

## Coaching Tip: How to Immediately Access Your Clients' Painful Thoughts with One Question

Hi Coaches, welcome to my coaching tip on how to immediately access your clients' painful thoughts with one question.

First, a very happy New Year to y'all! I want to thank you for listening and/or reading my coaching tips over the last several months. I've received several emails from some of you expressing your appreciation and gratitude for these tips and the ways they've helped you coach your clients. Those emails mean a lot to me because my primary goal is to be of service and to help you be the best coach you can be. So when I hear your real life stories and how you're applying these tips, it puts a little bounce in my step so thank you for listening and, of course, please email, or find me on Facebook and let me know. I really dig hearing from you.

So, let's get right to my coaching tip. This is a super short tip today – it's really just one question but a question that I frequently use with my clients to help them become aware of their negative thoughts or thought patterns. When we first learn to coach, many of us are taught to ask a very direct question like “what is the thought that is driving that feeling?” Or “what are your thoughts about this situation?” Those questions aren't bad, but they're somewhat elementary and believe it or not, some of your clients might not even understand this question if they are either unaware of their thinking or are in the habit of not taking responsibility for their thoughts and blaming others. I, for one, will be very TAO and say I find the question, “what is the thought driving that feeling?” annoying and contrived. So, I'm going to share a better question, one that I frequently ask my clients that not

only shines a light of their limiting beliefs but one that has the added benefit of them taking responsibility for their feelings, actions and results. When clients take responsibility for how they feel by owning their thought or thoughts they immediately feel empowered – and that’s what we want, right? We want our clients to feel that they have the power and control over their feelings, their behavior and ultimately their results through ownership of thought.

Okay, so, no more waiting. Here’s one of the best questions you can ask your client when they’re upset, disappointed, resentful, ruminating, perseverating or entangled in a swirl of negative emotions about others or themselves. Ready? Do you have a pen and paper?

### *What is your expectation?*

That’s it.

Next time your client presents with an upsetting situation, ask, “What is your expectation?” Example: your client is complaining and is upset because her husband sits on the couch after dinner and plays on his computer. This is a fact – her husband sits at the computer and plays video games after dinner, her feeling is disappointment, upset and resentment. Ask her, “what are you expecting of your husband?” She might say “I expect him to pay attention to me or ask me about my day or help the kids with their homework” – boom, you’ve just honed in on what she wants that she’s not getting – an expectation due to an unmet need. “He should have a conversation with me or he should pay attention to me.”

This can also pertain to a boss, friend, neighbor or children. When your child comes home with a C in science for example, and you’re bummed out about this, ask yourself “what did you expect of your child?” The answer might be “I expected him to work harder.” Right there, you’ve captured a painful thought – He isn’t working hard enough. You can also use this to self-coach. If you’re still in the processing of learning and assimilating the coaching tools and you’re suffering from the good ole “not enoughness” belief, you can ask “what am I expecting from myself as a beginner?” Are you expecting to know the tools inside and out? Are you expecting that your client

always have an “aha” moment, are you expecting that you should be better than you are? Swirling in the vagueness of not enoughness will only fuel more of that feeling but asking yourself what you expect of yourself will require that you get more specific about what you think you should know, be or do – and then you can really ask yourself “is that expectation realistic? How is it serving you? Does this belief empower you or shut you down?” Or do The Work on it.

Most pain or suffering is due to missed expectations. Locate those roadblocks, make your client aware of them, chip away at the constructs of those beliefs systems so your client can access what they really want – peace, calm, freedom, inspired to act and ultimately empowered.

Cheers,

Jackie