


Chapter 4

Coaching

Communication: A Conceptual Framework for More Emotionally Intelligent Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Communication

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ABSTRACT

Coaching has been described as a process of partnering with clients in a thought-provoking/creative way to inspire them toward maximum personal/professional performance. Often, that work comes down to two major tasks: helping the client communicate more effectively with key stakeholders in their lives and helping clients communicate more healthily with themselves. Yet, despite the salience of this statement, few academic pursuits work to ground the coaching process in the art of emotionally intelligent communications of the interpersonal and intrapersonal sort. This chapter proposes a research-based paradigm for theoretically and practically conceptualizing the coaching process in this way. Utilizing a pracademic approach, analyzing case study, and employing the use of valid and reliable scales, this author puts forth an argument for coaching as an effective process in facilitating the improved emotionally intelligent interpersonal and intrapersonal communication of coaching clients.

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TALKING TO OTHERS

The most common need for clients when talking to others seems to be in crafting and delivering well-balanced messages that are neither passive nor aggressive. A large part of the coaching work with clients is in moving them into effective communication approaches in which they are able to hold others accountable, while also remaining compassionate; able to ask for what they need, without behaving in ways that are entitled; able to build boundaries while also building community. “Communication involves a balance between knowing when to speak, when to listen, when to let others speak, and when to wait” (Caí & Fink, 2012). Helping clients to do this can often involve helping them understand how communication was modeled for them, and where they learned to communicate as they do. It can also be important to help them identify and manage deeper motives for expression. Equally important, is the ability to expose them to alternative tools and techniques that can facilitate more emotionally intelligent interpersonal communication between them and others.

To address this work, we may turn to William Schutz’ (1959) Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation, in which he posits that all human beings possess three interpersonal needs that inform their interpersonal expression. They are inclusion, control and affection. Exploring each of these interpersonal needs and their role in leading clients’ interpersonal communication with others, can be helpful to building their self-awareness, and strategizing goals for more effectively meeting their needs. Complementary are the skills, tools and techniques offered to us by research on emotional intelligence. “Emotional intelligence includes self-awareness and impulse control, persistence, zeal and self-motivation, empathy and social deftness” (Goleman, 2007). This can help provide clients with tangible tools for shifting their interpersonal communication practices.

TALKING TO THEMSELVES

Emotional intelligence skills can also help to shift intrapersonal communication. A key challenge across approaches is in helping clients to build their awareness of self-talk, as well as their confidence and tools to shift limiting cognitive scripts into automatic thinking patterns and personal narratives that better serve them. In this way, coaching of any kind is often centered around a process of modifying intrapersonal communication. Many coaching sessions then, are often an exercise

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