

Coaching Tip: Inspiring Your Clients Toward Their Goals

Welcome to my coaching tip of the week on how to inspire your clients to move toward their goals.

As coaches, our objective is to uncover and unpack the obstacles (aka thought poop) that get in the way of our client's pursuing their goals or the results they want in their life – whether it's starting a new career, setting a boundary with a family member, leaving a relationship that no longer serves them, exercising or just plain ole' feeling good. As a Martha Beck Coach, finding the area of least satisfaction, asking powerful questions in order to locate the culprit of our client's suffering and thought dissolving is the essence of the coaching model. But, there are many ways to skin a cat so to speak besides asking questions and taking painful thoughts to inquiry. In fact, it's unskillful to be a one trick pony. Most of you are very creative, intuitive and find it energizing to use a variety of tools and techniques to help create a shift in our client's attitude, thinking and perspective. And it's that energetic shift that we're looking for when we coach. One of the ways to do that is to bring awareness to the fact that what we see in others is simply a mirror of our true selves. For example, "I wish my friend would listen more and not talk so much as she complains to her husband for 45 minutes over dinner that night." Ummm ...who's talking too much now? Or "my co-worker shouldn't take all the credit for the job we did together," says the person who refuses to take credit for her own achievements.

I have used this following exercise with several of my clients and it is so incredibly powerful and beautiful that I sometimes find myself

welling up with tears. It's an ideal for anyone who wants to expand their awareness but especially helpful for clients who feel stuck, unmotivated and in a negative frame of mind.

This is a version, by the way, of Martha's *Mirror Mirror* exercise.

Reflection Letter

Ask your client to write an honest letter to a person they admire or love the most (it can even be someone they're envious of). It can be someone they know, a friend or co-worker or someone they don't know, a celebrity or author. In this letter, they tell the person (POA: person of admiration) how they feel about them and why and how he/she (the client) would love to see this person grow or evolve personally and/or professionally. By the way, this is a homework assignment, something they do on their own, not during a live session.

When you meet with them again, ask them to bring the letter and read it aloud to you. Then, ask them to read it one more time, but this time they will substitute their name for the POA. Encourage them to listen with an open heart, without any defense, the way you would want the POA to hear it and really absorb it.

Once they finish the letter, follow up with these coaching questions:

- What did you notice when you read this letter out loud the first time?
 - What did you notice when you read the updated letter (where you substituted your name)?
 - What stood out for you?
 - What insights did you have?
 - Did the advice you gave to your POA (person of admiration) apply to you?*
- If so, in what ways? (Make sure you address both the positive and constructive advice.)

- What does this letter tell you about loving yourself more?
- How can you embrace your positive attributes or qualities?
- What is one small action step you can take this week to bring forth these positive qualities?

*If the client can't see himself or herself in the advice they are freely giving to their POA, offer them a slightly different perspective. For example, if the client suggests that their POA be less talkative and they consider themselves an introvert, where do they allow themselves to be "talked" over or where are they talking too much in their mind - perseverating, worrying or ruminating for instance? You could also ask "could there be a kernel of truth in this for you?"

I hope you enjoyed this coaching tip of the week and per usual, if you try this exercise with your clients, I'd love to hear your experience, your feedback and comments.

Cheers,

Jackie