

Coaching Tip: How to Stop Trying to Make Your Clients Feel Better

Here's my coaching tip of the week on how to stop trying to make your clients feel better.

Okay, so I'm sure the lead here was a little provoking... it was meant to be. As altruistic as it is to think that our job is to make our clients feel better, it can be very ineffective to coach from this mindset. Now you might be saying, "Jackie, but don't our clients hire us because they want to feel better?" And the answer is yes. But as a Coach, you don't want to buy into the paradigm that it is your job to make someone else feel better. That is not your job – that is your client's job. You are not responsible for whether or not someone feels better. They are. Just like no one is responsible for your feeling state but you.

When coaches have this seemingly benign and innocuous belief they will often have more shallow and superficial coaching sessions – you may potentially not allow your client the space to feel their emotions all the way thru. Sometimes those negative emotions, that your client may have been avoiding or resisting for days, weeks, years and decades we call it fight or flight, are compounding the emotion – if you coach them with the goal of trying to make them feel better, you become part of the problem, you in essence exacerbate those negative feelings. As a result, you won't be able to access their stressful thoughts and may skip over those too, and instead find yourself doing more square 3 coaching – focusing on the action, which is never appropriate. The best coaches I know are not driven by needing their clients to feel better, instead they focus on their coaching objective, getting to the culprit of the pain by fully exploring their thoughts and feelings with

the understanding that sometimes we need to feel our feelings all the way through before we feel better.

Marianne Williamson says “that nothing is more functional than an internal warning system and nothing is more dysfunctional than ignoring it to take the edge off.”

The bottom line is that buying into the idea that we need to make our client’s feel better”, as innocuous or benign as that sounds, actually acts as a veil for our agenda. It suggests that if our client feels better, we feel better. There is no greater entrapment than that – because then we get controlling, cheerlead, ask leading questions and even give advice. We must recognize that our job is to coach from our Essential Self and trust that when we are free from any sort of attachment to the outcome that this is more conducive, ironically, to our client making progress – whether they are feeling their feelings for the very first time or experiencing freedom in recognizing and chipping away at their belief system.

In order to create a safe space for our clients to feel their emotions we need to understand that suffering is not a bad thing – it’s the only way to evolve ourselves and if we have judgments around this suffering, we are helping our clients to resist and numb their pain. Don’t defeat your clients with your agenda. Trust that they can handle their negative emotions. Trust that their negative emotions are there to teach them something. Trust yourself. You deserve it and so do they.

Cheers,

Jackie