

Coaching Presence

Paul Smith

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This book is based on a previously released digital version, now revised and expanded.

Dedication

This book is dedicated to all coaches who understand the importance of presence. Remembering the most important gift we can give to our clients is ourselves.

May this book guide you on becoming whole-heartedly present with all those whom you serve.

This moment right now, is all that there is.

“Time isn’t precious at all, because it is an illusion. What you perceive as precious is not time but the one point that is out of time: the Now. That is precious indeed.”

Eckhart Tolle

Purpose of this Book

This book was originally created as part of an Accredited Coach Training Programme with the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC), aimed at supporting coaches in enhancing their business and professional skills.

The programme offers a comprehensive curriculum designed to equip coaches with the knowledge and tools necessary to succeed in the dynamic field of coaching. Participants will benefit from interactive workshops, online study and peer-to-peer learning opportunities. Join a community of experienced professionals dedicated to advancing the coaching profession.

Upon completion of the programme, coaches receive five years' accreditation from the EMCC, a globally recognised accreditation body. This credential demonstrates to potential clients a commitment to excellence in coaching practice and signals a high standard of professionalism. To enrol in the programme, scan the QR code below. Access our online learning hub for coach development and collaboration projects.

All tools discussed in this book are available in the 'Coach Library' within our hub.



The CM Hub

Foreword

Many of us in coaching have heard the term 'presence', we know it's important, but it can feel like a mysterious skill that some coaches just naturally have. This book beautifully clarifies that idea. Paul Smith, influenced by the work of Eckhart Tolle guides us to see that presence isn't just a feeling within coaching; it's a practical skill we can all develop.

He breaks this journey down into a clear and natural flow: how to get ready to be present, how to truly be present in the moment with a client, and why looking back after a session is just as important. Discussing different styles of coaching including Emergence and Ontological Coaching along the way. The book feels like a supportive mentor, offering down-to-earth tips, relatable examples, and models you can start using straight away.

As you explore each chapter, I encourage you to take your time. Reflect on the wisdom Paul shares and see how it fits into your own practice. This book is more than just a read; it's an experience that will help you grow in confidence and deepen the impact you have with your clients.

Welcome to a space where mastering the heart of coaching is made clear and achievable. Let Coaching Presence be your guide to becoming the coach you are meant to be.

Adele Jacobs
Programme Director, Coaching Minds

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Chapter 1

An Introduction to Coaching Presence

‘Bring presence into whatever you do.’

Eckhart Tolle

What do we mean by ‘presence’ in coaching? Why is it an important skill? What should I consider when exploring the role of presence in coaching? An important aspect of becoming a successful coach is our ability to master what we term ‘Coaching Presence’. This is the concept of being present in all that we do in our coaching practice, particularly when holding our coaching space with our clients. As a coach, we must understand that the past and the future do not exist within our coaching sessions, all we have is the present moment. We must not carry any past experiences or future expectations into our coaching space and we must become present and aware of all that is going on for our client. By being present, we bring our best selves and by bringing our best selves, we provide the best value to our clients. The most valuable coaching skill we can give to our clients, is our presence.

One of the main objectives of coaching is to provide a reflective space for our clients, that allows them to explore what is truly going on for them. Through presence, we can create a more spacious approach to coaching, allowing the client to slow down and better understand their current experiences and challenges. To use music as an example, we must observe the whole composition, not just pay attention to the lyrics.

In this book, we will explore how we can master Coaching Presence through the power of silence, how we can deal with

our mind-chatter, prepare for presence, dive deeper into the use of our intuition and learn Emergence and Ontological Coaching. We will learn how to use ourselves as an instrument of change for all our clients. Understanding that presence is an art that we can develop through our practice.

As an opening reflective exercise, here are some important questions to consider:

- How present are you on a daily basis?
- Do you ever switch off or allow your mind to wander when in conversation with others?
- How often do you pay attention to your surroundings?
- What 'mind-chatter' creeps up in your day-to-day conversations with others?
- How often do you sit silently and listen to others without feeling the need to respond?
- Do you ever take time to plan any interruptions or distractions in your work?
- How often do you observe what is in front of you in its entirety?

Mastering Coaching Presence is not about adding another tool to our kit, but about returning to the very essence of connection. It is the quiet practice of meeting our clients exactly where they are, in the only moment we truly have; this one. By committing to this practice, we do more than improve our technique; we transform the quality of the space we hold. We become a clear mirror, allowing our clients to see themselves more fully, and in doing so, we unlock collaborative change that is the heart of true coaching.

Chapter 2

5 Types of Awareness

"Awareness is the greatest agent for change."

Eckhart Tolle

What role does 'awareness' play within presence? Is there a difference between awareness and presence? What does it mean to be 'aware'? Awareness is a key aspect of coaching and plays a fundamental part in our ability to be present. The more aware we are, the more present we become and the more present we become the better the environment we create for our clients in our coaching space. Just like a seed requires the certain conditions to grow into a beautiful flower, our clients require the right environment to grow into their full potential. In this chapter, we will explore awareness, the different types, and some useful exercises and tools we can apply to increase our awareness.

2.1 What is Awareness?

Awareness appears in different forms and at different levels. The more we understand the different types of awareness, the closer we become to mastering presence. Awareness helps us increase our ability to perceive and absorb. It creates alignment with our intuition and provides us with a deeper understanding. We can define awareness into five types of awareness, which when understood and practiced, will help us improve our coaching presence and our coaching practice.

The five types of awareness are:

1. Time Awareness
2. Task Awareness
3. Result Awareness
4. Spatial Awareness
5. Self-Awareness

Each type of awareness requires thought and reflection. Understanding these five types of awareness gives us a practical framework for our development. Here we capture a small part of presence, through five domains; time, task, result, space, and self, that we can observe and refine.

2.2 Time Awareness

In the fast-paced world we currently live in, many of us lose track of time, finding ourselves lost in social media or working to the point where time just disappears. Some of us may lose ourselves in our thoughts and operate on autopilot, repeating tasks without ever being fully present or conscious of the time we are spending.

When we become more conscious of time and the tasks, we increase what is known as our 'Time Awareness'. Time awareness is a key concept to help us become more present. When we bring awareness to the time we are spending, not only do we increase productivity, but we become more present in the completion of our tasks. As a quick test, we can ask ourselves the following questions:

- How much time do we waste per day?
- How much time do we spend on social media?
- How often do we procrastinate and why?
- How often do we find ourselves lost in our thoughts?
- How do we currently manage your time?

If we struggled to answer those questions and are unconscious of where we spend our time, then we lack time awareness. This is not an exercise to be critical of where we are spending our time, it is simply an illustration to show how aware of 'time' we are.

It is said that the average user spends 4 hours daily on their phones. A quick check on our phone usage gives us a small idea of time awareness. It also provides us with an area of reflection that we can explore to see if our screen time is productive, or is better spent elsewhere. We explore productivity, time management and energy management in detail in our ***Coaching Development*** book. For the purposes of presence, becoming aware of where we spend our time, builds our presence skills.

One useful tool we can apply when becoming conscious of time awareness is what is known as the 8/8/8 Model. The basic concept of this model is to break our day down into three sections, sleep, work and personal leisure. A perfectly balanced day would see us with 8 hours sleep, 8 hours work, and 8 hours for ourselves. The more balanced our day, the more energetic and productive we will feel.

Applying this model in practice, we can ask ourselves the following questions:

1. How many hours of sleep do we get each day?
2. How many hours do we spend on work each day?
3. How many hours do we give to ourselves each day?

If our day is unbalanced, we can then explore strategies to work towards a more balanced day. How can we work smarter? How do we improve our hours of sleep? How do we give more time to ourselves? With an aim to satisfy 8/8/8. By applying and reflecting on this model, we begin to increase our time awareness. The more aware of time we become, the more present we become.

The 8/8/8 model is also an excellent tool we can apply in our coaching practice with clients seeking more productivity or who find themselves procrastinating. By bringing our client's attention to time awareness, they understand how they can use their time more wisely, which supports in achieving their goals and visions.

Time awareness is also important within our coaching sessions. How often do we pay attention to the clock and sign post our time together with our client? (Without looking distracted or eager to end the session of course). One struggle many new coaches face, is the ability to keep their sessions within the agreed time limit and this is often caused by lack of time awareness. For those of us who struggle with this, here are a list of tips and techniques we can apply:

1. **Our Opening Agreement:** At the very start of our session, we can clearly state the time we have together. For example, we could say:

"We have a valuable 45 minutes together today. I'll help us keep an eye on the time so we can use it effectively, and I'll give us a gentle signpost when we have about 10 minutes left to ensure we can close our conversation well."

This makes us a keeper of the time and not a slave to the clock.

2. **Becoming a Silent Timekeeper:** We can use a simple analogue clock or a timer placed discreetly behind our laptop, within our line of sight. This allows us to check the time without breaking eye contact or looking down at a phone or watch, which can be interpreted as disinterest.

3. **The 'Five-Minute' Rule:** In the final quarter of our session (e.g. with 10-15 minutes remaining), we can begin to guide the conversation towards a close by expressing. This isn't about cutting the client off, but about helping them reach a conclusion. We can use bridging phrases like:

"As we begin to bring our focus toward wrapping up the last 5 to 10 minutes, what is the most important insight you're taking from our conversation today?"

"To make the most of our last 10 minutes together, I would love to know what actions you want to take away from today?"

4. **Blend Time Signposts:** We can naturally integrate time markers into our reflections. For example, halfway through, we might reflect:

"We're about halfway through our time, and you've already identified some powerful themes around confidence."

This reinforces without being intrusive.

5. **Practice in Everyday Life:** We can build our time-awareness outside of sessions. In any 10-minute

conversation with a friend or colleague, we can practice being silently aware of the time passing. This builds the intuitive sense we need for coaching, so it becomes a background awareness rather than a constant focus for us.

6. **Manage Overruns Professionally:** If we consciously exceed the time, we can acknowledge it and anchor the value. Then, we can immediately redirect to the next session:

"We went over a little as this was important. Let's continue this in our next session."

7. Avoid the "Anything Else?" Trap: We can replace the open-ended question that invites running over time. Instead, we can focus on summarising gains and setting the agenda for the next meeting to create a clean, purposeful close.

These tips ensure we respect the time agreement while maintaining a supportive and professional partnership with our client.

2.3 Task Awareness

The second type of awareness is 'Task Awareness'. This is the understanding we hold towards our to-do list, tasks and how conscious we are of their importance. We may have a long to-do list with many low priority tasks, or equally we may have a short to-do list that are all high-priority. The important aspect for

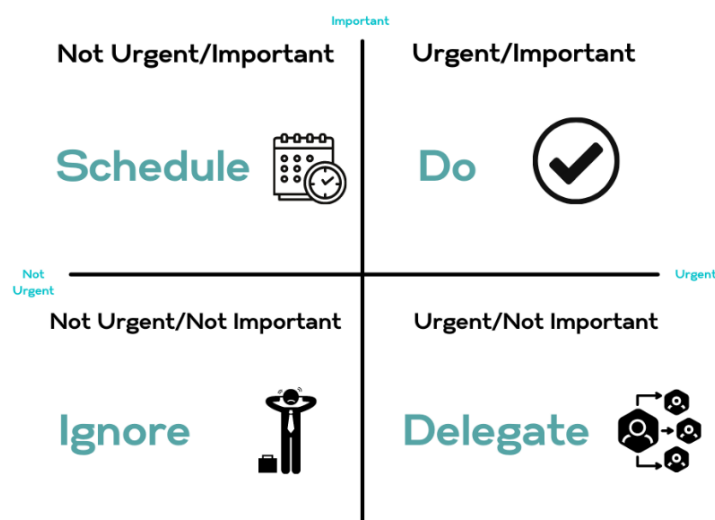
presence here, is that we are aware of our tasks, their importance, and their urgency and we are not floating through each day without a direction or agenda. The more we build our task awareness, the more present we become in our work.

In order to build a successful coaching practice, we must become aware of our day-to-day and weekly tasks, our processes, strategies, and plans. We must also be able to prioritise our tasks in terms of their importance and urgency to become aware of which to tackle first and when. A task aware coach, is a present coach.

One useful tool we can use as a coach is the ‘Eisenhower Matrix’. This model allows us to analyse, increase awareness, and prioritise all our tasks by importance and urgency. For those who are part of our coaching programmes, we have provided a detailed tool in our **Coaching Library**.

For the purposes of providing an overview, the diagram below shows the four areas of a quadrant that our tasks may fall under within the Matrix.

Figure 1: The Eisenhower Matrix



We can simply work through the model by listing our tasks, numbering them and then scoring their importance and urgency on a scale of 1-10. We can then plot the numbers on a quadrant similar to the above, using this task awareness to understand how to action each one.

Schedule (Important, Not Urgent): These are our high-impact activities. They are crucial for our long-term goals and development but don't demand immediate action. By scheduling these, we ensure our most strategic work gets the dedicated time it deserves.

Do (Important & Urgent): These are our critical priorities. They are both time-sensitive and vital to our success. This quadrant requires our immediate attention and action to resolve pressing issues and meet commitments.

Ignore (Not Urgent, Not Important): These are distractions that do not serve our goals or well-being. They are time-wasters that can be consciously minimised or eliminated to protect our focus and energy for what truly matters.

Delegate (Urgent, Not Important): These tasks demand a response but are not the best use of our personal skillset. If possible, entrust them to others. This frees us up to concentrate on the high-value activities in our 'Do' and 'Schedule' quadrants.

Ultimately, the Eisenhower Matrix provides more than just a method for prioritisation; it offers us a framework for clarity and conscious choice. By categorising tasks based on true importance rather than urgency, we reclaim control over our time and focus our energy where it has the greatest impact.

Again, this is also a useful tool to introduce within our coaching sessions. For clients feeling overwhelmed, stuck, or burdened by a to-do list, it provides as a practical and visual guide to cut

through the noise. It empowers our clients to move from a state of reaction to one of proactive strategy.

2.4 Result Awareness

What results are we producing? What success are we achieving (no matter how big or small)? What can we do differently? These are a few questions we can consider when exploring 'Result Awareness'. When we become more aware of our time and tasks, we also increase our awareness of our results. The outputs we make through our coaching practice are important. As a coach, we must review our progress and take the time to celebrate our achievements. However, in order to celebrate wins, we must first define and understand our 'Key Performance Indicators' (KPIs). A KPI is simply a metric we can use to show if our business is operating effectively.

Some basic KPIs we can set for a coaching practice are:

1. An Increase in Discovery Calls held each month
2. An Increase in New Clients each month
3. An Increase in Social Media Engagement
4. An Increase in Monthly Turnover
5. Client Satisfaction

The above is a non-exhaustive list and we must set our KPIs based on what is important for our business growth. For example, we may not use YouTube, but have a strategy for potential clients to book through our Facebook Page, therefore an important KPI for us could be to increase our number of Facebook Page likes and conversions. Having KPIs not only shows our growth and success, but also allows us to analyse our progress and become aware of where we are succeeding and where we may need to make changes to our business.

Another important point to note is; whilst likes and followers on social media may indicate business growth, we must not become attached to the idea that our social media account defines our success as a business. Likes are not turnover, and followers are not clients. Use social media metrics as an indicator but tailor them to also explore:

- **Engagement-to-Lead Ratio:** How many meaningful conversations (DMs, comments, quote requests) are our posts actually generating?
- **Content Resonance:** Which topics or formats lead to clients saying, "That post was exactly what I needed to see," and then booking a discovery call?
- **Platform-Specific ROI:** Is our effort on a particular platform directly contributing to enquiries or sales, or is it just a numbers game?
- **Audience Quality Over Quantity:** Are our new followers aligned with our ideal client profile, or are they just passive spectators?
- **The Client Journey Trace:** Can we track how a new client first found us? Was it through a specific piece of content or a shared value we expressed online?

To simplify the process of defining what truly matters, I have developed the FOCUS Model which is a simple five-step framework that guides us in creating KPIs that are not just numbers, but a reflection of our coaching vision and goals. We can explore each of the five steps below.

The FOCUS Model

F - Future Vision: We start with the end in mind. What is the ultimate impact we want our coaching practice to have? For example:

- ‘Become the leading career transition coach in my city.’
- ‘Empower 100 new managers.’
- ‘Achieve financial freedom.’

Our KPIs must serve and filter into this vision.

O - Outline Key Areas: We must identify the 3-5 critical areas that drive our vision. These are our strategic elements. Common areas for coaches include:

- Gaining Clients
- Client Results & Impact
- Client Satisfaction & Retention
- Business Financials
- Personal & Professional Growth

We can take these five elements and then begin to explore how we can measure them.

C - Choose Specific Metrics: For each key area, select 1-2 specific, quantifiable metrics. This is where we define our actual KPIs. They must be clear and measurable. For example:

- For Gaining Clients, a KPI could be ‘Number of discovery calls booked per month.’
- For Client Results, a KPI could be ‘Percentage of clients who successfully achieve their goals through our coaching.’
- For Client Satisfaction, a KPI could be ‘Overall score from our client surveys.’

- For Business Financials, a KPI could be ‘Amount of monthly recurring revenue.’
- For Professional Growth, a KPI could be ‘Number of hours invested in CPD.’

We must define metrics that work best for our business and that indicate growth and success.

U - Understand Targets: A KPI is meaningless without a target. We can therefore define what success looks like for each metric. Making the target realistic yet ambitious. Examples:

- ‘Increase my monthly turnover by 15% by the end of the year.’
- ‘Consistently book 15 discovery calls per month.’
- ‘Maintain an average client satisfaction score of 4.7 out of 5.’

We may want to expand our targets and link KPIs. For example, in addition to ‘consistently booking 15 discovery calls per month’, we can set a KPI that is linked to conversion rate (how many clients contract with us after a discovery call).

S - Set Reviews: Finally, we can integrate our KPIs into a regular review by scheduling a monthly ‘KPI Check-in’ to track our progress, celebrate our wins, and adjust our strategies as needed.

This model provides a structured, five-step framework to move from a vague ambition to a set of actionable, meaningful KPIs. It begins by connecting our metrics to our long-term vision, then guides us to the key areas of our practice. From here, we choose specific metrics that we align with clear targets, and finally, create

a regular review. This process ensures our KPIs are not just random numbers, but a strategy for driving our coaching practice forward.

It is important in coaching not only to measure our own success but also the success of our clients. The FOCUS model is, therefore, a highly useful tool to explore within our coaching sessions. When we guide clients to define and track their own meaningful metrics, we empower them to take ownership of their progress.

Ultimately, Result Awareness is important for sustainable business growth. The more consciously we track our results, the more we can streamline our business and reduce administrative stress. This clarity, in turn, frees up mental and emotional space, allowing us to be more fully present within our coaching practice. Tracking success metrics creates momentum; momentum builds consistency; and consistency creates the way for lasting success.

2.5 Spatial Awareness

Spatial awareness is our conscious perception of the physical space and energy we share with our client. It is the practice of stepping back from the content of the conversation to hold the entire session in our awareness. While focus narrows our attention to a single element, like the client's words, awareness expands it to take in the entire composition of the moment. Spatial awareness, allows us to observe the coaching session in its entirety.

Consider the difference between listening to a song and hearing a full orchestra. When we focus only on the lyrics, we grasp the narrative but miss the whole context the music provides. To be truly aware is to perceive the whole composition: the interplay of

instruments, the shift in tempo, the building intensity, as well as the words. Similarly, in coaching, spatial awareness means observing not just the story the client is telling us, but the entire structure of communication happening within the session.

By developing this skill, we begin to understand the layers of communication that words alone cannot tell us. As we exercise and improve our spatial awareness, we can pay close attention to:

1. **The client's body language:** Notice gestures, fidgeting, and what their hands might be expressing.
2. **The client's posture:** Observe whether they are open and leaning in, or closed off and withdrawn.
3. **The unspoken words:** Listen for what is not being said, the pauses, hesitations, and avoided topics.
4. **The energy in the room:** Tune into the emotional atmosphere the client is projecting, is it agitated, calm, or heavy?
5. **The level and quality of eye contact:** Is it direct, evasive, or searching?

Spatial awareness invites us to take a step back. It allows us to witness the full session as it unfolds, providing a more complete picture of our client's reality. A powerful question to hold throughout our practice is:

“How can I deepen my spatial awareness to serve this client more fully?”

This reflection is the key to moving from a coach who simply listens, to a coach who truly perceives.

2.6 Self-Awareness

Many people believe they are self-aware; however, true self-awareness is a rare quality. It is a constant journey that involves deep self-reflection and discovery. Our level of self-awareness represents how clearly, we see our own values, passions, purpose, environments, relationships, reactions, and behaviour, along with understanding the impact we have on others. It is essentially how conscious we are of our inner selves.

As a coach, it is important for us to embark on a journey of continuous growth and self-discovery, striving to always be the best version of ourselves and the best possible coach we can be. The more we understand our inner world, our values, passion, purpose, relationships, etc. the more impact we can have on others. A great coach possesses great self-awareness.

We discuss how to increase our self-awareness later in this book through mindfulness, however, for now, we can reflect on the following questions:

1. How well do we know our passion and purpose?
2. What are our core values?
3. How good is our relationship with others?
4. How aware are we with regards to the environment we need to thrive?
5. How often do we take time to observe and analyse our behaviour?
6. How often do we strive to improve ourselves each day?
7. How much time do we take to reflect on ourselves?

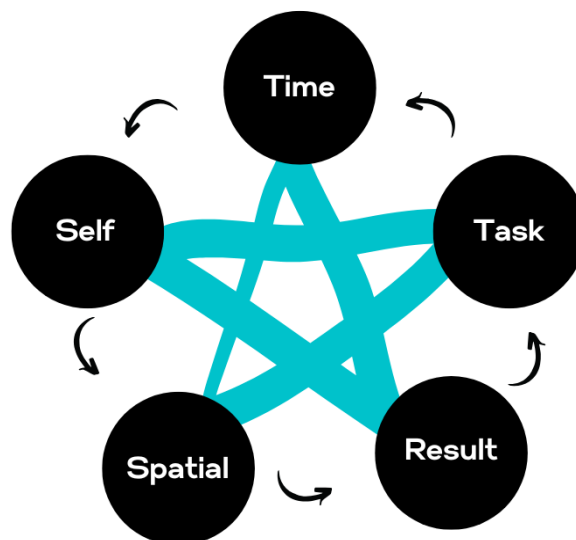
Take a moment to reflect on these questions and consider your current level of self-awareness.

Our own self-awareness is the foundation upon which we can perform one of our most important roles, to skilfully guide our clients toward their own deeper self-understanding. By first understanding our own inner self, we learn to hold the space for clients to explore theirs.

2.7 Why is Awareness Important?

The journey to becoming a present coach is, a journey of deepening awareness. It is the simple, yet profound, practice of bringing more attention to ourselves, our clients, and the space between us. By consciously developing all five types of awareness each day, we don't just manage our time or tasks better, we become more attuned, more responsive, and more impactful. This is how we build a coaching practice that is not only successful, but also sustainable and rewarding for both ourselves and our clients.

Figure 2: The 5 Types of Awareness



2.8 Theory into Practice

Throughout this chapter, we have explored the five essential types of awareness and practical ways to develop each one.

To integrate these concepts into your own approach, take a moment to consider the question below:

- ✍ **Which of the five types of awareness presents an opportunity for growth, and what is one action you can take to develop it?**

Chapter 3

Preparing For Our Coaching Sessions

‘Those who fail to plan, plan to fail.’

Winston Churchill

How can I plan to be present? Are there any techniques I can adopt to prepare for my coaching sessions? What must I consider to show up with my best energy? Preparing for our coaching sessions is an important part of the presence journey. If we go into our coaching space unprepared, we run the risk of becoming distracted and distant with our clients or leaving our mind elsewhere. In this chapter, we will discuss the three stages of presence and how we can prepare for our coaching sessions to enter the space with the best energy, fully present, and ready to engage with our clients.

3.1 The Three Stages of Presence

In order for us to become more present with our clients, we must work through what we call at Coaching Minds, the three stages of presence. To build on our presence, it is not enough for us to solely try to be in the moment with our clients, we must take action before, during and after our coaching sessions. The three stages of presence are:

Stage 1: Preparing for our Coaching Sessions

This initial stage is about creating the conditions for presence. It is a conscious process of transitioning from the busyness of our day into the present state required for coaching. Preparation might involve a short mindfulness practice, reviewing notes without attachment, or setting a clear intention for the session. By dedicating this time beforehand, we clear our own mental and emotional space, ensuring we can arrive fully for our client.

Stage 2: Presence During Our Coaching Sessions

This is the active practice of being fully immersed in the here-and-now with our client. It moves beyond theory into the lived experience of letting go of our own agenda, quieting our mind chatter, and listening with our whole being. In this stage, we are not thinking of the next question or analysing the past; we are completely available, using all our awareness to tune into the client's words, energy, and unspoken meaning.

Stage 3: Reflection on Presence After Our Coaching Sessions

The journey of presence does not end when the session stops. This final stage is where we consolidate our learning and growth as a coach. By taking just a few moments to reflect, asking ourselves how present we felt, where our attention wandered, and what we noticed about the client, we turn our experience into insight. This honest self-review is what allows us to strengthen our presence for future sessions.

We will explore stages two and three in the preceding chapters when we explore '*The 9 Sparks of Mind-Chatter*' and '*Becoming a Reflective Practitioner*'. For now, we will focus on the first stage

of presence and look at the importance of preparing for our coaching sessions and how best to do this.

3.2 Why Should We Prepare for Coaching?

Let's recall how it feels when we arrive into a meeting, session, presentation, or work event unprepared? Anxious, unsettled, a little worried? Maybe we thrive under pressure?

Regardless of our feelings when unprepared, any form of pressure that pulls us away from the present moment causes us to lose sight of our awareness.

When we have not prepared, our mind runs through preparations last minute which begins to trigger mind-chatter (more on this below). Whether that mind-chatter is positive or negative, it brings us to our mind rather than keeping us present in the room. Entering into mind-chatter during a coaching session not only affects our presence, but also the value that we bring to our clients. It affects the coaching space that we hold and the environment that we give to our clients.

It is therefore important that as a coach, we prepare for all our sessions in advance. Adopting useful strategies and techniques to give our best energy. This allows us to enter our coaching space with a clear mind and a positive mindset, giving the highest value to our clients.

3.3 How to Prepare for Our Coaching Sessions

There is much to consider when preparing for our coaching sessions. Our preparation must be both practical and mental to ensure we bring our best selves to our coaching space,

preventing, managing and mitigating any interruptions or distractions that may pull us away from the present moment. The more time we put into preparation and make it a habit, the more value we will provide to our clients.

Practical preparation helps us avoid any distractions or interruptions and allows our sessions to run more smoothly. Whether coaching online or face to face, we must consider and prepare the practical elements of our coaching sessions. These will differ from coach to coach depending on our processes, how we coach and where we coach. However, there are some basic points for us to think about when preparing practically for our coaching sessions, when coaching both online and offline. it.

3.4 Preparing for Online Coaching

When preparing for online coaching, we must consider the following ten important points:

1. How do I ensure my clients know how to use the video platform I have chosen for my coaching?
2. How do my clients access the online session? Where will I send the link and when?
3. How do I ensure I have a strong internet connection?
4. How do I ensure those in my home or physical surrounding are not going to interrupt my coaching session or distract me?
5. Is my phone switched off and on silent?
6. Do I have enough battery on my laptop?
7. Have I selected the right time for me to coach?
8. How do I ensure I have adequate lighting and clear video?
9. How do I ensure my audio is clear and my clients can hear me?

10. How will I manage any loss of connection?

Let's review each of these in more detail below.

How do I ensure my clients know how to use the video platform I have chosen for my coaching?

Numerous video platforms are available, from well-known services like Zoom and Microsoft Teams to emerging tools such as MeetFox. It's important to remember that our clients may be unfamiliar with our chosen platform or less comfortable with technology in general. With this in mind, it is helpful to consider how we can guide them through the process and what kind of technical support we can proactively offer to ensure a smooth and confident start to our sessions.

How do my clients access the online session? Where will I send the link and when?

Understanding our platform is only one part of the equation; equally important is ensuring our client can access it with ease. We must give careful thought to the entire process: How will the session link be delivered to the client; via email, a WhatsApp message, Facebook Messenger or other? When will you send it, and will a reminder follow? Streamlining this experience is crucial. It not only guarantees our clients a straightforward join-in process but also significantly reduces the risk of sessions starting late, protecting the valuable time with our clients.

To streamline this entire process, a variety of software tools now exist to make booking appointments seamless and automatic for both ourselves and our clients. Experiment with dedicated

scheduling platforms like Calendly or Acuity, which can automatically handle link delivery and reminders, freeing us to focus on the coaching itself.

How do I ensure I have a strong internet connection?

A poor internet connection can affect the coaching session and damage rapport with clients. It is therefore important for us to consider where we are holding our sessions, users in our household who may affect the connection (for example, any gamers in the house could have an impact) and ways in which we can improve our connection. If our coaching practice is our primary source of income, then investing in a strong, reliable internet connection is not just an expense; it is an investment in the professionalism and quality of your service.

If we struggle with a strong internet connection then we can always try the following:

- Reset our router.
- Turn off additional devices connected.
- Move ourselves closer to the router.
- Invest in an internet booster.
- Use a wired connection.
- Upgrade our equipment.

How do I ensure those in my home or physical surrounding are not going to interrupt my coaching session or distract me?

Let's consider an extreme example: Imagine you are in a deep, meaningful coaching session, and just as your client is opening

up, a family member walks into the background (perhaps unexpectedly and not fully dressed). The impact on your client would be significant, breaking the trust and professionalism you've worked so hard to build.

This highlights why it is absolutely essential to inform everyone in our household of our coaching schedule and to prevent distractions. If family members are out and expected to return home, we can place a note on the door. This ensures present space free from distractions for both ourselves and our clients.

Is my phone switched off and on silent?

We must never cause our own distraction and ensure that our phone is switched off or on silent for all our sessions. It is a simple point to consider, but one that some of us may forget.

Do I have enough battery on my laptop?

Imagine our client is having an 'Ahaa' moment and is on the verge of a breakthrough and just as the excitement kicks in, our laptop dies... oh!

Another easy point for us to consider, but we must always check we have battery and a charger for our laptops when coaching online. Forgetting something so simple as this, can truly damage the professional relationship.

Have I selected the right time for me to coach?

Our client wanted a 10pm session, we want to provide a service for them, so we agree. We have had a long, busy day and our energy is low. How much value can we bring to that session?

As coaches, we can easily fall into the trap of accepting sessions at a time that solely suits the client, constantly flexing to accommodate their needs. While this may seem like we are providing a service, it is an unsustainable approach that can lead us to burnout. We must respect our own energy levels and recognise the times of day when we are naturally at our best to coach. By consciously designing our calendar to protect these peak periods, we ensure that we can consistently bring our most present, focused, and valuable self to every single session.

How do I ensure I have adequate lighting and clear video?

The visual clarity we provide in our coaching sessions is an important part of building trust and connection in an online space. A poor-quality video feed can affect the professionalism of our coaching. Therefore, we must ensure to invest in a high-quality webcam not only as an expense, but as a direct investment in the professionalism and effectiveness of our coaching practice.

Often, a grainy or poorly lit image has less to do with the camera itself and more to do with insufficient light (especially if our camera is HD). In many cases, a simple and affordable investment in a ring light can enhance our video quality, without the need to purchase a new webcam.

How do I ensure my audio is clear and my clients can hear me?

A clear picture is vital, so too is clear audio. Investing in a good quality microphone is an equally important commitment to professionalism, ensuring our clients can hear every word without strain or distraction. After all, effective coaching relies on communication. To guarantee this consistently, we can make it a standard practice to run a quick sound and video check before each session begins. This simple habit ensures the technology fades into the background, allowing the true work of coaching to take centre stage.

How will I manage any loss of connection?

The internet connection, whilst strong, can be temperamental at times. It is therefore useful to prepare how we would handle a loss of connection. How do we jump back on the call, give our apology, and continue the sessions without it affecting our presence?

Technology issues happen and can be expected, how we manage them is what matters. We must never let a technical issue affect our performance or confidence.

3.5 Preparing for Offline Coaching

Coaching offline requires a slightly different approach to preparing for presence. There are five important questions to ask ourselves:

1. How do I ensure the environment I will be coaching in is suitable?
2. How do I ensure my client is aware of the location?

3. How can/will my client be arriving at the venue?
4. What steps can I take to ensure I arrive early to prepare my space?
5. If coaching from my home, how do I ensure the environment is safe?

How do I ensure the environment I will be coaching in is suitable?

When coaching face-to-face, the environment we choose is a critical for the session's success. While venues like busy coffee shops may seem convenient, they often lack the necessary privacy and freedom from distraction. To truly hold a space where a client can feel safe to open up and focus deeply, it is essential to scout our location beforehand. Consider tranquil settings such as a quiet hotel lobby, a booked private meeting room, a designated space in a library, or even a peaceful outdoor spot if the weather is suitable. Proactively checking our chosen venue ensures it supports, rather than hinders the coaching process.

How do I ensure my client is aware of the location?

Once we have selected a suitable venue, the next essential step is to provide our client with clear details and straightforward instructions on how to get there. This includes the full address and any helpful notes, such as a specific meeting point within a larger building or nearby parking options. By giving them this information well in advance, we remove potential stress and uncertainty, helping to ensure they arrive calmly, on time, and ready to fully engage in the session.

How can/will my client be arriving at the venue?

A smooth, stress-free arrival sets the tone for the entire coaching session. To facilitate this, we must seek to understand how our client will be travelling. Once we know their mode of transport, we can provide them with tailored guidance, whether that's precise details on parking availability and costs, the locations of the nearest bus, tube or metro stations, or the most convenient drop-off points for taxis. This thoughtful preparation demonstrates professionalism and care, allowing our client to transition smoothly into our session.

What steps can I take to ensure I arrive early to prepare my space?

Arriving at a session before our client is a non-negotiable standard of professionalism. This window of time allows us to calmly set up the space, centre ourselves, and transition into a fully present coaching mindset. When our client arrives, they are greeted by a composed and ready coach, which immediately creates a sense of safety and value. To make this a consistent practice, we can always plan for potential delays like traffic and give ourselves a generous buffer to ensure we are settled and waiting, never the other way around.

If coaching from my home, how do I ensure the environment is safe?

When we invite clients into our home for coaching sessions, we assume a legal duty of care known as 'Occupiers' Liability'. This means we are legally responsible for their safety from the moment they enter our property. Should a client trip, fall, or

sustain any injury due to a hazard in our home, we could be held liable. It is therefore a fundamental professional requirement to ensure our coaching environment is safe, clear of obstructions, and carefully maintained to protect all clients who visit.

To mitigate these risks and ensure a professional boundary is maintained, we can consider informing your household insurance provider that you are running a business from your home, as this may affect your coverage. You might also explore specific public liability insurance for coaches.

Equally important is our own personal safety and security when inviting new clients, who are initially strangers, into our personal space. It is essential to establish a robust pre-screening process. This should always begin with a discovery call online, which allows us to assess the fit and legitimacy of the enquiry. For our protection, we should consider scheduling first-time sessions only during daylight hours, ensuring another trusted adult is present in the house, and being mindful of what personal belongings are visible in our coaching space. Our safety should always come first.

3.6 The Coaching Minds Preparation Checklist

Whether we coach online or in person, a thorough preparation routine is key to creating powerful coaching presence. To simplify this process and ensure we consistently bring our best selves to every session, we have developed our own comprehensive checklist at Coaching Minds, captured below.

Figure 3: The Preparation Checklist



By integrating these steps into our routine, we lay the groundwork for a session that is focused, safe, and ready to create connection. This conscious investment of time before we meet allows us to step into the coaching space with calm and ready, fully available to serve our client.

Remember: always plan, prepare, and be punctual.

3.7 Theory into Practice

In this chapter we have explored how we can prepare for presence ensuring we show up to our coaching sessions with the best energy possible.

To integrate these concepts into your own approach, take a moment to consider the question below:

✍ **What is the very first thing you will do differently to prepare for your next coaching session?**

Chapter 4

The 9 Sparks of Mind-Chatter

‘The quieter you become the more you are able to hear.’

Rumi

How do I stay present in my coaching sessions? Are there any tips and strategies for dealing with mind-chatter? How can I use my focus to help my client feel truly heard and understood? It is all too easy to be pulled from the present moment by the internal dialogue of our own minds. In coaching, however, this drift holds a risk and can significantly diminish the value and impact we have with our clients. To ensure we deliver quality in our sessions, we must learn to manage this distraction.

In this chapter, we will explore the concept of 'mind-chatter' and provide practical strategies to manage it effectively, ensuring we remain fully available to those we serve.

4.1 What is Mind-Chatter?

One of the largest barriers to our coaching presence is mind-chatter, that internal voice born from self-doubt, distraction or compulsive thinking. This chatter can surface in many forms and for various reasons, from a simple to-do reminder to deeper thoughts around our competence. Regardless of how it arises, the effect is the same and it pulls us away from the present moment which can have a detrimental impact on the quality of our coaching session. The first step to managing this interference is to become a conscious observer of it. In this

section, we will explore the common causes of mind-chatter and equip ourselves with practical strategies to acknowledge it without letting it steer the session.

4.2 The 9 Sparks of ‘Mind-Chatter’

Mind-chatter is unique to every coach, and understanding its cause requires honest self-reflection. To support this discovery, at Coaching Minds, we have identified a non-exhaustive list of nine common triggers. We hope this list helps bring clarity and self-awareness to where your own mind-chatter may originate. These nine sparks are:

1. Attempting to Control the Conversation
2. Attempting to ‘fix’ the client’s problem
3. Attempting to define the outcome for the client
4. Pulling ‘experience’ from past coaching sessions
5. Seeking an ‘Aha’ moment
6. Trying to be ‘Perfect’
7. Wanting to look good
8. Feeling a need to be right
9. Focusing on ‘What to do’ and ‘What not to do’

Spark 1: Attempting to Control the Conversation

As a coach, it is important for us to facilitate a conversation that allows our client to explore what is going on for them and at the same time allow the discussion to flow naturally. When in our coaching space, we can easily fall into the trap of trying to think of the next question to ask or to try and lead a client to a specific outcome based on our past experiences. When we do this, we are trying to adopt too much control over the conversation, and

this can spark mind-chatter. This sparked mind-chatter maybe held by us as positive or negative. Regardless, it steers us away from presence. Here are some examples:

“I understand the problem here, I know the client’s solution. I’ve seen this with my previous clients...”

“There is so much going on here. I need to think of a question to steer the direction.”

“Too many questions. Which one do I ask? Where do I take this conversation?”

“Why is he/she mentioning all this information, it has nothing to do with their goal. Let’s steer the client away from this nonsense.”

By listening with deep empathy and allowing the conversation to flow, the most powerful questions will arise naturally. Any attempt to control or resist this flow only fuels mind-chatter, risks stalling the conversation, and breaks our presence. Let go of the pressure to ‘get the client somewhere.’ An impactful coach creates the space for discovery by asking open-ended questions and supporting the conversation’s natural direction, not their own.

Figure 4: Taking Control of the Conversation

- 0 1** Asking closed-ended questions.
- 0 2** Believing we have found a solution.
- 0 3** Assuming the client wants us to take control.
- 0 4** A need to share personal experience or knowledge.
- 0 5** Wanting to steer the client 'back on track'.

Spark 2: Attempting to 'Fix' the Client's Problem

When we feel the need to 'fix' our client's problems, we again spark mind-chatter and pull ourselves away from being present. When we enter our coaching space with the mindset of 'our client has a problem', we begin looking for a problem that may not be there. This does not only pull our focus and attention away from the whole composition of the coaching session, but also adds a filter to our listening in which we are only looking to hear problems. Here, we become lost in our own thoughts and analysis of the situation and enter 'fix' mode.

An important tip to help us avoid this is to remember that we are in our session to coach the client, not their issue. To be fully present, our focus needs to be on the person and not the issue they are presenting. Our role is to help them find their own solutions, not drive them to our own.

Spark 3: Attempting to Define the Outcome for the Client

When we take our 'fix it' attitude further, we can find ourselves creating plans to define the outcome for the client. We become attached to what we believe is the solution and begin to plot a strategy to move our client forward. We may do this through leading questions, planning sessions, pushing certain exercises or tools onto our client, and redirecting our client from other topics of discussion. Here our mind-chatter can spark a need to see results from our client from our own egotistical needs.

To avoid trying to define the outcome, we must show up as our true authentic selves. We must stick to what we observe, staying open to all information that is being shared, and not attempt to alter or change it in anyway.

Spark 4: Pulling 'Experience' from Past Coaching Sessions

This is probably the most common trap that many new coaches fall into, especially if we find ourselves in 'fix' mode. Here, we try to slot our clients into past sessions and experiences in order to find a solution for them. We get lost in our mind-chatter trying to pull knowledge from the past with the idea that it will progress our clients or assist them with their problem. This can really affect our focus and attention in the session and may lead us to missing key pieces of information being shared.

As a coach, we must never bring our past experiences into our present space with our clients. No matter how familiar the conversation feels, we must treat each session as a whole new situation and stay in the moment to provide the best value to it. Appreciate all the information being shared and observe.

Spark 5: Seeking an 'Aha' Moment

At the beginning of our coaching journey, we can begin to experience the joys and 'buzz' when our clients find those amazing 'aha' moments, and unlock the solution to their problem. However, this feeling can leave us with a mild addiction and pull us astray with a need to continuously search for these moments like an 'aha' junkie. This sparks mind-chatter and pulls our attention away from the present moment. What we must be aware of is that the more we consciously seek an 'aha' moment, the further we get from finding it. 'Aha' moments are not something we find, but something we surface through our presence.

It is important for us to understand as a coach, that we do not need to hold any insights that unlock an 'aha' moment, we merely provide the support and environment for them to appear. Imagine your client as a flower that has yet to blossom. Through presence, we provide the water and minerals our client needs, and we patiently wait for that one session where the flower blooms.

Spark 6: Trying to be 'Perfect'

Perfection and the need not to make mistakes is another common spark of mind-chatter. Instead of being present, we are focused on providing the 'perfect' service for our clients. Whilst, having a desire to provide an excellent service is a great trait, the moment we become attached or obsessed with the concept is the moment we become lost in our own mind. Asking those questions that both put pressure on ourselves and cause self-doubt.

In addition, we may not find ourselves satisfied with the client's progress, even when the client themselves are happy with how far they have come. We may be blinded by our own perspective and believe the client could do more or could find a better solution. We must understand that we are guiding the client to their own success and how that looks, is defined by them and not by us as their coach. We must therefore avoid leading clients to 'better' solutions.

Spark 7: Wanting to Look Good

Ego and wanting to hold a positive self-image are spark of mind-chatter. We can become too fixated on ourselves that we lose complete presence with our clients. This effects the overall quality of our coaching sessions and diverts our attention away from our clients. As a coach, we can put pressure on ourselves to be:

- Experienced
- Intelligent/smart
- Positive and uplifting
- Professional/business minded

Whilst these are nice attributes to have, when we put focus on being this way, we lose our authentic selves and authenticity in coaching is key to really helping our clients succeed. In the words of Oscar Wild:

'Be yourself, everyone else is already taken'.

The shift, then, is to transfer the energy we spend on self-image back onto the client. When we notice the pressure to appear a certain way, we can acknowledge that thought and then consciously ask ourself:

"Where is the client right now, and what do they need from me in this moment?"

This simple but powerful re-framing moves us from performing as a coach to being a coach. It dissolves the performance anxiety by giving us a clear, task to understand, not to impress.

Spark 8: Feeling a Need to be Right

As humans, we have a natural desire to be right and to avoid being seen as wrong. This goes beyond image; it's a need for our intellect to be validated. In coaching, this need is a barrier to presence and a spark of mind-chatter. When we are focused on proving we are right, we are no longer truly listening to understand our client's world.

This is why the coaching principle of withholding advice is so important. When we let go of the role of advice-giver, we release the pressure to be 'right,' and this freedom allows us to be fully present.

In addition, we will inevitably make errors when reflecting or paraphrasing a client's words. We may misunderstand or make an unconscious assumption. In these moments, it is crucial not to become attached to the mistake, allowing our mind-chatter to spiral. Instead, we must gracefully own the error, correct the misunderstanding with the client, and then let it go completely. This humility not only preserves presence but also demonstrates powerful behaviour for the client.

Spark 9: Focusing on ‘What not to do’ or ‘What to do’

When we begin our coaching journey, there are a lot of things we must consider and many ‘dos’ and ‘do nots’ (especially when we explore our ethical requirements). This is all part of the learning process and once learned, must be let go. To become a truly present coach, we must eventually internalise these principles so deeply that they become second nature. If we enter a session mentally ticking items off a checklist like:

- "Did I ask a powerful question?"
- "Have I avoided giving advice?"
- "Did I cover all the ethical points?"

Our focus is centred on our own performance, not on the client. This internal audit sparks a stream of mind-chatter that pulls us completely out of the moment. The ultimate goal is to learn the rules thoroughly, allowing us to operate from a place of integrity and to be fully available to guide the client with natural flow.

Figure 5: The 9 Sparks of Mind-Chatter



4.3 Managing Mind-Chatter

While mind-chatter can feel like an inevitable distraction, managing it is a skill we can all develop. It may feel challenging at first, but the process is simpler than it seems. It isn't about fighting the thoughts or silencing our mind, that can actually amplify the noise. Instead, it's about learning to notice the chatter without getting swept away by it, and then skilfully guiding our attention back to our client.

The most powerful strategy is proactive: to minimise the sparks that ignite the chatter in the first place. By consciously letting go of the need for control, the fixation on self-image, the pursuit of perfection, and our obligations, we create a mental environment where we can be present. We enter the coaching space not with a checklist, but with a clear and open mind and the right intention.

However, when mind-chatter does arise, here are some practical, in-the-moment techniques to help let it go and regain focus:

1. **Acknowledge and Anchor:** The moment we notice our mind has wandered, we can silently and kindly label it by simply saying to ourselves, "That's chatter." This acknowledgement robs the thought of its power. Then, we can immediately anchor our senses back in the room. Feel our feet on the floor, notice the colour of the wall behind our client, or truly listen to the tone of their voice. Any sensory observation to bring us back to the present.
2. **Return to the Breath:** Our breath is an always-available anchor. When we get caught in the confusion of "What question should I ask next?", we can bring our attention to our next natural inhalation and exhalation. Just one or

two conscious breaths can create a crucial pause, reset our nervous system, and create the space for a responsive question to arise, rather than a forced one.

3. **Get Curious, Not Critical:** Here we can shift our inner dialogue from, "I shouldn't be thinking this!" to "I wonder where my client is going with this?" or "What is the underlying emotion behind their words?" This reframes our energy and thoughts from self-criticism to curiosity, which brings our focus back.

Remember, the goal is not a perfectly silent mind. The goal is to become skilled at noticing and releasing the chatter. Reminding ourselves that our primary focus remains with the client. Each time we gently guide ourselves back, we are building our presence skills. In the following chapters, we will explore deeper practices, but by starting with these simple steps, we can begin to become a calmer, more focused, and more impactful coach.

4.4 Theory into Practice

In this chapter, we have explored the nine common sparks of mind-chatter and how they can surface to disrupt our coaching presence. This awareness is the first and most crucial step to becoming more present.

To integrate these insights into practice, consider the following question:

- ✍ **Which of the nine sparks of mind-chatter do you recognise as your most frequent visitor, and what is one strategy you will use to gently let it go in your next session?**

Chapter 5

Removing the Ego

‘A healthy relationship with our ego is to be aware of its influence and still have free choice in situations.’

Julie Starr

What does 'ego' actually mean for a coach? Is my own mind getting in the way of my client's progress? How can I just 'remove' a part of myself? At its core, whether it manifests as distracting mind-chatter, a skewed perception, low confidence, or any other barrier to presence, the root cause is often the ego. Our ego, in its quest to protect and promote a sense of self, creates a filter between ourselves and the experience of the present moment with our client. The journey presence, therefore, involves learning to manage our ego.

In this chapter, we will explore what we mean by the 'ego' in a coaching context and, most importantly, we will uncover practical ways to set it aside, creating the clear, open space where present coaching can happen.

5.1 What is Ego?

There are many different perspectives and definitions of the ego, from a metaphysical standpoint to the proposals and psychotherapy of Sigmund Freud. We will briefly explore these

definitions below for knowledge, but when we refer to ego in coaching, we simply mean the part of us that refers to ourselves.

The Metaphysical Definition

From a metaphysical perspective, we develop our ego through conditioning. Here our ego is our 'self-image', the false version of ourselves we built from birth. It is no more and no less than a character with no authenticity. Through the assumption that we create our ego through conditioning, we can then make a conscious change and learn to remove it through re-conditioning.

The Psychotherapy Definition

According to Freud, our psyche consists of our Id, Ego, and Superego. The subconscious Id is the most deep-rooted aspect of our psyche, the animal instinct that seeks our desires. This aspect of our mind is stored deep in the subconscious, seeking instant gratification, and pleasure. Defined by Freud as the 'pleasure principle.'

Our Superego is governed by social conditioning. Shaped in early childhood, societal and parental values drive our Superego. Actions influenced by our Superego come from our morals and outlook of the world.

Finally, our Ego is an unconscious aspect of our mind that acts as the reasoning between the Id's desire for pleasure and the reality of the external world. Freud defined this as the 'reality principle.' In this context, the ego is positive since it acts as the logical reasoning and rational between our Id and Superego.

The Simple Definition

In its simplest form, ego is the sense of self. Where our actions and behaviour are for our selfish desires and the part of our mind that asks, 'what is in this for me?' When exploring the rest of this chapter, we will be referring to this simple definition when discussing how to remove ego.

5.2 Why Remove Ego from Our Coaching?

As we explored in the previous chapter, the many sparks of mind-chatter, from the need for control to the fear of being wrong, all share a common source which is our ego. In essence, the ego is a function of our mind that constructs a separate sense of self, distinguishing 'me' from the world around 'me'. While this is a natural part of human psychology, when we unconsciously bring this ego into our coaching space, it acts as barrier to presence.

We can recognise the ego at work in subtle and telling ways. That urgent pull to be in 'fix-it mode,' the internal dialogue judging our performance, or the pressure to maintain a perfectly positive and professional image. These are all signs the ego has taken a position in our session. While it may feel protective, the ego offers no real value to the client's journey or to our growth as coaches. It shifts our focus from serving the client to protecting ourselves.

Therefore, the work of minimising our ego is not passive but an active discipline. It is the conscious practice of setting aside our own need to be seen, to be right, or to be the hero, thereby creating an honest, open space for the client to explore, discover, and grow. By removing our ego, we don't lose ourselves; we

simply get out of our own way, allowing our coaching to flow effortlessly.

5.3 The Egoless Coach

The most direct way to dissolve the ego in our coaching is to develop a deep presence. As Eckhart Tolle profoundly writes:

‘The ego’s greatest enemy of all is the present moment.’

When we are fully immersed in the 'here and now,' anchored in our senses and our client's world, the ego's chatter simply has no room to take shape. While this is simple in theory, it requires consistent practice. To help us begin this working on this, we have developed six practical tips to start removing the ego from our coaching space.

1. Practicing Mindfulness to Observe our Thoughts

Mindfulness is the foundational practice for noticing the ego without being controlled by it. Through daily meditation or mindfulness exercises, we train ourselves to watch our thoughts and impulses. We become aware of our urge to interrupt or the fear of silence and we treat these as passing mental events, not as commands we must follow. This creates a gap between a self-centred impulse and our response, allowing us to choose presence over reaction.

2. Letting Go of our Self-Image

Coaching from a place of self-image is a performance. It's the attempt to be seen as the 'expert,' the 'wise guide,' or the 'perfect coach.' To let go of this desire, we can consciously choose to release the need to manage these impressions. Our credibility will not come from a flawless performance, but from our genuine curiosity and commitment to our client. We can give ourselves permission to be authentic, not to be a version we think we should be.

3. Keeping our Focus on the Client

The ego thrives when attention is turned inward. The simplest solution is to always redirect our focus outward onto our client. We can immerse ourselves in their world. Listen not just to their words, but to their energy, their emotions, and what remains unspoken. When our entire awareness is filled with seeking to understand them, there is simply no cognitive space left for self-conscious ego.

4. Becoming Aware of our Ego

We cannot manage what we do not see. To become aware of our ego, we can begin to act as an observer of our own mind, noticing when we feel a need to be right, when we get defensive, or desire to take credit for a client's insight. This awareness is not about self-judgement; it is about recognition. It is simply noting:

"Ah, there is my ego seeking validation, let's quieten that."

This is a powerful first step in managing our ego.

5. Spending Time Understanding More About Ourselves

The ego often fills the voids in our self-knowledge. To manage this, we can dedicate time to self-exploration through journaling, reading, therapy, or our own coaching. It is important for us to understand our core triggers, biases, and unresolved wounds. The more we understand ourselves, the less our unconscious ego will project itself and hijack our coaching sessions.

6. Spotting Signs of our Ego and Addressing Them

We can turn awareness into action. When we spot a classic sign of ego, such as wanting to tell a story about ourselves, feeling irritated by a client's resistance, or clinging to a specific session agenda, we can pause. In that pause, we have a choice. We can:

1. Choose to act on our ego.
2. Release the need, take a quiet breath, and return our focus to the client.

Remember, managing ego is a continuous journey of growth, not a destination. The overall aim is Self-Actualisation (the expression of our true, authentic potential as a coach) and not 'Self-Image Actualisation,' which is a fragile construct of the ego. By practising these steps, we clear the way for a coaching presence that is truly powerful because it is entirely for, and about, the client.

Figure 6: Signs of Ego



5.4 The Strategic Play of Ego – Avoid the Trap

The most significant move our ego can make is to convince us it needs to be forcibly removed. In this attempt, we fall into a subtle trap: the ego itself takes charge of the project to 'fix' the ego. While this seems contradictory (how can the ego remove itself?) it highlights a crucial understanding. We must not seek to battle the ego, but to become aware of its influence and the negative impact it has on our coaching.

True progress comes not from elimination, but from understanding. When we gain a deeper awareness of how our ego operates (when it feels threatened, when it seeks validation etc.) we reclaim our power. This awareness creates a space between impulse and action, allowing us to acknowledge the ego's presence without letting it steer the session. The goal is not to let our ego lead the charge in its own removal, but to work with this understanding, making conscious choices that serve the greatest benefit of our clients.

5.5 Theory into Practice

In this chapter, we have explored how the ego acts as a barrier to presence and the practical steps we can take to set it aside. This work is not about self-judgement, but about creating more space for our client.

To integrate these concepts into your own approach, take a moment to consider the question below:

- ✍ **In your next coaching session, what is one specific way you can consciously shift your focus from 'How am I doing?' to 'Where is my client, right now?'**

Chapter 6

Regaining Presence in Coaching

‘Stop measuring days by degree of productivity and start experiencing them by degree of presence.’

Alan Watts

What do I do when my mind goes blank during a session? Is it normal to sometimes feel like I'm faking it? I can feel when I've drifted off, but how do I come back without the client noticing? Despite our best efforts to prepare and quiet our inner critic, there will inevitably be moments in a coaching session where mind-chatter resurfaces or our ego takes over, pulling us out of the present moment. When this happens, it is not a failure, but an opportunity to practice the skill of returning to presence. In this chapter, we will explore ten practical and immediate ways to regain our focus and centre ourselves, during a session.

6.1 The Importance of Regaining Presence

A moment of distraction, an unexpected interruption, or a sudden hit of mind-chatter, any of these can pull us away from the present moment with our client. While this loss of focus is a common experience, its impact on the session is determined by what we do next. If we allow it to pull us into self-criticism or frustration, the connection and value of the session can quickly be destroyed.

The true skill, therefore, lies not in achieving perfect, unbroken focus, but in our ability to quickly return to presence. The

strategies in this chapter are designed to be part of our toolkit for exactly those moments. They provide practical ways to untangle from our own thoughts, guide our attention back into the room, and reclaim the rest of the session, ensuring a single moment of distraction doesn't define the entire coaching conversation.

6.2 10 Ways to Regain Presence

The following list is a starting point for a toolkit of strategies to help us find our way back to the present moment. We can explore these concepts and discover which ones resonate most deeply with our personal style.

1. Tap into Curiosity

When we feel our attention drifting away, we can consciously choose to shift into a mode of deep curiosity. Asking ourselves:

"What is the underlying emotion behind my client's words?"

or;

"What detail in their story I might be missing?"

Curiosity is a useful tool that takes us away from boredom or self-focused chatter, naturally pulling our focus outward.

2. Change the Session's Direction

If we feel the session (and our focus) has become stagnant, we must not be afraid to change its direction. We can use a powerful, open-ended question to change course, such as:

"If we fast-forward six months, what would you want to have achieved from this current challenge?"

This deliberate shift forces us to re-engage and create a new angle with our client.

3. Consciously Change Our Energy

Presence is as much an energetic state as a mental one. When we notice a dip, we can take physical action. We can sit up straighter, take a quiet, full breath, or ground our feet on the floor. This physical reset sends a signal to our mind to re-engage, boosting our energy and pulling us back into the moment.

4. Spot and Own the Drift

The moment we catch our mind wandering, we can acknowledge it, first to ourselves, and if appropriate, to our client. A simple, authentic statement like:

"I'm sorry, my mind drifted for a second. Could you please repeat that last point?"

This is far more powerful than pretending to listen. This act of vulnerability models self-awareness and rebuilds connection with the present moment. We must not be afraid to own the drift.

5. Share Our Thoughts Transparently

For persistent mind-chatter, sometimes the best release is to voice it. If we're thinking, "I'm not sure I'm helping," we could share something like:

"I'm having a thought that I want to ensure this is valuable for you. How are you feeling in our coaching space right now?"

This does two things:

1. It clears our mental space.
2. It turns our insecurity into a collaborative check-in, deepening trust.

We must not be afraid to be open and transparent with our clients.

6. Pin Our Thoughts for Later

Not every intrusive thought needs to be dealt with immediately. We can acknowledge the thought ("I need to remember to send that email"), then consciously 'pin' it to a mental bulletin board for after the session. This technique recognises the thought without allowing it to derail our conversation, giving us permission to return to our client.

7. Tune Into the Details

Here we can force a refocus by zooming in on the specifics of what our client is sharing. Listening not just to the story, but to the specific words they choose, the rhythm of their speech, or the subtle shifts in their tone. This clearer focus on the details of the client's communication can directly anchor us back to the present.

8. Activate Conscious Choice

The simple act of naming our state to ourselves can be enough to break the spell. We can silently say to ourselves:

"I have lost presence. I am now choosing to return my focus to my client."

This moves us from being a passive victim of distraction to an active coach reclaiming our focus.

9. Create a Purposeful Pause

If the disconnect feels significant for us, we can suggest a brief, structured break. We can simply say something like:

"That's a really important point. Let's just take a minute of silence to let that land for both of us."

This gives both ourselves and the client a moment to breathe and reset, allowing us to return to the conversation with renewed clarity and focus.

10. Utilise the LAO TZU Model

When loss of presence feels frequent or vague, we can use a structured model to diagnose the cause. The LAO TZU model (detailed in the next chapter) provides cues and reminders of the six important elements of presence.

By integrating these tools into our practice, we transform moments of distraction into opportunities of presence and professionalism.

6.3 Coaching Through Personal Storms

Life does not pause for our coaching sessions. A personal argument, worrying news, financial stress, or the ache of a personal loss can all follow us into our coaching space, creating a heavy fog that makes presence feel impossible. In these moments, the challenge isn't just mind-chatter; it's a very real, emotional weight. Trying to simply 'push through' or ignore it often backfires, leaving us drained and inauthentic.

Whenever we are going through a personal storm, we must not aim to become immune to life, but to build a resilient practice that allows us to acknowledge our humanity while still showing up professionally for our clients.

Acknowledge and Compartmentalise with Compassion

Before our session, we can grant ourselves five minutes of intentional transition time by sitting quietly and acknowledging what is going on for us. By naming the emotion ("I am feeling sad," "I am preoccupied with worry.") we can visualise gently placing those emotions and concerns in a metaphorical box, with a promise to ourselves that we will return to them after the session. It is important to note, that this act is not about suppression but creating a conscious boundary that allows us to be fully available for the next hour or so with our client.

Create a Pre-Session Grounding Ritual

When our mind is full of personal noise and it is difficult to focus, a strong sensory anchor can be more effective than a cognitive one. Here, we can develop a short, pre-session ritual that brings us into the present. This could be splashing cold water on our face, focusing on the physical sensation of deep breaths, or holding a grounding object like a smooth stone. Bringing our focus to a physical sensation can cut through the emotion and signal to our brain that it is time to shift focus.

Develop a 'Go-To' Structure

In moments of personal vulnerability, leaning on a more structured coaching methodology can be a lifesaver. It acts as a scaffold for our presence. Here, we can design a 'go-to' structure focused on a model or framework that we feel most comfortable with. This could look something like:

- Strictly following the GROW model.
- Focusing solely on reflective listening and holding the space.
- Using longer periods of silence.

Having a clear, step-by-step framework to follow reduces our mental load of deciding what to do next, freeing up our mind to stay focused and present.

Know When to Pause

There is a critical difference between coaching with a heavy heart and coaching when we are in active crisis. Professional resilience also means knowing our limits. If our personal situation is so serious that we cannot guarantee a safe, professional space for our client, it is an act of integrity to reschedule. This protects both our client and our own well-being, ensuring that when we do coach, we can bring our whole self.

Our ability to coach through personal storms tests our resilience. By having a plan for these moments, we respect our own experience without letting it define our client's. This is the mark of a true professional. We are not a perfect, untouchable guide, but a grounded and compassionate human who can hold space for another, even while managing our own journey. Remember, if we need support as a coach, we always have the option of coaching supervision.

6.4 Theory into Practice

In this chapter, we have explored strategies to help us return to the present moment when distraction or mind-chatter pulls us away.

To integrate these concepts into your own approach, take a moment to consider the question below:

- ✍ **The next time you notice you have lost presence with a client, which single technique from this chapter will you consciously choose to guide yourself back?**

Chapter 7

The LAO TZU Model

‘If you are at peace you are living in the present.’

Lao Tzu

How do I make being present a habit? Is there a way to build presence without it feeling like another thing to remember? What does a ‘cue’ for presence look like? To master presence, we must make it a habit. The more present we become in our daily lives, the easier it is to be present in our coaching space. The key lies in having simple, reliable cues that call us back to the present moment. This is why we at Coaching Minds developed the LAO TZU model for presence. This model distils presence into six core anchoring questions, providing a practical and memorable framework to guide our practice. In this chapter, we will unpack the LAO TZU model and explore how we can use it to systematically build presence.

7.1 What is the LAO TZU Model?

Inspired by the timeless wisdom of the Tao Te Ching and its author, Lao Tzu, the LAO TZU model emerged organically during the development of our Level 5 Practitioner Programme curriculum on presence. We sought a framework that was both centred and practical.

The LAO TZU model provides a tool for self-inquiry, allowing us to explore six key anchoring questions for presence. It helps us pinpoint which areas need development and, most importantly,

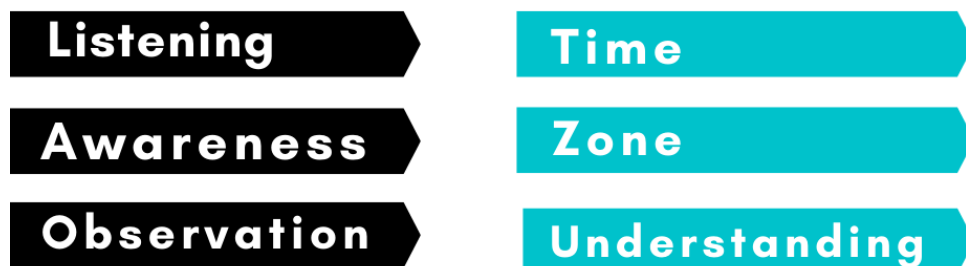
provides immediate cues to guide us back to a state of presence when we notice we have drifted.

LAO TZU is a purposeful anagram of:

- **L**istening
- **A**wareness
- **O**bservation
- **T**ime
- **Z**one
- **U**nderstanding

We will explore each of these six elements below.

Figure 7: The LAO TZU Model



7.2 The 6 Key Anchoring Questions for Presence

As outlined, the six elements of the LAO TZU model serve as both our map and our compass for presence. When we feel ourselves drifting, it is almost always because we have lost our connection to one of these core elements (listening, awareness, observation, time, zone and understanding). To make this concept actionable, we can transform each element into a powerful, anchoring question. These questions are not a test, but an internal check-in and a way to refocus.

Running through these questions when we sense a disconnect can instantly help us diagnose where our presence has faltered and guide us back to moment.

Listening: "Am I empathetically listening to my client?"

Listening is the foundation of presence. If we are not listening, we are simply waiting to speak. The goal is to move beyond the words of our clients to the meaning, emotion, and intention behind them, this is empathetic listening (discussed in detail in our Coaching Essentials book). When we ask ourselves this anchor question, we are checking the depth of our engagement. If the answer is "no," or "not fully," we have immediate action, to consciously quiet our own mind, let go of the need to formulate a response, and lean in. It is important for us to listen with the intent to understand, not to reply. This conscious shift in listening approach can restore our presence in an instant.

Where we have drifted away from listening, we can pull ourselves back to the present by saying to ourselves:

“I’ve lost focus, time to tune to empathetic listening. What is really going on for the client here?”

Awareness: "Am I aware of everything that is going on in the session?"

This question expands our focus from the content of the conversation to the entire structure of the session. It recalls the five types of awareness (Time, Task, Result, Spatial, and Self), and challenges us to take a deeper view. Are we aware of the client's energy, the time, our own body, and the overall dynamic? Losing presence often means bringing ourselves back to our awareness. This question forces us to expand our awareness again, pulling us back into a state of holistic perception where we can catch the subtleties we were missing.

Where we have lost connection with our awareness, we can pull ourselves back to the present by saying to ourselves:

“I’ve disengaged from the session, time to increase awareness. What is happening within this session?”

Observation: "What am I currently observing with my client?"

Presence is an active state of observation. This question forces a specific, temperature check. What do we see in our client's posture? What do we hear in their tone? If our mind draws a blank, it is a clear signal that we have become lost in our own thoughts. The corrective action is to deliberately re-engage our senses. Focus on one tangible detail, maybe the way they are sitting, the expression in their eyes. This sensory anchor is a direct pull from the world of our mind to the reality of the session.

Where we have drifted away from observation, we can pull ourselves back to the present by saying to ourselves:

“I’m unsure what I am observing here. Let’s focus on one element. What is the client’s body language saying to me?”

Time: "Am I in the moment, or focused on time?"

Becoming occupied with the clock (worrying about the session ending, or wondering how long we've been in the session), is another sign that presence has been broken. This anchor question highlights the conflict between being ‘in’ the moment and being ‘aware of’ the moment. The action here is a conscious release. We can acknowledge the thought about time, then gently let it go, as if setting down a weight. We can reaffirm our commitment to the current minute, trusting that the structure of the session will hold.

Where we are attached to time, we can pull ourselves back to the present by saying to ourselves:

“I’m focusing too much on the time. I must let it go and focus on what the client is sharing with me right now.”

Zone: "Am I in the zone, or disconnected from my client?"

Being ‘in the zone’ is that flow state where the outside world dissolves, and the coaching conversation exists in its own universe. This question checks the quality of our connection. Are we co-creating this space with our client, or are we mentally elsewhere? If we feel disconnected, the action here is to reconnect. We can re-establish eye contact, ground our feet on the floor, and make a silent intention to re-enter the shared space with our client.

Where we feel disconnected from the session, we can pull ourselves back to the present by saying to ourselves:

“I feel disconnected from this session. I must reconnect and bring myself back to the zone. Let’s ground feet and move back into the space.”

Understanding: "Am I understanding what the client is sharing with me?"

True understanding is a test for presence. If we cannot reflect the core of what our client is expressing with clarity, it is a strong indicator that we have not been fully present. This question calls for an honest assessment. If understanding is fuzzy, the action here is not to panic, but to courageously clarify. We might say, "I want to make sure I'm following you correctly. Could you please elaborate on that?" This not only brings us back into the conversation but also deepens the client's own process.

Where a lack of understanding indicates a lack of presence, we can pull ourselves back to the present by saying to ourselves:

“I’ve not fully understood here. Let’s clarify and getting a better understanding.”

Remember: Listening, Awareness, Observation, Time, Zone and Understanding are the key components of presence. By regularly using these six anchoring questions, we can build a resilient and self-correcting practice. They can become our internal guide to help us find our way back to presence with our client.

Figure 8: Six Anchoring Questions for Presence

- 01** Am I empathetically Listening to my client?
- 02** Am I fully Aware of everything that is going on in the session?
- 03** Am I Observing the energy and body language of my client?
- 04** Am I in the moment or focused on Time?
- 05** Am I in the Zone or disconnected from my client?
- 06** Am I Understanding what the client is sharing with me?

7.3 Theory into Practice

In this chapter, we have discussed the LAO TZU model which helps transform the abstract goal of presence into a practical and actionable framework.

To integrate these concepts into your own approach, take a moment to consider the question below:

- ✍ In your next coaching session, which component of the LAO TZU model will you consciously choose to focus on to improve your presence?**

Chapter 8

The Power of Silence

‘Silence is a true friend who never betrays.’

Confucius

Could staying silent actually be helpful? Won't my client think I'm unprepared or have run out of questions if I stay silent? What's really happening when it goes quiet? In the early stages of our coaching journey, it's common to feel an immense pressure to drive the session forward and demonstrate progress. This anxiety often shows as a need to fill every pause with a reflection, to immediately offer another question, or to provide reassurance the moment a client becomes quiet. In doing so, however, we unintentionally rob our clients of the most important space for their growth: the space of silence.

When we rush to fill the quiet, we interrupt their internal process. We prevent them from fully listening to their own words, from sitting with a difficult emotion, or from connecting with a deeper insight that is beginning to surface. Therefore, one of the most vital skills a coach can master is the intentional and comfortable use of silence.

Far from being an empty void, silence is one of the most powerful and underutilised tools in our coaching toolkit. It is an active space where integration, reflection, and true discovery occur. In this chapter, we will explore the power silence holds, learn practical ways to build our comfort with it, and uncover the benefits it brings to creating a transformative coaching space.

8.1 Silence in Coaching

Despite being one of the most powerful tools we can introduce into our coaching space, silence is often undervalued in coaching. As a new coach, it is common to feel the desire to jump straight in with our questions when our clients finish sharing information. Whilst the question we hold might be an important one, it is always best to give the client a moment to reflect on what they have shared. This allows them to essentially 'hear themselves' and feel the emotions that are flowing. It is important to remember that we are often the first person a client has shared a deeply held thought, fear, or dream with. In these vulnerable moments, our response can be critical. Rushing to fill the space with a question or reassurance can unintentionally shut down the client. By instead offering a short, moment of silence, we respect their sharing. This quiet acceptance powerfully communicates:

"What you have shared is important. I am giving it the space it deserves, and I trust you to sit with it."

This simple act can be empowering for the client and it:

1. Provides a space for information and solutions to emerge.
2. Allows the client to feel their emotions more deeply.
3. Allows the client to move inward to think and reflect.
4. Enables thoughts, questions, and information to be fully considered.
5. Allows time for both ourselves as a coach and the client to be present.
6. Ensures the client has finished sharing and that we don't interject.

Using silence may feel a little uncomfortable at first, but over time, we must learn to become comfortable and tune into its

power. Then, using our intuition, we can begin to feel the right lengths of time to hold silence with our clients.

8.2 When to Break Silence

The underlying rule when it comes to breaking silence is to always let the client break the silence. However, there may be certain circumstances in which it may be best for us to break it. What we do not want to create in moments of silence is a form of 'Mexican stand-off' where we find ourselves in a deep staring competition with our clients. The silence must always feel appropriate and right. It is ok for silence to feel uncomfortable at times, for example, where the client may be upset and tearful. It is never the easiest of circumstances to be in, especially if we are empathetic and can feel their emotions too. However, silence must never become awkward. If we feel silence is becoming awkward, then we must take a soft approach to breaking it.

Below are some scenarios in which it is best for us to break the silence:

- When the client is feeling confused or a little lost.
- When we may have asked a question that has offended or upset the client. (unintentionally)
- When the client has lost trail of thought and is unsure of what to say.
- When the client is having difficulty understanding our question.
- When the client appears stuck.
- When the silence begins to feel slightly awkward.

Knowing when to break silence can be difficult and is something that we master through practice over time. It is something we

begin to feel through our intuition. As a starting point, it is important to remember to let the client break the silence unless one of the above scenarios present themselves.

8.3 How to Build Silence Skills

Using silence is not only a coaching tool, but also a skill we can build and like any skill, it is something we must practice regularly. At Coaching Minds, we have designed a list of ways in which we can begin building our silence skills:

1. Consciously refrain from jumping straight in with our questions. Hold back and allow the client to have the space.
2. Practice mindfulness and meditation to tune more into our intuition. This is also part of preparing for presence.
3. Practice holding our silence for longer periods in each session (without allowing it to become awkward).
4. Practice allowing the client's emotions to come and go.
5. Practice allowing our own emotions to come and go.
6. Practice holding eye contact (without it becoming an awkward stare at your clients).
7. Reflect on our silence after your coaching sessions.

Let's take a look at each of these in a little more detail.

Consciously refrain from jumping straight in with our questions.

Here we make a deliberate choice to hold back after our client finishes speaking. We can count to five in our head. This creates a buffer that allows their words to settle and often prompts them

to elaborate further, revealing deeper layers of their thinking without us having to ask.

Practice mindfulness and meditation to tune into our intuition.

A quiet mind is a receptive mind. Through regular mindfulness practice, we learn to observe our own urge to fill space without acting on it. This creates the calm necessary to feel the difference between a silence that is productive and one that needs a gentle breaking.

Practice holding our silence for longer periods in each session.

Gradually extending the duration of our silent pauses can be powerful. We can start by adding just a second or two to our natural pause. As we grow more comfortable, we will find we can hold a supportive silence for much longer, allowing complex thoughts and emotions to surface fully.

Practice allowing the client's emotions to come and go.

When strong emotions arise (sadness, frustration, joy), it is important not rush to soothe or divert the client. We can create the space to allow the client to sit with them silently in that emotion. Our quiet, steady presence communicates that all feelings are welcome and safe in our coaching space, allowing for genuine processing.

Practice allowing our own emotions to come and go.

When we feel discomfort, anxiety, or even boredom during a silence, we can simply notice it without judgment. Acknowledge the feeling internally and let it pass like a cloud, rather than allowing it to pressure us into speaking. This self-management is key to maintaining professionalism. It is important to approach our questioning calm and collected, rather than frantically trying to articulate a response. This is a great tip for those coaches who fall into the trap of compound questions.

Practice holding eye contact without it becoming an awkward stare.

We can use soft, attentive eye contact to hold the space during silence. This is not an intense stare, but a gentle, affirming presence that says, "I am here with you." If direct eye contact feels too intense, focus on their face in general to maintain connection.

Reflect on our silence after our coaching sessions.

In our post-session notes, we can dedicate a moment to reflect on our use of silence, asking ourselves:

"Where did I use silence effectively? Where did I rush to fill it? What was the client's response?"


This turns every session into a learning opportunity for us refine our skill.

The above is a non-exhaustive list of foundations for building our silence skills. These are not just coaching techniques but approaches we can experiment with into our day-to-day conversations. By finding ways to slow things down in our coaching space, we allow more silence, feelings, and emotions to unfold, creating the conditions for transformation.

8.4 Theory into Practice

In this chapter we have explored how silence is a skill built through conscious practice, not just a technique to be used and how it is a powerful and undervalued tool in coaching.

To integrate these concepts into your own approach, take a moment to consider the question below:

-  Which one of the seven practices for building silence will you commit to focusing on in your next coaching session?**

Chapter 9

Emergence Coaching

‘The things that we understand, create silence. The things that we do not, create emotion.’

Kapil Gupta

How do I help a client who feels 'lost' if they can't even tell me what they want? Won't a session just feel slow and unproductive if we're not trying to 'get somewhere'? What am I actually supposed to do in a session if I'm not focusing on goals and action steps? Coaching is often understandably focused on goals, action plans, and achieving results. This results-oriented approach is highly effective for motivated clients with a clear vision of what they want. However, it can feel pressurising or irrelevant for clients who feel lost, are working through a significant life transition, or are sitting with complex, deep emotions that they don't yet understand.

For these clients, a different approach is needed, one that prioritises discovery over direction and creates space for clarity to surface from within. This is the heart of what we call 'Emergence Coaching'. It is a style that asks us, as coaches, to slow down, let go of the agenda, and trust in the process of unfolding. In this chapter, we will explore what Emergence Coaching truly is, the benefits it offers, and how we can begin to adopt this mindful and responsive style within our own practice.

9.1 What is Emergence Coaching?

Emergence Coaching is a transformative style that prioritises exploration over execution. It is the art of creating a safe, open, and deeply attentive space where clients can go inward, leading to self-awareness and self-discovery. Unlike more directive approaches, it is less concerned with setting goals and measuring progress, and more dedicated to allowing the client's own realisations and insights to surface naturally within the coaching space.

Instead of pushing for outcomes, we consciously slow down our coaching rhythm. We build our foundation on two powerful elements: deep presence and intentional silence. As an Emergence Coach, we understand that authentic, lasting change is not forced; it emerges over time. It is the cumulative result of small and large insights, subtle shifts in perspective, and moments of clarity.

Therefore, our primary role shifts from being a driver of action to being a guide of awareness. We do not need to create the change. Our work is to softly shine a light on the changes already unfolding within the client, helping them to see their own growth, wisdom, and path forward with greater clarity and understanding.

9.2 The Benefits of Emergence Coaching

While Emergence Coaching may not be the most widely practiced style, it holds potential to be the most transformative. Many coaches and clients are drawn to results, progress, and targets. Yet, as we have explored, this driven approach is not always suitable for a client who feels adrift or overwhelmed. By slowing the pace and focusing on the quality of the environment

we create, we make room for the client's own solutions and authentic progress to emerge naturally. This more deliberate and spacious approach offers a number of benefits:

1. It releases pressure from our clients to make progress.
2. It allows our clients to take a break from relentless decision-making.
3. It reduces action items and progress review that are overwhelming for our clients.
4. It allows us to pay more attention to what is going on for the client.
5. It creates a safer environment for the client to share.
6. It allows progress and solutions to unfold naturally.
7. It increases our presence as a coach.
8. It helps build our silence skills.

Releasing Pressure From our Clients to Make Progress

A goal-oriented approach, while effective in some contexts, can place undue pressure on a client to 'fix' their situation quickly. While a degree of challenge can be motivating for certain clients (such as an entrepreneur needing to overcome procrastination), it is entirely counterproductive for others, such as someone managing deep emotions of a personal loss, which cannot be rushed.

This presents us with a choice: we must either create the ability to adapt our style to the individual needs of each client, or we must consciously specialise in a particular coaching style and work exclusively with the clients for who the style fits. Both options require a high level of self-awareness and a commitment to serving the client's, not our own preference.

Allowing Clients to Take a Break from Relentless Decision-Making

A client who feels lost or confused is often experiencing 'information overload,' a state where the pressure to constantly make decisions becomes paralyzing. By adopting an Emergence Coaching style, we shift the focus from decision-making to processing. We provide a quiet, reflective space (a sanctuary from the noise) where the client is free to simply explore their thoughts and feelings without a demand for action. In this environment, the client can untangle their experiences without any pressure. Emergence Coaching is about creating a space of clearer understanding that the right decisions will naturally and authentically emerge, without force.

Reducing Action Items and Progress Reviewing That are Overwhelming for our Clients

Holding a strong focus on actions and accountability, while powerful for driving progress, can sometimes become a source of overwhelm for our clients. The Emergence Coaching philosophy asks us to temporarily step back from the role of a progress-checker. Instead, we create a spacious and non-judgmental environment where the client can explore the deeper reasons behind their inaction. By shifting the focus from 'what' they haven't done to 'why' it feels difficult to begin, we help them address the real obstacles, whether that be fear, conflicting values, or a lack of clarity. Emergence Coaching explores what is truly holding the client back.

Allowing Ourselves to Pay More Attention to What is Going on for the Client

A single-minded focus on goals and results can create an attachment to specific outcomes. This attachment as a coach, can blind us to the client's reality. If our aim is solely 'progress, progress, progress,' we risk listening selectively, hearing only what aligns with progress and filtering out the subtle, crucial, information that could lead to a genuine breakthrough. Emergence Coaching helps us avoid this. It allows us to slow down and pay attention to the client's entire experience, creating an environment where a true 'Aha' moment can spontaneously arise from within, rather than being forced from the outside. Emergence Coaching is natural and organic.

Creating a Safer Environment for the Client to Share

Emergence Coaching prioritises the creation of a supportive environment over strategic, forward-driving questions. By taking a softer, more receptive approach, we consciously provide a space of psychological safety. Within this space, clients feel secure enough to lower their defences and share their authentic thoughts and feelings. On the other hand, a constant focus on goals or a questioning style that feels like an interrogation can trigger a client's defensiveness, causing them to withdraw, ultimately hindering progress. Emergence Coaching is all about the environment that we create.

Allowing Progress and Solutions to Unfold Naturally

At its heart, Emergence Coaching is about trusting that progress will unfold naturally from the supportive and open environment

we hold for our clients. A rigid, goal-focused approach, can sometimes make us come across as pushy or firm, creating resistance. The true art lies in finding a balance, helping the client find clarity of goals without forcefulness. This ensures that the client's results and insights feel like a natural and authentic emergence from within, rather than a consequence of external pressure.

Increasing our presence as a Coach

The practice of Emergence Coaching and the creation of presence are deeply connected. Each time we choose to hold space instead of directing the conversation, we are actively strengthening our presence skills. In return, this deepened presence becomes the foundation upon which we build the right environment (one of safety, trust, and open exploration), making our Emergence Coaching even more effective. It is a cycle where the practice builds the core skill, and the core skill improves the practice.

Helping Build Our Silence Skills

Emergence Coaching is a powerful practice for building our silence skills. By shifting our focus from achieving goals to creating space, we naturally begin to value quiet reflection as a key for insight. In this approach, silence is not a pause, but an important element of the environment where the client's own realisations can surface. Therefore, mastering the intentional use of silence which we have discussed in the previous chapter, is not just complementary to Emergence Coaching, it is fundamental part of it.

9.3 10 Tips for Adopting Emergence Coaching

Above we have explored the benefits of Emergence Coaching for our clients. Now, let's explore the practical application, how we can integrate this style into our own practice? Below are ten tips to begin our exploration:

1. **Stay with the client's revelation:** Follow the client's thread without steering the conversation toward a destination.
2. **Explore their sense-making:** Inquire into how the client personally interprets and makes sense of what they are sharing.
3. **Notice subtle shifts:** Pay close attention to what is changing in the present moment, in their tone, energy, or perspective.
4. **Identify new patterns:** Be a quiet observer of any emerging patterns in their behaviour or thinking.
5. **Gently illuminate change:** Softly highlight the shifts and changes you observe, making them visible to the client.
6. **Highlight their awareness:** Gently draw their attention not just to the change, but to their own awareness of it.
7. **Discuss the meaning of change:** Explore what sense the client makes of the change that has been identified.
8. **Consider the wider impact:** Invite them to reflect on the potential impact of these realisations on themselves and their relationships.

9. **Explore the broader meaning:** Discuss what these discoveries could mean for their life or situation as a whole.
10. **Practice patience:** Remember that emergence focuses on sustainable, long-term progress, not quick, forced results.

By embodying these ten principles, we can adopt a more patient and emerging approach to coaching. This shift allows insights to surface naturally for our clients, creating the space for deep, lasting progress and authentic success.

9.4 Theory into Practice

In this chapter we have explored how Emergence Coaching transforms our role from a director of progress to a creator of insight.

To integrate this philosophy from theory into our daily work, reflect on the following question:

- ✍ **Which one of the ten principles of Emergence Coaching feels most challenging to you, and what is one small step you can take to practice it in your next session?**

Chapter 10

Living in the Here and Now

‘The next message you need is always right where you are.’

Ram Dass

What's the biggest challenge or risk in trying to be completely present with a client? What does 'living in the here and now' actually look and feel like during a coaching session? How can I use myself as an instrument without my own feelings getting in the way? A fundamental principle that underlies Coaching Presence is that of being able to live in the here and now. Whilst this is easier said than done, it is important that we work towards the concept to allow ourselves to provide more value to our clients. In this chapter, we will explore what we mean by the 'here and now', how we can use ourselves as an instrument in our coaching space, and the pros and cons of doing so.

10.1 The Here and Now

When we talk about the 'here and now', we are fundamentally talking about our ability to accept the present moment. Every Personal Development and Spiritual teaching ultimately boil down to the present moment: the eternal space of the Now, where the past has gone, and the future does not exist. In his book *'The Power of Now'*, Eckhart Tolle states;

“There is no need to go elsewhere for the truth. Let me show you how to go more deeply into what you already have.”

This is the power of the present moment. It opens our mind to the concept that we have everything that we need, right now. We must just escape our imagination and our memory and experience the whole magical energy of the now. When we live in the here and now in coaching, we can use ourselves as instruments to assist our clients to deeper self-discovery.

10.2 Using Ourselves as an Instrument in Coaching

As we explore the 'here and now,' we come to the realisation that, we, ourselves, are the most powerful instrument we will ever bring to our coaching. By bringing ourselves completely to the present moment, we learn to utilise everything that is happening, the words, the energy, the silence. We can become so attuned to the session that we begin to feel the essence through our own minds and bodies. This deep harmony allows the most important questions and insights to emerge intuitively, the very ones that would remain hidden if we were distracted by our own agenda or mind-chatter.

Of course, living in the 'here and now' is a concept much easier said than done. We cannot simply switch on presence at the start of a coaching session if it is absent from the rest of our lives. The challenge can be difficult. We are trying to be present in a world that actively pulls us away from the moment. The constant stream of social media, news, and business creates a fast-paced, information overloaded environments that leaves us feeling overwhelmed. To counter this, we must consciously create space to reconnect with ourselves, making a daily mindfulness practice.

To systematically guide ourselves back to the present, we must create space for four essential actions: to Reflect, to Decide, to Learn, and to Ground.

A Space to Reflect

Reflection provides the space to look back with curiosity, not judgment. It allows us to understand what consistently pulls us away from the present moment and, equally important, what practices or conditions help us to be fully engaged. Through this honest reflection, we gain a deeper self-awareness of our alignment (or misalignment) with the here and now, providing the clarity needed to amend and develop.

A Space to Decide

It is said we make over 35,000 decisions a day, most of them subconsciously. This cognitive load is one of the greatest thieves of our presence. Therefore, it is vital that we create space to make key decisions consciously and intentionally, right in the here and now. This practice of mindful decision-making, from what we will focus on to how we will respond, conserves our mental energy and prevents us from operating on autopilot, allowing us to show up for our clients with a fresh and available mind.

A Space to Learn

For a coach, continuous learning is what keeps our instrument sharp and responsive. This goes beyond acquiring new techniques and CPD Certificates; it is about learning to be with our clients in more profound ways. We must create space to learn about our own patterns, our triggers, and what creates our deepest presence. This commitment to personal development is an active practice of exploring our ability to inhabit the here and now, both for ourselves and for those we serve.

A Space to Ground

This is where daily mindfulness and meditation become essential. We can become so lost in the demands of work and life that we forget to simply be. By introducing a consistent practice of grounding (whether through meditation, mindful walking, or breathwork) we build a reliable anchor. This anchor allows us to pull ourselves back from the chaos of our thoughts and into the calm of the present moment, ensuring we are grounded and centred before we ever step into a coaching session.

By consciously creating space for these four elements, we do more than understand the concept of the 'here and now', we begin to live within it. This is how we position ourselves to be fully present, not just in our coaching sessions, but as in all aspects of our lives.

Figure 9: Creating Space for Presence



10.3 Pros and Cons of being an Instrument

While using ourselves as an instrument of presence is a powerful approach, it must be guided by ethics and our code of ethics (explained in detail in our Coaching Ethics book). Developing awareness is the key that creates the balance between the benefits and the mitigating of risks. Let's explore the advantages and the necessary cautions of using ourselves as an instrument in coaching.

The Pros: The Power of an Attuned Instrument

- **It creates a safer space.** Our full presence allows us to create a space of trust and positive energy where clients feel secure enough to be vulnerable and explore deeply.
- **It provides intuitive information.** We learn to feel what is happening in the space through body and mind.
- **It allows for the right questions to emerge naturally.** When we are truly present, the most powerful and timely questions arise naturally from the interaction, rather than being pulled from a pre-formed list.
- **It creates a harmonious flow.** We move from directing the conversation to moving with it, creating a synchronous and co-creative partnership with the client.

The Cons: The Risks of a Misaligned Instrument

- **The risk of shifting focus to ourselves.** We must vigilantly ensure that our internal connection serves the client, not our own curiosity or self-narrative.
- **The risk of over-identification.** There is a danger of becoming too emotionally involved, allowing our own

personal feelings, biases, or 'rescuer' instincts to colour the space and impair our objectivity.

- **The risk of judgmental delivery.** Our intuitive hits must be offered as neutral observations or curious questions, not as assumptions or judgments, which can shatter trust and safety.
- **The risk of subtle control.** A strong sense of 'knowing' can tempt us to lead the client toward our own insight, steering the session's direction rather than allowing the client to find their own path.

As a coach, using ourselves as an instrument can provide unparalleled value. However, this practice demands a disciplined commitment to self-awareness and dedication to our professional boundaries. The goal is not to become emotionally detached, but to be fully in the session while remembering that the space is solely for the client's growth. This balance is met through continuous practice and a commitment to our Professional Code of Conduct.

10.4 Theory into Practice

In this chapter we explored using ourselves as an instrument in coaching and how it requires turning our awareness inward to better serve the clients. To integrate this approach from theory into our daily practice, consider the following question:

- ✍ **Which of the four risks of using yourself as an instrument do you recognise as your greatest challenge, and what is one way you can practice managing it in your next session?**

Chapter 11

Intuition & Presence

‘Unease, anxiety, tension, stress, worry – all forms of fear – are caused by too much future, and not enough presence.’

Eckhart Tolle

Do I have to be a naturally intuitive person, or is this a skill I can really learn? What does 'feeling' the right question actually feel like in the middle of a session? How can I tell the difference between my intuition and just my own thoughts or biases? The depth of our presence is directly linked to the clarity of our intuition. When we are fully anchored in the 'here and now,' we quiet the mind-chatter that often drowns out our deeper, instinctive knowing. This connection allows us to sense the right questions and the most supportive direction to take, often before our logical mind has fully processed the reason. In this chapter, we will explore intuition as the language of presence, learn practical ways to develop this essential skill, and discuss the critical role of self-development in becoming an intuitive coach.

11.1 Intuition: Present Communication

The most skilled coaches possess an ability to guide a session with precision. This mastery does not come from a script, but from a deep, trusting connection with their own intuition, facilitated by present communication. By being fully immersed in the communication with our client, we create the silent space our intuition needs to come into play. It is in this space that we might suddenly ask the perfect question, spot a pattern everyone else has missed, or feel a subtle nudge to change the conversation's

direction, all for the client's ultimate benefit. Knowing precisely what to ask, when to ask it, and how to frame it are the traits of an intuitive coach, and it all begins with the choice to be present.

It is important to remember that present communication extends far beyond words. Our non-verbal cues form the silent orchestra that accompanies our speech, and we must become the conscious conductors of it. This begins with a simple but powerful question:

“How aware am I of the messages I am sending without saying a word?”

To activate our intuition through present communication, we must create a dual awareness, consciously tracking both the client and ourselves. This means paying close attention to:

1. **The spoken narrative:** The literal content and facts the client is sharing.
2. **The unspoken story:** The emotions, hesitations, and avoided topics that speak volumes.
3. **The intuitive flow:** The questions and reflections that spontaneously arise in our mind.
4. **The delivery of our voice:** The tone, pace, and warmth with which we offer our words.
5. **The power of the pause:** Our conscious and comfortable use of silence to allow for integration.
6. **Our physical presence:** Our posture, eye contact, and gestures that illustrate openness and focus.
7. **Our internal dialogue:** The mind-chatter and personal reactions we notice without being ruled by them.

When we consciously hold all these elements in our awareness, we achieve a state of presence. We are no longer just having a conversation; we are fully in the communication. It is from this deep awareness that our intuition sparks to life, offering the

insights and guidance that can transform a coaching session from good to extraordinary.

11.2 How Do We Develop Our Intuition?

In the words of Julie Starr:

“Intuition simply builds on what we already know. The knowledge we already have that is communicated to us via thoughts, feelings, images or sounds.”

This is an empowering perspective for us to digest: intuition is not a mystical gift reserved for a few, but a natural ability we can all develop. It is the mind's way of connecting pieces of knowledge and experience, delivering connection to us through subtle internal signals. Therefore, developing a strong intuitive sense becomes a practice, one that deepens and becomes more reliable over time with conscious effort.

To actively build this skill, here are five foundational practices:

1. **Developing Patience as a Discipline:** Intuition cannot be rushed. By consciously practicing patience in our daily life, allowing silence in conversations, resisting the urge to fill every moment with action, we create the inner quiet necessary for intuitive feelings to arise.
2. **Becoming a Student of Non-Verbal Language:** We can make a habit of gently observing the body language, tone, and energy of people we interact with daily. This trains our ability to read the whole field of communication, which is the language intuition often uses.

3. **Anchoring Ourselves Pre-Session:** A brief meditation or breathing exercise before each coaching session clears the mental clutter of our day. This creates a calm, inner space, allowing our intuition to surface more readily once we are with our client.
4. **Engaging in Deliberate Reflection:** After each session, we can take a few moments to reflect. Asking ourselves, "When did I feel an intuitive nudge? What was the outcome?" This process trains our mind to recognise and trust these subtle signals in the future.
5. **Commit to Continuous Learning:** Intuition builds on our existing knowledge base. The more we learn, about human behaviour, psychology, different industries, and ourselves, the richer the raw material our mind has to work with, leading to more perceptive and insightful intuitive hits.

However, using intuition effectively requires as much wisdom as developing it. It is a powerful tool that must be used with mindful caution. Please hold these five principles close:

1. **Hold Our Insights Lightly:** We must never become attached to our intuitive feeling. If exploring it leads to a dead end, we should be prepared to let it go gracefully and return to the client without forcing a connection.
2. **Distinguish Feeling from Fact:** Remember that an intuitive hit is a hypothesis, not a proven truth. It is a feeling to be explored with the client, not a conclusion to be announced.
3. **Embrace and Own Mistakes:** Our intuition will not always be correct. When it misses the mark, we must acknowledge it openly with ourselves. This humility is essential for maintaining integrity and trust.

4. **Frame it as a Shared Exploration:** Our intuition is used to fuel curiosity, not certainty. We must phrase it as an observation or a wondering for the client to consider, making it a tool for shared discovery.
5. **Allow it to Arise Naturally:** We must not 'try' to be intuitive. This effort creates pressure that hinders the process. Instead, we can focus on being fully present and trust that our intuition will contribute when it is truly needed.

When we consciously develop our intuition while being mindful to these guiding principles, we integrate it into our practice as a powerful ally.

11.3 The Importance of Self-Development

Self-development and intuition are deeply connected, each fuelling the other. Have we ever been in a conversation and offered a piece of wisdom, only to wonder moments later where it came from? That is our accumulated wisdom in action, facilitated by our intuition. When we actively consume knowledge and invest in our personal growth, we absorb wisdom, both consciously and subconsciously. This reservoir of understanding becomes the raw material that our intuition draws upon, connecting dots we didn't even know we had. Therefore, the commitment to our own learning is not a separate task; it is an essential practice that strengthens and refines our intuitive voice.

This investment in self-development can take many forms. We can engage in formal study, such as reading books, listening to podcasts or attending workshops, to build our conscious knowledge base. We can also learn through experiential

practices like mindfulness, which sharpens our self-awareness and our ability to listen to our inner voice.

Even reflective practices like journaling or seeking feedback from a mentor provide insights for our subconscious to process. Ultimately, every piece of knowledge we integrate and every insight we gain adds another layer of depth to our intuitive intelligence. Below is an illustration of some methods we can use to develop ourselves.

Figure 10: Methods of Self-Development



11.4 Theory into Practice

In this chapter we explored how intuition is a skill built upon a foundation of continuous learning and mindful self-awareness. It is the voice of our accumulated wisdom, and it grows stronger with every investment we make in our own development. Reflecting on this, consider the following question:

- ✍ **What is one specific form of self-development that you will commit to this month to consciously impact your intuitive growth?**

Chapter 12

Developing a Reflective Practice

‘We do not learn from experience. We learn from reflecting on experience.’

John Dewey

How can looking back at a session actually help me be better in my next one? What does a 'reflective practice' actually look like on a busy week? Do I need to journal for an hour after every client? A fundamental aspect of building a meaningful coaching business is to develop a consistent reflective practice. While presence teaches us how to be fully with our client in the moment, reflection is how we take wisdom from those moments. We gain our deepest professional growth not from the experiences themselves, but from pausing to understand the learning they offer. As coaches, this means reflecting not only on ourselves as individuals but also on our coaching process, evaluating our sessions, our use of presence, and our intuition. In this chapter, we will explore two powerful reflective frameworks. First, we will break down the steps of Gibb's Reflective Cycle, and then we will delve into the approach of Johns' Model for Structured Reflection, which helps us uncover the underlying ethics and intuitions that shape our practice.

12.1 What is Self-Reflection?

Self-reflection is the conscious practice of creating time and space to look back on our experiences and behaviours with the specific intention of learning and improving. Without this deliberate space, we risk operating on autopilot, unconsciously

repeating the same patterns and reactions. This can trap us in cycles of behaviour that hinder our development. The truth is, without reflection, there is no true learning; and without learning, there can be no meaningful growth. Therefore, developing a consistent reflective practice is not just beneficial for ourselves as a coach, it is essential.

12.2 Why is Self-Reflection in Coaching Important?

As impactful coaches, we are committed to a journey of continuous improvement, always striving to be better than we were yesterday. We operate from the belief that our potential for growth is limitless, and there are always new ways to enhance the service we provide to our clients. The habit that fuels this development is a dedicated reflective practice. For a coach, self-reflection is the engine of our professional growth, and it is important because:

1. It amplifies our impact, directly increasing the value we deliver to every client.
2. It reveals our blind spots, allowing us to spot unconscious behaviour patterns that may be helping or hindering our coaching.
3. It highlights our weaknesses, providing honest clarity on the specific areas requiring development.
4. It creates self-awareness, leading to a deeper, more perceptive understanding of our own journey.
5. It illuminates our strengths, allowing us to recognise and lean into what we do best.
6. It provides an important perspective, creating a space to observe our own behaviour with objectivity and compassion.

When we fully explore these benefits, self-reflection shifts from being a recommended task to a natural part of our practice.

12.3 How Can We Reflect?

The most important aspect of reflection is a commitment to honesty and an open mind. We must look back at our behaviour without judgment, but with a genuine desire to learn. Approaching this practice with a growth mindset allows us to view every experience as an opportunity, not an obstacle. This means holding ourselves accountable, celebrating what is working well, and courageously acknowledging where we can improve. Furthermore, we must actively seek and remain open to feedback from clients, peers, mentors, and supervisors. Often, an outside perspective provides the most powerful opportunity for our growth, revealing blind spots we cannot see on our own.

Creating a consistent reflective practice requires intentional space. Here are several practical ways to begin:

1. **Maintain a Reflection Journal:** We can dedicate a notebook or digital document for capturing our thoughts, insights, and observations after sessions.
2. **Use Voice Notes:** For a quicker, more fluid approach, we can set up a private chat with ourselves on WhatsApp or another platform to record spoken reflections.
3. **Log Coaching Observations:** We can keep a running log of patterns, breakthroughs, or challenges we notice while developing our practice.

4. **Document Successes and Stumbles:** We can honestly note both mistakes that provided a lesson and actions that made us feel effective and aligned.
5. **Review Supervisor Feedback:** We can set aside dedicated time to deeply process and integrate the structured feedback from our coaching supervisor.
6. **Consider Peer Insights:** After practical sessions or group work, we can reflect on the constructive feedback provided by our peers.
7. **Conduct a Post-Session Review:** After each client session, we can spend just five minutes considering what worked and what could be enhanced.
8. **Reflect on Our Business Holistically:** We can step back periodically to reflect on broader business areas (marketing, client onboarding, our own well-being) and their impact on our coaching.

To guide our thinking further, here are some powerful reflective questions we can ask ourselves:

- What specifically went well in that session, and why?
- What moment made me feel most connected and effective as a coach?
- What was the most challenging part, and what could I have done differently?
- When did I feel discomfort or a dip in my confidence, and what was happening at that moment?
- What underlying beliefs or triggers might be the source of these emotions?
- What factors, both my actions and the client's situation, contributed to the final outcome?

- What is one small, actionable change I can implement based on this reflection?
- What specific skill, technique, or area of knowledge do I need to develop next?
- What strengths did I use today that I should consciously continue to leverage?

Making time to look back on our sessions is how we get better. It's like having a quiet conversation with ourselves about what worked and what didn't. When we do this regularly, we stop making the same mistakes and start spotting where we can make a bigger difference for our clients. It's the simplest and most powerful way to keep growing into the coach we want to be. We have provided deep reflective questions and inquiries in the appendices of this book to help us further.

12.4 Gibbs Reflective Cycle

A powerful and structured tool we can use to develop our reflective practice is Gibbs' Reflective Cycle. This model offers a clear, six-stage process to guide us when we take time out to reflect deeply on an experience. It is an excellent framework for writing reflective essays for certification, ensuring we cover every aspect of our learning. The six stages are:

1. **Description:** What happened?
2. **Feelings:** What were you feeling and thinking?
3. **Evaluation:** What was good and bad about the experience?
4. **Analysis:** What sense can you make of the situation?
5. **Conclusion:** What else could you have done?
6. **Action Plan:** If it happened again, what would you do?

Let's explore each stage in detail, with guiding questions to prompt your thinking.

Description

At this first stage, we objectively set the scene. We describe the situation in detail by asking ourselves:

- What are we reflecting on?
- What happened?
- Where and when did it happen?
- Who was involved? (e.g. Client, Supervisor, Peers)
- What was the outcome?
- What did we want to happen?

The 'Description' stage is simply about writing down what happened, just the facts, like telling a story.

Feelings

After describing the event, we explore our internal world, the emotions and thoughts we had. Helpful questions include:

- What were we feeling during the situation?
- How were we feeling before it began?
- How do we think other people involved were feeling?
- What do we think they feel about it now?
- What were our thoughts at the time?
- What are our thoughts about it now?

The 'Feelings' stage is about exploring what we were feeling and thinking during the experience.

Evaluation

Here, we make an initial assessment of the experience. We look at what worked and what didn't by asking:

- What went well with the situation?
- What can be improved upon?
- How did we contribute to the situation?
- How would we have liked to contribute?
- What would we label as 'good' and what as 'bad'?
- How did other people impact the event?

The 'Evaluation' stage is where we honestly judge what worked well and what didn't in the situation.

Analysis

This is the stage for deeper thinking. We break down the event to understand the 'why' behind it. Good analysis questions could include:

- Why did things go well?
- Why didn't things go so well?
- What were the true causes of the outcome?
- What knowledge do we need to make better sense of this? (e.g. feedback, further research)
- Why are we labelling certain elements as 'good' or 'bad'?

The 'Analysis' stage is where we dig deeper to figure out why things worked or didn't work.

Conclusion

Having analysed the event, we now summarise our key learnings and consider alternatives. We can ask:

- What have we learned from this experience?
- How could we have achieved a more positive outcome?
- What skills do we need to improve?
- What could we have added that we didn't?
- What changes in our behaviour do we need to make?

The 'Conclusion' stage is where we sum up what we learned and what we could have done differently.

Action Plan

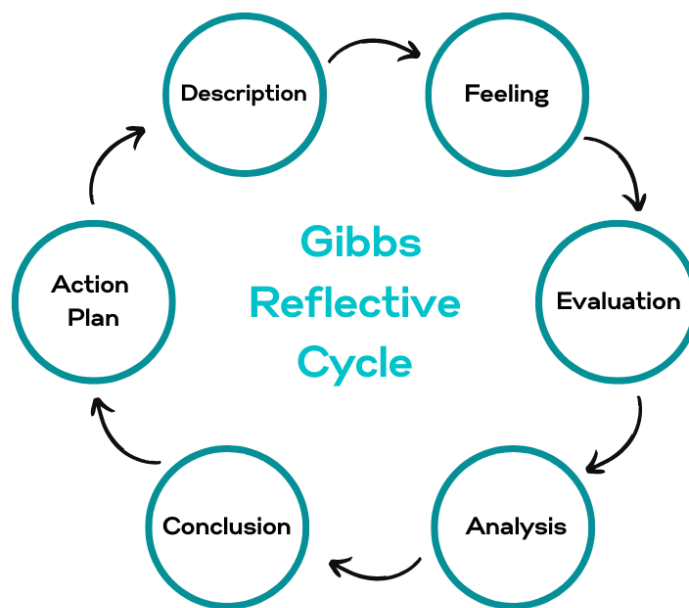
The final stage turns reflection into forward momentum. We create a concrete plan for future action:

- Next time, what will we do differently?
- How will we develop the skills we need to improve?
- What can we do to ensure we act differently next time?
- How can we practically apply this learning?
- How will we improve the impact we have on others?

The 'Action Plan' stage is where we decide what specific steps we will take next time to improve.

By working through all six stages of Gibbs' Reflective Cycle, we move beyond simple recollection to genuine learning. This process enables us to gain a deeper understanding of our coaching practice, which is the key to improving our skills, growing our business, and becoming the best coach we can possibly be.

Figure 11: Gibbs Reflective Cycle



12.5 A Deeper Reflection: Johns' Model for Structured Reflection

While Gibbs' Cycle provides an excellent step-by-step roadmap for reflection, Johns' Model for Structured Reflection invites us on a deeper journey. It is less about the chronological steps of an event and more about uncovering the full experience within it, the hidden influences, the internal conflicts, and the ethical dimensions of our practice.

We can think of it this way, if Gibbs helps us report on the 'what,' Johns' helps us explore the 'why' behind our actions and the 'who' we were in that moment. It encourages a deep conversation with ourselves to understand not just what happened, but what it truly meant for us and our client.

Johns' Model is built on five key areas of inquiry. When reflecting on a significant coaching session, we can work through these cues to guide our thinking.

Cue 1: Uncovering Our Intentions and Influence

This first cue is about objectively looking at the story of the session and our role within it. It sets the factual and intentional foundation for the deeper reflection to come. Questions to consider on the situation and our actions:

- What were we trying to achieve for our client in this session?
- Why did we respond or intervene in the way that we did?
- What were the consequences of our actions for our client, for ourselves, and for our relationship?

This first cue helps us objectively describe the situation and understand our intentions and actions within it.

Cue 2: Looking Inward at Our Personal Response

This cue allows us to turn our attention inward, to explore the internal experience of our thoughts, feelings, and biases with honesty and without self-judgment. It is about acknowledging the human factors that we, as the instrument of coaching, brought

into the session. The goal is not to criticise ourselves for having these feelings, but to understand their source and their influence. Questions to consider on our personal experience:

- What were we truly feeling during this session?
- What internal factors shaped our decisions? (e.g. our own beliefs, our mood that day, a past experience or trigger)
- How did our own feelings influence our presence and our ability to serve the client?

This second cue asks us to honestly explore our own feelings and internal biases during the session, and how they may have influenced our coaching.

Cue 3: Examining Our Ethical Compass

This stage forms the heart of Johns' Model, challenging us to ensure that our practice is rooted in ethics and integrity. It moves beyond what we did to question the motivation and principle behind our actions, holding our work to the highest professional standards. Questions to consider on ethics:

- Did we act in a way that was consistent with our core coaching values and ethics?
- Was our action primarily in the client's best interest, or were we serving our own needs (e.g. to be seen as the 'expert')?
- Did we honour the client's autonomy and process?

This third cue challenges us to check if our actions were truly ethical and, in the client's, best interest, or if they were influenced by our own ego or needs.

Cue 4: Seeking Broader Understanding

This step encourages us to shift our perspective from the internal and immediate, to look outside of ourselves for the wider context and learning that shapes our practice. It acknowledges that coaching does not happen in silo and allows us to actively seek out the resources and perspectives that will deepen our understanding. Questions to consider on empowerment:

- What broader factors influenced our practice? (e.g. a specific coaching model, our organisation's guidelines, the power dynamic in the relationship)
- What knowledge did we draw on? (e.g. intuition, a theory from a book, feedback from our supervisor)
- What other perspectives do we need to fully understand this situation?

This fourth cue asks us to consider what external factors, knowledge, and perspectives influenced our actions and what we still need to learn.

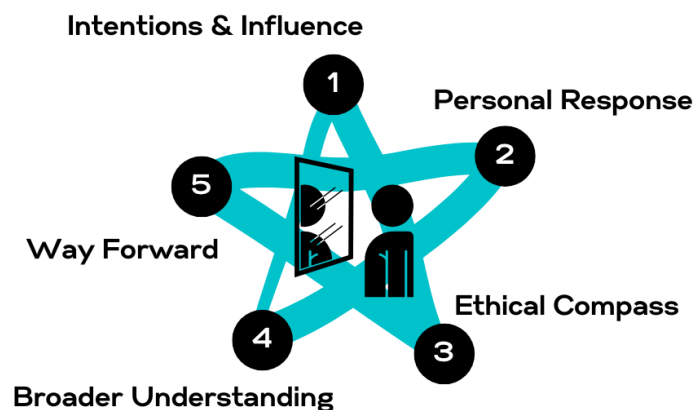
Cue 5: Shaping Our Way Forward

This final cue is where reflection transforms into growth. It's about moving from understanding the past to actively shaping our future, turning insights into a permanent part of our coaching. Questions to consider on conclusion:

- How has this experience changed our way of being as a coach?
- What has this experience revealed to us about ourselves?
- How will we carry this new understanding forward into our future practice?

Both Johns' and Gibbs reflective models are practical. We will explore the key differences below.

Figure 12: Johns' Model for Structured Reflection



12.6 Gibbs v Johns'

To bring clarity to these two powerful tools, remember this practical distinction:

- Think of Gibbs' Cycle as our reliable, step-by-step guide. Use it when we need a straightforward, practical

structure to learn from any experience. It ensures we cover all the essential bases in a logical sequence.

- Think of Johns' Model as our tool for deeper exploration. Turn to it when an experience feels particularly complex, emotionally charged, or ethically significant. It helps us uncover the deeper 'why' behind our actions and understand their true impact on our growth.

Ultimately, Gibbs helps us refine our technique, while Johns' helps us define our character. By bringing Johns' Model into our reflective toolkit, we commit to more than just improving our coaching skills, we work on refining our presence and the coach we want to become.

12.7 Theory into Practice

In this chapter, we have explored how reflective practice is the bridge between experience and expertise, ensuring that every coaching session contributes to our continuous growth.

To integrate these concepts into your own approach, take a moment to consider the question below:

- ✍ **After your next coaching session, which reflective model will you use, and what is one specific insight you hope to gain about your coaching presence?**

Chapter 13

Building Emotional Maturity

‘Maturity is achieved when a person postpones immediate pleasures for long-term values.’

Joshua L. Liebman

What does 'emotional maturity' actually look and feel like during a tough coaching session? If a client's strong emotion triggers a strong reaction in me, what's the first thing I should do? Is it possible to be too emotionally controlled and come across as cold or distant to a client? Our ability to remain fully present with a client, especially in moments of high emotion or tension, rests upon our own emotional maturity. Without it, our own unresolved feelings and reactions can easily surface, clouding our judgment and pulling us out of the present moment. To be a steady, trustworthy guide for others, we must first learn to master our own inner world. In this chapter, we will explore what emotions truly are, define the core components of emotional maturity, outline the key attributes of an emotionally mature person, and provide a practical tool for us to master our own emotions to deepen our coaching presence.

13.1 What Are Emotions?

Our emotions are the internal feelings that arise not from events themselves, but from our perceptions and interpretations of those events. Consider this example:

Imagine you are sitting by a serene, beautiful lake, admiring the tranquil landscape. You notice the still water, the tall trees, and the majestic mountains in the distance. You breathe in the fresh air and feel a deep sense of relaxation and peace.

Now:

Imagine you hear a low, menacing growl and instantly recognise it as the sound of a bear. In that single moment, your entire internal world shifts. Your emotions surge from calm to terror, your physiology prepares you to fight or flee, and your thoughts race from appreciation to survival.

The external scene is identical, but our internal reality has been completely rewritten by our perception of a threat. Now, let's change the context:

Imagine you hear the exact same growl while sitting safely in your living room. Your emotional response would likely be minimal. You might assume the sound came from the television, and you would remain relaxed.

The stimulus was the same, but our interpretation of it was entirely different.

This scenario illustrates that our emotions are formed by our perceptions, which are filtered through our mental models. The growl at the lake could have been a ringtone; a bear in our home, while unlikely, is possible. The crucial point is this: it is not the bear that causes the fear, but our interpretation that we are at risk.

It is this interpretation that then conditions our entire experience, dictating our behaviour, shaping our physiological reactions, and colouring the meaning we take from the event. Therefore, the path to managing our emotions does not lie in trying to control

external events, but in learning to manage our internal perceptions and interpretations.

Building emotional maturity is, fundamentally, an inside job. It requires us to understand that what we feel depends less on what happens in the world around us, and more on what is triggered within our own inner world.

13.2 What is Emotional Maturity?

Emotional Maturity is our developed ability to manage our inner emotional world with skill and awareness. It is the important difference between impulsively reacting to a situation and consciously choosing how to respond. We develop this maturity by learning to accurately interpret our emotions, express them appropriately, and healthily let them go, preventing them from controlling our actions.

This maturity is visibly reflected in our daily conduct, shaping our general mood, our manners, and most importantly, how we behave under pressure. Critically, emotional maturity extends beyond self-management. It involves developing a keen awareness of the emotions of those around us and a deep understanding of how our own behaviour impacts others.

For us as a coach, this is not a secondary skill but a foundational one. Our ability to remain present, create a safe space, and guide others effectively is directly dependent on our continued commitment to building our own emotional maturity.

13.3 The Attributes of an Emotionally Mature Person

While emotional maturity can be an abstract concept, it reveals itself through consistent patterns of behaviour. Emotionally mature individuals tend to show a set of recognisable attributes that contribute to their resilience and the quality of their relationships. Below are twelve key attributes that signal a high level of emotional maturity:

- They maintain a sense of **optimism**, holding the ability to find the positive or the lesson in any situation.
- They are generally **calm and relaxed**, demonstrating an ability to manage their emotional energy without being easily rattled.
- They **take full responsibility** for their actions, behaviour, and outcomes, avoiding blame and excuses.
- They are **flexible** in their attitude and approach, able to adapt to new information and the needs of others.
- They possess a **thirst for learning** and growth, viewing life as a continuous journey of development.
- They **actively seek constructive feedback** to improve and rarely become defensive when it is offered.
- They **can laugh at themselves**, demonstrating a healthy and non-arrogant self-perception.
- They **rarely criticise or judge others**, understanding that everyone is on their own path.

- They are **resilient** and can manage life's inevitable setbacks without being defeated by them.
- They **see failure as a necessary opportunity** for growth, not as a definition of their worth.
- They are easy and **pleasant to get along** with, creating a sense of psychological safety for those around them.
- They build and maintain strong, **healthy relationships** with ease, investing in meaningful connections.

As coaches, this is more than a list of admirable traits; it is a blueprint for our professional development. To genuinely coach and guide others toward success and fulfilment, we must first commit to the ongoing work of building these attributes within ourselves. Our emotional maturity is key to effective, impactful coaching.

13.4 The Emotional Maturity Star: How to Master our Emotions

At Coaching Minds, we like to look at Emotional Maturity through the lens of what we call 'The Emotional Maturity Star'. This provides us with 5 areas that we can develop, to help us work towards Emotional Maturity. By taking time to explore each point on the star, we can begin to adopt the attributes mentioned above. The 5 areas of the Emotional Maturity Star are:

1. Self-Awareness
2. Self-Acceptance
3. Self-Regulation
4. Self-Inquiry
5. Self-Expression

Self-Awareness

Self-Awareness is our ability to know what is happening within ourselves. It is the process of exploring our inner world and using reflection to develop an understanding of it. We can increase or decrease our level of awareness by the amount of focus, observation, and mindfulness we put into it. The less energy we give to it, the more risk we are at to live based on impulse and automatic reactions than conscious responses. It is therefore important that we increase our self-awareness to build on our Emotional Maturity.

In order for us to notice our feelings, we must gain the ability to separate ourselves from them. We must allow ourselves to feel our emotions without being hijacked by them or at the other end of the spectrum repressing them. When we are hijacked by our emotions, they take complete control of our actions. When we repress our emotions, we create an internal imbalance and risk these emotions surfacing in outbursts. Outbursts are signs of someone who lacks Emotional Maturity, which can trigger a series of destructive actions. It is therefore important for us to become aware of our emotions, so that we can manage them. We can manage our emotions by becoming a 'Witness' to them. The question we can ask ourselves to begin to do this is:

“How can I observe my emotions without becoming attached to them?”

By allowing emotions to come and taking that step back to breathe before taking action, we increase our level of self-awareness and build on our emotional maturity.

Self-Acceptance

The second point in our Emotional Maturity Star is to gain the ability to accept our emotions without judgement. It is easy for us to repress or deny emotions because we attach our moral compass to them. We tell ourselves things like ‘we shouldn’t be upset over something so small’ or ‘it is wrong to be angry at this’. When we create judgement in this way, we are failing to accept the emotions. We must understand that emotions are out of our control. We cannot help the way we feel. All we can do is manage the way in which we feel and the actions we take from those feelings. In order for us to do this effectively, we must accept the emotions as they arise. In his book *‘The Art of Living Consciously’*, Nathaniel Branden states the following:

“Emotions need not be acted on when we see that to do is counterproductive, but if they are treated with respect, they can become invaluable pathways to important information... It is a mark of wisdom and maturity to understand that we have the power to be a non-judgemental witness to our emotions, thoughts and memories without being controlled by them or driven to act in self-destructive ways.”

Applying this wisdom, the question we can ask ourselves here is:

“How can I compassionately accept my emotions?”

Building maturity requires we meet our emotions with respect, not resistance, seeing them as data, not defects.

Self-Regulation

The third point in our Emotional Maturity Star is to gain the ability to have control to direct our emotional energy. In other words, gain the capacity to not act upon impulse. Currently, we live in a society with many stigmas, where showing our emotions is a sign of weakness; but expressing our impulses and saying how we feel is a strength. Neither of these approaches form part of Emotional Maturity. We must allow ourselves to feel and show our emotions, but we must be conscious on how we address what we feel to others. For example, feeling angry is ok but shouting or lashing out at others will never solve a problem and will only create more suffering.

When we look at self-regulation, we must gain the ability to allow ourselves to feel angry; but express the emotion in a more constructive and conscious manner. The question we can ask ourselves here is:

“How can I recognise, embrace, and understand the origins of my emotions in order to express them consciously and constructively?”

When we reach this level of discipline, we gain the ability to express our emotions without compromising our values and this is the third point to master our emotions.

Self-Inquiry

The fourth point in our Emotional Maturity Star is to gain the ability to find the root of our emotions through internal inquiry. We must reflect on and analyse our thoughts to discover what is causing us to feel what we are feeling. Often, we can focus on just cutting down the weeds of our emotions without fully

uprooting them. When we find the root stories, it becomes easier to manage our emotions and easier to act from a place of response rather than reaction.

When diving into self-inquiry, we can look at common emotions that we hold and their opposites as a way of analysis. For example, we can understand that we feel happy when something good happens in our life that calls for a reward or celebration. If we are lacking feelings of happiness, then we can explore if there are any achievements that call for a celebration. If we are not feeling happy, we can ask ourselves:

“When was the last time we looked back at our progress and celebrated something that we achieved?”

On the other hand, we tend to feel sadness when something bad happens to us. Sadness calls for grieving which closes our past. Sadness is an emotion of holding onto something we have lost from the past. If we are feeling sad frequently, we can ask ourselves; ‘What is it that I need to put time aside to grieve?’

We can ask similar questions with all types of emotions, excitement, enthusiasm, fear, anger, guilt, gratitude, and so on. When we find the right question to ask, we learn the root cause and how to manage our emotions better to build on our Emotional Maturity. The important question we can ask ourselves at this point is:

“What is this emotion telling me, and what question do I need to ask to discover its root cause?”

Finding the right question reveals the root, allowing us to address the source rather than just the symptom.

Self-Expression

Finally, the fifth point on our Emotional Maturity Star is to gain the ability to articulate the stories behind our emotions. When we struggle to explain to ourselves why we feel the way we feel, we can tend to shut down and repress the emotions. By making sense of why we are feeling these emotions and articulating the stories to ourselves, we learn to manage our emotions better and build on our emotional maturity. For example, if we feel fear, we ask ourselves questions like:

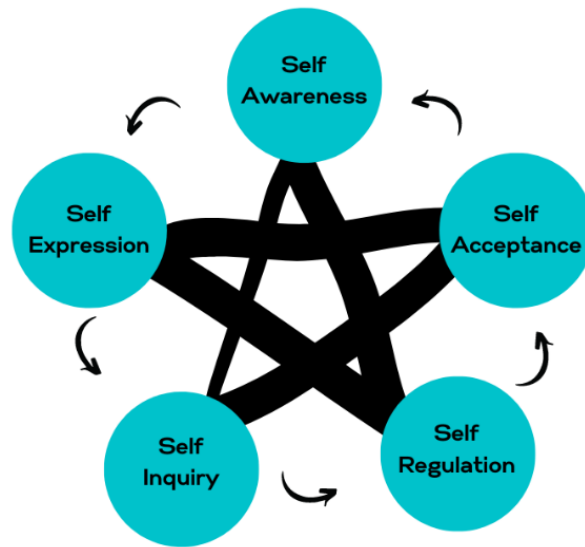
- What are we worried about?
- What do we feel might happen?
- What could we lose if it were to happen?
- How can we ensure it does not happen?
- How can we mitigate the damage?

These sorts of questions allow us to narrate a positive story that leads to positive and more constructive behaviour and action. The important question to ask ourselves at this final point of our star is:

“How do I positively articulate a story of my emotions to create constructive action?”

This completes the journey, turning emotional awareness into empowered doing.

Figure 13: The Emotional Maturity Star



When we learn to master all five points on our Emotional Maturity Star, we gain the attributes of an emotionally mature person. It is useful for us to reflect on this chapter and identify what attributes we hold, what attributes we need to gain, and where we need to develop ourselves on the Emotional Maturity Star. This is one of, if not the most important elements of a successful coach. We do not mature through age; we mature through awareness. The more awareness we hold, the stronger our ability to manage our emotions.

13.5 Theory into Practice

In this chapter, we have explored how the Emotional Maturity Star provides a practical tool to transform our inner world, turning reactive impulses into conscious, professional responses.

To integrate these concepts into your own approach, take a moment to consider the question below:

- ✍ **Which single point on the Emotional Maturity Star presents your greatest growth opportunity, and what is one specific action you will take this week to strengthen it?**

Chapter 14

How Personality Shapes Presence

‘Everything that irritates us about others can lead us to an understanding of ourselves.’

C.G. Jung

Why do I connect so easily with some clients and find others really hard to read? When a client gets stuck on details and I want to talk about possibilities, how do we get on the same page? What if the way I naturally think and communicate is accidentally making it harder for some of my clients to open up? Each of us is wired with psychological preferences that shape how we listen, process information, and engage with the world. As Carl Jung observed:

"The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances: if there is any reaction, both are transformed."

In coaching, this reaction is constant, and without awareness of these forces, we risk listening for echoes of ourselves rather than truly hearing the unique individual in front of us. In this chapter, we will explore psychological preferences, personality types and the affect these can have on our presence, providing us with tools for a deeper understanding of ourselves.

14.1 Two Lenses of Listening

What if our greatest strength as a coach could also be our biggest blind spot? Our ability to be fully present and truly hear

our clients is also shaped by our innate psychological preferences. These preferences act as a filter, determining what we naturally pay attention to and what we might unconsciously overlook. Carl Jung's model of Psychological Types provides a powerful awareness tool to understand these filters. By learning to identify both our own lens and our client's, we can remove our natural biases, deepen our connection, and ensure our presence is fully available to serve the client, not just our own.

Lens 1: Our Own Internal Lens (Our Psychological Type)

This is the filter through which we naturally see the world. It's our innate preference for how we listen, process information, and communicate. It's our 'default setting.'

When we listen only through this lens, it is like a radio tuned only to one frequency. We will only fully connect with clients who share our 'wavelength' and may misunderstand or frustrate those who don't.

Lens 2: The Client's External Lens (Their Psychological Type)

This is the filter through which our client sees the world. It's their unique way of processing and communicating. It's the client's 'native language.'

As a truly present coach we learn to hold both lenses at once. We become:

1. Aware of our own filter (Lens 1), noticing when our own preferences are causing impatience or a blind spot.

2. Curiously leaning into the client's filter (Lens 2), adapting our questions and language to understand the client's world on their terms.

In a nutshell, the 'Two Lenses' are:

- Self-Awareness and;
- Other-Awareness

Which are applied through the practical framework of personality type. The goal is to ensure our listening is focused on the client's reality, not just a reflection of our own.

Our innate psychological preferences shape our perception. Jung identified these core patterns along several key dimensions, which form the 'architecture of human personality'. Let's now explore preferences in detail, to understand how they directly influence the coaching dynamic and our ability to hold a truly client-centred presence.

14.2 Jung's Psychological Types and the MBTI

One powerful tool to help us see coaching through both lenses is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), which we will explore in detail below. However, for background, it is important to note that its foundation comes from Carl Jung's theory of Psychological Types.

Jung proposed that much of the random variation in human behaviour is actually orderly and consistent, due to basic differences in how people prefer to use their mental capacities. He believed we all have natural, inborn preferences for how we:

1. Get Our Energy: The Attitude (Introversion vs. Extraversion)
2. Take In Information: The Perceiving Function (Sensing vs. Intuition)
3. Make Decisions: The Judging Function (Thinking vs. Feeling)

Where Do We Get Our Energy?

This first preference is all about our personal battery charger. Where do we get our energy, and where do we lose it?

- **Extraversion (E): The External Battery**
Think of Extraverts as having a battery that is charged by the outside world. They get their energy from being around people, engaging in lively conversations, and taking action. They often think out loud, processing their ideas by talking them through with others. After a long day of coaching or socialising, they might feel energised. If they spend too much time alone, their battery drains.
- **Introversion (I): The Internal Battery**
Introverts, on the other hand, have a battery that is charged from within. They get their energy from quiet time alone, reflecting on their thoughts, ideas, and memories. They typically think things through internally before they speak, forming their ideas in silence. After a long day of coaching or social interaction, they need quiet time to recharge their batteries. Constant external stimulation without a break will drain them.

We can apply this into our coaching practice and presence by imagining this scenario in a session:

An Extraverted Coach might naturally fill a silence by thinking aloud, asking a series of questions to explore a topic. They are using conversation as their thinking tool.

An Introverted Coach will likely use the silence to process internally, carefully considering their next question before speaking.

If the Extraverted coach misinterprets the Introverted client's quiet reflection as disengagement, they might push too hard. If the Introverted coach misinterprets the Extraverted client's thinking aloud as rambling, they might cut them off. The key is to understand that both are valid ways of processing; they are just using different energy sources. A present coach recognises their own preference and adapts to honour their client's, ensuring the conversation flows naturally for both.

How Do We Take in Information?

This preference is like our brain's default internet browser, it determines what kind of data we naturally notice and trust. Do we focus on the specific facts on the screen, or the overall meaning and possibilities they suggest?

- **Sensing (S): The 'What Is' Browser**
If we prefer Sensing, we trust information that is concrete, specific, and gathered through our five senses. We focus on what is actually here, right now. We are grounded in reality, practical, and observant of details. We like step-by-step processes and want to know the specific facts of a situation before moving forward.

- **Intuition (N): The 'What Could Be' Browser**
If we prefer Intuition, we trust information that is about patterns, connections, and future potential. We focus on what could be, what it means, and the big picture. We are inspired by ideas, possibilities, and theories. We often read between the lines and are more interested in where something is heading than in all the precise details of how it started.

We can apply this into our coaching practice and presence by imagining a client saying, "I'm thinking about starting my own business."

A Sensing Coach is likely to ask:

"What are the specific steps you've taken so far? What is your business plan? What is your budget? Let's look at the practical details."

They help build the foundation brick by brick.

An Intuitive Coach is likely to ask:

"What's the vision behind this business? What does this success look and feel like in five years? What new possibilities does this open up for you?"

They help paint the inspiring picture on the canvas.

There is potential for misalignment here. The Sensing coach might unintentionally dampen the client's excitement by focusing only on practical hurdles, while the Intuitive coach might frustrate a detail-oriented client by staying focused on vision. The present coach learns to speak both languages, honouring the client's need for either concrete steps or visionary meaning, to ensure all critical information is explored.

How Do We Make Decisions?

This preference is our mind's inner judge, it's the default setting for how we weigh information and come to conclusions. When we have a choice to make, what is our top priority: objective logic or people-centered values?

- **Thinking (T): The 'Head' Judge**
If we prefer Thinking, we make decisions based on logic, objectivity, and cause-and-effect. Our primary goal is to find the most truthful, fair, and efficient outcome, based on consistent principles. We naturally analyse pros and cons, and we prioritise truth over tact. We ask, "Is this logical? Does this make sense?"
- **Feeling (F): The 'Heart' Judge**
If we prefer Feeling, we make decisions based on personal values, harmony, and the impact on people. Our primary goal is to create compassion, understanding, and a positive outcome for everyone involved. We prioritise relationships and strive for merit, considering what people care about. We ask, "How will this affect the people involved? Is this aligned with our values?"

We can apply this into our coaching practice and presence by imagining a client is deciding whether to leave a secure job to pursue a passion.

A Thinking Coach is likely to ask:

"What is the logical case for this move? Let's analyse the financial risks and projected income. What is the five-year

ROI? What is the most strategic step-by-step plan to ensure a smooth transition?"

They help the client build a logical framework for the decision. A Feeling Coach is likely to ask:

"How does this decision align with your core values? What kind of person do you want to be by taking this leap? How will this impact your sense of fulfillment and your family's well-being?"

They help the client connect the decision to their inner compass and relationships.

The potential issue here is that the Thinking coach, in attempting to understand a logical plan, might seem cold or dismissive of the client's emotional challenges. The Feeling coach, in their desire to maintain support, might shy away from asking the tough, challenging questions about real-world risks. The present coach learns to balance both, respecting the client's values while also ensuring their plans are grounded and sound.

14.3 How Jung's Ideas Became the MBTI

Carl Jung's theory was brilliant, but it remained a complex psychological model. It took a mother-daughter team, Katharine Briggs and Isabel Myers, to translate these ideas into a practical tool that anyone could use. Fascinated by Jung's work, they asked a simple but powerful question:

"How can we help people understand themselves and each other better in their everyday lives?"

Their answer was the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). They took Jung's three core dimensions and added a fourth to

complete the picture, creating a framework that describes 16 unique personality types.

14.4 The 4th Dimension: Our Approach to Life

This final preference captures our preferred lifestyle, how we like to approach the world outside of ourselves. Do we prefer a life that is structured and decided, or flexible and open?

- **Judging (J): The ‘Plan and Conclude’ Style**
If we have a Judging preference, we like life to be planned, decided, and orderly. We feel in control when things are settled. We make to-do lists, enjoy checking off tasks, and get a sense of relief and closure once a decision is made. Our natural impulse is to organise the world around us.
- **Perceiving (P): The ‘Adapt and Explore’ Style**
If we have a Perceiving preference, we prefer a flexible, spontaneous, and adaptable approach to life. We like to stay open to new information and last-minute options. We see deadlines as flexible and believe that a better alternative might still appear. We feel constrained by too much structure and prefer to explore life as it comes.

We can apply this into our coaching practice and presence by understanding how this difference can play out dramatically in the flow of a coaching session.

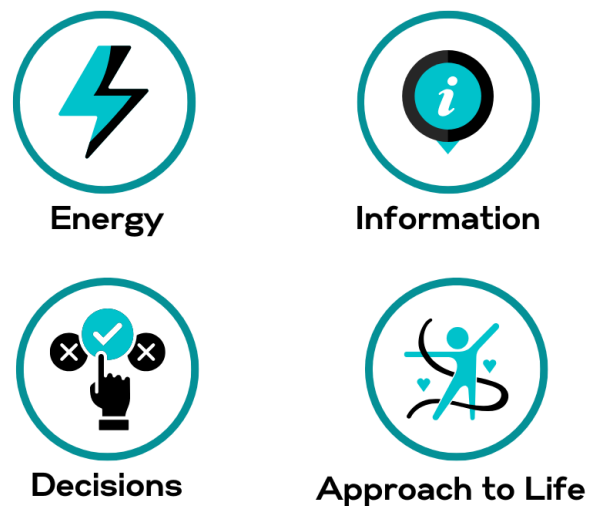
A Judging Coach has a natural drive for closure. They might instinctively steer the conversation toward a concrete action plan, a clear ‘takeaway,’ or a final decision. Their strength is

providing structure, but the risk is pushing for a plan before the client has fully explored the issue.

A Perceiving Coach is comfortable with meandering and open-ended exploration. They are happy to follow the client's train of thought wherever it leads. Their strength is allowing for emergent insight, but the risk is that a session can end without a clear sense of direction or next steps, leaving a client feeling unsupported.

The present coach is aware of their own natural rhythm. As a Judging coach, we learn to hold space for exploration without rushing to close it down. As a Perceiving coach, we learn to provide enough structure and forward momentum to ensure the client feels a sense of progress and purpose. The aim is balance.

Figure 14: The Four Domains of MBTI



14.5 The Goal of Using MBTI

So, what does an 'INFJ' or 'ESTP' actually mean? These four-letter codes are simply a shorthand for our unique combination of the four preferences we've just explored. Think of our type as

our mind's 'default settings.' It's the natural, inborn wiring that determines where we get our energy (E/I), what information we notice (S/N), how we make decisions (T/F), and how we approach the outside world (J/P). When applying personality types in coaching, we must remember two key points:

1. The goal is awareness, not to create labels.
2. We can use MBTI to transform our coaching presence.

The Goal is Awareness, Not Labels

It is important to remember that the purpose of this is not to put ourselves or our clients in a box or to use these types as excuses. The aim is to create awareness. This framework gives us a tool to understand the natural biases, both in ourselves and others, that shape every conversation.

Transforming Your Coaching Presence

When we understand our own 'default lens,' we can catch ourselves in a session. We might think something like:

"Ah, my 'Sensing' bias is making me impatient with this client's big-picture vision, I need to listen for their meaning, not just their facts."

Or;

"My 'Judging' preference is pushing for a plan, but my client needs more space to explore. I'll hold back and let the conversation breathe."

Additionally, when we learn to spot our client's preferences, we can step into their world. We can consciously adapt our language and questions to match their wavelength. This allows us to build rapport faster, understand them more deeply, and ask questions that truly resonate.

Ultimately, this self-awareness is one of the foundations of coaching presence. It ensures that the space we hold is truly for the client's benefit, and not just an extension of our own psychological comfort zone. By understanding our own lens, we can ensure our client feels seen, heard, and understood for exactly who they are.

14.6 Theory into Practice

In this chapter, we have explored how psychological types provide a useful tool for insights into the inner world of both ourselves and our clients.

To integrate these concepts into your own approach, take a moment to consider the question below:

- ✍ Reflecting on your own type preferences, which one of the four dimensions do you anticipate will be your biggest blind spot in a coaching session, and what is one specific way you will practice staying aware of it?**

Chapter 15

Ontological Coaching & Deep Presence

‘The limits of my language mean the limits of my world ‘

Ludwig Wittgenstein

How can I possibly pay attention to my client's language, emotions, and body all at once without getting overwhelmed? This sounds deep, but how do I actually 'coach someone's way of being' without it becoming a therapy session? If a client's story is limiting them, what's the first thing I should do, challenge their words, explore their feelings, or notice their posture?

We've explored presence in many ways throughout this book. We've examined our own awareness, mind-chatter, the ego, and learned to listen to the wisdom of silence. We've built a presence toolkit. However, all of these tools brought together form the heart of coaching presence, alternatively known as Ontological Coaching. In this chapter we will delve into what Ontological Coaching is and the three doors that shape every coaching conversation: Language, Emotions, and the Body.

15.1 What is Ontological Coaching?

The word 'ontological' simply means the study of being. And that's exactly what coaching presence is about: coaching the very way of being of your client, their default patterns for thinking, feeling, and acting in the world.

We can think of Ontological Coaching as a three-door system for understanding anyone who sits in front of us. Most conversations only knock on the first door. A truly present coach knows how to listen at all three, simultaneously. These three doors are Language, Emotions, and the Body, the core elements through which we all interpret and interact with our world. By learning to listen at each of these doors, we gain a complete picture of our client's reality, allowing us to facilitate change at the most fundamental level.

15.2 Door One: The Language We Live In

We usually think of words as labels we use to describe what's already there. We point at a tree and say 'tree.' But in Ontological Coaching, we see something much more powerful: Language is the tool we use to build our reality, not just describe it.

Think of it like this: the stories our client tells themselves are the windows into their life. A statement like:

- **"I'm not good with numbers..."**
- **"I'm stuck in this situation..."**
- **"I have to be perfect..."**

These aren't just passing comments. They are an important piece of the client's world. That story becomes a solid, unquestioned truth that then dictates their actions, their choices, and what they believe is possible. It's the plan they are constantly building from.

Our role of a coach within the first door of Ontological Coaching is to become a story detective. Our job shifts from being a

problem-solver to being a curious explorer of these important pieces of story. When a client says, "I'm stuck," we no longer just hear a problem to be fixed. We hear a story that can be investigated.

Our new, questions become:

"What is this 'I'm stuck' story costing you in your life and business?" (This helps them see the impact of the story.)

"If you weren't living the 'stuck' story, what's the new story you would be living? What would you be doing?" (This invites them to author a new, more powerful story.)

"When did this story first show up? Who does it sound like?" (This traces the story back to its source.)

This is actively practicing everything we've learned. Our use of silence isn't just about waiting; it is about creating space to truly hear these stories. Our intuition is often picking up on the gap between the client's words and the deeper story they are telling. With Ontological Coaching we create a clear framework to work with it.

An important point to note is that the first door of Language into Ontological Coaching is similar to what is known as Narrative Coaching and the two should not be confused (we discuss Narrative Coaching in detail in our Coaching Development book). While both approaches explore a client's story, they intervene at different points. Narrative Coaching focuses on the content of the life story the client is telling, helping them edit and re-author a problematic narrative into a more empowering one. In contrast, Ontological Coaching focuses on the storyteller, observing the underlying structures (language, emotions, and body) that generate those stories in the first place. One helps us write a better book; the other helps us transform the author who is writing it.

15.3 Door Two: The Emotional Climate

Most of us treat emotions like daily weather, a sudden shower of sadness, a bright burst of joy that comes and goes. But in Ontological Coaching, we work with something much deeper: the emotional climate.

Here's the important difference:

- Emotions are the daily weather, temporary and changing.
- Climate is the emotional environment our client lives in, the persistent, background atmosphere that colours everything they see and do.

This emotional climate acts like a pair of tinted glasses. A client wearing the grey glasses of 'Resignation' will look at any opportunity and only see why it will fail (an element of pessimism). That same client, when wearing the clear glasses of 'Ambition' or 'Curiosity,' might see the exact same situation as an exciting challenge (an element of optimism). We can't effectively coach someone toward ambitious goals when they're viewing the world through a lens of resignation, we must first help them change the glasses they're wearing.

Our role as an Ontological Coach is to detect the climate and to listen for this background atmosphere, not just the surface feelings that are being shared. During a session, we'll learn to sense the dominant emotional climate. We can ask ourselves:

- Is the atmosphere here one of hope or anxiety?
- Is there a feeling of trust or suspicion filling the space?

Instead of just discussing what our client is saying, we'll learn to bring attention to how they're saying it, to the emotional environment surrounding their words. We might offer an observation like:

"I'm noticing a sense of heaviness as we discuss this goal. What's the emotional atmosphere like for you right now?"

Or;

"There seems to be real energy and excitement behind this idea. Is that what you're feeling in this moment?"

This is where our work with the Emotional Maturity Star reaches its highest level. It's no longer just about managing our own emotional weather. Now we're:

- Reading the shared climate of your coaching relationship.
- Naming it respectfully to bring it into awareness.

Skilfully providing a shift toward a more productive emotional environment. By becoming aware of these emotional climates, we create the conditions where real transformation can occur. We're not just solving problems, we're working towards changing the environment in which those problems exist, which allows new possibilities to naturally emerge for your client (referring back to emergence coaching).

15.4 Door Three: The Wisdom of the Body

We often think of the body as just a vehicle for the brain, a thing that carries our thoughts around. But in truth, the body has its own deep intelligence. It's the first to know the truth of our experience, long before our mind can find the words. Our body is our unconscious mind made visible.

Think of it this way: when our client feels defeated, their shoulders might slump before they say "I give up." When they feel tense about a decision, their jaw might clench before they can name their anxiety. A sudden shift in breathing, fidgeting hands, or a change in posture, these aren't random fidgets. They are the physical echo of the stories and emotions happening inside. The third door of Ontological Coaching is built on the theory that the body is holding the story.

As an Ontological Coach, we now have a third channel of information. We are listening not just to the words of the client (Language) and feeling their energy (Emotions), but we are also 'listening' with our eyes to the story their body is telling. Applying deep empathetic listening.

We start to observe the body's posture and movements as an important data stream, just as important as what the client is saying. Our goal is to bring our client's awareness to this source of information.

Instead of interpreting for them, we become a guide to their own physical experience. We might ask something like:

"As you say you feel confident about this decision, what do you notice in your shoulders and chest right now?" (This helps them check for alignment between words and body).

Or;

"Let's pause for a moment. Take a breath and feel that option in your gut. What is the sensation telling you?" (This accesses intuitive, 'gut feeling' wisdom).

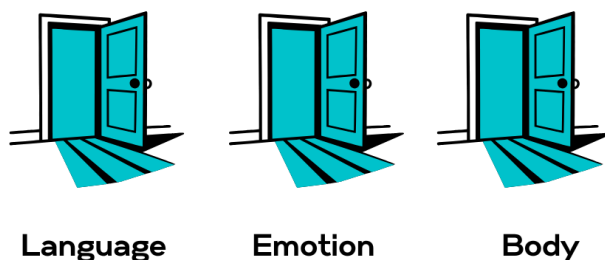
Or;

"I noticed your posture straightened when you talked about that goal. What was that shift like?" (This highlights a positive, embodied reaction).

This skill is the integration of the awareness we've built throughout this book. Our spatial awareness is now focused on the client's physical form. Our understanding of ourselves as an instrument is now fine-tuned to resonate with the client's physical state.

We are no longer just having a conversation; we are tuning into a somatic symphony, where words, emotions, and the body's wisdom all play together. By helping our client hear this symphony within themselves, we guide them to a place of deeper self-awareness and authentic action that comes from their whole being, not just their thinking mind.

Figure 15: The Three Doors of Ontological Coaching



15.5 Ontological Coaching in Practice

Let's explore the three doors of Ontological Coaching through a complete example. Imagine a client says:

"I know I should network to grow my business, but I just never do it."

The Conventional Approach (Coaching the Action): Many coaches would hear this as a simple problem of planning and accountability. They might respond:

"Okay, let's make a plan. How about you commit to attending two networking events this month? What's the first step to make that happen?"

This approach can often fail because it only addresses the outcome (the action of networking), while ignoring the client's entire internal world that is actively preventing that action. It's like trying to force a car to move by polishing the exterior, without realising the engine has been removed. The client's internal 'engine' isn't aligned with the action.

The Ontological Approach (Coaching the Being): An Ontological Coach hears this statement and understands that the word 'should' is a red flag. It signals an internal conflict between an external expectation and the client's authentic way of being. Instead of jumping to action, the coach gets curious at all three doors.

At the Door of Language

The coach listens to the words and the meaning behind them.

The Intervention: The coach notices the heavy, obligatory word 'should.' They explore the story it belongs to.

What They Might Ask:

"What does the word 'networking' actually mean to you? What images or feelings come up?"

"What's the story you tell yourself about people who are 'good' at networking? Are they fake? Pushy?"

"Who are you 'should-ing' yourself for? Where did you learn that this is something you must do?"

The Goal: To uncover the limiting narrative. The client might reveal a story like, "Networking is for slick salespeople, and I'm not one of them," or "I'll be seen as an imposter."

At the Door of Emotions

The coach listens for the emotional background surrounding the topic.

The Intervention: The coach senses that the client's statement is portraying a specific mood.

What They Might Ask:

"When you imagine walking into a room full of strangers, what's the dominant feeling that shows up? Is it dread? Anxiety?"

"What's the underlying worry? Is it a fear of being judged, or a sense of not belonging?"

The Goal: To name the emotional climate. The client might identify that they operate from a mood of 'apprehension' or 'insecurity' in these situations.

At the Door of the Body

The coach observes the client's physiology as they speak.

The Intervention: The coach notices a subtle physical shift as the client talks about networking, a slumping of the shoulders, a tightening of the jaw.

What They Might Ask:

"As you talk about this, take a moment to notice your body. Where do you feel the tension or resistance? In your chest? Your stomach?"

"Show me the posture of 'having to network.' Now, show me the posture of 'having a great conversation.' What's the difference?"

The Goal: To connect the issue to a physical experience. The client might discover they feel a literal 'weight on their shoulders' or a 'knot in their stomach.'

The Transformation: From 'Should' to 'Could'

By working through these three doors, we help the client achieve a fundamental shift in their way of being.

BEFORE: Their way of being was: Networking is a 'should' (Language) that induces 'dread' (Emotion) and 'tightness' (Body).

AFTER: The new way of being becomes: Networking is 'connecting with interesting people' (Language) that sparks 'curiosity' (Emotion) and feels like 'openness' (Body).

The action of attending a networking event is no longer a terrifying obligation. It has become a natural expression of a new, more confident and curious self. The action flows not from force, but from a transformed way of being. This is how Ontological Coaching creates deeper more meaningful change and why presence is the key to its success.

15.6 Ontological Coaching & Presence

Presence is not a mystical state. It is a practical, learnable discipline of using ourselves, our full listening, our calm awareness, our whole instrument, in service of another's growth. Ontological Coaching provides a powerful framework for this. It doesn't add one more tool to our kit; it illustrates to us how the entire kit works together in practice. It is the key that unlocks a depth of coaching we may have previously only glimpsed.

We began by exploring how to become a present coach. We now understand the capacity to become a truly transformational one. We are no longer working to just become a guide on the path for


our clients. We understand that we can help our client see that there are more paths available than they ever dreamed was possible. With practice, we know that we can help them not just achieve more, but become more.

This is the art. This is the practice. This is your way of being, as a coach.

15.7 Theory into Practice

In this chapter, we have explored how Ontological Coaching provides the ultimate framework for integrating every tool in our presence toolkit.

To integrate these concepts into your own approach, take a moment to consider the question below:

-  As you prepare for your next coaching session, which of the three doors, will you commit to listening at more deeply, and what is one specific way you will demonstrate this listening to both yourself and your client?**

The Coaches' Bookshelf

Additional Reading

For those who are interested in learning more, here is an additional recommended reading list:

- 1. The Power of Now - Eckhart Tolle**
- 2. Time to Think - Nancy Kline**
- 3. More Time to Think - Nancy Kline**
- 4. Presence: Bringing Your Boldest Self to Your Biggest Challenges - Amy Cuddy**
- 5. The Art of Living Consciously - Nathaniel Branden**
- 6. How to Stop Worrying and Start Living - Dale Carnegie**
- 7. There Is Never Anything but The Present: & Other Inspiring Words of Wisdom - Alan Watts**
- 8. Emotional Intelligence - Daniel Goleman**
- 9. The Four Agreements - Don Miguel Ruiz**
- 10. Coach the Person, Not the Problem: A Guide to Using Reflective Inquiry – Marcia Reynolds**
- 11. Psychological Types - Carl Jung**

12. Mbti Manual: A Guide to the Development and Use of the Myers - Briggs Type Indicator – Isabel Briggs Myers

Appendix A

30 Reflective Questions for Integration

On Self-Awareness & The Inner Coach:

1. Which of the five types of awareness (Time, Task, Result, Spatial, Self) do I most often neglect, and what is one practice to strengthen it?
2. When did I last get lost in mind-chatter during a session? What was the trigger?
3. What is one personal value that is non-negotiable in my coaching practice, and how do I honour it?
4. Where does my ego most often show up in my sessions? (e.g. needing to be right, looking smart, fixing the client)

On Listening & Silence:

5. What is my true comfort level with silence? On a scale of 1-10, and why?

6. When a client is speaking, what percentage of my mind is listening versus formulating a response?

7. What is one assumption I recently noticed myself making about a client? How did it affect my listening?

8. If I could only use one tool from the 'Power of Silence' chapter for a week, which would have the biggest impact?

On Emotional Maturity & The Ego:

9. Using the Emotional Maturity Star, which point (Awareness, Acceptance, Regulation, Inquiry, Expression) is my current greatest strength and which is my biggest growth need?

10. When a client expresses a strong emotion, what is the first sensation in my own body?

11. What is a recurring 'story' I tell myself about my coaching abilities that may not be entirely true?

12. How did I handle the last time I made a mistake in a session? What did it teach me about my relationship with being "perfect"?

On Psychological Types & The Two Lenses:

13. Reflecting on my own personality type, what is one potential blind spot I bring to my sessions?

14. Think of a recent client I found challenging. How might their psychological type have been different from mine, and how did that create friction?

15. What is one question I can ask to better understand a client who prefers Sensing (details) over Intuition (big picture), or vice versa?

On Ontological Coaching & The Three Doors:

16. After a session, which of the three doors (Language, Emotions, Body) did I pay the least attention to? What did I miss?

17. What is a common word or phrase (a 'story') I hear from clients that I now recognise as a limiting narrative?

18. When I feel a shift in the 'emotional climate' of a session, what is my first instinct? To name it, ignore it, or something else?

19. If I were to describe my own 'way of being' as a coach in three words, what would they be?

20. What is one thing a client said in my last session that I could have explored further by listening at the 'Door of Language'?

On Practical Application & Integration:

21. What is one specific, small change I can make to my physical setup or pre-session ritual to improve my presence?

22. How will I know if my coaching presence is improving? What will I see, hear, or feel differently?

23. What is one piece of feedback I have been avoiding asking for from a client or peer?

24. When do I feel most 'in the zone' as a coach? What are the conditions that make that possible?

25. What is one belief about what a 'good coach' should do that I am ready to let go of?

26. How does my own body feel at the end of a day of coaching? What does that tell me about my energy management?

27. What is one technique or concept from this book that felt unnatural at first but has now become more integrated?

28. Who is one client I feel I could have served better? With my new understanding, what would I do differently now?

29. What is the single most important insight I am taking from this book into my practice?

30. One year from now, what do I hope my clients will say about my presence as a coach?

Appendix B

20 Advanced Inquiries for Masterful Presence

Use these questions when you feel you have integrated the core practices and are ready to challenge yourself, work with greater complexity, and refine the art of your presence.

On Synthesis & Complex Client Dynamics:

Think of your most challenging client. How are their psychological type, prevailing emotional climate, and somatic posture all telling the same story of resistance? How are they not?

When has your intuition (a gut feeling, a spontaneous question) directly contradicted the client's stated goal? How did you, or how will you, navigate that ethical and professional tension?

Recall a session that felt 'stuck.' Using the ontological model, what was one intervention you could have made at the Door of Language AND one at the Door of the Body to unlock it?

How does your own 'way of being' (your default presence) naturally repel certain types of clients, and what does this teach you about the limits and specialisation of your practice?

What is a core belief you hold about 'how change happens' for a client? How does this belief influence where you direct your attention and what you consider a 'successful' session?

On the Coach's Shadow & Blind Spots:

What positive quality in yourself (e.g. compassion, intellect, drive) can become a shadow when over-used in a session, and how does it show up?

When do you notice yourself feeling secretly superior or resentful towards a client? What does this reveal about an unexamined expectation or a need of your own ego?

What feedback from a client or supervisor have you struggled to fully accept? What is the story your ego is telling you to protect you from integrating this feedback?

If you were guaranteed not to fail, what one new approach or style of coaching would you try that feels currently outside your professional comfort zone?

What is the one question about your own coaching that you are afraid to ask yourself?

On Mastery & Nuance:

Describe a time you consciously chose not to be fully 'present' with a client's story. What was your internal criteria for that choice?

How do you consciously cultivate a specific emotional climate at the very beginning of a session, and how do you know if it's working?

When working with a client's body awareness, where is the ethical line for you between observing, inviting awareness, and practicing outside your scope?

Think of your greatest strength as a coach. What is the hidden drawback or 'shadow' of this strength, and how do you manage it?

How do you 'de-presence' or decompress after an intense session? What ritual allows you to fully let go of your client's energy and return to yourself?

On Philosophy & Evolving Your Practice:

If you had to discard one popular coaching model or technique to rely solely on your presence, what would it be, and why would you be okay without it?

Beyond client outcomes, how do you personally measure the quality of your own presence in a session? What is your internal barometer?

What does the concept of 'surrender' mean in the context of your coaching? When is it an act of mastery, and when is it a cop-out?

Imagine your coaching practice in five years. What aspect of your presence that is currently a conscious effort will have become an unconscious, embodied mastery?

What one legacy of 'presence' do you want to leave with your clients, so that its impact is felt in their lives long after your work together is complete?

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