

Brainstorming Perspectives

Helping your client identify and try on other perspectives is a critical piece of the balance formula. While it is acceptable to simply ask the question: “What’s another perspective?” often coach and client run out of ideas after four perspectives. By selecting a metaphor, you and your client now have a large playing field to explore and the coaching interaction is often richer.

For example, you have a client who is in the perspective of “this current project at work is doomed.” You choose as a metaphor an auto mall (you know one of those places that has many dealerships all in one place). You would then ask your client to name various cars as the perspective, and then explore how they relate to the original topic. His current perspective could be the Edsel perspective. You might ask about the Ferrari perspective, the Ford Taurus perspective, the Corvette perspective, and so on.

One note of caution: When using metaphors it can be easy for you and the client to get lost, forgetting the original topic. Remember using metaphor in the way we have suggested is a simple way to engage the client’s creativity and open up new pathways.

It is your job as coach to keep reminding the client what the original topic is about.

Using our example you would remind the client that there are some other perspectives on the current project at work.

As you get to know your clients pull ideas from what you know they enjoy. For example, flowers for the client who loves gardening.

Here are some ideas of metaphors to explore with your clients:

- A buffet table — using various foods.
- A garden — using flowers and trees.
- A shopping spree — using clothing.
- Art museum — various paintings and sculptures.
- Music — songs or artists.
- Sports — various sports (baseball, basketball, soccer), or positions on a team (first baseman, shortstop, pitcher), or teams (Giants, Cubs, Blue Jays).
- Zoo — perspectives of the different animals.
- House — kitchen, living room, bedroom.
- People — famous or people known to the client (your Aunt, mom, boss).