

How do we maintain our integrity as coaches?

OUR SENIOR COACHES
SHARE THEIR REFLECTIONS
ON **CHALLENGING**
SITUATIONS.

the situation

Editors' note: For this issue, we asked each member of our senior panel of coaches to share their perspective and wisdom about how they personally approach challenging situations such as ending a client relationship, coaching a client with unrealistic expectations or managing sticky business situations. Read on to find out how each of them does their thing. They provide tips, too!

Do you have a sticky situation that you want help with or a different perspective on? You don't have to go it alone. Let our senior coaches give you a hand. Please send your situations to: letters@choice-online.com



Craig Carr, PCC, reveals: "I've found one of the most fulfilling rewards of coaching to be the joy of a relationship well-used and well-concluded."

When I quit my accountant I sent him an email. When I was done with an attorney's help there was a cordial "Thank-you-have-a-nice-day." When I didn't want to go to that body worker anymore I just stopped booking appointments. But when I finished with a coach, we worked for a month to 'complete.'

Why should we care if a client one day says something like, "This is my last call" or "I've decided to stop coaching" or "I don't think the coaching is working anymore for me" — or worse, just stops showing up. Most coaches have had an experience like this and in our line of work it's easy to take it personally. And that's because when it comes to coaching, it *is* personal.

Ending relationships can be difficult, but it doesn't have to be if completion is honored as a communication tool and life skill. I've found one of the most fulfilling rewards

of coaching to be the joy of a relationship well-used and well-concluded.

Authentic completion in a professional relationship is rare outside of coaching. Where else do you consciously design how a personal connection will complete itself? It is a norm in our society that a relationship ends because one of the parties says so, and pain is often a by-product we learn to accept whether we like it or not. I believe a promise of coaching is to show the world that we don't have to do it that way anymore.

When I've failed at completion I feel I've missed out on the gift of an exquisite detaching that comes with honoring connection in a full way. When the end of coaching arrives — and it can be at my initiation or the client's — my practice is to feel deeply into the truth of whether we should be parting, trust my gut and the eventual outcome, and stand courageous enough to challenge assumptions about leaving, or champion our moving on.

This work alone takes time and will occasionally fail. Still, if it is not done there may be a period of personal processing for the coach. Or, a rationalization process may kick in that will certainly perpetuate more of the same distance with the next client. Neither option is the road to fulfillment or particularly brilliant for the coaching profession as a whole.

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Carol Adrienne, PhD, shares: “In the case of a would-be star, I make a point of validating their sincere desire for self-expression and material success.”

Coaching difficulties can arise from any number of mis-matches. One type of client has been a little hard for me — the wanna-be, or the person with high expectations about ‘making it’ in the entertainment industry. While I have always been the one to say “anything is possible,” I sometimes have reservations in working with people striving to become authors, screenwriters, film or music stars — who for a number of reasons seem to be either unrealistic about their abilities, or who lack the drive to do what it takes to get to the top. Even with perseverance and application, they seem to keep generating obstacles and disappointment.

Of course, a coach must be sensitive not to project his or her own suspicions or fears on others. The coach’s job is to support the client’s decisions and goals, at least *initially*, even though these goals may seem to be a bit grandiose. In working with

someone like this, we begin to discover the person’s level of commitment, talent, and ability to make connections with people in their chosen industry. It’s important to remember that even if the person does not achieve their stated goal, the coaching process and engaging in new experiences *generally* leaves the client stronger or more insightful.

In the case of a would-be star, I make a point of validating their sincere desire for self-expression and material success. I make every effort to stay in tune with their own intuitive guidance. We all know that synchronicities can open doors that would never exist through sheer planning.

However, when a client has trouble taking care of household and family responsibilities, or makes choices that seem to be taking them further from a balanced life, I feel a duty to offer gentle feedback or help

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Vicky Trabosh, CDC®, urges, “...don’t make the same mistakes again. Make bigger mistakes that bring you greater opportunities!”

Here are some pointers on how to make the most of your coaching business.

“Three Rules of Work:

Out of clutter find simplicity

From discord find harmony

In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity.”

— That’s Albert Einstein.

That’s brilliance.

1. Out of clutter find simplicity. Many coaches I talk with are over-thinking their business and their target market. I love a razor-like focus and defined market segment. But if trying to find that niche gives you no niche at all, go back to the beginning. Why did you decide to coach in the first place? What is your passion and your strength? Who do you want to coach?

Are you working with *your* coach to answer these questions? (Note: if you are a coach, and tell me you do not have/need/cannot afford a coach, I think you have found your own problem). Stop reading now and find a coach. Walk your talk.

2. From discord find harmony. Discord is actually defined as *lack* of harmony. If there is discord in your coaching practice, prepare a checklist; diagnose the problem. For example: Lack of financial reserves to support the natural growth (and expenses) of a business? Fear of failure or success? Inexperienced in running a business? Unable to communicate and market your skills? Identifying and

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The best way to develop completion in the coaching relationship is to make sure it is a part of the on-going conversation from day one. That means finding ways to progress the coaching toward completion by including things like:

- Checking in on most calls with a version of “What are you going away with today?”
- Designing a time frame for your work together (three months, six months, or more);
- Looking directly at how completion shows up and operates day-to-day in the client’s life.

Revel in the power granted to the relationship that overtly agrees that *this* partnering will be a model

and a practice ground for the art of completion.

...Adrienne, continued from page 19

clarify what they truly want. My goal is to be quietly optimistic for the best to unfold. If you have a client with outsized goals, below are six tips to consider.

- 1. Validate and clarify their goals, and look for the deeper needs they are trying to fill with these goals.** For example, does someone want to be a screen-writer or actor for the money, because they are driven to express themselves, or for personal recognition?
- 2. Look for fulfillment now.** If they want recognition, perhaps they can get a feeling of the limelight by get-

ting into a local acting group, or writing a play and getting friends to read the play together out loud, while continuing their larger search.

- 3. Brainstorm with the person to create chunked-down and realistic ‘to do’ items between sessions.** Set deadlines for work to be done.
- 4. Be positive and refrain from sounding judgmental on progress reports,** knowing they are doing the best they can.
- 5. Listen to your conscience.** If someone is considering a risky investment or pouring their life savings into a project, do the math with them or refer them to a financial expert.
- 6. Be ethical.** Don’t feed magical thinking. Sometimes metaphysical teachings, such as the value of



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making affirmations, can be a detriment if they encourage superficial thinking at the expense of personal effort and responsibility. "I am making a million dollars at my new job" may or may not be an effective statement for someone who is living hand to mouth.

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attracting your ideal client?

All problems (discord) can be diagnosed and corrected (harmony). Businesses fail because of lack of preparation about the issues and tactics of running a business. The

coaching profession is not exempt from the business model. *Preparation and belief in the importance of a strong business model is key to success as a coach.*

3. In the middle of difficulty lies opportunity. If I've touched any nerves, take heart! This work that calls to you and through you will produce tremendous success. You will also have the opportunity to make a significant difference in the lives of your clients and the world. This is a calling. It is your opportunity. Embrace each day and its difficulties. Stay

present to exactly what's happening and the lessons that are coming to you. Learn. Grow. And don't make the same mistakes again. Make bigger mistakes that bring you greater opportunities!

As a good coach I attract (and keep) great clients. My highly successful coaching practice is not a fluke or luck. It is based on consistently doing the right things to attract clients, hold clients, run a successful business model and learn from every failure I have. And that is enough.

The 'magic' of successful people is not magic at all. It is about behavior. And behavior matters. Never ask less than your personal best from yourself and you'll be as brilliant as Albert. •

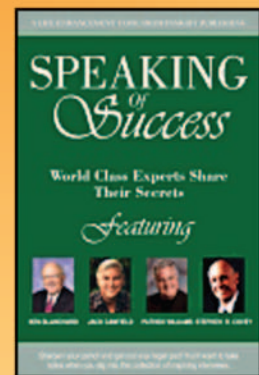
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