

A Word about Skills, and a Caution

In the Co-Active® Coaching Glossary you will find a number of skills that are useful in coaching Process. Some skills especially lend themselves to helping clients go deeply and stay with their experience. Here is the caution: your attention needs to be on the client and not on the skill itself. This is true for clients as well. If you or your client becomes focused on the technique then you are “being with” the coaching technique and not the client’s experience. In general, be aware of when clients pop out of the experience to talk about it.

Some skills for Process coaching might include:

- **Resonance/Dissonance:** Process coaching is all about your client being present and experiencing their life in the present moment. Noticing resonance and dissonance will help you discern whether your client is IN their experience (resonance) or simply talking about it (dissonance).
- **Powerful Questions (Naturally):** Especially useful are questions that focus on this moment: Where are you right now? What is it like there? What is the emotion? Also useful are questions that help the client explore the experience: Where do you feel that emotion in your body? What color is it? What size? Talk about the knot. How is it changing? What sound is it making?
- **Making Distinctions:** Sometimes as a client is in their experience, the coach may recognize that the client has two or more beliefs or ideas entangled into one disempowering belief. Distinguishing these allows the client to work with them separately and to become more resourceful. For example, say your client has failed to reach a sales goal, and they believe that they themselves are a failure as a person for missing that goal. It is the coach’s job to help the client tease apart their failure to reach their goal from the client as a successful human being.
- **Witnessing:** You are a powerful companion on your client’s journey. You are his or her advocate and supporter. You see who the client is being and what they are doing on this often difficult journey. Simply being with your clients and telling your clients what you see them doing, and who you see they are being is a powerful way to anchor the experience your clients are having.
- **Acknowledgment:** When you acknowledge your clients they feel truly seen at their core. When they are in the struggle, it is fuel to their motivation when you acknowledge who they are being in the process.
- **Championing:** This is a natural skill that will likely show up in coaching a client’s process. Championing your clients reinforces your belief in them. They know that you really truly hold them as creative, resourceful and whole, even if they’re in a mess in the moment.

- Level 3 Listening: Level 3 Listening is particularly useful in Process coaching. Level 3 Listening allows the coach to hear the emotion underneath the client's words or the dissonance in the space between what the client's words are saying, and what their tone of voice or expression or energy is saying. Level 3 Listening is where the coach picks up these kinds of clues, and then articulates them for coach and client to work within the coaching.
- Meta-view: When clients are down in the mess of their lives or struggling to find their footing as they climb up, sharing the Big Picture gives clients a sense of the overall purpose behind the experience.
- Metaphor: A client's own process can be a place where it is difficult to have concrete language, so much of the experience is emotional, or in other ways, below the surface. Metaphor gives clients a way to talk about their experience in imagery.
- Clearing: Sometimes, the pent up emotion is so supercharged that clients aren't able to explore until they've had a chance to burn off the excess energy. Clearing gives them a set period of time to simply ventilate, blow it off, with no judgment, no holding back and no repercussions. Nothing has to make sense or be justified, it's just burning up excess energy.