



Skill Builder – Week 16-18

Confrontations

The skill of confronting: confronting the client on blind spots, and when the client avoids, denies, fails to respond, or responds in a way that undermines the outcome.

Have you ever had the experience where your client was getting frustrated and taking it out on you? Or where they continuously answer your questions with “I don’t know”. It may have happened (in fact, that happens regularly) that your client contradicts him or herself and they aren’t aware of it. All of these situations are perfect to make a confrontation.

Confronting is a key skill in coaching. Like it is said, life starts at the edge of your comfort zone. Our brain works in such a way that we like to stay in homeostasis: keep things the same. It’s a self organizing system, and if we want to make a transformational change, we have to move out of the matrix of our comfort zone. And there’s heat involved with that. Fiery emotions that are at the very least uncomfortable and at times downright scary. This is why we focus on facilitating relationships first and foremost. There needs to be a strong enough trust for your client to be willing to be vulnerable and speak their truth. AND for you to be able to confront him or her.

How comfortable are you with making a confrontation? Does it come naturally to you? Or does it scare you, do you shy away from it? That certainly was the case for me for a very long time. Especially when I first started coaching and I was making mistakes, feeling self conscious, I would have clients who’d get frustrated. Their frustration



intimidated me, which stopped me from simply commenting on the state they were in.

And that's really where confrontation begins: with clean feedback and commenting on someone's gestures, emotions, and the things they say. Here's a few elements that need to be present for a great confrontation:

1. Calibrating client's present state, picking up verbal and non-verbal cues. (for which you need to be in a know-nothing state).

You need to pay very close attention in order to pick up non-verbal cues that indicate a state change or something that is not being said. At the same time, picking up changes within you can give you valuable information about what's going on. Especially if you are reacting to what your client is saying or doing. So you'll at times want to check in with yourself, what state are you in, what are you picking up?

As an example, one of my clients was telling me a story of his manager who had treated him badly. In asking him what he wanted to get out of the session, he stated that he wanted to feel more confident and strong when dealing with his manager. While we were close to the outcome he wanted, for some reason we kept spinning around and around in circles. I felt myself getting annoyed and irritated, and initially I didn't listen to it. Then it dawned on me: The irritation might not be mine! I told him what I was feeling, and it turned out that it was in fact the irritation I was picking up from him. An emotion that he had a troubling relationship with, and which stopped him from asserting himself. So as I confronted him with this, we were able to lock in on the outcome that made all the difference for him.



When we are in rapport with our client, our body becomes a kind of tuning fork. We calibrate not only with our eyes and ears, but with our other senses as well.

Of course, in that moment we want to be as clean as we possibly can, so as to not interpret the information based on our own map of the world. To learn more about the Know-Nothing state, please check out the recording on this topic on the website:

<http://subscribetochange.com/?p=1121>

2. Noticing incongruencies / inconsistencies (which plays to mis-matching and seeing patterns).

Where are you on the scale of matching – mis-matching? Do you have flexibility to do both? As you are matching your client on many levels, to build rapport and gather information, you will also need to look and listen through the filter of mis-matching and detect any incongruencies. Is there a gap between what your client is saying and what the non-verbal cues they are giving? Do they contradict themselves? Are they avoiding your questions?

In your Meta-Coach training manual, there is a pattern for stretching your meta-programs. If you don't have enough flexibility, you will want to run that pattern so you can improve picking up these patterns.

3. Clear boundaries (not taking things personally, being differentiated enough to separate responsibility TO and FOR)

Are you taking what your client says or does personally? If they don't answer your question, do you get annoyed or insecure? Do you feel personally responsible for your client getting his or her outcome?



Without clear boundaries of what you are responsible FOR and TO, it becomes harder to make a confrontation. A confrontation in coaching is not an attack or making someone wrong. It's about being kindly firm so that your client either gets to choice point or can experience a paradigm shift.

When is the last time you ran that Ownership pattern, including the Responsibility TO/FOR distinction? How much of this distinction is currently present in your coaching? Do you need to re-fresh this pattern again?

4. Speaking your truth (being kindly firm when you present your feedback).

Once you are calibrating what's going on for your client, and you pick up on patterns, incongruencies, etc, you'll need to speak your truth about it. Do you have permission to do this? It's one thing to pick up one it, but another to share it with your client. Especially if it is something that they may not want to hear!

How aware are you of not speaking your truth, of holding back? What do you need to believe about it to risk the vulnerability that comes with it? And what states do you need for that?

Did you know that the word courage actually comes from the word "coeur", which means heart? Courage basically means "to speak one's truth with all one's heart." (Just something to think about!)



5. Willingness to leave a silence after the confrontation.

Are you comfortable with silence? This can be a bit tricky, especially after you've just done a confrontation because you are taking a risk. And that feels vulnerable.

One of my clients spoke to me about making more money. He really wanted to make more money, but he had a very strong limiting belief that was holding him back. He believed that when you get more money, you become a “rude asshole” who only cares about himself and not about others. Part of that was that you'd start to look down on others, thinking that you were better. Now, there were a few things that stood out in this conversation, but there was one confrontation I did that made all the difference.

When we spoke about the desired state, asking a certain amount of money for his coaching programs, he said that he could only ask that amount of money from big organizations and not of small business owners. It seemed that he already thought of these small business owners as little and fragile. So I fed this back to him, as a question after I made an acknowledgement on what he had said so far: “Are you already looking down on them and seeing them as smaller?”

It went quiet on the other end of the phone. And I noticed a thought in the back of my mind: “What have I done?! I might be horribly wrong, he might be offended. Etc. Etc.” I registered these thoughts, and held the silence as I sat with them. When he said that he felt nauseated, I actually felt nervous and had a sense of dread. Again: What have I done?! Well, it turned out that while it was a bit of a punch in the gut because it violated some of his own higher values, it hit the nail right on the head. And this allowed him to make a decision to not do that anymore, and opened him up to charge the amount he wanted for his services.

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Being ok with staying silent, regardless of the thoughts that may run in the back of your head, is powerful beyond belief. Making your confrontation tentative, basing it on what you've heard and seen and keeping any judgment out of it, will make it so much easier. Your client may not sync with what you've brought to their attention. And that's ok. It just means you get to explore more.

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1. Listen to the [Know-Nothing State](#) teleconference on Subscribe to Change.
2. Run the Expanding Meta-Programs pattern on Matching-Mis-matching to gain greater flexibility to pick up incongruencies, contradictions, and opportunities to confront.
3. Examine your relationship with confrontation or any aspect of it (like silence, for example). Go through the basic matrix change pattern (the structure of meta-stating troubling concepts)