

## Coaching Tip: How to Diagnose Your Client's Problem

Welcome to this week's coaching tip how to diagnose your client's problem using the Basic Coaching Framework

I think one of the most challenging parts of coaching, especially if you're a newer coach, is the ability to diagnose your client's problem. If you're a Martha Beck trained Coach, you understand that the essence of the basic coaching model is to unravel thought patterns that are causing your client dissatisfaction – pain, suffering or any type of negative behavior –blaming, defending, screaming, overeating, etc. In other words, our objective is to unpack and identify the thoughts that are causing our client's stress, apply some type of inquiry to chip away at those belief systems and find at least one alternative story or thought pattern that is ultimately as true or truer and creates more peace and calm.

What sets Martha's life coach training program apart from many others is that we go deeper, focusing on locating the culprit of our pain rather than coaching the symptoms. It's similar to going to a doctor for a headache. Some doctors will focus on treating the symptom (headache) and prescribe aspirin, while other doctors will focus on what is causing the headaches, which ultimately alleviates the symptoms in a more sustainable way. Symptom coaching may temporarily take the pressure off, like Tylenol relieves a headache, but it cannot produce real and long-term change and in some cases may exacerbate the problem. In other words, the headaches will likely return and potentially may increase in frequency and intensity. The

same applies when you try to focus on changing your client's behavior rather than focusing on what's motivating their experience.

As a Martha Beck Coach, it's crucial that you keep your coaching objective (the basic coaching model) in mind because this will help you steer the ship. If you don't know where you're going, you'll end up on places that you don't want to be so keep this in the forefront of your mind – it will bring you back to base camp should you get lost in your client's story.

So, let's talk about how to diagnose your client's problem or issue using what I consider to be the best diagnostic tool in your tool kit – The Basic Coaching Framework. If you don't have a copy, please click [here](#) to get my Coaching Framework and Map! The Basic Coaching Framework or what we now refer to as A Framework for Coaching will be your best friend but only if you get comfortable using it.

The framework is divided into 4 components:

Circumstances

Thoughts

Feelings

Actions/Behavior

Very briefly, circumstances are facts – they are things you have little of no control of in the moment. Circumstances drive our thoughts. Our thoughts are a string of words that we create in our mind or our interpretation of those facts or events. Thoughts influence our feelings – think glad, sad, mad or scared. Our feelings inform our actions or behavior, what we do or don't do.

Everything your client says can be defined by one of these 4 components. For example, if your client says they are nervous to give a presentation at work, you would plug “presentation” into the Circumstance category and nervous into the Feeling category. Now, you know what's missing... the thought that is creating that feeling of nervousness. Please try not to make the rookie mistake of saying “tell me more about the presentation” ... this is just asking for more

circumstantial detail and makes it conducive for your client to story fondle, ultimately forcing you to sift through more information.

Once you've plugged your client's data into the appropriate categories, you can easily diagnose the problem by focusing on your client's thought patterns as a result of the circumstance. What he is making it mean that she has to give this presentation. It could be anything from "my job is on the line if I don't do well" to "they'll think I'm a fraud". Please see my Coaching Framework and Map for a plethora of questions you can ask no matter what components your client presents you with.

Once you identify your client's painful thought or thoughts, you can work on distilling and refining them further if appropriate. What I mean by this is if your client says "I'm afraid I won't be good enough to give this presentation", you could ask, "give me 3 reasons why you think you might not be good enough?" This will help localize his painful thinking based on the situation. It could be anything from "I won't be articulate enough" or "I'm too disorganized to make a presentation", etc. Of course, make sure that you frame up the painful thought so it is both succinct and declarative. "A good presenter is always organized", "a good presenter should be articulate".

In summary, this tool helps to provide a structure for your coaching sessions. It also creates efficiency because you are focusing on and bringing attention to what is driving your client's negative experience rather than asking erroneous questions that invite story fondling and irrelevant data.

Last, I encourage you to share this Basic Coaching Framework with all your clients right away. I teach every new client this framework in the first session or two. The reason I do this is twofold: First, they understand why I'm coaching them the way that I am, and two, it brings more awareness to their cognitive mind. The brain that observes itself, changes itself. Without conscious awareness, we create knee jerk responses and reactions which further cement those antiquated neural pathways in the brain. With conscious awareness, we have the unique opportunity to re-route the highway in our brain and lay down new tracks. It's a remarkably effective way for your client to feel more

empowered, more in control and build their confidence muscle at the same time. It's a trifecta!!

I hope you enjoyed my coaching tip of the week and, as usual, if you find these tips valuable, please let me know. I really do love hearing from you.

Cheers,

Jackie