

Accountability

Accountability is having your clients account for what they said they were going to do. It stems from three questions:

1. What are you going to do?
2. By when will you do this?
3. How will I know?

Accountability does not include blame or judgment. Rather, the coach holds the client accountable to the client's vision or commitment and asks the client to account for the results of the intended action. If need be, holding the client accountable includes defining new actions to be taken.

Acknowledgment

Acknowledgment addresses the self and who the client had to be in order to accomplish whatever action he or she took or awareness he or she achieved. It is the articulation of your deep knowing of the other.

"I acknowledge the courage it took for you to show up for this session, knowing that you had difficult things to share with me today."

Articulate What's Going On

This skill has many different useful applications. "Naming it" in the Process Energy Pattern is a form of Articulating What's Going On.

Articulating What's Going On also may involve telling the client what you see them doing; it may be what you're hearing with your Level 2 Listening, or you may speak what has not been said by the client based on your Level 3 Listening and awareness. Sometimes, it is powerful to simply repeat the client's words back to the client so they can really hear themselves.

"Debbie, I know how much you want to change your relationship with your dad, yet I hear you are interacting with him the way you always have."

"It sounds like you're annoyed that your manager didn't consider your workload when she assigned you to this new project."

"We're really stuck here in this coaching session."

Asking Permission

This skill enables the client to grant the coaching relationship access to unusually intimate or sometimes impolite areas of focus.

For example, "May I tell you a hard truth?" "Is it all right to coach you on this issue?" "May I tell you what I see?"

Authenticity & Range

The coach must come from a place of truth, integrity and personal authenticity. This coaching expresses a deep caring for the client in a personal authentic style. There are Three Attributes to Authenticity & Range:

1. Connection: The coach and client must be very connected and safety is thus created for the coach to call the client forth.
2. Aliveness: There must be a feeling of aliveness on the part of the coach and in the relationship. Calling Forth cannot happen successfully in a neutral or dull atmosphere.
3. Fierce Courage: The coach must be courageous and be willing to take a big risk — including the possibility that the client may feel offended — for the sake of supporting the client to achieve his/her goals.

Be With (see Witnessing)

Bottom-lining

This is the skill of brevity and succinctness on the part of both the coach and the client. Bottom-lining is also about having the client get to the essence of his or her communication rather than engaging in long descriptive stories.

Brainstorming

With this skill, the coach and client together generate ideas, alternatives, and possible solutions. Some of the proposed ideas may be outrageous and impractical. This is merely a creative exercise to expand the possibilities available to the client. There is no attachment on the part of either coach or client to any of the ideas suggested.

Calibration

A structure to help the client locate their starting point, desired end point, and current status in their own growth and development process. Calibration also allows the client to measure their progress toward a dream or a goal.

Challenge

Challenging involves requesting that a client stretch way beyond his or her self-imposed limits, AND SHAKES UP THE WAY THEY SEE THEMSELVES. Frequently, in the face of a challenge, clients will respond with a counter-offer that is greater than they initially would have allowed themselves to make otherwise.

A client WANTS a high level position that has just been posted in another department. He thinks he will be ready for it in about a year. You challenge him: “I challenge you to apply for this position now.” The client counteroffers with “I will meet with my manager and ask her to recommend me to the department head.”

Like a request, a challenge includes a specified action, conditions of satisfaction and a date or time by which it will be done. There are three possible responses to a challenge:

1. Yes,
2. No,
3. A counter-offer.

Championing

When you champion clients, you stand up for them when they doubt or question their abilities. Despite the client's self-doubt, the coach knows clearly who the client is and that he or she is capable of much more than the client thinks. CHAMPIONING IS OFTEN FUTURE FOCUSED. When the client is in the valley, the coach is on the next hill, waving a flag and saying, "Come on. You can make it."

Choice (see Resonant Choice)

Clarifying

When a client is unable to articulate clearly what he or she wants or where he or she is going, the coach clarifies the client's experience. Clarification may be used in response to the client's vague sense of what it is that he or she wants, confusion, or uncertainty. This skill represents a synergistic application of questioning, reframing, and articulating what is going on. It is particularly useful during the discovery process.

Clearing

Clearing is a skill that is a benefit to both the client and the coach. When the client is preoccupied with a situation or a mental state that interferes with his or her ability to be present or take action, the coach assists the client by being an active listener while the client vents or complains. Both client and coach hold the intention of clearing the emotionality from the situation. This active listening allows the client to temporarily clear the situation out of the way and focus on taking the next step. When a coach gets hooked by a client interaction or is preoccupied with issues that do not pertain to the client, the coach can clear. The coach clears by sharing his or her experience or preoccupation with a colleague or a friend in order to show up and fully be present with the client.

Client

1. A person who engages the professional advice or services of another (a lawyer's clients).
2. A customer, or someone who receives services.

Co-Active® Coaching

A powerful alliance designed to forward and enhance the lifelong process of human learning, effectiveness and fulfillment.

Co-Active® Strategy

Co-Active® Strategy is the third step in the Balance formula. Once the client has made a resonant choice, the coach works with he or she to create a plan of action that addresses both “Co” (being) and “Active” (doing) resulting in action that creates transformation at the level of identity.

Commitment

There is a fundamental difference between goals and commitments. The goal is the outward, visible outcome; the commitment is the inner drive that produced the goal to begin with. Asking a client “What are you committed to?” causes the client to look deeper inside than asking “What is your goal?” In some cases, understanding the commitment is necessary before goals can be set. In some cases, clarifying the commitment changes the goals.

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 answers 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 tunnel, 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 is 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 the client being surprised and finding the unexpected truth. It is child-like: look what I found! And it is exciting to look in a curious way.

Dance in This Moment

It is most creative to work with what arises in the moment rather than from a fixed and rigid plan. Relationship is fluid give and take. Everything that happens is an opportunity for learning and movement.

Designed Alliance

The design of the alliance begins during the first meeting or discovery session. Each coaching relationship is custom-designed to meet the particular needs of the individuals involved. Both client and coach are intimately involved in designing the coaching relationship that will be most beneficial to the client. Designed alliances tend to shift over time and need to be revisited regularly.

Embodiment

Embodiment is about having what is learned and/or known inside the body so that it is owned from the inside out. With embodiment, what we are comes from a sense of our whole self. When something is embodied it is expressed or exemplified in a way that is somatic and concrete.

Empowered Relationship

Empowered relationship is a vital ingredient in Co-Active® Coaching. An empowered relationship is one in which all parties to the relationship have granted power to the relationship, there is a clear Designed Alliance in place, and the space of the relationship is Safe and Courageous.

Enrollment

Enrollment is both a life skill and a coaching skill. Authentically engaging with people and generating excitement, enthusiasm and aliveness is part of communicating effectively whether you are talking to your children, a client, an employee or your manager. Coaches enroll their clients into the possibilities of the client's biggest, most magnificent self, and also into different aspects of coaching. For example, throughout the life of the coaching relationship, the coach may enroll the client into trying on different perspectives, accepting a challenge, and/or choosing to set the Saboteur aside. All of these are areas where enrolling the client to participate fully will empower the coaching.

Evoke Transformation

The nature of life is to transform and evolve. The coach's job is to call forth the greatest possibility for the client.

When evoking transformation, the coach fiercely and courageously takes a stand for the client to step more boldly into his or her most powerful self.

This can occur when the coach asks the client either to take a courageous, possibly scary step towards something the client wants in his or her life, or challenges the client to move beyond resistance or fear to face something fully.

Focus on the Whole Person

People are a complex and unique system and each part impacts the other aspects. It is important to include all aspects of being human, mind, body, spirit and emotion.

Forwarding the Action/Deepen the Learning

Forwarding the Action/Deepening the Learning are always interwoven. Clients learn from the action they take, and also learn from the action they don't take. Taking action is inherently connected to new learning or discovery. Similarly, new learning or discovery leads to resonant action.

The most powerful forwarding the action occurs when a coach has the client DO IT NOW during the coaching session. This provides immediate support and immediate celebration once the action is taken.

Geography

The relationship between coach and client exists in space and time. Whether coaching is done in person or over the telephone, an environment is created in which the coaching occurs. The feeling, posture, and climate... this environment has many qualities that we call the Geography. Often the concept of geography can be confused solely with the position of one's body without considering the position of one's body in space, in the environment. Exploring emotions, body positioning, voice tone and pace can allow for deeper insight and understanding for the client. As coach and client, we actually create geography even when we are unconscious of what we create. Being conscious of geography makes coaching enormously more effective. The goal is to be aware of the geography you are creating as coach to notice what happens when you or your client changes geography.

The body is an excellent indicator of one's geography. If the client is, for example, in a state of confusion, the coach may ask the client to change their body posture, their location in the room, or simply get them to move their body. The coach will then help the client to realize that, by changing their body position, their mood may shift, their thinking may clear, a new perspective may occur, and the client's energy may shift. This is, in fact, a change in the client's geography.

Goal Setting

Clients live into their greatest possibilities by setting goals and following through. Goals keep clients focused and on track toward who they are becoming. Goals are not the same as action; they are the desired result of action.

There are many versions of the acronym "SMART" as applied to goals. Here is the CTI version:

S = Specific

M = Measurable

A = Accountable

R = Resonant

T = Thrilling

Grant Relationship Power

The coaching relationship is separate from the client and the coach. The power of coaching resides in the relationship between coach and client, rather than with either the coach or the client. By granting power to the relationship, both coach and client are taking responsibility for creating the coaching relationship that will most fully serve the client.

Hold the Client's Agenda

Holding the client's agenda lies at the heart of Co-Active® Coaching. When a coach holds the client's agenda, the coach lets go of their own opinions, judgments and answers in support of facilitating the client's Fulfillment, Balance and Process. The coach follows the client's lead without knowing the RIGHT answer, without giving solutions or telling the client what to do. Holding the client's agenda requires the coach to put their whole attention on the client and the client's agenda, not the coach's agenda for the client.

Holding the Focus

Once the client has determined a direction or course of action, the coach's job is to keep the client on track and true to that course. Frequently, clients become distracted by events in their lives, strong feelings elicited by the Saboteur, or the wealth of other possibilities available. The coach consistently reminds the client of his or her focus and helps redirect his or her energy back to the client's desired outcomes and life choices.

Identify the Topic

1. Balance coaching begins with a clear topic that matters to the client. It is important to identify the topic itself, without embedded perspectives. If the client begins the coaching with a statement such as "I am stuck about my relationship with my customer," then the topic is "relationship with my customer," and the first perspective is "stuck." If you begin the balance work with "stuck" embedded in the topic, then you will soon bog down in the coaching. Always distinguish and separate the embedded perspectives from the topic.
2. In Fulfillment or Process coaching sessions, this may look like getting clear with the client about their agenda for the coaching session.

Inquiry

When a powerful question is given as homework to the client, it is intended to deepen the client's learning and provoke further reflection. The intention is for the client to consider the inquiry between sessions or over a longer period of time, and to see what occurs for them. The inquiry is usually based upon a particular situation that the client is currently addressing. An inquiry has multiple answers, no one or two of which are "right."

"What are you tolerating?"

"What is it to be undaunted?"

"What is challenge?"

Intrude

On occasion, the coach may need to intrude, to interrupt or wake up a client who is going on and on, or who is kidding himself or herself. When you intrude, it is for the sake of the client's agenda, often pointing the client in a specific direction, "Stop a moment. What's at the heart of this?" Intrusion is considered rude in some cultures. The Coaches Training Institute views intrusion as being direct with the client, allowing the client to honestly assess and immediately deal with situations. Sometimes the intrusion is a hard truth such as "You are kidding yourself." Sometimes the intrusion is simply stating what is going on, such as "You are skirting the issue."

Intuition

Intuiting is the process of accessing and trusting one's inner knowing. Intuition is direct knowing, unencumbered by our thinking mind. The process of intuiting is non-linear and non-rational. Sometimes, the information received through intuiting does not make rational sense to the coach. However, this information is usually quite valuable to the client. Intuiting involves taking risks and trusting your gut. The coach remains unattached to the accuracy of their intuition.

"I have a hunch that..."

"I wonder if..."

Listening

The coach listens for the client's vision, values, commitment and purpose in their words and demeanor. To listen for is to listen in search of something. The coach listens with a consciousness, with a purpose and focus that comes from the alliance that was designed with the client. The coach is listening for the client's agenda, not the coach's agenda for the client. The Coaches Training Institute calls listening to your own thoughts, judgments and opinions about the client's story Level 1, while listening with a hard focus on the client is Level 2 and global listening is Level 3.

Everything in coaching hinges on listening – especially listening with the client's agenda in mind. The coach is listening for signs of life, the choices clients are making, and how those choices move them toward balance or away. Listening is the gate through which all coaching passes.

There are two aspects of listening in coaching:

1. Attention – awareness of what we receive through our senses (hearing, seeing and intuition). We are attentive to all the information we are receiving. We notice the breathing on the phone, the pace of delivery, the modulation of the voice. We sense the pressure behind the words – the voice may be soft- or hard-edged, tentative or enraged.
2. Impact – what we do with our listening. What impact is the coach having on the client? How the coach listens and what they do with that listening impacts the client.

There are three levels of listening:

Level 1: Internal Listening

- Attention is on ourselves — on the sound of our own inner voice.
- Listening to our own thoughts, opinions, judgments, feelings and conclusions.
- Appropriate level for the client's listening.

Level 2: Focused Listening

- Attention is a sharp focus on the other person — listening is directed at the client.
- Listening for words, expression, emotion, what they don't say, values, vision, and what makes them energetic.
- Impact on the client — are they coming alive (resonance) or are they becoming withdrawn (dissonance)?

Level 3: Global Listening

- Attention is soft focus; listening at 360 degrees.
- Awareness includes everything: What you see, hear, smell, and feel.
- Coach is aware of their impact on the client and can dance with it.

Making Distinctions

One way to help clients see a situation from a fresh perspective is to help them distinguish between two or more concepts, facts or ideas. In this case, two facts have been blended together into one disempowering belief. The belief appears to be a fact of life and it is not.

The separate facts need to be distinguished in order for the client to become more resourceful. Examples of where it is useful to make distinctions are:

- Failing & failure ("Since I failed, I am a failure.")
- Money & success ("If I make money that means I'm successful.")

Metaphor

Metaphors are used to illustrate a point and paint a verbal picture for the client.

"Your mind is like a ping pong ball bouncing between one choice and another."

"You're almost at the finish line. Go for it! You can win the race!"

Metaview

Metaview is the big picture or perspective. The coach pulls back (or asks the client to pull back) from the client's immediate issues and from the clarity of that expanded perspective reflects back to the client what they see.

"If your life were like a road, and we were to take a helicopter ride up above it, what would we see?"

Name It (see Articulate What's Going On)

Name it is a particular form of Articulate What's Going On.

People are Naturally Creative, Resourceful and Whole

One of the Cornerstones of the Co-Active® Model and a key element of Co-Active® Coaching: The client is naturally creative, resourceful and whole.

- Nothing is broken or needs fixing.
- People have a natural ability to resolve the challenges they face.
- The coach has the questions, the client has the answers.

Perspectives

Perspective is one of the gifts that the coach brings to the coaching relationship — not the “right” perspective, simply other points of view. Creating perspective expands the aperture through which clients look at their life circumstances. Part of coaching is inviting clients to see their life or certain issues from different angles. When they see things from only one perspective, the old way of looking, they are less resourceful and victimized by the circumstances. When they are able to reexamine their viewpoint, they are able to see possibility and change.

Planning

The coach helps the client articulate the direction that they wish to go and actively monitors the progress made by the client. Clients can frequently benefit from support in planning and time management as coaches help them develop their skills in these areas.

Powerful Questions

A powerful question evokes clarity, action, discovery, insight or commitment. It creates greater possibility, new learning or clearer vision. Powerful questions are open-ended questions that do not elicit a yes or no response. Powerful questions are derived from holding the client's agenda and either forward the client's action or deepen their learning.

“What do you want?”

“What's next?”

“How will you start?”

“What does that cost you?”

“What's important for you to remember?”

Reframing

Reframing involves providing a client with another perspective. When a coach reframes a situation, he or she takes the original data and interprets them in a different way. For example, a client has just been informed that she was selected as second choice for a high-powered position in a very competitive market. She is disappointed and is questioning her professional competence. A reframe of the situation is: To be selected as second choice in such a competitive market indicates the high quality of your expertise and experience.

Request

One of the most potent coaching skills is that of making a request of the client. The request, based upon the client's agenda, is designed to forward the client's action. The request includes a specified action, conditions of satisfaction and a date or time by which it will be done. There are three possible responses to a request:

1. Yes,
2. No,
3. A counter-offer.

Resonance/Dissonance

When resonance is present, the client is honoring his or her values, the coach can sense the client's true self, there is a feeling of aliveness coming from the client. Dissonance signals the presence of the Saboteur.

Resonant Choice

Resonant Choice is the second step in the Balance coaching formula and arises from relationship with one's life purpose. Once a client has explored and discovered that there are many different perspectives with which to view a certain situation and they are not stuck in one "truth," the client makes a resonant choice as to which perspective will forward. Being at choice is critical, because when a client is at choice, s/he is no longer victimized by the circumstances facing him/her. Instead, one can powerfully choose how to view a situation. For example, a preliminary perspective on being fired from a job could be that the person fired is a failure. Upon viewing other perspectives, the client could determine that being fired presents opportunities to pursue his/her true passion. Being fully at choice in this perspective allows the client to confidently begin to explore new opportunities. This kind of resonant choice results in action that is transformative.

Saboteur

The Saboteur is a concept that embodies a group of thought processes and feelings that maintains the status quo in our lives. Often operating as a structure that would seem to protect us, it in fact keeps us from moving forward and getting what we truly want in life. Like our minds, the Saboteur will always be with us. It is neither good nor bad; it just is. The Saboteur loses its power over us when we can identify it for what it is, notice our options in the situation and then consciously choose what it is we do really want at that time.

Self-Management

The ability of the coach to get out of the way in the service of holding the client's agenda. This means to put aside all opinions, preferences, judgments and beliefs in order to reflect and support the client's agenda. Another facet of self-management includes managing the client's Saboteur. The coach can aid the client in identifying the Saboteur and then provide tools for managing it. Clearing is also a tool for coach or client self-management.

Structures

Structures are devices that remind clients of their vision, goals, purpose, or actions that they need to take immediately. Some examples of structures are collages, calendars, messages on voice mail, alarm clocks, and so on.

Take Charge

The coach chooses and directs the path of the coaching in service of the client's agenda. Sometimes clients lose their way in their circumstances, and forget what matters most to them. That's when the coach needs to take charge and direct the coaching back to what is most meaningful to the client.

Values

Values represent who you are right now. They are principles that you hold to be of worth in your life. People often confuse values with morals. Values are not chosen. They are intrinsic to you. Your individual values are as distinctly yours as your thumbprint.

Vision/Visioning

This is a multi-faceted mental image, which personally defines and inspires the client to take action and create that picture in their actual life. A powerful vision is sensuous, exciting and magnetic; constantly attracting the client's desire to bring the image to fruition. Vision provides the client with a direction and can provide meaning in the client's life.

Witnessing/Be With

To witness a client in their experience is both simple and profound. Witnessing means that the coach is fully engaged with the client in the moment and fully present with them in their experience. Witnessing is a powerful connection, one that goes beyond thinking or understanding. When a coach witnesses the client, the coach creates an inviting and spacious place for the client to be in the full experience of his or her life.