



## Lifelong Learning to Artful Coaching Mastery

**Shift your relationship to professional development**

*Conformity is the jailer of freedom and the enemy of growth.*

*John F. Kennedy*

What is it that keeps you activated, inspired and engaged in being a learner? What do you give your attention toward so you are ever more effective with your clients at every stage of your development and growth as a coach? I invite you to reflect and think a little more deeply about your relationship to professional development. What does it mean to you, how are you going about it now and what else might be available to you? I intend to be a bit provocative in terms of how you look at this part of your professional life, maybe even disturb your expectations and assumptions to open some new, more empowering possibilities!

Ease and comfort as a coach might be revealing complacency and habit. What is your coaching mindset? Every one of you really loves that cherished moment when you feel like you are just absolutely clicking right along with every client you engage. Then comes the client when you're not clicking. You ask yourself, what just happened? What did I miss? Where did this go in a direction so contrary to what I am used to experiencing with my clients? I know every time this happens for me it's been a really good wake up call to pause and step back, maybe even drop a couple of clients or not pick up new clients so I give attention to self-reflective. This is my time to examine who have I become as coach and where have I taken for granted the way in which I am engaged and the quality of my presence?



I invite each of you to challenge yourself to reflect on these inquiry questions:

- *What is my coaching mindset when I am actively in a session, as I prepare before a session or just after I complete a session?*
- *What consciously or spontaneously surfaces about clients in between sessions?*
- *How am I relating to my work in a way that honors my authenticity and expression of my full potency with all of my clients?*

### **Being innovative and generating catalytic insight**

*Ever since I was a child I have had this instinctive urge for expansion and growth. To me, the function and duty of a quality human being is the sincere and honest development of one's potential.*

*Bruce Lee*

The other side of the coaching mindset coin, is your relationship with taking risk so you choose to stretch and grow. While your tried and true approaches, models and tools feel comfortable, like the old pair of slippers at the edge of our bed, these rarely stimulate your imagination. So, what does? How response agile is your coaching? How much attention do you allow so that you discover your personal landscape for innovation and catalytic insight?

Awareness for how to pursue profound change is the intention of coaching exchanges. Coaches create an environment for clients to choose new behaviors and actions that are useful for experiencing a more desirable outcome or successfully navigating the transition path. Authentic presence with



clients in this process demands that you practice creating this environment for yourself, strengthening your tolerance for stretching to risk exploring in unknown territory.

Notice as I declare this belief what emotion surfaces: agreement, dismay, disagreement, fear, surprise or maybe a little bit of inspiration? The really good news here is that if you choose the behavior of being innovative with self in search of your own catalytic insight we build self-trust for doing the same with clients. What inspires taking risk? Working with coaches in the coaching supervision process I often hear these types of phrases, "I am just flat bored, I am not in love with my clients anymore, I am not finding inspiration in my work, my sessions feel heavy and too much work." These are good indicators that it is time for taking risk to learn, be innovative and generate catalytic insight. Now, imagine what will open up in your work with clients if you choose risk taking, choose to liberate your potential in advance of these symptoms?

What I have discovered is that my potential for risk taking is growing in every moment through every person I meet. Every interaction gives me a new perspective, a new best right answer and noticing and that means I've grown new potential. Am I tapping into it all the time? The answer I came to was no.

Here is another useful inquiry to anchor this idea.

- *What stops us from naturally expressing our full potency?  
Unraveling this question reveals a sweet spot that inspires!*



## Be sovereign to coach from wholeness

*Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lie our growth and our freedom.*

*Viktor E. Frankl*

Essence is who I am, the unalterable me. For each of you it may take a lifetime to fully express it. People around you see it before you do and you are often the last one to know your essence fully. With deeper, inner reflection you do discover an expression that dynamically generates greater wholeness. This is part of being sovereign. How well do you know your own king and queen within? King or queen is a synonym for sovereign; to be sovereign in your life is the fundamental reason that you are a spiritual being in a human existence. If you can't rule yourself how in the world could you be engaged with others in community life and create a thriving, loving experience with each other? To me the gift of coaching is that people come back home to themselves, to wholeness by restoring access to essence and personal sovereignty.

*The quality or authority of being independent and in charge of our relationship with the conditions of our lives.*

*When we take our life in our own hands we also take upon our self to act with integrity and be response agile in our own life, family, community and with our fellow human beings and the planet as a whole.*

Engaging from wholeness is liberating. Do you believe this? Many of you, myself included, were rewarded and acknowledged in your lives for gaining information, turning it into knowledge, making it meaningful and telling someone else about it. I am assuming you notice this is a very outside in approach. Sadly, much of your educational experience was

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built on this principle: how much information can a student acquire and learn to remember to demonstrate knowledge?

At some point you changed your approach. You recognized more value in something instinctive, something innately creative about each person. You choose to adopt an inside out approach that partners with all the information and knowledge outside of you allowing expression of your unique point of view. That describes the intrinsic experience you have as a professional coach.

No matter where you are on the coaching journey, you are always at a place asking the question what's the next thing I could be doing, where could I go next, what's the thing I have to add. It is so easy to forget that if you honor your values at each point of your coaching journey and express from essence, a generative field opens up for your clients and you, mutually.

Here is another useful inquiry to anchor these ideas.

- *What permission is required for me to embody wholeness, the freedom to express from sovereignty, everywhere and in particular, in my capacity as coach?*

## Practices, Methods & Tools for Professional Development

*Being ignorant is not so much a shame as being unwilling to learn. Tell me and I forget. Teach me and I remember. Involve me and I learn.*

*Benjamin Franklin*



### *Recordings: Recognizing & Evolving*

- I discovered that clients enjoy and appreciate reviewing our sessions later via recording. Who knew? This is an incentive to support your own review of client session recordings over time so you may recognize your strengths and identify skills and behaviors that you want to evolve.
- Being an objective listener, outside the heat of the moment of coaching is useful in revealing habits that are creeping in and limiting our innovation and catalytic insight so we can choose greater consciousness next time.

### *Transcripts: Perceiving & Imaging*

- Invest time to type out (or have a service do this for you!) a transcript from each recording. Seeing the words reveals what you chose to perceive and follow from your client's expression and therefore, what other opportunities were present to perceive and follow.
- Imagine alternative questioning or direct communication you could have chosen and consider what new client awareness could be stimulated.



### *Experimenting: Learning Styles & Exaggeration*

- Much of artful coaching requires being responsive to a client's learning, thinking, creating and being style. How often do we default to our own dominant learning style? Listening to recordings and reading transcripts reveals alternatives to experiment with in sessions.
- Often stepping outside of our dominant habits requires exaggeration until we practice enough to find our unique expression. For example, blurting an insight to be bolder with direct communication is exaggeration that is not required after some practice in trusting our insight.

Remember it is also important to celebrate your progress over time in the same way we provide for clients.

Here is an inquiry that is useful for this process:

- *What am I harvesting now in my artful coaching mastery?*