

# REFLECTIVE PRACTICE FOR COACHES

*The technique of Reflective Practice is used by professionals in nursing, education, psychology, social work, and management (amongst others) as a way to gain an awareness of our behaviours, understand them and become more effective in what we do. The following technique is just one of the many ways you can apply it.*

After your coaching session or at the end of your work day, take five minutes to reflect...

**1. What were the critical moments for you or your client in this session?**  
(Use your feelings to guide you)

**Strengths:**

- What worked?
- When did you feel you were on the right track?
- When did the client have breakthroughs? Or find a way forward? Or realise some new information about themselves or the situation that changed how they saw it?
- When did it just seem to flow?

**Development areas:**

- What didn't seem to work?
- What were the stuck points?
- Where did the energy drop?
- Where did you feel your client going in circles?
- When did you feel uncomfortable?

**2. Choose one moment that you would like to understand more fully.**

**Describe this moment in detail.**

- What were you saying or doing?
- What were you thinking?
- What were you feeling?

**3. What was your belief behind your thoughts and actions?**

- What was your intention in doing or saying this?

**4. What have you learnt from this situation?**

- Were your intentions in line with what you actually said or did?
- What needs to change for your thoughts, actions, beliefs/intentions to be in alignment?

**5. How could you apply this new learning?**

- What could you do in future coaching sessions to test it?
- What are you going to change? Eg Do you need to re-phrase what you say so that it more accurately (or compassionately) communicates your intention?
- Does your belief serve you or your client? Or does it need a re-think?

This is a guide. The most important part is to become aware of what's going on in a session (check your feelings, check your client's energy) and then just write about what happened and how it feels, and what you can learn/apply from it...

# REFLECTIVE PRACTICE FOR COACHES

Reflective Practice is helpful on a number of levels.

1. It requires you to be **aware** in your coaching - the client-centred nature of coaching already requires this of us. So we've usually got that info. Now we can do something with it.
2. Rather than just mulling it over in our heads, we can gain some **understanding** of the theories and rationales we sometimes use intuitively in sessions. It also gives us an opportunity to pull apart a situation, work out what lead to the outcomes and use that information to either replicate or not replicate.
3. Most importantly it helps us **change** our behaviours, thoughts or beliefs so that we can best serve our clients (and ultimately ourselves).

Whilst Reflective Practice can be used to gain greater understanding of your professional strengths, it is at its **most powerful** in those situations where things didn't quite go as we planned or expected. It's in those moments we find that our beliefs or intentions may not be in sync with what we're actually doing.

Not only will it lead to greater awareness overall, but you will soon be able to be **reflective during a session** as well as before and after. It gives you the capacity to coach through uncertainty. We rarely know what our clients will specifically bring to a session and ultimately Reflective Practice become Reflection In Action. You are able to self monitor during critical moments in a session and make decisions that keep your intentions, thoughts and behaviours in alignment.

And when your coaching style or situation allows, then **enrol your clients** as you co-reflectors. Ask them what worked for them, what didn't and what they learned. Not only will they take more ownership of the process of the session but they'll also feel that they are truly being heard when you act on their feedback.

This is a starter for you to begin using reflective practice in your own professional development. You can find out more about how to apply Reflective Practice to you coaching and life by contacting

Trish Weston

[trish@worklifedesign.com.au](mailto:trish@worklifedesign.com.au)

61 7 3102 5485