

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.

Being In This Moment

Our clients frequently come to the coaching session completely consumed by what happened the past week, or earlier that day, or since childhood... or they are completely engaged by what they are reaching for in the future: their plans, goals, intentions, the way the world will be when they have made the changes they are focused on in their coaching. They are talking about the past or talking about the future, but not really being in the present. When we turn off the chatter from the past and the future, we can bring all of our attention on this moment and it becomes HUGE. It is a challenge for many people to be in this moment. How ironic because it's actually the only moment that exists. This one. and now this one. This is the moment you are reading the words on this page. Slow down your reading. Slower. one word at a time. Now slower yet. Notice your breathing as you read this. Notice the sounds in the room around you. This is the moment you are alive. Pause here. In this moment. appreciate being alive.

It is so easy to skip over, and yet it is vital. Coaching a client's process starts with being in the NOW.

Being With — In This Moment

It's an odd phrase, "being with." Maybe the easiest way to relate to this is the familiar sense of being with friends. Another situation that comes to mind is being with someone who is in the hospital. There's nothing to do there — at least no expertise that you bring to their healing, but it is important that you are with that person. You're not just passively sitting in the room; you're actively engaged even if there are no words. In the language of listening that we use in Co-Active® Coaching, it is about listening at Level 2, connected to the person, and at Level 3, as aware as you can be of the surrounding space of connection and everything that's in it, a sensitivity to the person and where they are. "Being in action" implies moving forward, having things to do, focusing on options. "Being with" implies exploring the territory, moving deeper into the experience. Whatever shows up is perfect. Nothing has to change in this moment. As coach, that means being enormously curious about whatever is here, and whatever is true right now, and helping the client experience that more and more deeply, rather than running from it or resisting it.

(E)Motion Is Energy in Motion

The presence of emotion is one of the inherent qualities of process coaching. When clients talk freely about issues that are deeply important to them, it should come as no surprise that the conversation takes place in an atmosphere of emotion.

Coaches are sometimes alarmed or confused by this. They think that because the client is having emotion, the coaching relationship has turned into therapy. But emotions and therapy are not the same. Emotions are just emotions. When someone is passionate, even angry about a perceived injustice, it doesn't mean that he or she is mentally unstable. Instead, they are just human being having a human reaction.

Emotions are part of the normal functioning of a human being, not symptoms of disease or weakness. The whole, healthy and resourceful client has full access to his or her emotions. It's the hiding, denying, submerging emotions that get clients in trouble.

From a very early age, most have of us have been taught to suppress our emotions. We get messages like "Don't be a baby". "Be a big girl or boy."

As we grow older, we are taught that our emotions are inappropriate, messy and unprofessional. In his powerful book "The Four Agreements" author Miguel Ruiz states that we have been "domesticated" and separated from our own nature.

Unfortunately when we turn down the volume on our emotional experience, we also turn down the volume on our aliveness and authenticity as well.

Emotions, are energy and when our emotions are flowing freely they bring us tremendous energy and provide the fuel for us to transform and grow.

However when we are not willing or able to allow our (e) motion to flow freely, that energy can stuck in our bodies and can create all kinds of physical issues and disease.

Sometimes we are afraid to let our emotions flow freely. We are concerned that we will become overwhelmed and our emotions will take over and run the show.

Actually it is what we CAN'T be with that runs our lives. When we try to push emotions away, they can feel overwhelming or even dangerous.

However as we learn to be present and experience whatever we are feeling, the energy of the emotions moves naturally and becomes a resource that we can harness to create powerful, positive change in our lives.

Being present with what one is feeling can take time. As coaches, we need to support the client in slowing down and begin present with what they are feeling rather than dashing off the to the next thing. This is the case in both the lighter emotions such as joy and celebration and the heavier ones, such as anger and grief. When a client has fully experienced what they are feeling, a natural shift will occur and there will be new energy for forward motion. This process can take a moment, a day or a year. However long the process, it is important that the coach remain committed and present throughout.

Geography

The relationship between coach and client exists in space and time. Even in telephone coaching there is definitely an environment created in which the coaching occurs. This environment has many qualities that we call the Geography. Geography in Co-Active® Coaching was introduced in the Balance course. In Balance, you focused on the geography of the client. Here, in Process, you are focused on the geography of the coach and how that affects the coaching.

The Amplified Life

The goal of Process is to give clients the opportunity to own their WHOLE life... all of it. The peaks and valleys. The ups and downs. Too often people create their lives to avoid the highs and lows. They are looking for a safe and comfortable middle with no swings either way. It is a misguided form of self-protection — protection from pain, or sometimes, just avoidance of strong emotion in either direction. If we attached an EKG monitor to their life force, instead of highs and lows their life force would become dangerously close to a flat line. This is a deadly alternative — a “dial tone life.” If coaching for Fulfillment gives clients back their dreams, and coaching for Balance gives clients back their choices, coaching the client’s Process gives them back the means to experience their whole life in every moment.

The Contexts and Process

As you recall there are five coaching contexts in the Co-Active® Coaching model:

- Intuition
- Listening — especially listening at Levels 2 and 3
- Curiosity
- Self-Management
- Deepen the Learning/Forward the Action

These contexts are what we bring to the arena of the coaching relationship. It's true whether we are coaching the client's Fulfillment, Balance or Process. We've found that it is especially useful to remind coaches of these contexts when it comes to coaching Process and helping clients be in the moment. When coaches ask, "How do I DO Process coaching?", one answer is to look at the contexts. How much of your intuition are you bringing to the process? What would happen if you doubled the access you have to your intuition? How much are you hearing at Level 3? Focus your listening on Level 3 in Process, and coach what you are hearing there, rather than the details of their story. Be more curious about what is going on inside the client than what is happening outside in the client's life. Notice where you have your own issues and self-manage. Do you avoid Process coaching? Finally, remember that all coaching leads to action but especially in Process, you will first spend time exploring, investigating, deepening the experience and uncovering learning.

What We Can't Be With Runs Our Lives

Here's how it usually happens. You, as coach, recognize that there is something blocking the client's progress. You may not have a clue what it is, but you sense there is an obstruction in the flow or turbulence in the river of the client's life. You get curious about this underwater obstruction. Sometimes clients get curious too, or they know what it is from past experience. Sometimes clients want to avoid the whole exploration; they would much rather talk about the treasure they are paddling for down the river. Clients are human beings and human beings often resist going down into the dark, fearful of what monsters they might find. They often resist going into the light too. They want to stay where it is familiar (no matter how turbulent) or where it is safe or comfortable. They resist going there — even when they know intellectually that going to a new, better place in life means going through something they would rather avoid. So they resist, and it doesn't go away. You've probably heard the line, and it seems so true, "what we resist persists." The more it is avoided, the bigger and more persistent it grows. Eventually it starts to run our lives.

For example, most of us would prefer not to disappoint others. If your client is avoiding disappointing others at all costs, guess who is paying all the costs? When they decide they'll do anything to avoid disappointing others they cut themselves off from what might be possible if they took the risk or moved forward anyway and dealt with the consequences. Some folks avoid standing in the spotlight, even when they've earned the right and deserve the recognition; it's not "appreciation" they feel when they stand in the spotlight, it's "exposed" and "vulnerable"... it's a hot seat, not a victory stand. So they avoid doing things that would bring them attention or even success. They live in their own shadow, and thereby cut themselves off from all that would be possible by taking a risk, by standing in the light. If they can't be with disappointment or success, they cut themselves off from that much life, and the maneuvering room gets smaller and more difficult to negotiate. There are big boulders in the road, and "disappointing others" is just one of the many things they might avoid.

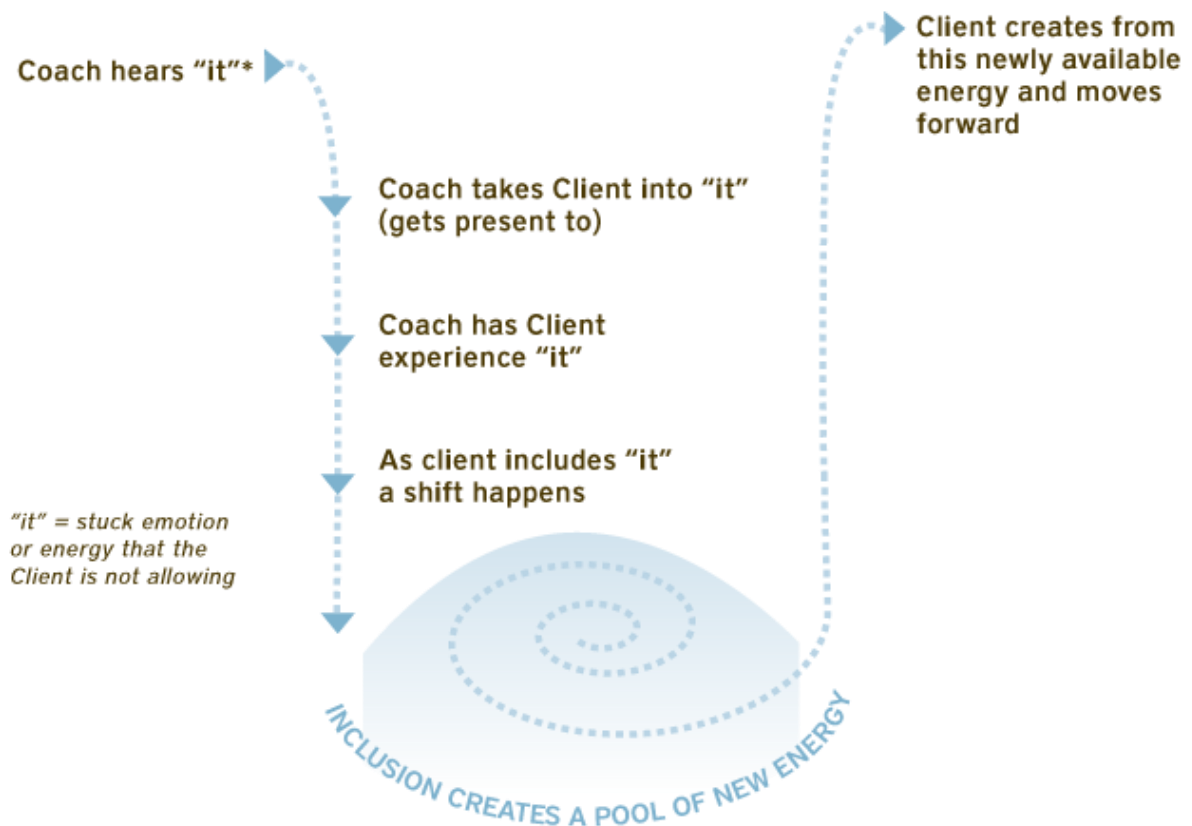
How about anger? Can't have that in my life; avoid any situation that might lead to anger! Intimacy? Too risky; take the detour here. Or confrontation? Back up, turn around, find a way around that or see the faintest warning sign in the distance and lie low.

Most of the time clients are unconscious of the boulders. Their focus is on getting around or getting by. They are not aware that they are stalled at the foot of a boulder called "Disappointing Others." They are unaware that they have been trying to drive around this thing. The boulder itself is running their life. Until they see it and deal with it, they won't be able to move forward on the path. The boulder controls the path.

Your job as coach is to have the vision to recognize this situation and point it out. Almost always when clients recognize what they've been struggling to avoid, they will agree to go into it, maybe reluctantly, knowing that to get to the other side sometimes means traveling through the hard stuff.

Process Coaching Overview

The Co-Active® Energy Pattern



1. The coach hears it. "IT" is the emotion, the turbulence, the disturbance, or the energy shift in the life force. This can be very obvious when the client is experiencing strong emotion, or it can be quite subtle: a ripple in the usual tone that you hear, listening at Level 3. It's a signal that something is not quite the same or not quite right with your client. Your ear is tuned to hearing what your client is communicating underneath the words, and you pay attention and point out what you hear.
2. When you and your client have identified the source of the energy shift, your job is to take your client into the experience.

3. The client experiences it. The client has a full experience of this place — as full as he needs to have. There is no objective measure for this. You will need to trust your Level 3 awareness. At some point you will sense that the client owns this experience, he is able to include it in his life. It's as if he has been holding this "IT" with both hands stuck to it like glue. It's cumbersome and he doesn't have his hands free, but he can manage most life activities. When you have clients experience "IT" you have them hold this weight out in front of them at arms length where they can get a good look at it — and by the way, their arms get really tired — so eventually, they embrace it.
4. The client owns it. It is part of the client's whole life experience without judgment. It just is. It is sadness, or joy, or risk-taking. It is triumph, or disappointment; it just is. As coach you can hear and feel the shift in the client. It can often feel as though the client has "popped" into a new reality.
5. Client moves forward into action. The client is no longer avoiding the feeling, the client moves forward bringing a new sense of him or herself into the world.

TOOLS

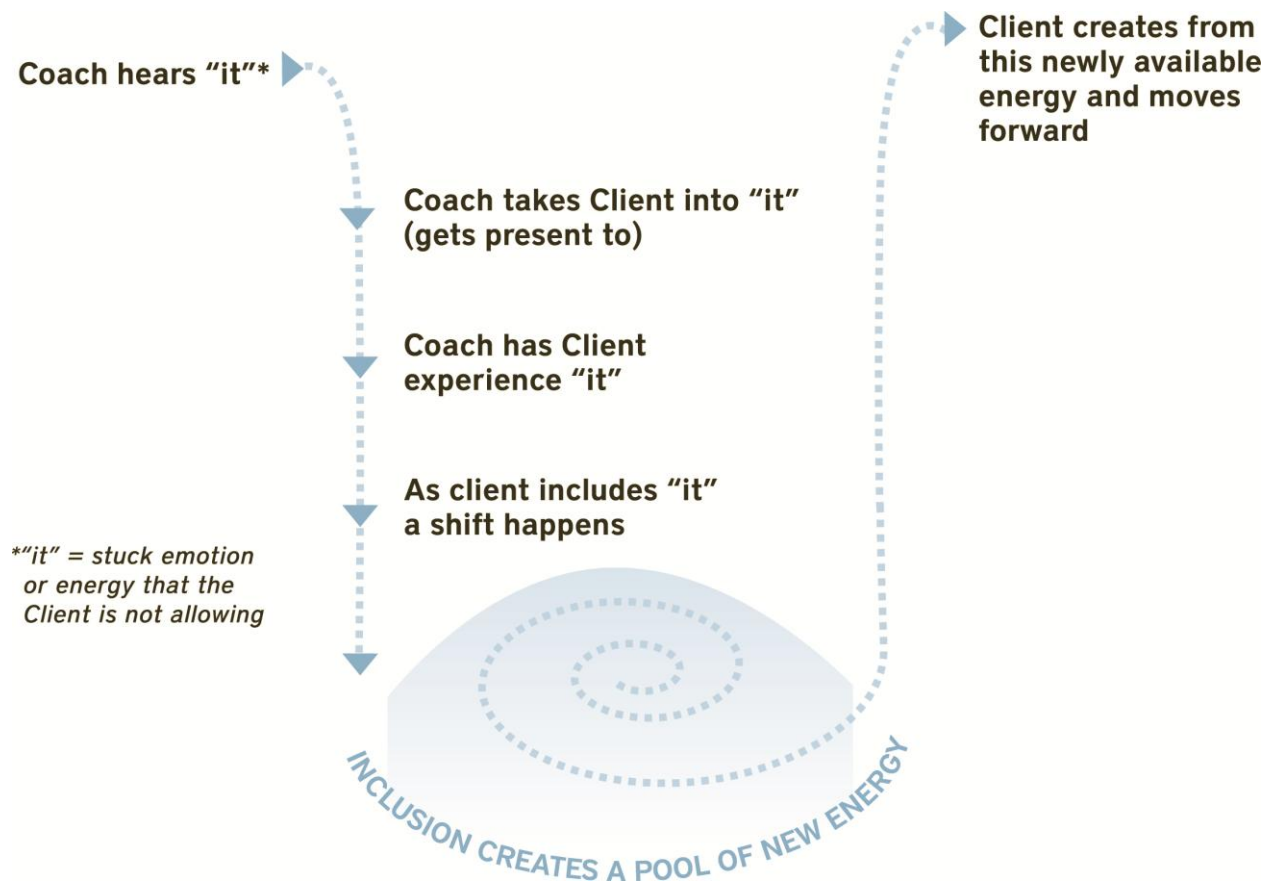
Emotional Field — Feeling Vocabulary

Peaceful <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • calm • content • comfortable • satisfied • serene • relaxed • fulfilled • relieved • quiet • carefree • centered • refreshed • free • blissful • expansive • mellow 	Loving <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • warm • affectionate • open • friendly • compassionate • grateful • kind • touched • passionate • infatuation • radiant • moved • tender • sexy • thankful • appreciative 	Glad <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • happy • joyful • cheerful • encouraged • delighted • excited • elated • proud • hopeful • confident • optimistic • merry • glorious • ecstatic • exhilarated • wonderful 	Playful <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • energetic • goofy • thrilled • exuberant • alive • giddy • adventurous • mischievous • effervescent • jubilant • invigorated • amused • impish • silly • electrified • lively 	Interested <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fascinated • intrigued • curious • engrossed • inquisitive • enthusiastic • eager • astonished • intense • absorbed • focused • inspired • animated • alert • stimulated • surprised
Mad <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • frustrated • aggravated • disgusted • resentful • angry • grouchy • irritable • hostile • enraged • furious • exasperated • indignation • displeased • mean • bitter • impatient • annoyed 	Sad <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lonely • disappointed • heavy • sorrowful • unhappy • despondent • disheartened • blue • miserable • dejected • grief • distressed • depressed • discouraged • melancholy • forlorn • brokenhearted 	Scared <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • afraid • nervous • insecure • worried • fearful • helpless • vulnerable • concerned • anxious • terrified • shocked • horrified • wary • frightened • alarmed • dread • powerless 	Tired <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fatigued • indifferent • lethargic • hopeless • exhausted • withdrawn • apathetic • disinterested • sleepy • dull • bored • reluctant • distant • detached • weary • pessimistic • fidgety 	Confused <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • torn • uncomfortable • hesitant • troubled • disturbed • suspicious • restless • perplexed • uneasy • puzzled • embarrassed • unsteady • skeptical • overwhelmed • hurt • surprised • dismayed

Process Coaching Energy Pattern Definition

1. The coach hears it. “IT” is the emotion, or energy that the client is not allowing, the turbulence, the disturbance, or the energy shift in the life force. This can be very obvious when the client is experiencing strong emotion, or it can be quite subtle: a ripple in the usual tone that you hear, listening at Level 3. It’s a signal that something is not quite the same or not quite right with your client. Your ear is tuned to hearing what your client is communicating underneath the words, and you pay attention and point out what you hear.
2. When you and your client have identified the source of “it” energy shift, your job is to take your client into the experience.
3. The client experiences it. The client has a full experience of this place — as full as he needs to have. There is no objective measure for this. You will need to trust your Level 3 awareness. At some point you will sense that the client owns this experience, he is able to include it in his life. It’s as if he has been holding this “IT” with both hands stuck to it like glue. It’s cumbersome and he doesn’t have his hands free, but he can manage most life activities.
4. When you have clients experience “IT” you have them hold this weight out in front of them at arms length where they can get a good look at it — and by the way, their arms get really tired — so eventually, they embrace it.
5. The client experiences it. It is part of the client’s whole life experience without judgment. It just is. It is sadness, or joy, or risk-taking. It is triumph, or disappointment; it just is.
6. As the client includes “it” a shift happens
7. The client creates from this newly available energy and moves forward, bringing a new sense of themselves into the world.

Components of the Co-Active® Energy Pattern



The Coach's Geography and Process Coaching

Up until now your work with Geography has been focused on the client's geography. In this course we are shifting the focus to the coach's geography.

In Process coaching, too much shifting of the client's body position can sometimes have the client move out of the experience, rather than move more deeply into it. It can work well for you as the coach to assume a different geography and see what kinds of questions come from there.

Here are some examples:

- Rather than asking a client to close their eyes you could close yours and see what emerges. Some possible questions that might come to you from this geography are "What's dark about this?" or "What are you blind to?"
- If you're sensing tightness in the client or the coaching, rather than shifting the client's geography try putting yourself into a ball and asking questions from there.

You can let your intuition be your guide to new body positions to try on as a coach and keep asking yourself if they are informing you in having the client move more deeply into their experience or away from it and into talking about the experience.

It's important to avoid becoming overly invested in lots of different techniques to use with your clients in Process coaching. This will only serve to lead them into "doing" Process coaching rather than "being" in their experience.

In our current world climate we are so geared to producing results and to getting somewhere. It is a natural tendency for the coach to seek tools and techniques to rely on, tools and techniques that give the coach a sense of providing value and "getting the job done." In Process coaching, however, nothing can replace being fully present with your client in a spacious and present way, having room for and curiosity about what they are experiencing now...and now...and now.

Working with your geography as a coach can assist both you and the client in deepening the learning and forwarding the client's action. Exploring emotions, body positioning, voice tone and pace can allow for deeper insight and understanding for the client.

The geography of different emotions is another powerful place to look in Process coaching.

- What is the geography of tears? There are many different kinds of tears. Some are of sadness, some of grief, and other tears are an expression of happiness or inspiration. What are the geographies of these different kinds of tears?
- What is the geography of anger? Imagine getting cut off in traffic. That has a certain geography, doesn't it? Or what about feeling betrayed or when a client is experiencing another's dishonesty. What happens when you assume that geography with your client? What opens up for them?

Lastly, while we focus a lot on the body as an access point for geography, it's important to remember that geography for both coach and client includes tone of voice, internal temperature, attitude. We encourage you to use all this and more as you explore the experience of the moment with your clients.