

Co-Active® Coaching Skills: Curiosity

In Co-Active® Coaching we start with the belief that clients are creative and resourceful, and they have the answers. That means that the coach's job is to be curious and ask questions. The questions coaches ask are provocative, open-ended, inviting. The questions invite clients to look in a certain direction but the invitation has no preconceived conclusion.

These are not leading questions. And coaches are not at all attached to the answer they receive. If it is not a fruitful place to look, clients will know and say so, or the coach will see that it was a dead-end, and ask a different question. Curiosity is a playful state, full of wonder. As in, "I wonder what you want?" "I wonder what your life would be like if you could design it to be any way you like?" "I wonder what you are deeply committed to?" "I wonder what's holding you back?"

The spaciousness of curiosity is miles wide and open for exploration. Coach and client enter this space together to look around. Curious is somehow less dangerous. Curiosity tends to lower the risk and eliminate the stifling quality of potential judgment. It's no big deal to look in a curious way. We're just being curious. And yet, curiosity is enormously powerful because it is so open to be surprised and to find the unexpected truth. It is childlike: look what I found! And it is exciting to look in a curious way.