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Coachee-learning – a Results-based Method for Assessing Coaches

Dr Angus I McLeod

Abstract

The present paper follows on from the Acuity paper of 2016.

Coach interventions are reported that create learning experiences in the coachee. The rationale for the selection of the interventions is based upon: 1) observed levels of coachee's psychological states and, 2) coachee-learning as expressed by coachee-language (using the REPROCess model), where psychological shift is classified according to the model. Examples link separate coach interventions to specific learning and the perceived level of state-change (as determined by observations of the coachee). The methods here provide a means of training advanced coaches and also, assessment of coaches based on coachee-change, rather than present-day, skills-observation of coaches alone.

This paper suggests that further efforts towards the assessment of coaches, based upon what is achieved in the coachee, should be fruitful.

Key Words

Coaching interventions, psychological state-change, Reflective Language, REPROCess Model, meta-coaching, learning, coach-assessment.

Introduction

When Robert Dilts wrote (Dilts, 2003) about large 'C' and small 'c' coaching, he asserted that facilitative methods create more impactful change than focussing on behavioral change. His differentiation between the qualities of different coaches and his pitch towards more effective coaching, reflected a separate, but prevalent view at the time, that the best coaches could not be ranked on skill-sets alone; the best coaches appeared to have

additional qualities. Benchmarking of coach-skills by Hall (2013) and others has improved the 'potential' to rank coaches by skill-sets, but the factors that differentiate the good and best remain hinted at rather than prescribed by their skill-sets.

Coaching, as a set of variable disciplines has risen towards professionalism with a number of key coach's skill-sets, including their benchmarking. In contrast, other, more established and more consistently prescribed professions, allow the ranking of practitioners on their results for clients; to check customer-satisfaction, failure-rates and risk. Recent research (Lawley & Linder-Pelz) averred this:

'If assessing competency requires both an evaluation of behaviour and a measure of outcome, why is it that so many competency-based assessments and certifications do not include outcome measures? Instead, it is presupposed that an expert can evaluate a coach's competency solely by observing behaviour specified by the coaching method.'

The pilot results showed a very significant disconnect between coach assessments made by an international expert (on the meta-coaching discipline involved in the study) and the actual expressed experiences of the people who were coached. They reported that there was a:

'notable divergence of opinion between expert and coachees relating to the degree of confrontation, challenge, probe, direction and goal orientation. For example, in dyad B the expert said the coach did not once confront, whereas the coachee's first words in the interview were 'I found it very confronting. She challenged me on just about everything I said'.'

Other examples in that reported work also illustrated the disconnect, adding weight to the view that skilled assessment of coaches (even by benchmarking¹) is inadequate in predicting the results of coaching experienced by the people coached.

If coach-assessment is to move in the direction of analysis by results, then this study in which psychological change in the coachee is assessed, may make a further contribution both to coach training, but also to increased confidence in those hiring coaches. This study attempts to extend that debate and encourage further research on coaching interventions that create real change in the coachee.

Results-based assessments should prove useful compared to current practices, where assessment of coaches is based upon skill-sets alone.

Coaching Questions & Challenge

Most people are familiar with the comfort zone model, including a stretch zone. Often, the stretch zone is also referred to (Senninger, 2000) as the 'Learning Zone'.

Coaching questions can be designed to place the coachee into the Learning Zone. It can be imagined that more challenging questions will place the coachee further into their stretch/learning zone. However, observations of countless professional coaches at the Coaching Foundation and elsewhere, illustrate that many coaches ask questions primarily to inform themselves, rather than challenge the coachee. This is an observation also made by James Lawley (Lawley, 2015) after modelling numerous professional coaches. The coach was often questioning in order to provide information/pattern that may be 'treated' by the coach, by application of a therapeutic coaching tool, or device. Conversely, in this present study, James Lawley noticed that coach questions were predominantly asked, not to inform the coach, but to stimulate the coachee to learn more about their own thinking and inner-world of perception: understanding, judgements, beliefs and so on. James and his partner, Penny Tompkins are masters of linguistics and psychotherapy, both responsible for elucidating the brilliance of David Grove's 'Clean Language' but also for formulating a facilitative practice called 'Symbolic Modelling' (Lawley & Tompkins, 2000) to help clients explore and understand their inner mind-maps and to use these maps to engender welcome and transformative change. James noticed similarities in the relative 'cleanness' of the coach questioning of this study, aiming to help the coachee explore their inner world, rather than provide information for the coach. 'Clean' questions for the coachee then, may be one major distinction separating professional coaches and those that are masterful.

In this study, we recorded the re-use of the coachee's language in the sessions. When a coachee speaks, a neural pathway is created. So, when the same words are used by the coach, the words may be imagined as travelling back along the pathway, not requiring any interpretation or judgment. The reported study will show that the use of these words alone (that is, without a subsequent question), may cause shifts in both psychological state and shifts in their learning (as evidenced by their language). We will see too, that the repeated language may be linked (by the coach) with a number of interventions, with or without questions, to also produce altered states in the coachee and to lead to shifts in their learning.

Psychological States Model: from intellectual to trance-like

The first part of this research paper (McLeod, 2016) set out a proposed classification of coachee-states. It also made linkages between facilitative coaching's best practice and neuroscience.

To provide further context here, a full set of interventions from the research to date, is included now.

Learning states are recognized as important to psychological change-work (Bolstad, 2002). The extremes of coachee-attention suggested here are:

1. Externally focussed on the coach and coaching space
2. Internally focussed: processing/experiencing states, or actual trance-like states.

Facilitative coaching is capable of creating variable levels of internally-focussed states. The higher levels of internal experiencing can be so intense that the coachee may lose awareness of external events and may often have no recollection of the coaching detail (McLeod 2009).

Four levels of psychological state in coachees are described, in order to map and follow their needs. Each level marks a distinct, observable differentiation, as the coachee requires deeper processing to move forward. The four levels of state proposed (McLeod, 2011) move from engaged 'intellectual' states to deep introspection. The Levels are selected simply because the distinctions between the four levels are easy to spot, once you know what to look for (see later):

1. Intellectualizing Spontaneously
2. Intellectual Accessing
3. Trance-like Events – Self-reflective experiencing
4. Trance-like Events with pauses of more than 2 seconds (sometimes minutes).

It has been proposed (Goel, 2003) that there are two distinct forms of logical processing, each characterized by separate neural pathways. These are so-called 'heuristic' (recall of experience & knowledge) via a frontal/temporal pathway and 'universal/formal processing' in the parietal system involving a visuo-spacial system (in the case of syllogistic reasoning), where simple recall is not enough, because the demands for information are 'unfamiliar, nonconceptual (sic) or incoherent'. It is intriguing to wonder

if levels #1 and #2 are not patterned manifestations of these two proposed 'reasoning' systems.

Intellectual Responses	1. Engaged Conversational Fluid dynamic ~ Animation
	2. As above Plus Engaged pauses
Trance-like Events	3. Disengaged Internal No animation
	4. As above Plus Events > 2 secs

Level #1: Intellectualizing Spontaneously

The coachee is engaged, responsive and lively. They may be animated. If in rapport, and at Level #1., the Coachee will exhibit some or all of the following:

- A level of eye-contact with the coach
- Variable animation including, often, gestures of emphasis
- Rapid answering.

Level #2: Intellectual Accessing

The coachee has all the Level #1 characteristics, but there are short episodes where the coachee is more noticeably accessing information. These short episodes may only last for parts of a second. The slightly higher effort involved in answering may be due to the questions being more probing and challenging; the coachee has to dig deeper to seek/deduce the information and so, there are pauses while they access, explore/reason.

The coachee may also exhibit:

- Very short periods of silence, typically while remaining energized and engaged
- Rapid eye-movements, perhaps associated with accessing memory.

Level #3: Deeper Level Processing – Trance-like Events <2 seconds

At Level #3., the coachee no longer has easily-accessible memory (to a more challenging question) and seeks to construct new meanings from internal processing. These new meanings will be advised, no doubt, on information and linkages, based upon their prior and current learning and experience. For example, a coach may ask the coachee to focus their attention on a movement they made, or what may be happening in part of their body (when the coachee talks about a particular experience or aim). The short episodes of internal processing follow the stimulus of the question (or just the first few words of the question). During these episodes, the coachee may exhibit some (or all) of the following:

- Defocus of vision into the middle-distance and, mostly-steady eye position (possibly with some rapid, accessing movements without focus)
- Muscle relaxation and loss of muscle tones generally:
 - Slight nod of head
 - Relaxation in jaw
 - Droop in posture
- Shallow breathing & heart-rate
- Silence
- Absolute cessation of physical movement/tics.

At Levels #1 and #2, there may be one or more repeated physical tics (movements). For example, a foot may be twitching, but as they enter Level #3., the tic instantly stops. Moments later (or longer), the tic will often start again. This happens as the coachee re-enters the 'outside world' of their experience (Level #1). Very often, if the coach is graceful

and quiet, the coachee will slide back into their internal, Level #3 state, without further intervention by the coach. The coach may also repeat all, or just part of the intervention that led to the Level #3 state; this may immediately trigger that state again. There can be, in effect, a subtle dance of coaching within the dynamic space. Level #3 is defined here as episodes lasting for 2 seconds or less. This dance of coaching, where the coachee is leading, may be another characteristic that differentiates between professional and masterful coaches.

Level #4: Deeper Level Processing - Trance-like Events >2 seconds

All the characteristics of Level #3 continue, but for longer periods. Eyes are invariably still and always focussed into the middle-distance. There are no tics at all. Some features of Level #3 physiology (listed above) may be exaggerated during the first few seconds at Level #4. The additional features may include:

- Subliminal breathing rate
- Reducing pallor of skin tones.

Note, that these states are NOT akin to sleep! The eyes are maintained open, but the coachee's focus is in the middle distance. Such states (single or chained) always resulted in learning experiences (described below).

Research published in Acuity (McLeod, 2016) showed that facilitative coaching may often lead to rapid state-change in the coachee, moving from Level #1 to Levels #3 & Level #4 states within the first minute or so of coaching.

In summary, questioning and statements that are challenging to the coachee may be expected to lead to internal processing during trance-like states. During these same internal states, learning occurs as determined by analyses of the coachee's language and, a leap of learning may occur, the so-called 'Aha!' moment.

Coaching skills Leading to state-change and perceptive change

In research, we have established coaching skills that are effective in moving a coachee into Level #3 & Level #4. The skills so far established in continuing research, have been identified by repeated viewing of video taken from coaching master-classes. In each case, coach-behaviors are noted (where they are repeated several times), and where consistent change is evidenced by the verbal record in the transcript. The objective of the coach,

together with any other effect that results from the use of the skill (recorded by the coachee, or as observed by the researcher) are noted.

Typical outcomes that follow episodes at Level #4 include: new meaning, new understanding, high energy & motivation. A coachee may become very animated, gratified (smiling & self-confident) and obviously excited. In one recorded case, the coachee left a Level #4 state, leapt to his feet and started to leave the room saying, "I know what to do. Brilliant! Invoice me."

Links: interventions, psychological levels & coachee map

We have been using the work of Lawley & Tompkins (2012) to map where a coachee is during their coaching-journey by analyzing coachee-language. The REPROCess Model maps coachee-attention in reaction to questions posed by the facilitator/coach. Mapping coachee-responses were classified into six, consciously-acknowledged learning experiences. These classifications are not a sequence, but simply a list of categories into which the language analyses from coachee-scripts are readily placed. The classifications are:

1. Resource (expressed quality of self supporting change-work)
2. Explanation (reasoning for understanding)
3. Problem (expressed)
4. Remedy (a course of potential action)
5. Outcome (expressed objective)
6. Change (psychological reframe or shift of understanding or motivation)

It is worth noting that 'Explanation' described by the REPROCess Model is invariably self-explored and vocalized exploration, rather than 'explanation' to inform the facilitator. REPROCess practitioners use prescribed language that is 'clean' in order to facilitate client discovery.

We have linked a number of coach-interventions (linguistic & physical) to the observed psychological state in the coachee (Levels #1 through #4), and to their resulting learning (classified using the REPROCess map).

Combining the two models enables direct linkages to be made between interventions (questions AND coach-behaviors) that lead to one or more of the six learning experiences, including significant psychological advance, or 'change'.

The combined information is now given below for each type of patterned coach-intervention. Quotes are exact: any words spoken by the coachee (and coachee-words repeated by the coach), are shown in italics. Where a Level of state is reported, it is followed in parenthesis along with the REPROCess classification.

Followship (F/)

In this group of coach-interventions, the coach is following the coachee, naturally of course, in energy, physical movements (including gestures and eye/head movements), sounds, breathing, words or phrases. As the coaching was facilitative, it is unsurprising to see a number of examples here.

From an NLP perspective, this Followship is referred to as matching. These matching (and cross-matching) behaviors of the coach are then expected to lead to improved rapport.

Matching language, used without interpretation, may also be expected to reach the coachee via open neural pathways, without the need for intellectual process (McLeod 2016). Matching-language, so-called, 'Reflective Language' (McLeod, 2003) may then be less likely to stimulate a coachee away from their inner, experiential states, but rather to help them stay in productive learning states, including trance-like states. Repeated Reflected Language may improve their capacity to return to deeper, inner levels of experiencing; trance-like events (Level 3 and Level 4) examples, following Reflective Language, are reported below.

The first group of Followship skills involves simply matching, without further intervention by the coach:

F/Physical movements

Physical movements can include gestures that match or cross-match the coachee. They include smiling, tilting the head, looking or pointing in a direction that the coachee has identified, crossing limbs, paced breathing and so on. The coach may nod to follow the coachee, provided coachee-language is positive and useful to them.

Here are examples from this research:

- Coachee smiles and the coach smiles (Coachee reaches Level #4)
- Coachee hand-gesture followed by a coach hand-gesture to same direction (coachee reaches Level #3)

The physical movement that the coach uses, whether used by them previously or not, was sometimes re-used later in the coaching-journey, to help re-trigger an anchored, resourceful state:

Coach: “This *stuff* over here” <with matched arm movement> n.b. *italics* are the coachee’s words

Coachee: “*There is capacity to push things out*” (coachee at Level #1; RESOURCE)

The coachee’s words, or simply one word previously used by the coachee, can act as an invitation for the coachee to move to deeper levels of psychological experience. Of course, there may be increased impact using coachee-words and using coachee-physical movements together.

The reader may wish to notice where the Reflected Language² does not follow a grammatical form; unnecessary words can be omitted by the coach, in the same way that they are omitted in Clean Language, for example (Lawley & Tompkins 1997): ‘And what kind of relax is relax like that...’

Coach: “*It is uncomfortable... moving away from that*” <two separate phrases taken from the coachee’s previous statement>

Coachee B: “*I don’t like where I am*” (coachee at Level #2; PROBLEM)

Coach: “*Trying to fit more in*”

Coachee N: “*I’m actively going to take care of myself*” (coachee to Level #2; OUTCOME)

In these examples, the coachee’s language triggers responses that are not a logical answer to the questions, but rather, new meanings. In other words, the ‘clean’ nature of the question may be considered to have facilitated the coachee to develop new meanings for themselves, rather than logical answering of the coach’s question to advise the coach.

Followship plus Intervention

Followship can be linked to one or more subsequent interventions. These could include a new coach-movement, change of pace, a sound, question or a statement that challenges the coachee into the Learning Zone.

If the coach is very aware of coachee-behaviors, the coach also has a rich array of both verbal and non-verbal material to leverage the effectiveness of their coaching, see here:

F/Movement

Sometimes, the earlier movement of the coachee can be used by the coach, while asking a question which relates to the coachee-expression (given at the time that they used that movement).

Coach: "You have a process for that?" <repeats coachee's earlier gesture>

Coachee: "*I cannot imagine anything more important* (coachee to Level #3; CHANGE)

F/Words

The coach will select one or more words, phrase or part of a coachee-sentence. The coachee words can be sandwiched to make a revised statement or question:

Coach: "Don't want *work* to be *such a dominant part of my life*"

Coachee S: "*Yes, it's getting in the way of me*" (coachee at Level #1; PROBLEM)

Coach: "So, on the one hand *X*, and on the other hand *Y*" <repeating inner conflicts *X & Y*>

Coachee T: "*I know it about time-management*" (coachee Level #2; REMEDY)

Additional words can include examples or stories to provide context for the coachee, and then followed by a related question.

F/Resourcing the Coachee

Resourcing tries to facilitate the coachee to explore and find resourcefulness to change, often following from internal exploration:

Coach: "Best advice is *X & Y*" <*X & Y* in coachee's words>

Coachee F: "*It's exquisite. It's empowering that I can actually be there*" (coachee to Level #3; CHANGE)

F/Words & Challenge

A question or statement may be more, or less challenging. The Psychological Levels Model is predicated on the idea that, a greater challenge accepted by the coachee may lead to deeper, internal processing/experiencing in the 'Learning Zone'. A challenge may be accompanied with direct eye-contact.

Coach: "<repeated coachee-words> what exactly?"

Coachee D: "*It is too long to saving my life*" (coachee to Level #4; CHANGE)

Coach: "<repeated coachee-words> and that is a surprise?"

Coachee P: "*It's a change to how things were in the past*" (coachee to Level #3; CHANGE)

Coach: "Eventually there will be a *change* but not today..."

Coachee N: "Well, it is *today*. *It is today*" (coachee to Level #2; CHANGE)

Coach: "What is that *one thing*?"

Coachee S: "*Developing my practice*" (coachee at Level #1; OUTCOME)

Coach: "*Really important?*"

Coachee S: "*Yes, like vital*" (coachee at Level #1; EXPLANATION)

C/Interrupt and Challenge

Coaches do not typically interrupt the coachee. However, if the coachee is moving away from a resourceful train of self-expression, then interruption may help them to go back to the resourceful experience. The interrupt may be an earlier phrase (often containing the coachee's words) that had already produced deeper states in the coachee. As the coachee moves out of deeper states, the coach may re-play the same phrase again. So, there is a dance of intervention that follows and facilitates the coachee's learning states:

Coach: "Does it really *do it* for you.....compared to then?"

Coachee: "*So, compared to then, I'm talking about things I would have given my life for...*"
(coachee to Level #4; CHANGE)

F/Integration of parts

Integration of parts can be very simple as demonstrated here:

Coach: "Do you want to say hello to this *different person*?"

Coachee: "*It feels like I am full of relief, a wow feeling*" (coachee to Level #4; CHANGE)

F/Joke

Jokes can be helpful at the start of a coaching relationship by way of building rapport. They can also help reframe something the coachee thought of as very serious, as just ridiculous and questionable. The coachee may then re-calibrate the seriousness of their issue. <The dialogue in this transcription has been redacted to shorten>

1. Coachee: "...I get distracted by interesting things that come along that aren't really important to me, but they're interesting"
2. Coach: "So, you sound pretty skilled at this?" <matching hand movement>
3. Coachee: "Yes <laughs>, I've been mastering it for my life"
4. Coach: "That's, that's <sic> your success strategy" <laughs>
5. Coachee: "That's my success strategy for being interested in my life but not for achieving results"
6. Coach: "So, not for achieving results?"
7. Coachee: "Hmmm..." <pauses, reflective>
8. Coach: "So, what's important here, is it *enjoying your life* or is it *achieving results*, or is it a bit of both or..." <trails off>
9. Coachee: "<pause> I guess it's something even deeper than both of those things. It's about me".

F/Meta positions

The conventional perceptual positions, second and third/observer, are all useful and a related trick is asking the coachee to advise the coach, as if the coach has the exact same issue to resolve. As with the third-position, this can help them to disassociate from less-useful emotions.

Coach: "So, if I had this same scenario <coachee's language repeated> how would you advise me to manage all that?"

Coachee B: "*Do one thing and achieve a level of momentum, then bring other things in, one by one, as you can manage them*" (coachee at Level #3 repeated; REMEDY)

The coachee's solution is then a powerful message which is usefully re-played, back to them.

Summary so far

In the examples of F/ interventions so far, we see that careful re-use of the coachee's verbal and non-verbal expression can be used to create any of the six learning experiences described by Lawley and Tompkins. Reflective Language and the re-use of just one or two coachee-words can be enough to generate measureable coachee-learning. All these skills can be taught and the results-based learning events mapped quite easily.

F/Metaphor question

The classic metaphor question is, "So, what is that/this like?"

Coach: "What is *it* like?"

Coachee N: "*It's horrible*" (coachee to Level #4 for 7 seconds and again for 9 seconds; CHANGE)

Coach: "What is *this* like"

Coachee R: "*Things will happen quicker, naturally...*" (coachee to Level #3; RESOURCE)

Coach: "And what is *that* like?"

Coachee D: "*I feel more healthy, more energetic*" (coachee to Level #3; RESOURCE)

Coach: "And what is *that* like?"

Coachee T: "*Great. A new sense of confidence*" (coachee to Level #3; CHANGE)

F/So, And, Or

The coach's intervention may just be an invitation to explore more. The word "or", "so" or "and" may be preceded by an audible breath (slow intake and out-take) and followed by an attentive pause. Here is another example where fewer words from the coach can make significant differences to measureable coachee-learning.

Coach: "So...."

Coachee E: *"My project is... getting my business started"* (coachee to Level #2; OUTCOME)

Coach: "Or..."

Coachee T: *"It's even deeper, giving service is important"* (coachee to Level #2; OUTCOME)

F/Pauses

Typically, these include eye-contact and aim to bring greater focus into the coach-coachee dynamic. Pauses can also be used to help the coachee move to internal states.

Coach: *"Nature itself..."*

Coachee M: *"Yeah, I feel that"* (coachee to Level #4; RESOURCE)

Coach: *"Cool..."*

Coachee T: *"It was easy"* (coachee to Level #4; CHANGE)

F/Trail off

When the coach is attentive to the coachee, the cues determining the four Levels of psychological state become clear. So, when the coach triggers a coachee-shift from intellectualizing and into an internal state, there is then no longer any point in the coach talking (and risking interruption of the coachee's learning state). Instead, the coach can 'trail off' by lowering the voice and stopping mid-sentence. The coachees in this study did not show any sign of noticing 'trail-off' and there were no coachee-references to noticing trail off, or pauses, in any of the debriefing sessions that followed all sessions. Indeed, in the author's wider practice, trail-off, Reflective-Language and deleting parts of the

coachee's sentences when repeating, are not noticed or commented upon by coaches at any time during or after coaching.

Coach: "...when would that be or..."

Coachee: *"I need to get them moving"* (coachee to Level #3; OUTCOME)

F/Neutral

A coach may not wish to support (or judge) a coachee who is emotionally associating with their negativity. A challenge may come later, but while the coachee is using unresourceful language, the coach may demonstrate a neutral demeanour to avoid supporting a coachee's negative pattern. Here are two examples of coachee-language where the coach remained neutral.

Coachee: *"There is a sense of overwhelm about where to start"*

Coachee: *"I'm feeling some stuckness and inertia"* (coachee to Level #2; PROBLEM)

F/Outcome

Interventions are used to facilitate the coachee to their well-formed outcomes:

Coach: *"If this is not happening, what do you want to do?"*

Coachee B: *"I want to be able to manage my work within a reasonable time-period"* (coachee at Level #1; OUTCOME)

F/Words repeated, sometimes softly

The Coachee's words can be repeated several times to help a coachee return to trance-like events (Levels #3 & #4), when they may be moving back into the (intellectual) dynamic space, away from their inner states. This appears like a dance in video recordings. Soft repetition can also be combined usefully with pauses and trail-off, as the coachee shows signs of moving back into their inner experiencing. The softness, reduced volume and timbre, may also be assisting the coachee by enhancing their auditory attention?

Since measureable change is occurring in the coachee, it may be considered useful to train coaches in this specific set of skills and to use these combined models to measure actual performance of coaches in terms of real coachee-learning. Examples:

Coach: "Take your time... this is your time... its about you *not making commitments to things that you do not have time to do at work* {softly:} its about you *not making commitments to things that you can't do when you are at work* {pause} {softly:} its about you *not making commitments to things that you can't do when you are at work* {pause} <she moves head>... about you *not making commitments...* {longer pause} {softly} so, its about you *not making...*" {trails}

Coachee W: "*It feels immensely emotional because it's a whole different person... It's different... it's a different person who doesn't make commitments*" (coachee to Level #4 for a period of over two minutes; CHANGE)

Coach: "Just one thing"

Coachee X: "*That just clicked into place*" (coachee to Level #4; CHANGE)

F/Summary

Summary, involving the coachee's words and phrases can be used to help the coachee towards their outcomes again, especially if they have been going 'off piste'.

Coachee T: "*That's the conclusion I have come to*" (coachee at Level #1; PROBLEM)

Coachee S: "*I still get worried about not doing the work*" (coachee at Level #1; PROBLEM)

Coachee S: "*Developing the business and actually delivering the service*" (coachee to Level #2; OUTCOME)

Coach Interventions [C/]

We observed and studied other interventions that arose from the coach without obvious followship of coachee's words or behaviors. Clearly, the coach is following the coachee-journey, but not following in the present definition by repeating language or physical behaviors. Instead, the coach is intervening proactively to help fulfil an expressed need in the coachee, or doing that assumptively, for example, where a coachee seems to be stuck. The examples will illustrate some of the observed range of such interventional practices.

C/Devices for encouraging a distracted coachee back into the dynamic

To bring a distracted coachee back into the dynamic, a number of coach interventions can help. These arose primarily due to the presence of many observers around the coaching space and within the first minute or so of sitting down. However, the interventions are included here because in 1-2-1 coaching there are distractions from people, traffic and other extraneous sounds including digital devices.

Casual eye-contact was usually maintained during these interventions. The coach interventions included adjusting a collar or tie (something close to the coach's face), rocking gently back and forth until the coachee's attention is regained (change of eye-focus to accommodate the coach's movements), hand movements that move away from, and then back to the coach, may also be followed by the coachee's eyes. When coachee-attention is back with the coaching dynamic, the coach can again question and challenge to help them move into internal states.

Coach: "Is that motivating enough?"

Coachee C: "*I can see how I want it to be*" (coachee at Level #1; OUTCOME)

Coach: "...when might that be?"

Coachee N: "*I'm struggling with getting traction...*" (coachee to Level #3; PROBLEM)

Coach: "What do you want to tell me?" <rocking>

Coachee H: "*I'm ready to launch*" (coachee at Level #1; RESOURCE)

C/Encouragement

Nodding can be used as encouragement when the coachee is using resourceful language:

Coachee: "*I can feel the energy and determination building*" (coachee to Level #2; RESOURCE)

Coachee: "It feels more believable" (coachee to Level #2; CHANGE)

C/Resourcing

We saw Followship plus Resourcing earlier, where Resourcing attempts to facilitate the coachee to explore and find resourcefulness to change, often following from internal

exploration. Here are examples where the resourcing may follow the needs of the coachee, but where there is no observed followship of the coachee's words or other verbal and non-verbal expression:

Coach: "Spin the clock forward"

Coachee B: "*It's a relief*" (coachee to Level #3; CHANGE)

Coach: "And..."

Coachee S: "*It's actually really simple*" (coachee to Level #3; CHANGE)

Coach: "From your experience?"

Coachee X: "I find that really powerful" (coachee to Level #2; RESOURCE)

C/Challenge & calibration

As with Followship followed by an intervention, the aim of questions is to challenge coachee-thinking. Calibration questions like, "and, zero to ten...?" and, "so, one step better than that would be what?" offer potential for gap-management.

Coach: "And that's been difficult?"

Coachee: "*It's been difficult for a long time*" (coachee at Level #1; PROBLEM)

That could have been followed by, "And how much longer do you want it to be *difficult*, a year, a month, a week...?"

Coach: "Aha?"

Coachee T: "*I got some juice from it*" (coachee to Level #1; CHANGE)

Coach: "Let's work for failure"

Coachee D: "*I want to be proud of myself for taking action*" (coachee at Level #1; OUTCOME)

Challenges, as we saw earlier, may be repeated to help facilitate the coachee to deeper-level states:

Coach: "Is that realistic?" <repeated>

Coachee: "*I can make some changes*" (coachee to Level #3; REMEDY)

C/Outcome

As with F/Outcome, interventions are used to facilitate the coachee to their well-formed outcomes:

Coach: "So, when, what time...?"

Coachee: "*Doing it on the bus*" (coachee to Level #2; REMEDY)

Coach: "...which is it? It's your choice"

Coachee C: "*It's more fulfilling to go down the path of success*" (coachee to Level #2; OUTCOME)

C/Meta positions

As with F/Meta Positions the coach may help resource a coachee by helping them into second and third/observer meta positions. Again, these can be used to help a coachee who may be too attached to the negativity of their predicament to process objectively:

Coach: "So, I have this issue too. Advise me"

Coachee T: "Choose the most important thing and focus on that" (coachee at Level #3 repeated; REMEDY)

Playing the coachee-learning back to the coachee may trigger deeper learning.

C/ Pauses

We earlier showed examples of Followship plus pauses, but they are also useful where the coachee is not using repeated coachee's auditory or non-verbal-expressions:

Coach: "Uh, huh..."

Coachee R: "*I'm feeling more committed to ...working to my own natural rhythms and just being consistent*" (coachee to Level #4; CHANGE)

C/ Provocative Coaching Interventions

Challenges in certain circumstances may be provocative. The term ‘Provocative Coaching’ (McLeod, 2002) arose from observations of the work of psychiatrist, Frank Farrelly. Provocative Coaching interventions can be used³, where a coachee is very stuck, particularly when the stuckness is characterized by negativity (low self-confidence in the context that is being explored). Provocative Coaching may involve humor, excessive exaggeration of negatively expressed utterances as well as exaggerated statements. These can shift a coachee from highly negative self-descriptors to re-calibration of their negative self-judgment. Here is an example, from working with an international figure. Your author and a team of coaches were brought into an organization to coach the whole Board and senior staff as a ruse to have one destructive, but vital asset in the organization ‘coached’. Twenty minutes into the first session, using Provocative Coaching, came this exchange:

Coach: “So, you are a bit of a bastard then?”

Coachee: “I realize that I’ve been throwing my toys out of the pram. Destroying the organization I value and admire... I have not told anyone any of this; even my wife does not know what I have been doing” (Level #4 c. 90 seconds)

C/ How

Some schools of coaching advise ignoring the word ‘how’ as potentially intimidating, but many coaches at the Coaching Foundation and elsewhere find it powerfully useful.

Coach: “How do you do that?”

Coachee S: “*There are more interesting things than <my objective>*” (coachee to Level #2; PROBLEM)

Coach: “How will you do that?”

Coachee N: “*...it becomes really compelling for me*” (coachee to Level #2; CHANGE).

Conclusion

Close attention to the coachee's behavior and their language, together, provide real-world measures of coaching effectiveness that coach skill-sets, alone, cannot.

Coachee's behaviors are patterned into four distinct categories, two of them are most likely intellectual, and two that are most likely manifestations of deeper-level processing by the coachee.

The results of coach interventions including sounds, movement, questions, statements and timely use of Reflected Language (single words or phrases used by the coach or coachee previously) can be mapped against the resulting state-changes in the coachee, together with measures of actual psychological shift in the coachee, as analyzed using the REPROCess Model. Other coach-intervention methods that may assist deeper-level processing (trance-like states) in the coachee, and which can lead to significant change, include the use of pauses and trailing off by the coach, as the coachee is perceived, by their behaviors, to be entering into deeper-level states.

A number of coaching interventions are mapped together with the resulting level of perceived psychological state (that preceded the coachee-expressions) together with any shift determined, using REPOCess. These examples provide a novel map for exploring the effectiveness of coaching and the outcomes-oriented competences of the coach.

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Notes

- 1) In the Lawley/Linder-Pelz research, the benchmarking was done by an expert and founder of meta-coaching who watched the videos of coaching under research.

- 2) Reflective Language and many of the interventions cited here are advanced techniques. Clumsy use of coachee-language may be noticed and then interrupt coaching-process.
- 3) The author advises to seek the coachee's permission to enter into Provocative Coaching mode.

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