



Equilibrio Coaching Philosophy

META-COACHING: COACHING AT A HIGHER LEVEL

“Coaching” – An Idea Whose Time Has Come

Today coaching offers a new paradigm. As a paradigmatic shift, *coaching* has become a much more acceptable way to think about change whether the target of that change is in business or in personal transformation. In business, we now have executive coaching, team coaching, corporate coaching, public speaking coaching, etc. In personal life, we have life coaching, fitness coaching, stress management coaching, wealth coaching, relational coaching, etc. It seems that the time has come wherein we realize that any experience or performance that involves skills and awareness that can be improved, enhanced, refined, or honed is subject to *coaching*.

So, what do we mean by *coaching* when we extend it beyond sports and fitness? How does the coaching metaphor relate to the field of Executive Coaching, Life Coaching, and the other target skills? And why this metaphor? What does the idea of coaching offer that's unique and special?

The Need for Coaching

We live in a world where everything is changing and changing at a speed that continues to increase. This creates challenges for all of us in our personal lives, business, health, focus, etc. With the Information Age and the explosion of information, *change* itself has been accelerating so that just keeping up has become a major challenge in every field. New industries, companies, and markets come into being every month. Old established businesses, ways of doing things, even ways of thinking become irrelevant and redundant every year.

Change as such will not only continue, but increase. As it does, it will bring more stress, more demands, more choices, more instability, more shifting, more cultural and world changes as nations come and go, corporations come and go, knowledge and technology come and go. Even today, no one in any field can read everything in that field. Specialities and specialization has become more and more focused *and* the need and development of interdisciplinary studies and projects has become more critical.

Coaching as an Idea

Skills Oriented

Coaching invites us to think about change and transformation in terms of developing and refining skills. In that it is first and foremost about adding new skills to our repertoire and refining our current skills. In this, coaching is about developing, refining, honing. It is about identifying new skills needed for the changing world and providing that kind of change management.

Keeping Up

Given that we live in an ever changing world and that we are beginning to experience the stresses and challenges of that change accelerating, the challenge and need to keep up is becoming increasingly difficult. To do so, we need more skills at change management, at understanding ourselves, at pacing and managing our own mind-body states, and at becoming more efficient. Coaching comes in here to provide the latest technology in how to handle the human element of expertise, whether personal or the functioning of a group.

Continuous Improvement

One central key for success in any field is in terms of setting a goal of continuous improvement. The Japan call it *Kaizen*. It's not the giant jumps forward that counts as much as the ever increasing improvement on top-notch skills and knowledge. This means receiving constructive and useful feedback as information that we can use for continuous improvement. Yet where do we get that kind of quality information? Friends and associates are often too emotionally involved to be honest, direct, or even aware of our blind spots. That's where coaching comes in.

As world-class athletes hire personal coaches, so have world-class executives, CEOs, business and political leaders, etc. Why? Not because they don't have the skills, obviously they do. And not because they need fixing. The focus is not that, it is for the purpose of becoming even better and refining the skills to an even higher level.

Generative

Rather than fixing things and taking a *remedial* approach to "problems," coaching as a paradigm looks at what we already do well and coaches us to play to our strengths. As such, it is positive and constructive. It is solution-focused, rather than problem focused. This doesn't mean that a Coach doesn't ever deal with problems, but when the coach does, it is not as a coach. For that, the coach will step out of the role, take care of whatever is creating the sabotage or difficulty, and then step back into the coaching role.

Flexible and Structureless

What the Neuro-Semantic Coach has a structure about human functioning, how the mind-body-emotion system works and uses it, the actual coaching experience is structureless in that it operates according to the present moment focus and outcome that the client sets. In this the Coach follows and facilitates the agreed upon outcomes for peak performance rather than trains, teaches,

guides, mentors, or counsels. These are other processes that the coach can step into, but not coaching as such.

The *coaching* paradigm operates with numerous frames that make it a solution-oriented experience with the control, power, and accountability in the hands of the client rather than the coach. Unlike counseling, therapy, consulting, teaching, training, or mentoring, coaching does not imply that there's anything wrong or that the process involves pain. There's nothing to *fix*, there are only goals, outcomes, and directions to set and move toward. There are only games to play, skills to master at an even higher level, and successes to experience.

In coaching, the client is in charge of the goals and outcomes as well as holding him or herself accountable for the process. What's the answer to such questions as: Who knows what's right for you? Who's responsible for your development and expertise? Or, Who's responsible to hold you accountable? Obviously, the client.

Neuro-Semantic Coaching

This view of *coaching* makes it fit nicely with NLP and Neuro-Semantics. These models focus on generative change based on the idea that people have all the resources they need and that we only need an expert in facilitation to make it happen. As such this changes the expert role of the change agent. To be an expert in coaching does *not* necessitate being an expert in the content, but in the process. It necessitates becoming an expert at a higher level, at a *meta* level of awareness. The coach as a change agent works with and at the meta-level of the processes of how we humans transform and develop.

Coaches in sports do not have to be experts at baseball, soccer, pole vaulting, gymnastics, tennis, golf, etc. The personal coaches that work in these areas, even with the world class experts in these events, have an expertise at a meta-level and provide that kind of information. As a coach they work to mark and measure the processes as the expert prepares and practices.

Coaching, then by definition, is inevitably a meta-discipline and when we step back to understand coaching, we have *meta-coaching*.

Those individuals who seem to have a natural and implicit skill at coaching may not know what or how they do what they do. Though they may be extremely skilled at the art of coaching, they may not know what they do or how to transfer that knowledge or skill to others. To coach with mindfulness and to know what we are doing and why moves us to becoming a *meta-coach*. Using NLP and Neuro-Semantics as our base, we call this Meta-Coaching.

Masterful Meta-Coaching

A meta-coach will first and foremost be able to recognize, detect, and effectively address the processes, structures, mind-sets, frames, beliefs, etc. of

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the expert or person learning to become a master in a given area whether business, leadership, management, creativity, relationships, persuasion, etc. This means the ability to *go meta to the mental-emotional matrices* of a person's experience.

After recognition of the structure of experience and being able to model and profile the experience, the meta-coach needs to be able to see the neuro-semantic system of mind-body-emotion within relationships, contexts, etc. as a system. This means systemic thinking about the human mind-body system within yet higher systems (business, culture, family, government, politics, economics, etc.) and within with yet lower systems are embedded (thinking, valuing, believing, feeling, remembering, imagining, etc.).

For this reason we have developed the 7 Matrices of the Mind coaching model based upon the neuro-linguistic model of human communicating and functioning (NLP) that describes how to run our own brain and manage our own states and the Meta-States model of Neuro-Semantics that describes the levels of mind-body-emotion as a systemic process. The idea of *framing* from Bateson came into NLP in terms of a few basic frames: ecology, as if, relevancy, outcome, meaning (reframing), etc. With Neuro-Semantics we developed this much further to create *Frame Games* as a model of the embedded nature of frames within frames. This has led to being able to work with mastering fear, becoming fit and slim, modeling the frames of business experts, wealth building, prolific writing and researching and other creative arts, relationships, persuasion, and much more.

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