
   - Misplaced anger (think "angry at Starbucks" story from above)

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[105] Altman, L. (2010, June 24). *Is self-deception keeping you in the box?* Intentional Communication Consultants. Retrieved October 20, 2021, from https://www.intentionalcommunication.com/is-self-deception-keeping-you-in-the-box/

- Thinking of people as objects and not people
- An inflated sense of self
- Belittling others' needs or desires
- Inability to process the circumstances of others

2. **Ask powerful questions about your client's involvement in the problematic situation.**

   Sample Questions:

   - How would you describe your demeanor during the encounter?
   - Whom or what do you think caused the problem? How do you know?
   - What made the other person respond to you in that way?
   - How do you think the other person saw you in that moment?

3. **Search for the deep rules that may have led your client into the box in the first place. (Refer to Chapter 10: Deep Rules.)**

   Sample Questions:

   - What thoughts were going through your mind? What was their tone?
   - What values were challenged in this situation? How did you see your values in comparison to the other person's values?
   - What emotions did you experience?
   - How did you feel toward the other person? How might these emotions be exaggerated?

4. **Just like in Deep Rules, you will want to compare your client's behavior to their thoughts.**

   The goal here is slightly different than with *deep rules*. In this case, you are driving toward an insight that helps them realize that they are devaluing others.

   Sample Questions:

   - When you look back on the incident, how do you feel about the other person?

- What value did you honor in the situation?
- How did your behavior justify your values?

5. Just like in the Empathy exercise from the CTEDU 1.0 Coach Training program, you want your client to understand the situation from the other person's perspective.

It's important to note here that the only way to stay out of the box is to be "other-focused." Helping your client identify ways in which the other is important is key.

Sample Questions:

- What do you think was going on in the other person's head?
- What do you think happened to the other person earlier in the day?
- How do you think the other person felt during the interaction?

6. Encourage your client to identify a perspective that will help them tap into being "other-focused" when they feel like they are falling into a box.

Sample Questions:

- What are you learning about yourself?
- What can you do to remind yourself to stay more other-focused?
- How do you want to remember to tap into this perspective?

7. Design action steps.

CHAPTER 19: Brainstorming & Edge Crafting

Brainstorming

What

According to Merriam-Webster, brainstorming is “a group problem-solving technique that involves the spontaneous contribution of ideas from all members of the group,” or “the mulling over of ideas by one or more individuals in an attempt to devise or find a solution to a problem.”[106] However, brainstorming can come in all shapes and sizes. From individuals to large groups, brainstorming is a way for anyone to get concrete ideas down on paper.

When new ideas live solely in our brains, they can sometimes get lost. They flutter through our thoughts at the worst possible moments, and when we think of them again, our ability to capture them remains amateur at best. Brainstorming requires dedicated time and resources to clear your head and allow your mind the creative space it needs to generate effective ideas.

[106] “Brainstorming.” *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, Merriam-Webster, https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/brainstorming. Accessed 21 Oct. 2021.

Why

Brainstorming offers many benefits, especially for clients and teams trying to work through complex problems. Here are just a few of the benefits:[107]

A. Creativity.

As previously mentioned, our brains aren't always the best place to house our thoughts. When we are dealing with more complex problems and potential solutions, getting everything out of our heads to see and analyze all of our thoughts is often what's required for moving toward a solution. While brainstorming can be done by individuals, the real magic with creativity happens when your client can share their ideas with others (like you, their coach) to get feedback and add more details.

B. Diverse Thought.

As the saying goes, two heads are better than one. Oliver Wendell Holmes Sr. once said, "Many ideas grow better when transplanted into another mind than in the one where they sprang up." We see this happen all of the time. Writers often consult writing groups for help developing new ideas, inventors work with a team to improve their innovations, and even the greatest thinkers had confidants whose job was to push back and add value. By brainstorming with others, we are exposed to their perspectives on the topic, opening our minds to the various ways we can improve our ideas.

C. Critical Thinking.

The more you think about a problem, rolling it over in your mind, the better you can critically analyzing it from multiple angles. By brainstorming all of the ways you can approach a particular problem or challenge, you bolster your critical thinking skills.

[107] Price, K. (2020, September 8). *The importance of brainstorming*. Small Business - Chron.com. Retrieved October 21, 2021, from https://smallbusiness.chron.com/importance-brainstorming-77488.html

Research shows that brainstorming in groups—even as small as two people (like a coach and client)—increases our ideas' quantity and quality.[108]

How

There are countless strategies for brainstorming. We've compiled five of our favorites here:

Reverse Brainstorming

What

Reverse brainstorming asks the question, "What's the worst idea you can come up with?" By starting with the worst possible solution, teams and individuals can then reverse those ideas to gain new perspectives on the challenge at hand. From there, clients can rework the problem and come up with even more effective solutions. As a bonus, this strategy also helps clients to identify additional problems that might come up in the process of creating the solution.

Why

Because of its more unique approach, this particular method produces more discussion, resulting in more creative and innovative solutions. This particular approach is also helpful where group members might feel alienated or pressured to come up with "the best" ideas first. By coming up with creative ways to make the situation *worse* first, people see the problem from a new perspective. This allows both individuals and groups to come up with even better solutions.[109] The major drawback of this approach is that it does tend to be a bit more time-consuming.

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108 Simone M. Ritter & Nel M. Mostert (2018). "How to facilitate a brainstorming session: the effect of idea generation techniques and of group brainstorm after individual brainstorm", *Creative Industries Journal*, 11:3, 263-277, DOI: 10.1080/17510694.2018.1523662. https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17510694.2018.1523662

109 Hagen, M., Bernard, A., & Grube, E. (2016). Do It All Wrong! Using Reverse-Brainstorming to Generate Ideas, Improve Discussions, and Move Students to Action. *Management Teaching Review, 1*(2), 85–90. https://doi.org/10.1177/2379298116634738

How

1. **Listen for indications that your client could benefit from a creative brainstorming session.**

   This may present in any of the following ways. (Note: this is not an exhaustive list.)

   - They have been stuck on the same problem for a few sessions.
   - They are talking in circles around a problem.
   - Something is getting in the way of them being able to identify a solution.

2. **Ask your client to think about the worst possible solution they could imagine.**

   Encourage them to be creative and to take notes.

3. **After they've come up with one bad solution, help them brainstorm as many as they can think of.**

   If you find it helpful, consider setting a timer. The idea is to get out as many bad ideas as possible.

4. **Once all of the bad ideas are out, coach around the bad ideas.**

   What you're listening for during this coaching period is an indication that your client has gotten an insight or is experiencing a perspective shift that will allow them to see more concrete solutions.

   Sample Questions:

   - What jumps out at you about these bad ideas?
   - What patterns do you notice?
   - In what ways does this list change your perspective?

5. **When you hear the insight or perspective change, switch the brainstorming to realistic solutions.**

   Sample Questions:

- How do you want to apply your learning to develop a better solution?
- What do you need to keep in mind as you develop a solution?
- What role do you play in the solution?
- What character strengths will you need to leverage to be successful?

6. **Continue to coach around realistic solutions based on the learning your client had while brainstorming bad ideas.**

7. **Once your client has a few solutions, develop action steps.**

Mind Mapping

What

Mind mapping involves building a diagram that represents our thoughts, ideas, tasks, etc., as they relate to a specific starting concept. These maps are often colorful, memorable, and tightly organized. Instead of creating a long list and trying to remember everything on the list, a mind map allows you to see everything in one quick snapshot.

Why

Mind mapping was validated by the researcher, Dr. Roger Sperry, who developed the idea of "cortical skills." Cortical skills are carried out in the brain's cerebral cortex and include things like lists, colors, lines, numbers, and daydreaming.[110] His research showed that the more one could engage these cortical skills during a learning exercise, the more likely that person was to retain that information.[111] Text alone often isn't enough, but mapping your thoughts into a colorful, organized, and concise diagram allows you to bolster your brain's memory.

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[110] *What is a mind map?* MindMapping.com. (n.d.). Retrieved October 22, 2021, from https://www.mindmapping.com/mind-map

[111] *HealthEd: What's A mind map?* Osmosis. (2019, June 14). Retrieved October 22, 2021, from https://www.osmosis.org/blog/2019/06/14/whats-a-mind-map

How

1. **Listen for implications that your client could benefit from a structured brainstorming session.**

   This may present in any of the following ways. [Note: this is not an exhaustive list.]

   - Your client feels disorganized.
   - Your client is having trouble focusing on one task at a time.
   - Your client has long lists that aren't helping them to solve any problems.

2. **Introduce the idea of a mind map.**

   Ask your client if it would be helpful to create a diagram to visualize their thoughts and tasks.

3. **Encourage your client to identify their main topic.**

   What is the one thing that they want to focus on? Have them write or type the topics on the center of a blank page. For example, if they were creating a mind map for cleaning, they could write "Clean House" on the center of the page.

4. **Create the main branches coming off of the main topic.**

   Your client can draw as many lines as they need from the main topic to the main branches. Using the previous example, their main branches might be rooms in their house or specific main tasks, like vacuuming and laundry.

5. **Next, invite your client to create the subtopics that live under each of the main branches.**

   These subtopics should be concise--no more than a few words. If I were using rooms as the main branches of my cleaning map, I might have subtopics that outline what needs to be cleaned in each room.

6. **Once your client has gotten all of their thoughts and ideas out onto the mind map, encourage them to take a moment to look everything over.**

   Sample Questions:

- What pops out at you?
- What needs to be rearranged, if anything?
- How do you know you've completed your map?

7. **Continue to coach around the map's organization, how your client plans to utilize it moving forward, and how to manage any potential adjustments to the map.**

8. **Action items should include adding more visuals and formatting to the mind map to make it stick in their mind.**

   Just like the research says, the more you can implement formatting and images, the more likely it is to be utilized.

5-Why Analysis

What

A 5-Why analysis is often used in Lean Management, a technique many companies use to optimize their resources and generate more business value. The purpose of the 5-Why Analysis is to get to the core of the problem so that it can be fixed properly. Often, people will ask themselves why something happened and then accept the first answer that comes to them as the primary reason. The 5-Why Analysis encourages people to go beyond that first "Why?" to uncover the root issue. As its name suggests, it encourages people to ask "Why?" at least five times.

For example, let's say that the problem you're facing is that you overslept.

1. **Why 1:** You ask yourself, "Why?" the first time, and you remember that you stayed up late the night before. Here is where many stop and think, "I just need to go to bed earlier tonight." But is that getting to the core of the problem?
2. **Why 2:** The second "Why?" is designed to dig beneath the surface. Here, you're asking yourself, "Why were you up late last night?" You realize that you were working on a project that needed to be completed for a client the next day.
3. **Why 3:** Why were you working on that project that late? Upon reflection, you realize that you overbooked yourself and ran out of time to fit in all of your work.

4. **Why 4:** Why were you overbooked? Upon further reflection, you realize that you weren't correctly tracking all of your client work. When another client requested your time, you thought you had enough time to work on their project, even though you really didn't.
5. **Why 5:** Why did you think you had the time? Because, of course, you haven't gone out to replace your planner yet, so you're tracking everything in a messy notepad.

As you can see, at any one of these junctures, you could have stopped the "Why?" process. However, by digging all the way down, you realize that what really caused you to be up late last night is having a disorganized way to manage your clients.

Why

This brainstorming came out of the Toyota Production System, developed by Sakichi Toyoda. The people of Toyota have become masters of Lean Management, and their methodologies allow them to quickly and efficiently address problems to add value to their clients.[112]

The 5-Why Analysis method is so effective because it forces people to look beyond the surface. As we've discussed in previous sessions, the surface agenda rarely holds the answers to what's really going on. Instead, peeling back the layers to unearth the core cause of the problem will allow people the ability to find effective solutions.

How

1. **Listen for implications that your client could benefit from brainstorming around the core cause of a potential problem.**

   This may present in any of the following ways. [Note: this is not an exhaustive list.]

   - Your client is staying on the surface.
   - Your client isn't seeing the whole picture.
   - You feel like your client is missing key pieces of information.

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[112] *5 whys: The ultimate root cause analysis tool.* Kanban Software for Agile Project Management. (n.d.). Retrieved October 22, 2021, from https://kanbanize.com/lean-management/improvement/5-whys-analysis-tool

2. **Introduce the "5-Why Analysis" and how it works.**

   Coaches typically use "Why?" questions sparingly, so hearing a bunch in a row without prompting can be intimidating. Let your client know that the "Why?" questions are all part of the tool.

3. **Start by having your client identify the core problem.**

   For example, they might say that they got into a fight with their significant other.

4. **Ask, "Why did you get into a fight with your significant other?"**

   Be careful not to fall into the trap of gathering too much information. Once they've answered the question, paraphrase what you believe to be the cause of the fight, and ask them to confirm.

5. **Once you get a firm confirmation, continue to coach using the 5-Whys method.**

   It's important to note that you may not always get to a fifth "Why?", and sometimes you may need to ask more than five "Whys". Both you and your client will know when you've gotten to the core of the problem because they will struggle more to identify what's beyond the next "Why?"

6. **After you get to the core problem, ask powerful, solution-focused questions.**

   Sample Questions:

   - What does it feel like to identify the main problem?
   - What do you want to do with this knowledge?
   - Now that you've identified the main problem, what's next?

7. **Help your client to create action steps around solving the main problem first.**

   The other problems they stumbled upon while working to the core of things may dissipate by solving the main problem first.

Most Ideas

What

The “Most Ideas” brainstorming tool is effective for individuals or teams who are overly judgmental of ideas before they’ve had time to develop or grow. In this technique, a timer is set, and the client is asked to generate as many ideas as possible in that given timeframe. The key here is to refrain from sharing or discussing any ideas until the timer rings.

Why

This particular technique has two key benefits:

1. Especially in group brainstorming sessions, people can feel hesitant to share their ideas. They worry that their ideas might be dismissed quickly, causing potential embarrassment. By setting a timer and allowing everyone the ability to write everything down first, there is no time for judgment or dismissal.

2. Brainstorming a large number of ideas forces us to get creative quickly. Often, we empty out all of the obvious, less-creative ideas onto the page first. Once the less-obvious ideas are out of the way, our brains are open to coming up with more creative and innovative ideas.

How

1. **Listen for implications that your client could benefit from a brainstorming session free of judgment.**

   This may present in any of the following ways. [Note: this is not an exhaustive list.]

   - Your client judges their ideas before they speak them aloud.
   - Your client is hesitant to share ideas with others because they fear judgment.
   - Your client is looking for a creative solution to a problem, but they keep coming back to the same three solutions.

2. **Start by introducing the activity and asking permission to play with the brainstorming.**

   Let your client know that you will also be participating.

3. **Ask your client to restate the problem/challenge they are trying to solve.**

4. **Set a timer.**

   Once you hit "go" on the timer, both you and your client should write down as many ideas for solving the problem/challenge as you can both manage in the allotted time. (TIP: We recommend starting with no more than five minutes. If your client is on a roll, you can always add time later.)

5. **Once the time is up, ask your client to assess their list.**

   Sample Questions:

   - Which idea stands out most to you?
   - What was it like to write down all of your ideas?
   - How did this activity stretch you?

6. **If your client is still struggling with a solution, it's okay to offer to share your list, then ask them similar questions as above.**

   Sample Questions:

   - Which idea(s) stands out to you?
   - How could you change these ideas to better suit your needs?

7. **Continue to coach around the potential solutions, and develop an action plan from your client's insights.**

Edge Crafting

What

Originally designed by Seth Godin, edge crafting is the process of taking an aspect or trait specific to your product or service to its "edge."[113] In other words, it means identifying something that makes you unique and then exploiting every aspect of that unique trait. If you're known for using funky colors in your marketing, make sure you use those funky colors everywhere—on your website, storefront, business cards, company t-shirts, etc. If you see a restaurant advertising an all-you-can-eat night, consider finding that edge for your product. For example, if you own a clothing store, using the all-you-can-eat edge might include offering your clients all of the clothing they can put on in 2 minutes for $20.

This brainstorming technique is unique in that it requires a lot more brainpower. It helps you identify the "edge" you might have over your competitors. It forces us to think beyond the obvious and push ourselves and our products/services to the very edge of their potential.

Why

This technique doesn't just apply in business or marketing, though it is particularly effective in these spaces. Edge crafting can be used even when thinking about smaller projects your client may want to accomplish. The idea is to highlight something that makes you unique and gives you an edge over others looking to accomplish similar goals.

How

1. **Listen for implications that your client is looking for ways to identify and leverage their unique contributions to the world.**

   This may present in any of the following ways. [Note: this is not an exhaustive list.]

   - Your client wants to come up with an idea to pitch at work but is struggling to develop something innovative.
   - Your client hopes to start a business but doesn't know how to separate themselves from their competition.

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[113] Godin, S. (2012, July 30). *The best things in Life are free.* Fast Company. Retrieved October 22, 2021, from https://www.fastcompany.com/49509/best-things-life-are-free

- Your client has an upcoming project that they'd like to be wildly successful.

2. **Start by introducing the activity and asking permission to play with Edge Crafting.**

3. **Ask your client to list the things that they feel make them unique.**

   Sample Questions:

   - What do you do better than others?
   - What do you offer that others may not be offering?
   - What makes your product/service unique?
   - What sets you apart?

4. **Once your client has listed a few things, ask questions that help them to identify the one thing that makes them feel most unique.**

   Sample Questions:

   - Of this list, what feels most authentic to you?
   - What is the one item on this list that you couldn't do without?
   - If I asked you to remove everything from this list, what would be the hardest to remove?
   - What makes this trait so important to you?

5. **Help coach your client to the "edge" of their unique trait.**

   Sample Questions:

   - How can you leverage this trait in ways no one else can?
   - How far can you take this trait?
   - What's the wildest thing you can do with this trait?

6. **Help your client generate several ideas of their new "edge," and develop action steps from their insights.**

CHAPTER 20: Stress & Humor

Stress & Humor

Stress is your body's response to pressure, both internal and external, and it can manifest in physical, mental, or emotional ways.[114] A coach's job is to create self-awareness and design action steps that allow clients to manage the demands in their lives. In the book *Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers,* Dr. Robert Sapolsky looks at the phenomenon of human beings becoming—and remaining—stressed to the point where they develop health problems.[115]

More importantly, Sapolsky goes into detail about the origin of our predilection to follow this pattern and how we can break free from it. As it turns out, humor helps to soothe the nervous system and prevents the long-lasting negative effects of stress hormones.[116]

A long time ago, stress was considered a good thing because it kept us alive. In a world before computers, most daily life stressors were more immediate and involved exercise. For survival, our ancestors learned to either run after or run away from certain animals. The zebra, too, has this stress response. When a zebra sees a lion, their stress response kicks in, and they can react quickly, running away from danger. Once the danger is gone, the zebra's body can release its stress very easily, allowing the zebra to go back to grazing through the savannah. Stress was originally seen as a short-term solution to mobilize the body in the face of danger.

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[114] Bhargava, H. B. D. (Ed.). (2020, August 14). *Stress - why it happens and common causes.* WebMD. Retrieved October 22, 2021, from https://www.webmd.com/balance/stress-management/what-is-stress

[115] Sapolsky, R. M. (1994). *Why Zebras Don't Get Ulcers: A Guide to Stress, Stress Related Diseases, and Coping.* New York: W.H. Freeman.

[116] Savage, Brandon & Lujan, Heidi & Thipparthi, Raghavendar & Dicarlo, Stephen. (2017). Humor, laughter, learning, and health! A brief review. Advances in Physiology Education. 41. 341-347.

Today, however, our stressors are much less likely to involve exercise and more likely to last longer than a few minutes (e.g., financial, marital, familial, or career stress). These psychological stressors are just as likely to trigger the stress response as did our ancestral physical stressors, but now the stress response sometimes never dissipates. When our bodies are in a constant state of low-grade stress, our stress response is actually more harmful than the stress itself.[117]

However, not all stress is bad. If you feel engaged, immersed in meaning, and know you can be successful, the stress you feel can be healthy. The science behind stress seems to point to a balance between managing the negative effects of stress through exercise and good habits while embracing stress as a necessary part of life.[118]

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117 *Stress: Signs, symptoms, management & prevention.* Cleveland Clinic. (n.d.). Retrieved October 22, 2021, from https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/articles/11874-stress

118 *Harnessing the upsides of stress.* Harvard Health. (2020, February 19). Retrieved October 22, 2021, from https://www.health.harvard.edu/mind-and-mood/harnessing-the-upsides-of-stress

Using Stress to Your Benefit

As it turns out, most people experience moderate to high levels of stress in their daily lives.[119] It's not uncommon to hear someone (or yourself) say something like, "I'm just so stressed out." Yet we all know people who are under a lot of stress and seem to be handling it with grace and poise. We might think of them as anomalies, aliens who are simply outliers in a world of stressed-out people, but as it turns out, that's not the case.

In 2013, psychologist Kelly McGonigal gave a groundbreaking TED Talk entitled *How to Make Stress Your Friend*.[120] While her TED Talk is incredible, its essence is that it's our perception of stress that's causing the harmful side effects, not the stress itself. And she shares the science to back up her claims.

In one study, researchers from the University of Wisconsin-Madison analyzed the link between stress rates and the belief that stress influenced health. Approximately 29,000 people participated in the study by rating their stress from the past year and filling out measures that assessed their belief that stress impacted their health. This study found that people who rated themselves high on stress and high on the belief that the stress was harmful were 43% more likely to die than those who did not perceive the negative effects of stress.[121]

In another study, researchers administered a stress mindset test before showing participants a video that presented stress as enhancing or harmful. These researchers found that people who watched the "stress is enhancing" video were more likely to report improved work performance and experienced fewer psychological complications.[122]

These are just two of dozens of studies that show how our perception of stress can play a significant role in our health and well-being. But changing how we perceive stress isn't as easy as flipping a switch. It's something we need to develop and practice over time. However, to give us a boost in developing this skill quicker, the research offers two suggestions:

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[119] Saad, L. (2021, September 23). *Eight in 10 Americans afflicted by stress.* Gallup.com. Retrieved October 22, 2021, from https://news.gallup.com/poll/224336/eight-americans-afflicted-stress.aspx

[120] McGonigal, K. (2013, June). How to make stress your friend [Video]. TED Conferences. https://www.ted.com/talks/kelly_mcgonigal_how_to_make_stress_your_friend

[121] Keller, A., Litzelman, K., Wisk, L. E., Maddox, T., Cheng, E. R., Creswell, P. D., & Witt, W. P. (2012). Does the perception that stress affects health matter? The association with health and mortality. *Health psychology : official journal of the Division of Health Psychology, American Psychological Association, 31*(5), 677–684. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0026743

[122] Crum, A. J., Salovey, P., & Achor, S. (2013). Rethinking stress: the role of mindsets in determining the stress response. *Journal of personality and social psychology, 104*(4), 716–733. https://doi.org/10.1037/a0031201

1. **Help others.**

   Dr. Michael Poulin and his team from the University of Buffalo developed a study that focused on the impact that helping others had on stress management. After interviewing over 850 people and tracking deaths over the five years following the interviews, he and his team came to a stunning discovery. While major stress events did increase the risk of death by 30%, anyone who reported high rates of helping others (even if they also reported high rates of stress) essentially negated their increased risk.[123]

   By helping others, our bodies release healthy hormones such as oxytocin, serotonin, and dopamine. These hormones have lasting health benefits and counteract feelings of stress and anxiety.

2. **"See It. Own It. Use It."**

   In 2015, just a few years after McGonigal's TED Talk, Alia and Thomas Crum, a psychologist and a performance coach, wrote an article for the *Harvard Business Review* about harnessing the power of stress. They offered a simple three-step plan for approaching stress as opposed to avoiding it.[124]

   - Step 1: **See it.** Sometimes we get so caught up in the stress of our lives that we fail to recognize the stress we are experiencing. From a coaching perspective, helping your client to become aware in the first place that they are experiencing stress is an imperative place to start. By bringing the stress into our awareness, we can direct our brain to think more intentionally about what's happening in our body. This intentionality allows us to proactively address the stress we're feeling instead of being sucked into autopilot.[125]

   - Step 2: **Own it.** Owning our stress means acknowledging that we really only get stressed about the things we care about. With this realization, we can shift our motivation to feelings of gratitude and positivity. This is a lot of the work of coaching: helping clients to see that their stress is actually connected to their meaning and

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[123] Poulin, M. J., Brown, S. L., Dillard, A. J., & Smith, D. M. (2013). Giving to others and the association between stress and mortality. *American journal of public health, 103*(9), 1649–1655. https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2012.300876

[124] Crum, A., & Crum, T. (2018, February 9). *Stress can be a good thing if you know how to use it.* Harvard Business Review. Retrieved October 22, 2021, from https://hbr.org/2015/09/stress-can-be-a-good-thing-if-you-know-how-to-use-it?registration=success

[125] Lieberman, M. D., Eisenberger, N. I., Crockett, M. J., Tom, S. M., Pfeifer, J. H., & Way, B. M. (2007). Putting feelings into words. *Psychological Science, 18*(5), 421–428. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2007.01916.x

passion in life. Helping them center themselves on this realization will offer them a new perspective through which to view their lives and help them to focus their energy on the things that matter.

- Step 3: **Use it.** After self-awareness and acknowledgment come action. Think back to our ancestral stress response: it was meant to enhance our ability to function and think quickly. When our heart starts to race, that simply means that we are getting excited about something important that matters to us. Our body begins to tingle with adrenaline, which fills us with more energy and allows us to focus on the most important tasks before us. More helpful than judging our stress response is recognizing it as an adaptive response to certain life events and identifying the opportunity that lies in the stressor. This acknowledgment of the intention of the stressor will lower the stressor's severity and give us the power to overcome.[126]

[126] Jamieson, J. P., Crum, A. J., Goyer, J. P., Marotta, M. E., & Akinola, M. (2018). Optimizing stress responses with reappraisal and mindset interventions: an integrated model. *Anxiety, stress, and coping, 31*(3), 245–261. https://doi.org/10.1080/10615806.2018.1442615

Neurochemical Elements of Achievement and Stress

From a scientific perspective, the human body is mostly a mix of water, proteins, and hormones supported by a rigid structure built mostly of calcium. Managing such an intricate balance of molecules is a complex task. It involves a seemingly endless list of molecules and compounds that require much more research. Out of all of these elements, a few hormones stand out as being especially important to understand in the Cycle of Achievement.

A hormone is a molecule released by a gland that impacts an organism's mood and behavior. The amygdala is the brain structure that is responsible for directing brain activity. It releases hormones that signal other glands and structures to either relax or kick into gear. Let's take a look at six of the most prominent hormones (cortisol, adrenaline, endorphins, dopamine, serotonin, and oxytocin) and their impact on motivation and achievement.

Cortisol

Cortisol is a hormone associated with stress and that "kick in the butt" feeling. Cortisol levels naturally follow a regular cycle of being highest in the morning (this is what helps you wake up and get moving), and then gradually dropping until their lowest levels at nighttime (which helps you fall asleep). In conjunction with other stress-relieving hormones, a burst of cortisol is extremely effective in helping short-term problem-solving. The problem, however, is when cortisol is used too often or in constant low-level doses throughout the day. High cortisol levels inhibit rebuilding processes in the body and do not allow the body to repair from daily wear.

Adrenaline

Adrenaline is a powerful hormone that is released when responding to acute dangers or stressors. It evokes a flight, fight, or freeze, or a "tend and befriend" response. Adrenaline feels awesome when used in short doses to overcome an immediate physical obstacle, like clearing a massive mountain biking jump. Similar to cortisol, however, those amazing short-term benefits come at a long-term cost. Adrenaline tells the body to gear up for an immediate threat, which takes resources from the long-term rebuilding processes associated with health and vitality.

Endorphins

Endorphins act like the masking tape that keeps the body together when working out. Endorphins take away the pain of exercising and help us to feel fantastic. It takes about forty-five minutes of exercise or some sort of physical discomfort for endorphins to be released. Lucky athletes experience the somewhat elusive "runner's high" when their body pumps out an inordinate amount of endorphins. They feel like they can run forever. Endorphins contribute to the success of exercise in managing stress. It is our body's way of letting us know that exercise is crucial for our health.

Dopamine

Out of all of these hormones, dopamine could be crowned the neurochemical king of achievement. Dopamine in the system feels like a slow-burning fire of motivation, ready to get us over that next hill or accomplishment. The challenge of tapping into dopamine is creating goals that are both doable and exciting. Our goals should involve the element of surprise. Having room for surprise is important because it is one of the main triggers for dopamine, regardless of whether those surprises are happy or disappointing. Video game designers create games with small surprises and setbacks at certain intervals to keep gamers on a steady stream of dopamine that mimics the experience of being in flow. The magnitude of the surprise seems to correspond to the level of dopamine released. The other hormones, from adrenaline to oxytocin, seem to guide whether or not someone uses the rush of motivation in a useful or useless way. Designing habits that either mitigate or increase surprise is beneficial to mindfully engage dopamine.

Serotonin

Serotonin is the hormone associated with a full belly, a happy heart, and feeling on top of things. It is related to digestion and is released when people perceive safety and an abundance of food and resources. It is associated with high levels of well-being and positive affect. Serotonin is an important balance to other stress hormones, including dopamine, and prompts the body to keep up the long-term rebuilding processes associated with being healthy. It also plays an important role in Frederickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory due to its ability to create an environment where one can build future mental and emotional resources.

Oxytocin

Oxytocin is the hormone of love. It dilates the pupils, gives color to our cheeks, and makes people feel over-the-moon happy. It is puppy love and an elderly couple holding hands while out on a stroll. It is released during interactions like handshakes, hugs, and other activities that include close intimacy. A big hug, seeing a beloved friend, and newborn babies are the rock stars of oxytocin release. Oxytocin has tremendous health benefits and lasts a long time once released. Fortunately, oxytocin is also released when engaging in play or doing work you love. People who do what they love daily and have healthy and happy relationships typically have high levels of oxytocin.

The Role of Humor

Stress is an unavoidable part of life. Our bodies are finely-tuned machines that deliver stress hormones in varying levels depending on our perceived risk. With this in mind, there are two Golden Rules of Stress Management:

1. **Change the baseline of your stress level.** Design your life to incorporate stress-reducing activities, such as meditation and exercise. Consider developing a mindfulness and loving-kindness routine.

2. **Design a system of recovery when you feel stressed out.** Use a combination of the above tactics to recover quickly and to stay calm and focused.

Humor's Dark Side

Humor has two sides: a playful, fun, and healthy side; and a dark, biting, mean side. This "darker" side often houses ridicule and sarcasm, behaviors that can sometimes fall into the category of bullying. The rise of awareness of bullying in schools and in the workplace has shed light on the negative aspects of humor. While light, playful sarcasm has its moments, coaches should be careful to stay away from humor that has a darker tint. Being flippant or not treating situations with sensitivity can hurt feelings and damage relationships. The skill of using humor in a coaching session requires both connection to your client and the ability to bring a lightness to the situation at hand, when appropriate.

Benefits of Humor

The benefits of humor and playfulness have been well studied and documented. According to Barbara Frederickson's Broaden-and-Build Theory of positive emotion, people who have a playful attitude in life enjoy an abundance of benefits:

- **Less Stress**

  Even breaking momentarily to laugh in the face of a challenge mitigates the long-term impact of the stressor.[127]

- **Stronger Friendships**

  Laughing together is one of the signposts of friendship. People enjoy hanging out with people who share a similar sense of humor.[128]

- **More Creativity**

  Humor helps people feel more at ease and comfortable, sparking creativity and building stronger skills to deal with future adversity.[129]

- **Psychological Scrub**

  It seems that laughter and humor act like a psychological scrub. They release all of the existential angst related to speaking about touchy situations, and they fill us with happiness.[130]

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[127] Kalaivani, S., & Rajkumar, K. (2017). Laughter is the best medicine for stress relief. *International Journal of Advances in Nursing Management, 5*(3), 262–264. https://doi.org/10.5958/2454-2652.2017.00057.9

[128] Raine, J. (2021, October 4). *The evolutionary origins of laughter are rooted more in survival than enjoyment.* The Conversation. Retrieved October 22, 2021, from https://theconversation.com/the-evolutionary-origins-of-laughter-are-rooted-more-in-survival-than-enjoyment-57750

[129] Chen, C.-H., Chen, H.-C., & Roberts, A. M. (2019). Why humor enhances creativity from theoretical explanations to an empirical humor training program. *Creativity and Humor,* 83–108. https://doi.org/10.1016/b978-0-12-813802-1.00004-1

[130] Gibson, J. M. (2020, December 7). *The science of why Laughing is good for your mind and body.* The Wire Science. Retrieved October 22, 2021, from https://science.thewire.in/the-sciences/science-laughter-stress-body-mind-explanation/

Exercises to Employ Useful Humor

Bringing appropriate humor into a coaching session doesn't look like telling jokes or witty banter. Instead, it involves intentionally choosing humorous questions that still aim to bring insight to your client. By asking absurd, unusual, or sometimes even nonsensical questions, we break our clients out of any potential ruts they are stuck in and open them up to more creativity. Here are three types of questions that can introduce humor in a useful way during a coaching session.

1. **Opposite-Day Questions.**

   Ask the opposite of what someone would normally expect. For instance, you might ask about the benefit of a perceived negative. Or vice versa.

   For example, if your client says, "Today's been a really tough day at work," you might ask, "What's the best part of having a tough day?"

   Think of the opposite of what your client says or expects, and build your question from that idea. Opposite-Day Questions help your client to break away from old patterns and assumptions.

2. **Odd Perspective Questions.**

   The idea here is to ask something about what the world would look like from an unusual place. For instance, if your client is stuck in a situation, you might ask, "What do you imagine a banana might do in this situation if faced with a bowl of other fruit?"

3. **Personification Questions.**

   The better the nonsense—or wilder the personification—the better the question.

   Here's your chance to have a little more fun with coaching and tap into your creativity by offering nonsensical questions. For example, "What do you think hurts your calendar's feeling the most?" Or "What nice thing does Time want you to do?"

CHAPTER 21: Competing Values

Competing Values

Living a life aligned with one's values leads to fulfillment. Exploring, clarifying, and learning about personal values is a huge benefit of life coaching. Each of us has a unique set of values that we especially seek and enjoy.[131] The CTEDU 1.0 Coach Training programs address how to help clients clarify and deepen an understanding of their own personal values. This 2.0 training takes understanding our personal values to the next level as we explore what happens when two values collide.

For example, let's say that your client values performing top-level work and being in a flow state while working. This value requires that they take time each night to prepare for the following day. They clearly outline the hours in which they can concentrate and devote time to deep thinking and to getting into flow. Flow is one of their most treasured values. Another value they have is spending time with family and being a fantastic parent. They love spending time with their spouse and children. But what happens when these two values collide? What happens when they have to choose between their child's event or spending time on their business?

This is a case of value collision. What usually happens is that a decision is made based on which value is more urgent (or with a "Motivation Away" structure). Do they really need to hang out with their family right now, or does that proposal really need to be sent tonight? Decisions on values can quickly devolve into a "Motivation Away" structure, which makes it a challenge to establish systems or make choices that are truly aligned with one's values. Our innate human value to avoid pain trumps the other values.

[131] Lomas, T., Hefferon, K., & Ivtzan, I. (2014). Applied Positive Psychology: Integrated Positive Practice.

A more subtle example of values colliding is when a high value, such as performing top-level work, collides with a low-importance value, such as feeling rested or taking time for self-care. In this case, putting self-care in the backseat and pushing through is an easy choice. But what happens when the body, mind, and spirit need a break? What happens when the break goes from being simply a good idea to being necessary? The values collide again, and a system is not in place to navigate a choice between the two. Most often, a backseat value comes out sideways—procrastination, feeling unmotivated, negative self-talk, etc.—and the consequence of not balancing values rears its ugly head. Conflict between these two types of values (individual values and organizational values) raises the probability that your client will experience more stress.[132] Finding a balance between the two values is crucial.

[132] Boucknooghe, D., Buelens, M., Fontaine, J., & Vanderheyden, K. (2005). The prediction of stress by values and value conflict. *The Journal of Psychology*, 139(4). 369-384. DOI:10.3200/JRLP.139.4.269-384

Balancing Values

The Balancing Values exercise provides a structure for bypassing the dismal experience of grappling with competing values. The trick is for the client to decide ahead of time how they want to handle, or be mindful of, two values that might collide. The Balancing Values exercise is based on imagining a personification of each value, then facilitating a conversation between the client, the first value, and the second value. As a coach, you will use the same skill set you used in the Inner Critic and Future Self exercises to facilitate learning and insights and to help develop an action plan.

The Balancing Values exercise is designed to help clients establish a decision-making process for the moments when values in their lives collide. To make this exercise effective, it is helpful to identify a "Super Value"—a value that trumps all others—for your client to use when making a decision.

For example, let's say that there are two values of equal importance: performing top-level work and spending quality time with family. It can be helpful to look at the thread that weaves between these two values. What do they have in common? By identifying what these values share, you can help your client craft a "Super Value" that might help them navigate between the two values.

Exercise: Balancing Values

1. Clarify the competing values.

The values can be of equal importance, but this is not necessary for the exercise to work. The important aspect of this step is to help your client clearly identify their competing values and what's at stake now that they are colliding.

2. Personify the values.

Using the skills and questions from the Inner Critic, help them create a visualization and personality for one of their values. Repeat with the second value.

3. **Facilitate a conversation between the two values, seeking balance and harmony.**

    Help your client to relate the images they just created to a deeper understanding of their internal world. Consider inviting the Future Self to comment on the conversation between the values.

    Sample Questions:

    - What do these values have in common?
    - How could these values become friends?
    - What do you need to bring harmony between the values?

4. **Deepen learning and forward action.**

    Using your client's learning, help them to develop an action plan. They can take the new balanced values for a spin to see how their experiment plays out between sessions.

Like any new concept, it will require tweaking and a touch of renegotiating to help the values find balance. However, the "Balancing Values" exercise puts a structure into place for clients to move elegantly through values-based decision-making. Going through this exercise helps your client create a system for navigating between competing values and even helps create a more robust "Super Value" for making more proactive and fulfilling decisions.

CHAPTER 22: Laser Life Coaching

Laser Life Coaching

Sometimes, clients want something different from traditional life coaching sessions, which are often between 30 and 60 minutes in duration. In these cases, it's likely that the client is looking for something with a faster impact—something that pushes them to get to their goals faster.

The main benefit of laser life coaching is the quick follow-through inherent in the system. Research shows that short, focused periods of decision-making followed by a set time to execute them is an effective way to achieve goals. Setting a goal to be accomplished in a short period of time (for example, within the next hour), then immediately starting to work on that goal, helps the client to build the habit of connecting their intention to their behaviors.

Clients may seek you out to focus exclusively on laser life coaching. At other times, it might be nice to include some laser life coaching sessions between your regularly scheduled sessions to keep the coaching fresh. It's okay to switch between longer and shorter sessions based on your client's needs.

One of the best ways we've found to structure these sessions is to have two laser coaching sessions scheduled about an hour apart. For example, let's say you're working with a client on an application of some kind. We might meet for 15 minutes to clarify the next action steps and what perspective the client needs to be in while completing the work. Then, after helping the client into the right perspective, we end the session so our client can start working on their goal. An hour later, we will meet again to assess their progress and to create another action step.

Whether you are peppering laser life coaching sessions between longer sessions or have an exclusive package for laser life coaching, it's always best to assess the value of the coaching.

Encourage your client to provide feedback. If they enjoyed it, consider scheduling another laser life coaching session in less than a week. If not, then return to your regularly scheduled 30- to 60-minute sessions.

Elements of Laser Life Coaching

1. **Short, strict time frame.**

   Laser life coaching sessions are short (usually 15 minutes), with a brief follow-up session once the action has been taken (usually an hour later).

2. **Pre-set agenda.**

   For laser life coaching to be successful, the client has to be proactive and take more ownership of setting the agenda between sessions. For this reason, laser life coaching is most effective with established clients rather than new clients.

3. **Predetermined time between sessions.**

   Often, this is an hour, but it could be up to two weeks. The less time there is between sessions, the more likely that the client will follow through on their action. However, there may be times when the action is too large to complete in less than two weeks. In those cases, co-designing when and how to follow up is an effective way to partner with your client.

4. **Quick action steps.**

   The well-designed actions that stem from a laser life coaching session are often those that the client can move forward with immediately after the session. Even if the action is larger, there is typically a first step that they can take immediately.

5. **Quick follow-up.**

   The follow-up session serves as a form of accountability for the client. It's an opportunity to briefly discuss what the client learned through the process and how they want to carry their learning forward.

Potential Challenges

Because laser life coaching can take on an amorphous form, one of the more challenging aspects of this model is setting up payment/scheduling options. How can you charge for sessions that may be 15 minutes one week but an hour the next week? What happens when clients need more support one week and less support the next?

We recommend charging by the month or a few months at a time. Then, design with the client that you'll set sessions as needed for a specified duration of time. Such an arrangement requires trust between you, the client, and the client's sponsor (if applicable).

Another challenge is setting the agenda ahead of time. Workbook prompts, text messages, or emailed questions can all work to help clients generate an agenda ahead of time. Consider asking the client to accept responsibility for sending a text or an email with their agenda before their next session.

The third challenge is to make sure that you are paying attention to the client's Learning and Being, not just to their action (Doing). The short time frame of laser life coaching sessions demands that coaches choose their questions carefully. You must also rely on your client's resourcefulness and experiences between the sessions to guide new conversations. Always remember to follow up on your client's experience.

Exercise: Laser Life Coaching Session (In-Class)

1. **As a client, choose an agenda around a hard-to-start task.**

   Choose a task that's been tough for you to get started, but once you get started, it goes well (e.g., writing a blog post, putting a proposal together, etc.) It can even be something as simple as cleaning up an area of your home.

2. **Coach for 10 to 15 minutes, then switch roles.**

   One person is the coach; the other is the client. Explore and clarify an action you want to take for 20 minutes right after the first coach/client session is finished. Don't skip the Being and Learning questions in an effort to quickly get to the action (the Doing).

3. Log off, and begin working on your action step(s).

This is your chance to start that prickly project that keeps lurking on your to-do list.

4. Reconnect at the agreed-upon time.

Log back on 20 minutes later to reconnect. (In a coaching session, this could be between 30 minutes and up to a few hours later.) Explore how the action steps went for your client.

Sample Questions:

- What went well?
- What didn't?
- What did you learn about yourself?

As an in-class exercise, each person coaches and is coached for 10 minutes before doing the actions. When you reconvene with your partner, each person will be both the coach and the client in debriefing for 10 minutes each on how the action went.

CHAPTER 23: Coaching Overview & Feedback

Coaching Assessment

Eliciting feedback at multiple points in a course is necessary for learning. Assessment and feedback at the end of a program allow you to better understand the growth you've experienced and the skills you want to continue to develop. During this session, you will have the opportunity to receive feedback on a recorded workshop presentation. As you plan your workshop, consider how you might display each of the Essential Coach Qualities throughout your experience. This is also an opportunity for you to review any coaching concepts from previous chapters to help solidify your learning.

Coach Assessment Questions

Professional

- How well did the coach clarify expected outcomes or address accountability on the participant's recent action steps?
- How well did the coach use the T.I.M.E. model when setting a strategic or session agenda?

Empathetic

- How well did the questions provoke new insight for the participants (instead of seeking information or implying solutions)?
- To what degree did the coach recognize subtle shifts in the participants' energy, tone, or perspectives?

Empowering

- How well did the coach focus on the participants, not the problem?
- How well did the coach balance expert knowledge and information with empowering the participants?
- How well did the coach adapt the participants' language and adjust standard coaching questions and tools to the participants?

Curious

- How well did the coach ask short, open-ended questions? How well did these questions balance Learning, Being, and Doing and address the participants' Agency and Pathways?
- To what degree was the coach willing to lean into intuition while staying curious and holding space for the participants to explore?

Courageous

- How well did the coach address prickly points, ideas, or observations (either directly or through sharp questions)?
- To what degree is the coach willing to take risks and share intuition and ideas without attachment to being right?

Confident

- How well does the coach demonstrate trust in the coaching process?
- How well does the coach demonstrate comfort with pausing and silence during a coaching session?
- To what degree does the coach trust that the action step will come from the participants?

Inspiring

- How effective was the coach at helping the participants develop inspiring well-designed actions?
- To what degree does the action (Pathways) also include aspects of Learning and Being (Agency)?

Practice

Coaching Notes for a Recorded Workshop:

- **Check in with the facilitator about the objectives of the workshop.**

  Sample Questions:

  - What do you hope participants will gain from this workshop?
  - What do you hope to learn about yourself through this process?
  - How do you plan to use this workshop? With whom?

- **Then, listen to the recording of the workshop.**

  Provide feedback to the facilitating coach.

Reflecting on Feedback

Once you have received feedback from your peers, consider the following questions:

- What did you learn about yourself through this process?
- What do you want to learn next?
- How do you want to incorporate the feedback you received?
- What's the next step in becoming the coach you want to become?
- How can you apply this learning to other areas of your life?

CHAPTER 24: Completion & The Bigger Game

Completion

As discussed in the CTEDU 1.0 Coach Training program, completion is a mindful skill for concluding a series of coaching sessions. When your client first came to you to begin their coaching journey, they likely had overarching, long-term outcomes they were working toward. By the end of your coaching relationship (often lasting between three months to a year or even longer), your client will have made significant progress toward their goals. Completion is the art of revisiting these goals, evaluating the effectiveness of the coaching, and reflecting on the additional value your client received. To review the basics of completion from the CTEDU 1.0 Coach Training program:

Evaluate the Agenda

Completion involves looking back at your client's original agenda for their coaching package to determine the success of the coaching program.

Reflect

Reflecting on what did and did not work is an essential part of the completion process. It is your client's opportunity to offer feedback about the relationship the two of you co-designed.

Celebrate

Completing a coaching relationship also involves recognizing all of the effort, time, and resources that both of you devoted to building a coach-client relationship.

Appreciate

Coaching sessions usually end with a mutual expression of gratitude.

The Bigger Game

How many times in your life have you dreamed big, only to be told to quell your desire because it was "unlikely"? Throughout our lives, we receive messaging from the outside world to be risk-averse and careful. Even when we present evidence of successes, we're often met with the concept of "the exception and not the rule." These pieces of evidence are labeled "rare," and the narrative returns to one of safety.

In his book, *The Bigger Game,*[133] Rick Tamlyn discusses the idea that life is just one big game, and we are here to play the most exciting and fulfilling version of that game. Instead of giving in to the idea that we aren't enough or that our ideas are beyond our capabilities, Tamlyn suggests that it is a part of human nature to want to continuously develop our talents and abilities. Tamlyn encourages his clients to fully embrace the biggest, dreamiest version of the life they want to live and to spend their time working toward those goals.

With big goals, however, often comes bigger challenges. Tamlyn's concept takes the idea of defining one's problem up a notch by asking clients to choose their problems (see Chapter 6 of "The Bigger Game").

Sample Questions:

- What problems do you want to solve?
- What solutions would give you an immense sense of satisfaction and fulfillment?

When we choose a bigger outcome, the growing pains we experience will likely be longer-lasting and more intense in nature. But this kind of growth will also yield much more impressive results, forcing us to step out of our comfort zones and truly embrace our adventure zone. In doing so, we are in a constant state of reassessing our Agency and Pathways. They grow with us, developing and contorting to allow us more opportunities for success. When we embrace these challenges, they become a way to move ourselves forward, rather than obstacles that hold us back.

Helen Keller once said, "Character cannot be developed in ease and quiet. Only through experience of trial and suffering can the soul be strengthened, ambition inspired, and success achieved."

[133] Tamlyn, R. (2013). *Play your bigger game: 9 minutes to learn, a lifetime to live.* Hay House, Inc.

Big goals also open us up to vulnerability. The number one reason that most people don't start the journey toward achieving their biggest dreams is their fear of failure. They allow the "what if" to rule over their lives, never stopping for a moment to assess the possibilities. This is where resilience steps in, providing us with a fresh perspective with which to approach our lives.

The beauty of taking on big challenges is that in success, you will also find your ability to be a strong leader. People look at those who have accomplished something, people who have boldly put themselves out in the world and succeeded, as the right people to follow. So when we take ownership of our bigger games and play with firm and decisive action, our strengths emerge as a leader and as someone who is worthy of following.

Class Exercise: Round Robin Coaching

In this practice coaching, we will stay in the larger group. We will do a coach-client circle so we each have a chance to explore each of the elements of completion: Checking in on the original agenda, reflecting, celebrating, and appreciating.

Congratulations on reaching the end of the CTEDU 2.0 Coach Training! It has been a tremendous journey for me to put this program together, and it has been one of the biggest joys of my professional life. Thank you for showing up, being bold, and trusting the process. - John Andrew WIlliams, President and Founder of CTEDU

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John