

Coach the Human, not the Culture

Currently we have a global economy, global ecology and global science. Yet we are still doing politics as nation states.ⁱ As well, it seems that often in the field of Professional Coaching, our limiting beliefs around regional culture differences, diversity and communication are tending to lead us down a path of fragmenting our beloved profession. Let's not do this. Let's not do coaching as nation states. Let's not become segmented and limited in our understanding of what coaching can be. Let's rather ensure that coaching is global by understanding the nature of 'pure coaching'.

What is pure coaching?

Pure coaching is to simply show up with the conscious intention to relate, partner and be present with another remarkable human being who has put themselves forward to unleash their potential and grow themselves by being curious. Pure coaching is not about what you do, but who you are. This is universal and not country specific.

Pure coaching does not include consulting, facilitating, psychology, counselling, training, teaching, or whatever other related modality you have experience in. Pure coaching demonstrates the ICF's Core Competencies and the ICF Code of Ethics, without role confusion.

Pure coaching has universal application, no matter where or with whom we practise. Pure coaches can coach anyone, on anything. Pure coaches believe in, and experience, the global-ness of being. Pure coaches don't coach to different cultural assumptions – be these geographical or organisational. This is limited thinking that is not based on true connection, but rather, limited coaching experience and limited thinking.

Pure coaching is not about what we do but about who we are being. It is not about where we are born, where we live, our academic qualifications, or who our clients are.ⁱⁱ It is not about our work experience nor our family situation. It is about who we are being as we show up to coach each individual that comes to us.

There is no regionality in coaching, leave this for our marketing. Pure coaching can be, and is being, practised globally.

Moving from Transactional to Transformational

As noted, who the coach is being is not nationality or regionally defined. In creating sustainable impact and change, it may be more important and relevant that the coach is coaching from who they are being, versus what they are 'doing' with the client. Better to ask *who does the coach have to be* to support the client in who they are and what they really want to achieve. This understanding is often only gained from thousands and thousands and thousands of coaching client hours. By the time we are MCC's, our models, frameworks, structures and training schools have dissolved, and our unique way of being is what we offer our clients. Trusting in ourselves, rather than the safety net that these tools, techniques and training have provided, is one of the hardest shifts pure coaches must make. As we move to offer pure coaching, we need to let these go and trust ourselves; trust our clients; and trust the coaching process. We move from simply transactional coaching to transformational coaching.

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What does it take to offer pure coaching?

Without a doubt, it requires hundreds of hours of coach-specific training and thousands and thousands and thousands of client hours. It's application of behaviour, not just knowing the theory. Then, and only then, it becomes about who the coach is being. Let's get clear on this distinction:

-) Master Certified Coaches coach the who of the client.
-) Pure coaching includes **who the coach** is being.

EXPERIENCE + TRAINING	= COMPETENCE (ACC & PCC) (what and how of the client)
EXPERIENCE + TRAINING + CONFIDENCE	= MCC (who of the client)
EXPERIENCE + TRAINING + CONFIDENCE + TRUST	= PURE COACHING (who THE COACH is being)

Now we get to the real crux of the matter. How do we to coach purely, versus simply obtaining coaching hours and an advanced credential? What is the shift we are required to make so we can offer pure coaching, remembering that pure coaching has universal application, no matter where or with whom we practise?

Coaching Presence is the key to offering pure coaching. This is where we are fully conscious and are able to create a spontaneous relationship with our client. We are open, flexible and most importantly confident. We trust ourselves, our clients and the coaching relationship. We are open to not knowing. Not only do we have to be willing to not know, we must be willing to allow the client not to know. Our curiosity about who the client is and what the client wants must supersede our need to discern the solution, or to be a great coach, or to be right.

Here, the coach is responsible for the process and the client is responsible for the content and the results. Yet many coaches still believe they are responsible for the resultsⁱⁱⁱ. This is the coach's ego getting in the way and moving from true relating back into the safer, more familiar modality of informing. That is, from relating to interrogating so that we can provide a solution.

Q: What does it take to offer pure coaching?

A: A decision to evolve that takes courage.

Now is the time to retire our past careers and make a decision to offer only pure coaching. Not consulting, facilitating, psychology, counselling, training, teaching, or whatever other related modality in which you have experience, which is familiar and safe. People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care. Moving from doing coaching to being a coach takes time and courage.

Pure coaching has universal application. Culture, place and time dissolve. It is my sincere hope that this article inspires you to: trust yourself; trust your clients; and trust the coaching process. Coach the human, not the culture.

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ⁱ Yuval Noah Harari www.ynharari.com

ⁱⁱ More often than not, I hear newer coaches bragging who their clients are – be it the position of their clients (C-Suite, Board, EVP's, etc...) or the nature of their clients' business (MNC, industry, size, turnover, etc...) This is a clue to me that the coach is still gaining their coaching confidence from their clients' status, not from their ability to coach. This is a red-herring. As I said earlier, the hardest thing about masterful coaching is to let go of our taught tools, techniques, and training; and trust ourselves, our clients, and the coaching process. It's not who your clients are – it's about who you are.

ⁱⁱⁱ This is usually due to selling results and/or solutions up front to the buyer of the coaching services. Not an ideal sales pitch when it comes to pure coaching!