

Coaching Tip: How to Frame up a Painful Thought

Welcome to my coaching tip on the basics...how to frame up a painful thought!

As an instructor for Martha Beck's Life Coach Training program and as a coach mentor, I am in the unique position of observing coaches practicing coaching. I listen for a coach's ability to analyze their client's problem, the tools they choose to use to unearth and identify the source of their client's pain, how well they execute those tools, their energy, the ability to hold space without judgment, etc. One of the critical components of coaching is the ability to properly frame up thoughts. Just like a frame brings attention to the painting it surrounds, framing up a thought brings attention to the core painful belief that is the essence of your client's issue. Before you do thought work, you want to make sure that you're framing up what I refer to as a quality belief.

If you are unable to succinctly put a bracket around, or frame up, the culprit of your client's pain point, your entire session will be impacted. You will either dance or make circles around those beliefs, making little or no progress, inadvertently derail your client by going down lukewarm or cool paths or employ thought work with shallow or less than optimal results.

The good news is I am giving you six easy steps to help you "frame up" a quality thought before doing thought work so none of that happens!

1. **Get agreement from your client** before you use a thought dissolving tool, using "tell me where I'm wrong" (TMWIW) at the end of the phrase.

Using TMWIW allows your client the opportunity to make any necessary modifications to the statement.

Example:

Client: My mother is so frustrating because she calls me most everyday and seems to enjoy telling me how to raise my own kids.

Coach: It sounds like you believe *you're mother shouldn't give you advice about raising your kids*, tell me where I'm wrong.

2. **Make the phrase as succinct** as possible. The more words you use, the more cumbersome and unwieldy it will be as you progress through The Work.

Example:

Client: I'm really angry with my boss for not acknowledging the project I completed under budget and before the deadline at our staff meeting last week.

Coach: What I'm hearing you say is *your boss should acknowledge your achievements*; tell me where I'm wrong.

*Notice how I simplified this phrase by leaving out the situation (staff meeting), the emotion (anger) and the details of the circumstance (under budget and before deadline).

3. **Make the phrase declarative.** In other words, keep it simple and definitive.

Examples:

My boss should have promoted me to senior manager.

My kids need to clean up their rooms.

My partner is on his phone too much.

4. **Leave out the emotion(s.)**

Example:

Client: I'm so sad and frustrated, my grandfather is very sick, maybe even terminal but I think it's way too early for him to give up on his life.

Coach: What I'm hearing you say is *your grandfather shouldn't give up on his life so soon*, TMWIW.

5. **Read between the lines.** Sometimes what our client doesn't say is as important or more important than what they do say.

Example:

Client: I'm so upset, my husband forgot our anniversary again, he never remembers the important stuff.

Coach: It sounds like you believe *your husband doesn't care about you*, TMWIW.

6. Remember, **you don't need every qualifying phrase or detail in the thought**, because you will focus the client on the particular situation when you go through The Work with them.

Client: My father makes me so mad every time he tells me how I should be investing my money. This morning he told me to take my money out of the stock market and invest it

in T-bills, that there's going to be a downturn in the market and I should be more conservative.

Coach: Sounds like you believe *your father shouldn't give you financial advice*, TMWIW.

Client: Yes!

Coach: Okay, now focus on that situation with your father telling you how to invest your money. Is it true that your father shouldn't give you financial advice?

You can see how, in the last example, I set it up to show you how you could then progress to doing The Work on that particular belief.

I hope you enjoyed my coaching tip of the week and I always love to hear how these tips are working for you, your coaching stories, challenges and wins! Email me at Jackie@jackiegartman.com and let me know!

Cheers,

Jackie