

Coaching Tip: How to Help Your Clients Feel More Supported

Welcome to my coaching tip of the week on how to help your clients feel more supported and take responsibility for their actions and outcome in their primary relationship.

This week I'm going to introduce you to a really cool practice for helping your clients create a deeper understanding of and appreciation of their primary relationship so that they feel cared for and supported. This practice also enables them to take responsibility for own feelings, experiences and outcomes. It's a tool that I learned at a retreat my husband and I recently attended called **Wired for Love: How Understanding Your Partner's Brain Attachment Style Can Help You Defuse Conflict and Build a Secure Relationship**. That's a mouthful! If you and your partner are interested in strengthening your relationship, I highly recommend this workshop. I'm including the link here if you want to know more: <http://stantatkin.com/threecolpagex/retreats>.

As you know the cornerstone of being a Martha Beck Coach is to find the area of least satisfaction, identify the story and or thought clusters that are creating a negative experience and use a dissolving tool, like The Work, to create an alternative story that's just as true or feels better. When we explore Turnarounds, we ask the client to come up with proof or examples of how the TA can be as true or truer than the original painful belief. That particular process creates a new neural pathway in the brain. But it doesn't end there. The only way that that new neural pathway is going to stick is by going over it again and again. It's similar to taking the same route to work each day. Let's say you've taken the same freeway to work every day for the last 5 years.

Chances are you no longer have to think about your route to work, it's more or less automated. Your brain is using its resources efficiently by automating that process. We use the process of automaticity when we walk, ride a bike, and speak which makes it possible for us to do other things like have a conversation when we drive. But let's say the freeway is shut down for construction and you need to take a new route to work. That means your brain is going to have to come online again which will require more resources (concentration, memory and focus, for example) to make sure you get to your job. It's why you might get lost when you're going somewhere you've never been before if you're talking on your cell phone at the same time. The level of concentration required to find that new restaurant, for example, occupies so much of your mind you can't concentrate on having a dialogue. We've all been there before, right?

The Eastern technique I'm going to share with you is similar to finding examples for Turnarounds because it relies on facts and the reality of relationships. For instance, when we articulate examples for Turnarounds, we are in essence building new neural pathways in the brain. The Naikan method of self-examination and reflection also asks that you provide proof for the ways in which you are more cared for, loved and supported than you think you are. It's like exploring the opposite of those big universal painful beliefs: "He doesn't love me", "my boss doesn't think I'm good enough", "I don't belong now and I never will". And because new neural pathways require habituating, this is not a one and done exercise. The idea is to clear the schmutz off the lens so you see the world in its true form – unedited by you.

It's called the Naikan Approach or Naikan Therapy. Naikan was developed by Yoshimoto Ishin, a Japanese Buddhist. Naikan is a Japanese word that means "inside looking", "introspection" or "seeing one's self with the mind's eye".

Do this exercise when you have some quiet time:

Take out a piece of paper and create a 3-column grid like the one below.

What she/he gave to me	What I gave her/him	The Trouble I caused her/him

1. In the first column, write specific things **he/she gave or did for you during the week**. (You pick the period of time but it should be at least 3 days and can be up to 3 weeks). Be as specific as possible. Here are some examples.

General: He always makes me breakfast

Specific: He made breakfast for me this morning

General: She is very affectionate

Specific: She gave me a 10-minute foot rub after working hard all day

General: He is good at keeping things generally clean

Specific: He wiped down the sinks after I asked him to

This question enables us to appreciate what others do for us, and how the world supports us. Noticing all the things that our partners do can help prevent us from getting bogged down into what is wrong with the relationship and see the bigger picture.

2. When you are finished with column one, you can go to the second column and do the same, being as specific and concrete as possible.

3: In the third column, ***What trouble and difficulties have I caused*** _____ may be the most challenging. We are so much more

aware of the trouble and inconvenience that our partners cause us so hey it's not a whole lot of fun looking at how we sometimes make life difficult for others. This question allows us to take a good and hard look at our behavior, and how what we do or say impacts others. It's not meant to cause guilt or shame, but can help us have more compassion for our partners when we recognize our own humanity. Just a side note, don't mistake these areas for complaints you heard from your partner. These are things you know have been troubling or inconveniences on your account.

If you are living in a place where they think the world owes you something, "husband should be communicative", "the delivery guy was late with your chow mein" or "your boss didn't give you that raise", in other words they aren't fulfilling your expectations, this is an invaluable tool for gaining a deeper sense of gratitude, and appreciation for how we're being cared for and supported. Again, you can use this method with anyone, partner, boss, friend, parent, etc.

Please email me next week because my husband and I are starting this exercise today and I'll want to tell you how it went down. I've already noted that he cleaned my breakfast dishes, picked up the dog from the kennel and made me a delicious salad for lunch. Gotta go cuz I have some catching up to do. Seriously, it's not a race, but I am going to make the bed before he gets home.

I hope you're enjoying my Coaching Tips. And, as usual, I'd love to hear how you're using this tool, where you're feeling challenged, what's working, what's not working and any suggestions for future tips.

Cheers,

Jackie