

Client-Led Consolidation of Learning and Review of Return on Investment

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“Bill, I want to renew our engagement because I find value in our work together. It’s been good--I know we did a lot in the last year, but I just can’t remember what we did.”

Early in my coaching career, at the end of a year of coaching, a client who had some extraordinary transformations in confidence, career, and income, said almost exactly that to me. I was, frankly, momentarily stunned. The differences in this client’s life were truly momentous and unmistakable—at least I had thought they were. I took a deep breath and offered a short overview of where I thought he was when he started and what I saw regarding some of the goals he set and achieved. “Wow!” he responded, “I felt like we did a lot—and we did a lot more than I remembered by far. I guess I’m doing even better than I thought I was.”

Often, when we as coaches do our work well, even the clients we have who gain the most powerful outcomes are only partially aware of their accomplishments—unless we draw their attention to the changes they’ve made and the outcomes they’ve created. Their growth is so organic, so natural, that they don’t realize how far they’ve traveled.

But this knowledge is important to the client. Experience suggests being clear about their accomplishments makes it easier for clients to continue them, for clients to have confidence in their new capabilities, and for clients to build future habits on top of new habits. More, when clients know what they’ve done, they can more easily see what needs to be done next—which is the basis of the conversation about renewing a coaching engagement.

To support clients in consolidating their learning, I suggest they write short answers to these questions:

- As a result of my coaching work, what new thoughts or ideas do I have?
- As a result of my coaching work, what new actions have I been taking?
- As a result of my coaching work, what outcomes have I created or contributed to?