

Moving The Client Forward

This skill overlaps with several others, for instance accountability, interrupting, brainstorming and questioning.

Coaching is essentially about three questions: “What?” “So what?” and “What next?” The key to this skill is the ‘so what’ and ‘what next?’ part of the coaching process. Without this skill, a coaching session can seem rambling and unfocussed – just a nice chat with a pleasantly non-judgemental person. Throughout the coaching session, you need to keep up the pace so that ‘what next?’ is constantly in view. It is a matter of judgement and experience to decide when it is appropriate to move to this phase.

Victims

Some clients get stuck in victim mode. This may be the form their Gremlin takes, or it may be a defensive habit that they have perfected over the years. Victims can prevent themselves learning from coaching because they are looking for ways to change others rather than themselves. They may have a terror of taking responsibility for themselves or even a fear of success. Symptoms of victim thinking are sentences that begin:

If only they’d...

I wish he or she would...

If only other people would...

I can’t do this because they won’t let me...

I can’t...

<i>If only they’d change their way of thinking</i>	How can you change <i>your</i> way of thinking?
<i>I wish he or she would</i>	How can you alter the way <i>you</i> respond to him or her?
<i>If only other people would...</i>	What choices do you have when other people don’t do what you want?
<i>I can’t do this because they won’t let me...</i>	In what ways are you giving other people the power to make these choices for you?
<i>I can’t...</i>	Do you really mean, ‘I won’t’?

The key questions

The key questions for moving the client forward are:

- What do you really want?
- What will happen if you do nothing? (Usually the answer is that doing nothing will ensure failure - precisely what the client usually wishes to avoid)
- What's your responsibility for changing here?
- So what do you need to do to make the change?
- Who do you need to involve?
- What will support you?
- What can you do here?
- What's the range of options?
- How, exactly, will you make these changes?
- By when?

Another excellent question is:

- *What do you need to do to make sure that you don't succeed here?*

The unexpectedness and cheek of this question usually makes clients laugh, but there is also rich learning in it too.

Source:
Adults Learning, by Jenny Rogers (2007, 5th ed.)