

TheCoachMentor

TQL Resources #1: Introducing Coaching To New Client

Congratulations, you have decided to work with me on achieving your goals. In preparation of our first session, there are a couple of things that I'd like to share with you so that you can get the most out of our time together.

About Coaching

Coaching is different from other professions like consulting, mentoring, training and therapy. It is all about helping you find the answers and inner resources you need to get to your outcome. While in consulting the main goal is to share expertise, in coaching we refrain from giving advice. This is because we believe that you have all the answers you need. It's for this reason we also won't focus on mentoring or training.

While it's not the main focus, I might at times do some training as it relates to personal development or the psychology of change. Understanding certain principles will make it easier for you to understand how you have created your own experience. This will allow you to make informed decisions about what you want and need to change.

Coaching Is About Structure

Coaching, even though we listen thoroughly and intensely to what you have to say, is not about content. That's not to say that I am not interested in your stories, but they may not be relevant to you getting your outcome. This means that I might at times interrupt you if I have enough information or if I hear something important that we need to pay attention to.

It is in the structure of our meaning making that we create problematic states, and have the opportunity to build new states and experiences that allow us to do what it is we want to do.

During our sessions I will be listening for the structure and will invite you to do so as well. That's why I want you to be aware of some of the things that I will be listening for, so we can determine together whether it's something that is at play for you or not.

Cognitive distortions:

We use language to make sense of the world around us. We label, evaluate, generalize, and delete information in order to understand the world. We do this from a very early age, and a great deal of our mapping the external world around us is set at the age of 5. By that time, our language is limited, and therefore our meaning-making often has

TheCoachMentor

distortions in them.

Growing up, we have the ability to make the necessary nuances that will allow us to deal with situations effectively. But that does not always happen. And these cognitive distortions can really hold us back in life. In fact, they can be very toxic.

As a reminder, we all use this kind of thinking from time to time. It says nothing about who you are as a person. It's the frames that is the problem, never the person! And we can change the frames into something more effective for you.

Below you will find a list of these cognitive distortions, with an example of how they work.

All-or-nothing thinking

You see things in black-or-white categories. If a situation falls short of perfect, you see it as a total failure. When a young woman on a diet ate a spoonful of ice cream, she told herself "I've blown my diet completely." This thought upset her so much she gobbled down an entire quart of ice cream!

Over-generalizing

You see a single negative event, such as a romantic rejection or career reversal, as a never-ending pattern of defeat by using words such as "always" or "never" when you think about it. A depressed salesman became terribly upset when he noticed bird dung on the window shield of his car. He told himself, "Just my luck. Birds are always crapping on my car!"

Mental filter

You pick out a single negative detail and dwell on it exclusively so that your vision of all of reality becomes darkened, like the drop of ink that discolours a beaker of water. Example: You receive many positive comments about your presentation to a group of associates at work, but one of them says something wildly critical. You obsess about his reaction for days and ignore all the positive feedback.

Jumping to conclusions

You interpret things negatively when there are no facts to support your conclusion. Mind reading: Without checking it out, you arbitrarily conclude that someone reacting negatively to you.

Emotional reasoning

You assume that your negative emotions necessarily reflect the way things really are: "I

TheCoachMentor

feel terrified about going on airplanes. It must be very dangerous to fly.” Or “I feel guilty. I must be a rotten person.” Or “I feel angry. This proves I am being treated unfairly.” Or “I feel so inferior. This means I am a second-rate person.”

“Should” statements

You tell yourself that things *should* be the way you hoped or expected them to be. After playing a difficult piece on a piano, a gifted pianist told herself: “I shouldn’t have made so many mistakes.” This made her feel so disgusted that she quit practicing for several days. “Musts”, “ought’s”, and “have to’s” are similar offenders.

“Should” statements that are directed against yourself lead to guilt and frustration. Should statements directed at others or at the world lead to anger and frustration: “He shouldn’t be so stubborn and argumentative.”

Many people try to motivate themselves with shoulds and shouldn’ts, as if they were delinquents who had to be punished before they could be expected to do anything. “I shouldn’t eat that doughnut.” This usually does not work because all these shoulds and musts make you feel rebellious and you get the urge to do the opposite. Dr. Albert Ellis calls this “musterbation”

Labeling

Labeling is an extreme form of all or nothing thinking. Instead of thinking “I made a mistake”, you attach a negative label to yourself: “I am a loser.”

Labeling is quite irrational because you are not the same as what you do. Human being exists, but “fools”, “losers”, and “jerks” do not. These labels are just useless abstractions that lead to anger, anxiety, frustration, and low self esteem.

You may also label others. When someone does something that rubs you the wrong way, you may tell yourself: “He’s an S.O.B.” Then you feel that the problem is with the person’s character or essence instead of with their thinking or behavior. You see them as totally bad. This makes you feel hostile and hopeless about improving things and leaves little room for constructive communication.

Personalization and blame

Personalization occurs when you hold yourself personally responsible for an event that is not entirely under your control. When a woman received a note that her child was having difficulties at school, she told herself: “This shows what a bad mother I am,” instead of trying to pinpoint the cause of the problem so she could be helpful to her child. When another woman’s husband beat her, she told herself: “If only I were better in bed, he wouldn’t beat me.”

TheCoachMentor

Personalization leads to guilt, shame and over-responsibility.

Some people do the opposite. They blame other people or their circumstances for their problems, and they overlook ways that they might be contributing to the problem: “The reason my marriage is so lousy is because my spouse is totally unreasonable.” Blame usually does not work very well because other people will resent being scapegoated and they will toss the blame right back. It also creates powerlessness by not taking responsibility.

Catastrophizing

This is a particularly extreme and painful form of fortune telling, where we project a situation into a disaster or the worst-case scenario. You might think catastrophizing helps you prepare and protect yourself, but it usually causes needless anxiety and worry.

A person who is catastrophizing might fail an exam and immediately think he or she has likely failed the entire course. A person may not have even taken the exam yet and already believe he or she will fail—assuming the worst, or preemptively catastrophizing.

Fortune telling

We believe we know what the future holds, as if we have psychic powers. We make negative predictions, feeling convinced these are unavoidable facts. Examples of fortune telling: “I am going to fail,” “This situation will never change.”

Impossibility thinking

Imposing semantic limits on oneself and others using the word “can’t” which presupposes that there is some law or rule that constrains us from doing something.

Discounting

This extreme form of all-or-nothing thinking occurs when a person discounts positive information about a performance, event, or experience and sees only negative aspects. A person engaging in this type of distortion might disregard any compliments or positive reinforcement he or she receives.

TheCoachMentor

Thinking Styles

Another way of detecting patterns, is through listening to what is called a thinking style. This is the lens we use to interpret what happens around us. It has some overlap with cognitive distortions, but while cognitive distortions usually lead to a distorted view on reality, a thinking style can actually be very useful in one situation yet not so effective in another.

The following thinking styles describe *the kinds of lenses* we use when we look at people, events, and information. (source: User's Manual For The Brain by Bobby Bodenhammer and Dr. L. Michael Hall).

Internal Referencing ————— External Referencing

People with internal as a preference know from within whether they did something well or not so good. They rely on their own inner frame of reference. They collect information and use their intuition to decide. Typical expressions are "I had that feeling" or "I simply knew it." They have autonomy in their decisions. They know by themselves what is right.

It is difficult to persuade these people in case of a different opinion. They react less to praise or criticism. Both will rather be used to judge whether the other

understands the subject or not. For them it is helpful to learn to listen to proposals and feedback from others.

People with this preference are open minded in their decisions. They want to know what others think. "Someone has to tell me" or "I was appreciated". They have to get the information for evaluation from the outside. They want to know what others think of them. They react to positive comments or critique. Persons with strong external references need information from outside sources to know where they stand. Thus they are less autonomous. For them, it is helpful to learn not to get too influenced by others and to rely on people whom you know very well and whom you can trust.

Reactive ————— Active

If a report would need to be written with a four-week deadline, a person with the Active thinking preference would start to prepare the report after maybe two weeks' time. Changes are dealt with at once and spontaneously. This thinking preference is important for short reaction times.

A person with the reactive thinking preference would begin to write during the last two or three days. Changes are dealt with only after thorough reflection. This preference is useful in quality control jobs.

TheCoachMentor

Long term ————— **Short term**

People with the long term preference put their emphasis on midterm or long-term consequences and effects. They tend to overlook short-term

consequences. They prefer to use a time planner. They divide time globally. Long-term means to you in the current job situation:

The prime attention for short term is focused on the immediate or short-term consequences. They tend to ignore the long-term aspects. They have a more "southern" feeling of time. Their feeling for time is more like that of southern cultures and therefore they use time planners much less. This thinking preference is important for immediate reactions and for improvisation. Short-term means to you in the current job situation:

Global ————— **Detail**

People with the global preference generalize. They like to have an overview first. The chunks they are using carry rough and more global information. They concentrate on the general direction of a project. They can easily see relations and basic structures. They work best when they can delegate details to others. Their learning style is from the Global to Details (deductive).

People using the details preference concentrate on the details of a job. Details are important to them. The chunks they are using carry many detailed bits of information and have a finer structure. They deal with the elements and components of a project. Preciseness and accuracy is important to them. Their learning style is from Details to Global (inductive).

Options ————— **Procedures**

People with the options preference are motivated to find new solutions and to experiment with alternatives whenever they get a chance to do so. They ask: "How else could it work?". If you give them a process that promises 100 percent success, they tend to polish it even further. To them decisions mean limitations. They do not like decisions and if they happen to be Re-Active at the same time, they avoid decisions. They avoid or ignore rules and look for alternatives to the routine path. People in this preference can be motivated by giving them options, opportunities, alternatives and chances. They can easily develop procedures, but have difficulty in following them.

In the procedures preference people are looking for the right way and for proven procedures. They ask: "What do I have to do?". Their frame of reference is to do what is necessary. They like to go the official way and follow firm working structures. They have no problem deciding, any decision is a relief to them. Once they have found a procedure

TheCoachMentor

that works, they will always return to it.

They will be irritated or confused if someone asks them to break rules. "Why should I break rules which obviously worked?". Giving them proven procedures and processes can best motivate these people. If you do not provide them with procedures, they can become helpless. They have difficulty in developing procedures. They like to be given procedures and like to follow them.

Caring for Self* ————— *Caring for Others

To people with the caring for self preference it is more important to first concentrate on oneself. Probably they would realize that they need something to drink before they see that the others need something too before they go and get the drinks. This thinking preference is often used by athletes or in professions in which performance is very important.

People with the caring for others preference take care of others first. In our example, they would notice that someone else needs something to drink and would go and get it. In this situation, they would likely get something to drink for them self too. This thinking preference is often found in service and support jobs and in healing professions.

Difference* ————— *Sameness

People with a sameness preference look first in any new situation forwhether this has something in common with previous experiences. They sometimes have difficulty in noticing differences and changes and they dislike major changes. They like the familiar things and the safety of the known. This preference is important to recognize patterns.

People with the difference thinking preference first recognize any differences based on their past experience. When they enter a new room or meet a new situation, they can immediately detect what is different compared with what they

know from the past. They have difficulties in recognizing patterns or similarities, and they like change. This thinking preference is important for spotting mistakes.

Relationship* ————— *Task

People who primarily concentrate on the persons involved are mainly concerned with the well-being of these persons. In case of a strong tendency towards this preference the task gets out of focus. They put their attention on people and on the team spirit. They tend to care for other people.

People with task orientation are mainly interested in getting the job done and reaching the goal. In the extreme, this can result in pushing colleagues or themselves too hard.

TheCoachMentor

They put their attention on the work or job to be done and to the related dates and deadlines. They are attracted by tasks.

Towards* ————— *Away From

People in this preference move towards a certain goal. They quickly leave the past behind and quickly address their tasks and goals. In extreme situations it can mean they want to get to the goal and overlook the problems on the way. Their motivation is the attractiveness of their goals. For them it is often helpful to find out what kind of problems may arise by achieving their goal.

Problem oriented people move away from all sorts of problems. They follow an avoidance-strategy, they like to avoid problems or difficulties, their attention is directed towards things that shall not happen. They can use this preference, their caution, positively to deliver high quality, to proceed in a safe manner and thus become very reliable. They match very well with their "Towards" colleagues. They can best be motivated by being shown negative consequences. For them it is often helpful to find out what exactly they want to have instead of having the problem they are solving.

In Time* ————— *Through Time

People who are in-time oriented will be great at being present, yet struggle to predict how long a task or action will take. They are often late with deadlines, meetings, or events.

Through time people often see their timeline right in front of them, whereas someone with a preference for in-time often has their timeline run through them with their future in front and past behind them. This means that through-time people can see time and plan and monitor progress. They are better at being punctual and meeting deadlines.

TheCoachMentor

Setting An Outcome

Before we get started, I would like you to go over the following questions and fill them out. You can send it back to me before our first session. This will be our starting point to determine your outcome statement and identify what we need to work on. Please copy/past the questions below, answer them to the best of your abilities, and send it back to me. This is going to be your outcome statement document, and we will use it as the basis of our coaching sessions. Feel free to add pictures, colors, etc, whatever makes it more inspiring to you!

Where are you now? (Describe your current situations/areas where you want to see a shift/change)

What triggers you in those situations?

Where does your mind go? (Thoughts, reference experiences, etc)

How do you describe your state of mind / emotion in those situations?

What is the behavior you'd like to change?

Where do you want to be? (Desired State)

What do you want to experience in that desired state? (Please describe the different situations/areas that will be different once you have achieved your outcome. The more specific, the better)

What will you see, hear, feel, etc., when you have it?

What will you be doing in these situations?

Where, when, how, with whom, etc. will you get this outcome?

Who will you have to become to get this outcome?

Who is a good example for you that already has this outcome?

Have you ever had or done this before?

What prevents you from moving toward it and attaining it now?

How will you know that your outcome has been realized?

What will let you know that you have attained that desired state?

TheCoachMentor

When will you feel satisfied with the outcome?

What will you gain through it? What will you lose? Is it achievable? Does it respect your health, relationships, etc.? Are there any parts of you that object to this outcome?