

READING #03: INTEGRATION OF THE PRINCIPLE OF FULFILLMENT

What is Fulfillment? The answer to this question is individually unique and intensely personal.

What is infinite tedium to you may be hugely fulfilling to one of your clients.

Make no mistake about it. Fulfillment is our birthright, yet choosing to live one's life based on a model of fulfillment, on personal values and preferences is a radical act. We have been taught from an early age to be successful, practical, pragmatic and accomplished. We have learned to follow the thinking of our heads rather than our hearts' desires. We have been relentlessly trained to operate inside the box of what we know we can achieve, rather than risking the uncharted territory of what we truly want. Pursuing a path of fulfillment means rocking the boat, sometimes rocking it very hard. To go against and outside of this training requires a fierce creativity, an undauntability and steadfastness that is paradoxically both rare and smoldering in the heart of every human.

Coaching clients in fulfillment is about having them stretch beyond their limits and what they know to go for what their hearts desire... for what will have them sing rather than just speak, what will have them dance rather than merely walk. It is about empowering clients to dream big, fanning the flames of those dreams with the skills of acknowledgment, championing and powerful questions and then challenging them to go for those dreams with aliveness, passion and commitment.


For coaches, it is vitally important to realize that the true juice of fulfillment is not in the destination. The act of discovering and going for what you truly want is, in and of itself, fulfilling. When a client is engaged in moving toward fulfillment, the result or outcome is a sweet and passing experience. It is the day-to-day aliveness that this type of journey engenders that brings on-going, lasting fulfillment. To be playing a "big game," to be working toward things that truly matter to oneself, to be living, thinking and creating "outside the box;" this is the foundation of fulfillment.

Fulfillment is one of the most enrolling aspects of coaching. Enroll potential clients in their dreams and watch them jump into coaching. Give them permission to make choices based on their own values (as opposed to parents' or society's) and see them come alive.

Choosing to live our lives based on our values is not what society, parents, etc. have taught us. While honoring our values brings us aliveness and fulfillment, it is definitely not the easy, well-trodden way. Fully honoring our values is about resonance, not about being happy all the time.

Many people make choices based on what others want, or what will be easiest, or what will cause us the least amount of discomfort in the moment. We have been taught to live inside a box of what we think we can have and what we already know. We settle for what we have and give up on our dreams. The trend or movement in this direction is so overwhelming that, without some kind of structure for support, we get swept away. It becomes almost impossible for us to fight the tide and hold onto our vision alone. We forget what it is that we truly want, what brings us joy and fulfillment. We forget that we know.

Values clarification begins a process of rediscovery. As a client's values become more clear, they can see the choices that they need to make in order to have a more fulfilling life. Within the structure of coaching, clients begin to create and design their lives from what they want, from the possibility that exists outside the box of what they think they can have.



Values are the lighted signposts on the fulfillment path, the arrows that tell a client which journey will hold the most fulfillment. In honoring one's values, there is an inherent permission to be fully integrated and self-expressed; to be, in fact, whole. Coaches can return to a client's values again and again; there is always grist here for the coaching mill. If things are going well for the client, take a look at how they are doing in honoring their values. This will usually add richness and "body" to the moment. If the client is suffering or feeling empty, search for the values that are being stepped on or suppressed. Score these values on a scale of 1 to 10, 1 meaning they are completely dishonoring the value and 10 meaning they are honoring the value fully. Challenge your client to raise the score with immediate and courageous action. Watch for the Saboteur, but speak to and challenge your client's heart.

While values are a compass for a client's rich, fulfilling life, goals design the path that a client follows toward who they are becoming. A client lives into their full, magnificent self 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. Every goal is an opportunity for a client to live more fully into their Life Purpose.

When a Co-Active® Coach holds the client accountable for moving toward their goals, they are holding the client accountable for much more than a specific action toward a goal, they are holding the client accountable for living into their Life Purpose. Resonant goals are tied to fully honoring the client's values, who they are becoming and what they truly want. Resonant goals move clients toward transformative change. It's part of our job as coaches to help clients find the resonance in their goals – or let them go.

A thrilling goal is compelling and exciting to a client. Co-Active® Coaches help the client to set goals that are so thrilling – and even scary – that the client can't wait to get started! Encourage your clients to set goals that have them stretch, that call them forth to new capabilities and power, that push and pull them forward into a bigger life.

The Captain and Crew are invaluable tools in coaching clients toward the state of fulfillment. The Captain is like a client's true self and has "been there" and "done that" enough to have a great deal of clarity about such matters as fulfillment. Most Captains are not particularly interested in pleasing others, tolerating or settling.

Coaching your client to develop an on-going relationship with their Captain and Crew can often open up powerful and "out of the box" coaching.

Work with your clients in creating an exciting, resonant path for their actions. What would be so juicy that it would pull them out of bed in the morning like a magnet? Assist your clients in creating visual reminders, cues, quotes, structures, images, phrases; whatever resonates for them and will keep things alive for them. Let them know that as their coach, you know who they are and what they are about. Even when they are mired deep in the swamp of Saboteur, the vision of your client's true self lives as you hold it for them like a beacon on a starless night.

Coaching is about change, about clients moving out of their comfort zones and going for what they truly want instead of what they think they can have. As keeper of the status quo, the Saboteur gets up in arms about all this change and fulfillment stuff. "Who are you," says the Saboteur, "to upset the status quo, to say that you want more, better or different? How dare you!"

The Saboteur, as defined in the dictionary, is one *who bungles and sabotages*. What is sabotage? Well, according to Merriam-Webster's online and American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language online, sabotage is:

1. Destruction of property or obstruction of normal operations.
2. Treacherous action to defeat or hinder a cause or an endeavor; deliberate subversion.
3. An act or process tending to hamper or hurt.

So, the client's Saboteur is not to be taken lightly. The presence of the Saboteur puts the client into a state of dissonance, where negative self-talk and self-defeating thinking rule the day. The Saboteur is the antithesis of resonance, and separates the client from their true self.

There are many different ways to coach the client when the Saboteur shows up. It's important that a coach be facile with a variety of ways to coach around the Saboteur voices or move them aside because different approaches are effective with different clients, or even with the same client at different times. Trust your intuition and allow yourself to experiment. If one approach isn't working, then try another. See page 3 in *Chapter 5: References: Eight Ways to Move Aside Saboteur Voices*


In our experience, ways to coach around the Saboteur fall into two basic categories. The first category is about naming the dissonance and creating awareness that the Saboteur is present or by personifying the Saboteur. Have your clients name their Saboteurs, draw them and describe them. Or have them create a Saboteur doll or other structure that represents it to them. Have them find a place for the Saboteur to live either in reality or in their imagination. Then, as a coach, send the Saboteur there when they are getting in the way of the coaching. One client of ours, whose Saboteur's name was Ex-lax, had a little troll that represented her Saboteur to her. When he got in the way of what she wanted to accomplish, she would put Ex-lax in a drawer and leave him there until she was done with her project.

You can also do this during the coaching session. If the Saboteur is being very active in the coaching, you can send it into the hallway, to its cave, or simply ask the client to choose to focus their attention elsewhere. Then proceed with the coaching.

You'll be most effective in your coaching when you take the Saboteur seriously, yet handle it lightly, playfully and creatively when it shows up. The Saboteur is here to stay, and as a coach you need to be able to dance with the Saboteur without getting sucked into believing it.

The second category for coaching around the Saboteur blows right past it and builds resonance, by working with the client's Captain, values, vision or life purpose. The coach notices, yet basically by-passes the Saboteur and goes right to the client's true self. These techniques call the power of the client forth and, clever as a Saboteur is, it is no match for the power of a client's true self. Ask a powerful question like "What do you really want" and watch the Saboteur fade into the background. Work with the client's Captain or the client's values. Acknowledge your client or champion who they are. Make an outrageous request or challenge them in a big way. Expand their perspectives. Have them see beyond the limited thinking or story that they have been telling themselves about what is available to them.

How do you know when you are coaching the Saboteur? Some topics are obvious, like I don't have enough time, money, etc. to honor my values. Listen for Saboteur dissonant language like "I can't," "I have to", or "I shouldn't." Listen for the story that clients are telling themselves



about why they have to struggle, suffer, and sacrifice. Watch for the feeling in yourself as the coach of struggling or going around in circles like a plane in a holding pattern above an airport. Most importantly, watch for “the way it is.” Notice if your client is working from “inside the box,” trying to rearrange the pieces of what they already know or think they can have. Coach your clients to look outside the box, and create from what they truly want, from what will bring them joy, fulfillment and aliveness.

As long as you are coaching the client’s brilliance and power rather than the limitations, the resonance of the client’s life will expand and they will have an experience of Fulfillment.