



Comprehensive in-depth report and study of:

A Definition of Coaching

Including Achieving Lasting Intentional Change & Methods from 'Cognitive Behavioural Coaching'

www.noble-manhattan.com

By Noble Manhattan Coaching Ltd
Leaders in the field of Coach Training



Contents

- 1 Life Coaching Defined
 - 2 Coaching As a Profession
 - 3 Who Has Coaching?
 - 4 Benefits of Life Coaching
 - 5 Key Elements of Life Coaching
 - a. Confidentiality
 - b. Equality of Relationship
 - c. Mutual Commitment
 - d. The Client Takes Action
 - e. Accountability
 - f. Temporal Focus
 - 6 The Coaching Session
 - 7 What can be Addressed in Life Coaching?
 - 8 The Coach's Mental Attitude & Skills
 - 9 Who is the Client?
 - 10 The Boundaries of Coaching
 - 11 How Coaching Can Enable Lasting Intentional Change
 - 12 Concept & Methods of Cognitive Behavioural Coaching
 - 13 The Diamond Path
- Select Bibliography

“Experience is not what happens to a man; it’s what a man does with what happens to him.” - Aldous Huxley-

1 Life Coaching Defined

A Life Coach helps each of their clients to become increasingly pro-active, rather than passive, and increasingly creative, rather than reactive, in the way they approach their lives. This empowering and positive process of change can be effective within all kinds of settings to bring out the best in people and Coaching is now a recognised profession with established methods for helping people grow and excel both in their personal lives and their work.

Well-known life UK Coach and Trainer Curly Martin defines Life Coaching as a profession in the following way:

“Life coaching is a career and an ethical profession. The life coach uses the power of commitment to enable their clients to achieve beneficial and measurable results in all areas of their lives. Life coaching is a holistic process that has the power to balance and harmonise life.”¹

This simple yet powerful definition of Life Coaching gives a sense of the spiritual and holistic approach which is a strong element in Life Coaching. A key aspect of the coach’s role to their clients is to consistently hold a bigger perspective; as such the coach can be a tremendous ally for their clients and the relationship can have a profound effects.

The spiritual dimension of coaching underpins a very pragmatic approach to handling challenges and opportunities. The ICF’s (International Coach Federation’s) Description of coaching is as follows,

“Professional Coaching is an ongoing professional relationship that helps people produce extraordinary results in their lives, careers, businesses, or organizations. Through the process of coaching, clients deepen their learning, improve their performance, and enhance their quality of life.”²

² ICF website: www.coachfederation.com

Coaching is one of many types of profession with a fundamental aim of helping others function well or better in their lives. However, it is crucial to appreciate the important differences between coaching and counselling, psychotherapy, and advice-giving services. The different schools of thought and sub-categories within these other professions each has its own position regarding how directional or non-directional its practitioners' interactions are with their clients. True coaching takes place at the non-directional end of the spectrum; its remit being to assist those who are considered well (as opposed to ill) to refine and improve what they do to do it even better. True coaches do not give specific advice; but they do teach the skills needed for creative thought and behaviour.

If a potential or existing coaching client is experiencing severe ongoing emotional distress other help is indicated and should be referred by the coach to alternative forms of help such as counselling or therapy. The coach has an ethical duty to put the client's well-being first, before their own self-interest when making such decisions.

Coaching works with immediate life and business situations by enhancing the thinking that goes with them to make it more supportive and productive. As explained in 'The Thirty Minute Life Coach',

*"Your coach will show you how to change the way that you think about adversity and may even point out that we learn far more from our mistakes than we do from our successes."*³

³ The Thirty Minute Life Coach, Gerard O'Donovan & Curly Martin, The Coaching Academy UK Ltd., page 38

Coaching provides the opportunity to investigate and clarify issues and situations arising directly from the client's current life experience. It provides a non-judgmental, open, trusting relationship within which to fully explore choices of action open to the client. It also provides the arena for choices to be made and commitment to be voiced out loud, and very importantly provides a mechanism for the client to hold themselves accountable with the coach's assistance. Coaching provides a space for the challenge of unhelpful patterns of thought and behaviour where needed; the challenge may come from the client themselves or from the coach. It provides a structured approach to goal-setting and achievement. Coaching enables the client to gain insight and awareness of their helpful and unhelpful patterns and tendencies, and refine their future actions accordingly.

Above all, Coaching is a relationship with the purpose of supporting clients in moving nearer to their potential in any and all aspects of their lives, whilst strictly adhering to the client's own agenda for change. Coaching provides the opportunity for a client to develop their relationship with them self to a higher level than ever before, due to the steadfast commitment and compassion shown by the coach to whatever their client brings to the relationship.

2 Coaching As a Profession

The concept of Life and Business Coaching as separate definable activities, developed to the extent that they are now professional activities, is relatively new. The concept of Coaching requires exploration and explanation to be properly understood and appreciated.

Coaching is essentially not a new skill but it is a relatively new profession and it has been developed for particular uses in life and business over recent years. There have been elements of coaching around in other helping relationships for many years. Coaching is a well-known term in sports, though certainly there are many styles of coaching which can be very different from one another. Coaching is also related to, but certainly not the equivalent of, mentoring, which involves a strong element of tutoring of the client by the mentor e.g. in specific education or employment skills.

Coaching is gradually becoming known as a profession with its own training, ethical standards, and professional bodies being established to help set and safeguard professional standards. It is evident that,

“Holding oneself accountable for certain standards is part of being a professional. Those standards are typically developed and endorsed through a professional association.”⁴

⁴ Co-Active Coaching, Whitworth, Kimsey-House & Sandahl, 1998, Davies-Black Publishing, page 170

The ICF (International Coach Foundation) and the ECI (European Coaching Institute) are two such bodies.

The current rapid global expansion of Coaching is described as follows,

“Today the profession of coaching is still in its infancy . . . But clearly it has the size and the impact of a profession with active professional and personal coaches not only in North and South America but in Europe and the Pacific Rim. That the profession continues to grow at an impressive rate is a tribute to the human desire for excellence and the spirit of being fully alive.”⁵

⁵ Co-Active Coaching, ibid, page 169

3 Who Has Coaching?

Coaching is found in a very wide range of settings and has the scope and flexibility of approach to be used in almost limitless applications. Coaching takes place across a wide range of communication mediums as best suits the clients needs; one-to-one personal Life Coaching and Business Coaching take place by telephone, in person, and using e-mail, or by a combination of these. Coaching typically takes place on a one-to-one basis, however group coaching for personal Life Coaching and in business settings is also effective, both in moving forward as an individual and in improving the dynamics operating within particular groups.

Coaching is being employed within a wide spectrum of life situations including:

- personal life coaching
- in all kinds of businesses
- in educational settings
- in public sector organisations
- with offenders
- in health & fitness & professional sports

Coaches are often self-employed within their own private practice and may be affiliated to a coaching body or organisation from which they receive referrals of potential clients. They may apply for accreditation in recognition of their training and hours of coaching experience and it is advisable for them to have indemnity insurance.

Systems for the accreditation and regulation of Coaching are in the process of being set up in Europe although the profession is not yet legally required to be regulated. In my opinion it is

in the interests of all Coaches to participate in the development of industry standards and means of regulation for the benefit of current and future clients.

4 Benefits of Coaching

The potential benefits of coaching are far-reaching indeed:

- ✓ increased self-awareness of all aspects of oneself
- ✓ improved self-esteem and clarity, sense of choice
- ✓ sense of owning one's true power of self-determination
- ✓ a truer picture of own strengths and weaknesses
- ✓ the ability to own appropriate responsibility
- ✓ knowledge of one's values, goal and aspirations
- ✓ aligning to one's true purpose in life
- ✓ the ability to take decisive action
- ✓ the expansion of one's comfort zones
- ✓ resolution of communication difficulties
- ✓ celebration of success, and learning and perseverance through any set-backs!

Above all I would cite improved relationships - with one self and others - as the key potential benefit of coaching, as human relationships are so fundamental to every aspect of our lives.

5 Key Elements of Life Coaching

Several key aspects of Life Coaching which, when present together, help define Life Coaching as distinct from other helping relationships, are listed below. As other forms of helping such as Counselling are at present more known and established within our culture it is helpful to ensure clarity about the differences, both to avoid general confusion and to prevent expectations which cannot be met arising in the client.

- a Confidentiality*
- b Equality of Relationship*
- c Mutual Commitment*
- d Action is Essential*
- e Accountability*
- f Temporal Focus on Present and Future*

These defining key features of the true coaching relationship are explored below.

a) Confidentiality

The aspect of confidentiality is clearly an aspect of coaching which is held in high regard by the coach in common with many other helping professions. A true Coach makes confidentiality a very high priority in their practice and will make this known to the client. This is essential to enable trust to develop and enable the client to feel sufficiently at ease to reveal their beliefs, values, aspirations, current challenges and opportunities. Confidentiality must also have boundaries which take into account the law of the land and the client's, coach's and others' well-being. For instance, if it were to be revealed within a coaching session that someone was at serious risk of harm of physical violence or sexual abuse it would be usual for the coach to break confidentiality. These guidelines are in strictly in line with those for other established helping professions.

b) Equality of Relationship

Coaching is an equal relationship embodying equal commitment of coach and client. Individual responsibility is necessary – the coach being responsible for them self and the client being responsible for them self and their decisions. This reduces limits the risk of any dependency arising and grants a unique power to the coaching relationship. Any temptation to coach from an unequal stance, by giving specific advice about ways of resolving issues, or having preferences as to the client's course of action, is to be resisted by the coach. By giving advice I mean that the coach does not design solutions for their client (in contrast to in the way that perhaps a mentor might be expected to). For example, a coach may well recommend that a client take care of their physical health by exercising regularly where this has been neglected– as virtually all human beings who are able to exercise moderately will benefit from it – but the coach will help the client clarify their possible choices and it will be up to the client to choose their level of commitment in the knowledge of the results they want to achieve.

It is crucial for the client's growth to ensure that the coach does not fall into a rescuing mode and that full and final responsibility for all the client's decisions rests with the client. The client is not viewed as 'ill' or in need of emergency intervention for their mental health, and would be referred elsewhere should this be so. This issue will be explored in detail later.

c) *Mutual Commitment*

A coach uses the power of commitment, and this commitment must come from both coach and client for coaching to have profound effects in the client's life. Leading UK Life Coach, Fiona Harrold is very forthright about the importance of commitment for the success of the coaching process. Of the coach's commitment she says,

“My clients get results; some of them get extraordinary results. I give each one of them my undivided attention. I expect, want and demand the very best from them and I want the very best for them. I bring 100% of myself to each client; I am totally committed to them and their goals. “

She follows this by emphatic statements regarding the client's commitment:

“So why is it that one client will do well while another will do brilliantly? Why will one achieve good results while another gets stunning results? . . . Over my years of working with hundreds of clients I have seen, time after time, what makes the vital difference and I can tell you what it is with absolute certainty. It is the degree of commitment to themselves and their goals that each client has when I work with them. . .⁶

⁶ Be Your Own Life Coach, Fiona Harrold, Hodder & Stoughton, 2000, page 10

It is highly likely that a coach will discuss the subject of commitment with a client at the outset and/or periodically within their relationship. Some clients may already be very committed to their goals and to taking action towards achieving them; others may need to be educated in the importance of sustaining on-going commitment for any lasting change to occur. In understanding what makes commitment strong it is helpful to look at its components.

According to Fiona Harrold,

“. . . commitment is made up of four distinct elements:

- *motivation*
- *self-belief*
- *self-discipline*
- *willingness to challenge ”⁷*

⁷ Fiona Harrold, *ibid*, p11

A coach may assist the client to develop these components of commitment - to strengthen their commitment 'muscles' as it were – in order that they become increasingly effective and fulfilled and achieve more in a shorter space of time with less discomfort.

d) The Client Takes Action

'A creative life is founded on many, many small steps and very few large leaps.'

'Small actions lead us to the larger movements in our creative lives' ⁸

8

The Artist's Way, Julia Cameron, Pan Books, 1993, pages 142 & 143

I interpret the 'creative life', of which Julia Cameron speaks so eloquently, in the broadest sense – that of having a creative mind set – which I am convinced is what leads us to creative acts, both in art and in life. Human beings can engage frequently in pointless anxiety, worry and negativity or instead they can choose to take the cumulative small steps which eventually lead to achieving the biggest of dreams! So it is with coaching; a coach helps their client recognise their ability to choose and act by assuming that this is possible, and then helps the client find their path to an increasingly creative mind set within each moment.

The International Coach Federation identifies action as the key to success for the client;

"The successful client is not excessively limited in the ability to take action or overly hesitant to make this kind of progress."

However, it can certainly be part of the coach's role to assist their client in changing habits of procrastination – this common human habit of 'putting it off until later' and 'later' may never come. A common area for clients to require assistance in for instance is that of physical exercise and health-giving diet; clients often have resistance to taking short-term actions even though they know they can lead to immense long term benefits. The coach can help the client to alter their perspective to take into account and focus strongly on the long term benefits and good reasons for delaying instant gratification. They can also give themselves instant mental and physical rewards for taking the new action. These steps help form new habits – they even have their own short-term benefits which had not previously been anticipated as they are now increasingly linked to experiencing pleasure rather than pain.

Coaching is both an art and a science in many ways; the art of manifesting the highest levels of inner awareness and outer communication, together with the science of understanding how the human mind and emotions operate and interact. This enables the coach to facilitate the specific changes desired by clients in their behaviour patterns and habits and thus in their day to day experience of themselves and the world.

e) Accountability

A significant difference between coaching and other forms of helping is in the central importance of the accountability of the client for carrying out the agreed actions. This grants the relationship highly effective power in the process of change and prevents the sessions becoming ‘all talk’ without leading to real and measurable change. Accountability can be assisted by having a method for the client to feed back their progress between sessions, which may take the form of a written progress report or form of concise verbal update. It can be very helpful for the client to record their progress in writing as this becomes part of the self-reflective process; and also increases awareness of any habits of procrastination. The coach is not there to chastise the client but to reflect back and challenge where needed, any habitual patterns that do not serve the client, and recognise and champion any behaviours that serve the client well.

f) Temporal Focus

The temporal focus of coaching is most definitely in the present and future, rather than the past, in contrast with many other kinds of helping relationship. Coaching concentrates on where clients are right now, and what they are willing to do to get where they desire to be in the future.

Coaching does take account of any recurrent patterns or habits in a client’s experience, however it is important that coaching focuses primarily on what we can influence and change rather than on our stories of the past. In fact the ‘story’ is recognised as often being a large part of any perceived ‘problem’. Re-living the past is only helpful to the extent that we learn from it and understand ourselves through it, to assist in our present and future growth and development. Through coaching a client may choose to shift their perspective on past events to one which is more helpful to their future development. Minimal time would be spent in a

coaching session going over past events and much more emphasis placed on the present and future and the options, challenges and opportunities arising there.

As explained by the ICF *“A coach makes a request of the client to promote action toward the client's desired outcome. A coach does not make such requests in order to fix the client's problem or understand the client's past.”*⁹

⁹ International Coaching Federation website, *ibid*.

The coach assists the client in focussing squarely in the direction in which the client wants to go; thus enabling them to get there quicker, with less energy-sapping detours along the way. The client can then use their fuller energies to contribute towards achieving their desired outcomes.

6 The Coaching Session

Coaches and clients arrange a schedule and a verbal or written contact that works well for them both. The coach will lead in the construction of a mutually agreed and clear contract. Coaches have different approaches to sessions depending on their preferred ways of working. It may be appropriate for instance for coaching to take the form of one-off sessions for specific issues or projects, but generally a series of coaching sessions is required to realise significant positive change. Some coaches may recommend a series of a dozen sessions from the outset so that the client brings an expectation of devoting this time to the relationship from the start and will be more likely to stay on track through any experience of challenge. It is helpful for coach and client to acknowledge that in any process of growth there will be times of ease and struggle when old patterns are being exchanged for new.

A coaching session would generally begin as follows: the client would bring an issue or range of issues to the session; the coach listens and forms suitable questions to further clarify the issue/s on behalf of the client, (and not to satisfy the coach's personal curiosity). The quality of listening is such that the coach is able to tune into the client's way of being, way of seeing their world, and unique experience of themselves and others; with a skilled coach this occurs to such an extent that the coach's own agenda all but disappears in the process, being put to one side for the duration of the coaching session. The coach will ask powerful and at times provocative questions; through their answers, the client will explore their current experience and future options. The coach will often reframe an issue in terms of the

timescale and perspective to enable the client see situations in a new light and enable more creative solutions to arise. The range of possible options will be generated and an action plan agreed. Action on the part of the client between sessions is central to the process of coaching, together with any learning and feedback resulting from their action/non-action. For instance, in a situation where the client wishes to adopt a new helpful habit they make themselves accountable with the coach's support. This helps prevent the possibility of the client losing sight of their goals, action plans and personal insights. The coach may also make requests of the client which will promote further learning and action in the direction of their goals. However, the client at all times has the power to agree, disagree or make a counter-offer to a coach's requests and this free choice should be made explicit in the relationship.

Coaching can only work for the client to the extent that they bring commitment and willingness to change in the way they relate to themselves and others. The ongoing extent to which the client commits to take action which they have agreed to take between sessions is of great significance. Part of the effectiveness of coaching lies in the fact that when in a coaching relationship the client feels more accountable – not judged by - but accountable - ultimately to themselves - for all their actions and non-actions.

A coach may well ensure that they obtain clear 'nailed-down' commitments from the client before the end of a session as to exactly what they are agreeing to do, with whom, and when, before the next session. This takes the relationship far beyond one primarily composed of talking and sharing without any real change in behaviour. The resulting positive spiral of empowerment and increased clarity and choice in client's life is the successful result of coaching.

7 What can be Addressed in Life Coaching?

Life Coaching is helpful in a myriad of different situations, some of which are listed below:

- Communication issues in all situations
- Raising and maintaining self-esteem
- Improving self-confidence
- Relationship issues of all kinds (whether at work, family, friendships, sexual)

- Decisions about what work to do and how to go about it
- Financial choices and issues
- Health related issues
- Maintaining recovery from addictions (providing other appropriate support is also present)
- Recovering after bereavement or other major loss
- Any major life decisions
- Any issue where choice is involved

As one can appreciate, this is a very broad remit, and many coaches choose to specialise in certain areas according to their own interests and experience. The coach has access to a wide range of approaches to suit different clients with their unique personalities and potentials, and different life situations.

A note on timescale of coaching relationship:

Each client's speed of discovery, growth in self-awareness, willingness and ability to act, and rate of change is specific to them. It is common for clients to have coaching over a period of months and for some years to achieve significant, lasting success; they may achieve their original goals and go on to set new higher goals for themselves. The coach assists the client to keep referring to the intended outcomes in their life, thus sharpening their focus.

8 The Coach's Mental Attitude & Skills

Through their training and coaching experience a coach will amass a great deal of experience in the mental and physical states that lead human beings towards success and fulfilment – this awareness of strategies for success is one of the coach's assets. The positive mind set and 'can do' mentality is at the core of a coach's being; a coach will seek to exemplify their methods within their own life. Each coach will have their own unique approach to coaching dependent on their particular interests and inspiration, as well as their formal and informal training for the job. A coach's particular coaching style will probably emphasise certain aspects of coaching more than others and will be tailored to suit each individual client dependent on their needs.

A coach will frequently specialise in one or more areas of Life and/or Business Coaching. The law of attraction of like to like results in them working with the clients who are attracted to their particular approach. A coach has a wide range of tools at their disposal to assist the client with whatever arises. The coach will have clarified their own professional boundaries regarding what they can and cannot offer to a client and will be adept in communicating this with clarity.

When coaching, a great coach will access certain state of being which will promote high quality listening and awareness. This is a grounded state of being ‘in the zone’ for coaching – a caring state of non-judgemental openness and positive detachment. In my experience this positive sense of detachment from the client’s decisions needs to be constantly cultivated and contributes significantly to the coach’s effectiveness. Whilst caring deeply about the client’s overall well-being and recognising their influence in the client’s process, the coach needs to resist over-influencing the client’s choice of action. Coaches do not use their expertise to diagnose, direct, or design solutions for the client.

I believe that successful coaches find their own particular niche within coaching to give the best of themselves in ways which delight and fulfil them. I believe that, through their practice of coaching, successful coaches repeatedly access peak states of inspiration and effectiveness in a spiral path leading to greater and greater awareness of self, of others and of the interconnectedness of both.

9 Who is the Client?

The client wants something – whether it is a higher level of performance, additional learning, or greater satisfaction and fulfilment in any or all aspects of their life. Coaching is often used by successful individuals who support themselves and their development by making use of Coaching as a highly supportive mechanism for positive change and even greater levels of success. The ICF clarifies why these successful individuals use a Coach,

“What about people who are already doing great in their lives. Why would they need a coach? They might not need a coach. But it is helpful to find out: Are they doing what they most enjoy? Are they tolerating anything? Is life easy? Are they going to be financially

independent within the next 15 years? Do they have what they most want? We've discovered that, often, people need to expect more out of their lives. A coach can help in this process.”¹⁰

¹⁰ International Coach Federation website, 2003: www.coachfederation.org

It may well be the case that clients' levels of expectation of what their life can be could be raised significantly in their favour. Clients often need lots of encouragement to allow their greatest dreams to live!

Some clients come to coaching for problem solving with major and minor life issues. It is crucial to recognise that coaching can be used concurrently with psychotherapeutic work but it is not to be used as a substitute where psychotherapeutic work is needed. The question of identifying when it would be advisable for a particular client to have therapeutic help is one in which the coach must use their professional judgement and experience; I will say more about this process in the next section. In addition to clarifying their own professional boundaries I believe a coach should regularly seek the counsel of senior coaches in making these important judgement calls.

10 The Boundaries of Coaching

Coaching is not the same as mentoring; the coach is not required to be an expert in anything other than coaching technique and communication. The coach is not giving advice as a mentor would; the coach facilitates mental agility and expansion of choices rather than teaching from experience e.g. of having done a particular kind of work.

Whilst a coach is not there to tell a client how to act in specific ways, they are there to help the client move into whatever action is conducive to their well-being and growth. Some clients may think they want and need advice, but any temptation to give it should be resolutely resisted by the coach.

The ICF, in its website, gives a notably different opinion, saying

“Advice, opinions, or suggestions are occasionally offered in coaching. Both parties understand that the client is free to accept or decline what is offered and takes the ultimate responsibility for action. The coach is not discouraged from offering advice, opinions or suggestions on occasion.”

If, as I would resolutely uphold, the coach is not there to offer advice how does the client know what to do? Coaching implicitly assumes that the client **does** indeed know what to do; this may take time and encouragement to uncover, but they have all their own answers to achieve their potential. Coaching provides the means for exploring both the more ‘rational’ areas of self - what clients think about themselves and their potential - but also crucially a coach will help a client feel their intuitive sense of inner guidance.

As Robbie Gass wrote

‘Like an ability of a muscle, hearing your inner wisdom is strengthened by doing it’.¹¹

¹¹ As quoted in The Artist’s Way, Julia Cameron, Pan Books, 1993, page 16

I would argue that a true and great coach does not advise in the sense of being attached to the client taking any particular route of attaining a goal. Clients need to be encouraged to become more and more accustomed to looking within for their answers and strengthening their belief in their own inner wisdom. Coaching clients are ultimately responsible for their choices within the coaching session and should be encouraged to recognise and take this responsibility. This is balanced with the client being motivated to achieve their commitments because they are being held accountable to themselves by the coach. Ultimately they need to move towards recognising that they have complete freedom of choice to undertake whatever they wish to. Where there is any question of a client feeling obliged to do something this needs to be explored and acknowledged so that they can move forward into their own power. The coach is working towards enabling the client to coach them selves to success by adopting tried and tested methods.

Coaching is not a cure-all for all problems and is not a rescue service for those stuck in prolonged emotional distress. It is not a therapy in the sense of healing illness of the mind but it I would argue that it is more appropriate than counselling for people with much less severe difficulties who may go to counselling looking for support and answers to their inner questions but find that they have not achieved any significant change. Often what people who are basically well need is educating in how to become more confidently themselves! Coaching is not applicable in cases of extreme psychological and emotional distress, clinical depression or deep-rooted, intransigent difficulties stemming from the past. It is possible to

have counselling and coaching continuing along-side one another if helpful to a client for different purposes in their life.

*“The client is not seeking emotional healing or relief from psychological pain. They are not in a state of crisis. . . Coaching is designed to help clients improve their learning and performance, and enhance their quality of life. Coaching does not focus directly on relieving psychological pain or treating cognitive or emotional disorders.”*¹²

¹² International Coaching Federation website, ibid.

Whether operating from within the membership of a recognised coaching body or not, each coach must ultimately set and act upon their own specific moment-by-moment boundaries. I have identified the following guidelines for my own coaching practice:

- ◆ The apparent state of the Client and the nature of their issue/s both need to be considered. It is not sufficient to say that where a Client or potential Client is not considered, or does not consider themselves, ‘ill’ they can be accepted for coaching. Their issue may be unsuitable.
- ◆ Where the client’s issue/s relates primarily to an event or relationship in the past which they experienced as very traumatic I would refer them for therapy or counselling and, if considered appropriate and desirable, offer coaching in addition.
- ◆ Where the Client’s ‘negative’ emotions are strong and sustained and not under sufficient self-control for them to manage their lives. E.g. anger, depression, anxiety, I would refer them on.
- ◆ Where a Client is suffering from prolonged sense of overwhelm and does not have the current capacity to move forward I would refer them on to therapy or counselling.

Where indicated I would refer clients to their GP and perhaps also to tell them about Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) as I am aware of the excellent results achieved and know that CBT is sometimes available through the NHS. However, it would be the GP’s role, with assistance from Mental Health professionals and the Client themselves, to determine the appropriate course of action depending on the nature and severity of the difficulties.

11 Achieving Lasting Intentional Change

Clients come to coaching because there is something somewhere which they want to change in their lives; either something they want or don't want. They will need to learn to think and act in different ways to get new results. In my experience clients often need encouragement to own and express something they already know about themselves deep down; their own truth which resides perhaps so deep that it is in the recesses of their unconscious mind as yet. Coaching methods involving visualisation can help, as can the precise powerful questions the coach asks. However, negative self-beliefs can block further progress.

The process of uncovering negative self-beliefs and systematically replacing them with supportive self-beliefs is one of the most effective life changing and affirming processes. This process is described by Julia Cameron in 'The Artist's Way' (a book which guides people in releasing their innate creativity). It works with uncovering negative beliefs and discarding them (p30-36) and using positive affirmations (p32-40). Julia Cameron also describes the process of identifying 'gremlins' and 'monsters' which are our habitual internal fears and blocks. This has the effect of externalising the stumbling block – the poor quality questions we habitually ask about ourselves, and the poor quality answers about ourselves which naturally ensue. It clearly identifies this mental construct as the difficulty, and not something inherently part of the person. This can be an immense relief to anyone who has lurking fears they are somehow inherently flawed.

In *Awaken the Giant Within*, Anthony Robbins also engages deeply with this process of changing negative self-beliefs; he gets us to ask new questions when we perceive difficulties. He strongly encourages us to ask a number of 'challenge questions', including:

*'What's great about this problem?'*¹

¹ *Awaken The Giant Within*, Anthony Robbins, Simon & Schuster, 1991, page 193

This turns our usual thinking on its head and can promote a radical change of state and perception if we are willing to engage with it; it can be mind-expanding indeed. If followed by new actions, which give us new feedback about what we are able to do, be and have in our lives, we can go on to free ourselves from the self-made prisons of habitual negative responses for good!

When viewed from a higher standpoint our greatest obstacles can reveal themselves as our most helpful teachers. The more one experiences this dynamic, the greater one's ability to persevere through difficulties with an inner faith that valuable learning and growth will surely follow. This is not in any way an encouragement to undergo unnecessary suffering if we can see a way out of it!

A large part of human suffering is caused by attaching to thinking that reality 'should' somehow differ from how it actually is – and without our having to take responsibility for actively changing it! When we can think and feel our way beyond 'shoulds' like this we can experience much greater inner peace – even in the midst of what might appear to be significant obstacles.

I feel strongly that many perceived obstacles are subjective obstacles, of a kind which it is possible to dissolve, given the right way into our thinking; they may look, feel and taste solid, but they are constructed in our minds and in the minds of others who influence us. Given the right approach, tools and support, we are able to break through to a place of far greater inner freedom and joy. This awareness can lead us to a creative mindset of recognising those factors which we do wish to change and getting on with it confidence!

12 Methods from 'Cognitive Behavioural Coaching'

Clients may be aware of unhelpful behaviours they wish to change; but awareness alone is not usually enough to change deep-rooted behaviours; clients need to be equipped with the tools, methods, and support for lasting intentional change to occur and take enough of the necessary actions which will truly implement the change. In this section I will explore how coaches can work most effectively with some of the more resistant of behaviours which can stand in the way of the client's further progress. Here I am considering entrenched behaviours such as procrastination, poor time management, and the adoption of certain very common stances (such as that of 'victim' and 'rescuer') in personal and work relationships. These behaviours can very much affect a client's life adversely but without them necessarily becoming clinically 'ill' as such.

I suggest that the coach can assist the process of change by drawing on methods from an approach coined as 'Cognitive Behavioural Coaching', by Michael Neenan and Windy

Dryden in their book 'Life Coaching: A Cognitive Behavioural Approach', first published in 2002. This book is clearly aimed at *“that neglected species . . .the intelligent reader. This person keeps her critical faculties sharp by engaging with new ideas, welcomes opposing viewpoints, is unafraid to change her mind and seeks opportunities for self-development. However, even these fine qualities cannot prevent you from underperforming or becoming stuck in certain areas of your life.”*¹³

¹³ 'Life Coaching: A Cognitive Behavioural Approach', Michael Neenan and Windy Dryden, Brunner-Routledge, 2002, preface.

Cognitive Behavioural Coaching (CBC) is based on the premise that learning to think differently can enable us to feel and act differently and thus become happier and more fulfilled in life. This work is derived from the authors' experience of delivering Cognitive-Behavioural Therapy (CBT) but is aimed at the population at large, in a non-clinical setting and is concerned with the changing the self-defeating thinking which adversely affects and restricts so many people.

From engaging with the methods and examples Neenan and Dryden describe, I have a strong sense that wherever a coach encounters a block to their client's progress which hinges on troublesome emotions, procrastination, excessive sensitivity to criticism, or reaction rather than response, the methods of Cognitive Behavioural Coaching would be very helpful indeed.

To give a flavour of CBC, its methods include working with unhelpful thinking by

- Disputing unhelpful patterns of thinking by using questions based on logic and asking 'Does this thought help or hinder goal achievement?'
- Countering distorted thinking such as exaggerating the negative and discounting the positive.
- Finding alternatives to rigid 'shoulds' and 'musts'.
- Recognising the habits of 'catastrophising', or assuming the worst, and if it occurs, assuming an inability to cope with it.

The authors look at the negative core beliefs which often underpin distorted thinking and which are 'activated from their dormant state when you are upset' and explain how to identify them by progressively tracking back a current disturbing thought (p 8-9) to find out what lies at its root. These core beliefs determine how we see a situation; as we know from

experience people do see different situations very differently indeed. Changing our core beliefs requires identifying the new belief one wishes to adopt and then actively seeking evidence for it wherever possible, from one's past, and particularly from one's present and future.

I will give a brief outline of the major topics covered within Neenan and Dryden's work and then go on to explore a couple of these methods in more detail to determine how they could benefit a Life Coach's work. Their chapters cover:

1. *Dealing with troublesome emotions*
2. *Problem-creating vs. problem-solving*
3. *Overcoming procrastination*
4. *Time management*
5. *Persistence*
6. *Dealing with criticism*
7. *Assertiveness*
8. *Taking risks and making decisions*
9. *Understanding the personal change process*
10. *Putting it all together*

In Chapter 3 Neenan and Dryden take a thorough look at procrastination behaviours; identifying them as 'often a behavioural way of protecting yourself from experiencing an unpleasant emotional state.' If the coach helps the client understand their fears they can help the client implement a programme of action to overcome them. They also recognise that sometimes productive action needs to come before one's motivation can be really high, and that it can be self-sabotaging to wait for sufficient motivation to arise before making a start on action which we know will benefit us. They identify a common misconception about change; some people believe that:

“ . . insight alone will bring about the necessary changes in your life. Unfortunately, the change process is more complicated: insight plus forceful and persistent action equals enduring change.”

They go on to give an example regarding producing lasting improvements in self-worth:

“For example, you see that your self-worth is dependent upon the approval of others and the solution to this dependency is to value yourself irrespective of how others see you. Unless you put this insight into daily practice (e.g. being assertive when necessary, doing things that

may incur criticism or rejection from others), it is highly unlikely that you will integrate your new philosophy of self-worth into your belief system (i.e. you believe it deeply and consistently.”¹⁴

¹⁴ Ibid, Neenan & Dryden, page 82

This is how CBC would approach time management issues,
‘The essence of time management is knowing what your values and goals are in life and making the optimum use of your time to achieve these ends . . . You will need to review how you use your time and phase-out those activities that are not goal-directed.’

They may well advocate the use of a daily time log which is reviewed jointly with the client to make decisions about what needs changing. Their focus on values, goals and increasing the goal-directed activities to achieve positive outcomes sits very happily with coaching methodologies. They also offer precise, practical ideas for change; e.g. for the client who is working with improving their effectiveness and who often handles the same pieces of paperwork many times without taking the necessary decisive action, Neenan and Dryden suggest the following method. The client puts a tick in the corner of each piece of paper each time it is handled to help them notice if they are putting off making a decision if the ticks are mounting up.

It would have been interesting to know more about how Neenan and Dryden see their work when viewed within the context of styles of Life Coaching. Their view of the client-coach relationship fits with the approach described in ‘Co-Active Coaching’ by Whitworth, Kimsey-House and Sandahl, and also with the methods taught in the Noble Manhattan Life Coach Training. I have noticed that through using the CBC approach coach and client are likely to become better acquainted with their current reality: adept at looking for the precise evidence of how something is now, what precise and measurable criteria would represent an improvement and, once the action is chosen and acted upon, its effectiveness in the light of their chosen criteria. In my opinion this is a very good result of CBC – one could say that it makes highly effective use of the ‘reality’ stage of the TGROW¹⁵ coaching model, coming back to review it later with a series of reality checks being built into the CBC coaching process. The CBC approach also makes good use of the other stages of this model.

¹⁵ The ‘TGROW’ coaching model as taught by Noble Manhattan, and found in ‘Effective Coaching’ by Myles Downey, stands for Topic, Goal, Reality, Options and Way Forward.

The central premise of cognitive approaches is that our feelings are not just automatic reactions to events, they are shaped by the ideas and recurring thoughts that we have. Whilst the CBC approach to change management takes full account of both the rational and non-rational cognitive and emotional forces underpinning behaviour it purposely places them within a rationally-based framework to facilitate increasing control and mastery of one's strong, reactive emotions. Thus Neenan and Dryden offer coaches precise and effective methods for helping clients work directly with thoughts and the way they affect their feelings and behaviours.

I was interested to find out whether cognitive approaches generally fit with coaching methodology. Further research into Cognitive Behavioural Therapy revealed the temporal focus as a common to both. As Dr Chris Williams explains,

“Cognitive therapy looks at "here and now" issues rather than things from the past. It helps people to learn new methods of coping and problem-solving which they can use for the rest of their lives. “

He goes on to say that

“Cognitive therapy is a way of talking about the connections between how we think, how we feel and how we behave. It particularly concentrates on ideas that are unrealistic. These often undermine our self-confidence and make us feel depressed or anxious. Looking at these can help us work out different ways of thinking and behaving that in turn will help us cope better. Cognitive therapy also helps us to look at our "rules for living". These are strong beliefs about how we should live our lives which we develop while we are growing up. They are based both on what we learn from other people and on our own experiences. Although they shape our lives, most of the time we don't give them much thought. They may be realistic or unrealistic, helpful or unhelpful. For example, someone may grow up with the belief that "I cannot be happy unless I am successful in everything I do". This belief is unrealistic - the reality of life is that we all fail sometimes. By demanding the impossible, this idea is likely to produce feelings of depression. Cognitive therapy can help us not only to be aware of the "rules" we use but also to develop more helpful ones. “

It is important to recognise that Cognitive Behaviouralists do not encourage clients to simply change their thoughts where in fact it is preferable and possible to change the external circumstances for the better. Neenan and Dryden recognise that there are different solutions

to any challenge – some are ‘emotion focussed’ and some are ‘situation focussed’ solutions; either or both can be appropriate and helpful depending upon the individual situation. For instance, they identify emotional self-management as the usual key to stress management in addition to making changes within one’s environment. I see that CBC approaches as potentially very helpful where an ‘emotion focussed’ solution may be highly applicable.

It is important to emphasise here that I am in no way advocating coaches taking clients who in fact would do better to seek relief from therapy; however I am advocating the use of Cognitive Behavioural approaches within Life and Business Coaching as I would maintain there is great value in these methods. They can be helpful to people who consider themselves, and are considered by others, entirely well in addition to those who are ill.

I believe that further valuable work could be done in exploring the use of Cognitive Behavioural techniques to further enhance all creative and positive thought, as well as in substituting unhelpful for helpful thinking.

To make use of these CBC methods principally requires a coach to focus their skills on helping the client analyse minutely the reality of their thoughts, feelings and behaviours and then methodically manage their chosen belief changes at the right pace, whilst supporting the client taking massive amounts of the desired kinds of action. This may require the coach and client to work in great detail, and perhaps at a slower pace than they may initially wish to at times, but I believe it could achieve lasting intentional change of habits for the client.

I am in favour of using any method which can help human beings harness our phenomenal mental and emotional power for intentional living! If some of those ways come from methodology originally employed in therapy settings this is entirely valid - providing that we maintain a very clear awareness of the professional boundaries of coaching.

**I have a conviction, borne from experience, that
wherever human beings have a tendency to limit themselves by their thinking,
they can also free themselves by it!**

13 The Diamond Path of Coaching

A major reason for making the effort to have coaching in the first instance may well be to align more effectively with one's greatest potential. As we come to see so well in coaching, just talking about something does not produce results – commitment to action is required to really see positive change. Reflecting on the intentional change facilitated by coaching has led me to generate this representation of the journey that can occur:

Diamond Path of Coaching

Low level of self-awareness

Gradually increasing self-awareness

Still very much locked into one's initial conditioning

Knowing what one is 'good at' but not feeling truly fulfilled

Finding the sources of on-going inspiration and motivation,

Coming into stronger relationship with oneself, one's dreams and aspirations with increasing self awareness and sense of choice; aligning oneself with ones values by one's actions. Living with increasing intentionality & willingness to learn from all experience – both joy & challenge

Living more and more confidently in accordance with one's individual nature

whilst finding a moving balance within changing conditions

Transforming all limiting views of self/other

Highly inspired & inspiring of creativity

Living out one's true potential

Fully self aware

Where we start may be largely determined by our disposition, environment and conditioning – but where we finish is up to us!

We grow our own diamonds!

SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY

- The Life Coaching Handbook, Curly Martin, 2001, Crown House Publishing
- Co-Active Coaching Whitworth, Kimsey-House & Sandahl, 1998, Davies-Black
- Be Your Own Life Coach Fiona Harrold, 2000, Hodder & Stoughton
- Coaching for Performance John Whitmore, 1992 (3rd edition 2003), Nicholas Brealey
- Effective Coaching Myles Downey, 1st ed in GB1999, Orion Business
- Awaken the Giant Within Anthony Robbins, 1991, Simon & Schuster
- The Thirty Minute Life Coach Gerard O'Donovan & Curly Martin, 2000, Coaching Academy UK Ltd
- Life Coaching: A Cognitive Behavioural Approach Neenan & Dryden, 2002, Brunner-Routledge
- Mind Over Mood D Greenberger & C Padesky, 1995, Guilford Press
- The Artist's Way Julia Cameron, 1995, Pan

Are you interested in finding out about the courses and trainings offered worldwide by

Noble Manhattan Coaching Ltd.

Please contact our friendly customer care team

Contact Details

International Head Office

Noble Manhattan Coaching Ltd

No 5

105 The Esplanade

Weymouth

Dorset

DT4 7EA

Tel +44 1305 769411

Email info@noble-manhattan.com

Web www.noble-manhattan.com