International Association *of* Coaching

#1 Establishing and maintaining a relationship of trust

Common Mistakes Coaches Make:

- Not setting appropriate boundaries.
- Jumping in without permission, such as when challenging an assumption or belief.
- Trying to be the expert, or thinking the coach *should* be the expert.
- Imposing the coach's opinion.
- Trying to be liked by the client, causing the coach to hold back in their coaching.
- Letting the session be more of a nice chat, or conversation between friends vs. a real coaching session.
- Trying to get the client to say nice things about the coach.
- Expecting the client to do all the work, or thinking they should.
- Thinking the client has all the answers, vs. realizing that the coach and client, and the coaching relationship itself, are co-creating and/or co-discovering the answers.
- Not addressing any expectations of the company or organization, when coaching is occurring in that context.

Indicators the Coach Understands the Mastery:

- The client is willing to explore uncharted, perhaps fearful, topics.
- The coach negotiates boundaries, and is clear with the client. (This is especially important when coaching in the corporate/organization environment, when reporting to supervisors is part of the coaching contract.)

© 2007 International Association of Coaching ®

- The coach is probing and challenging, and the client feels safe and respected.
- The client disagrees with something the coach says – and is able to express this in the session.
- The coach is able to share an opinion or idea without needing, expecting, or coercing the client to agree.
- The coach trusts the client. (If the coach does not trust the client, why should the client trust themselves?)
- The coach knows that coaching works, and is comfortable, even when unsure what to do or say next.
- The coach realizes that everything the coach does and says, or does not do or say, contributes to the environment of trust. The coach uses this awareness strategically.

#2 Perceiving, affirming and expanding the client's potential

Common Mistakes Coaches Make:

- Cheerleading or being patronizing or parental.
- *Pushing* the client to be/do more.
- Accepting the client's assumptions or beliefs.
- Trying to get the client to do what the coach thinks would be good for them.
- Measuring or expressing the client's value or potential *only* in terms actions and accomplishments, rather than by who the client is being or is capable of being.

Indicators the Coach Understands the Mastery:

© 2007 International Association of Coaching ®

- The coach naturally offers sincere encouragement via comments and questions.
- The coach creates openings for the client to discover and express themselves and/or their potential.
- The coach realizes clients need the coach to perceive, affirm and expand the client's potential – even the most self-assured clients.
- The client begins recognizing and accepting his or her own greatness and what might be possible.
- The coach does not measure the client's worth (or their own) by what the client does and whether it worked or not.
- The coach identifies where the client's strengths intersect with their personal goals and those of their sponsoring organization (where applicable).

#3 Engaged Listening

Common Mistakes Coaches Make:

- Thinking the coach has to speak when the client is quiet – being uncomfortable with silence.
- The coach assumes they know what the client means.
- Being nervous/trying to figure out the "right" thing to do as a coach.
- The coach focuses on what to say next, while the client is still talking.
- Not noticing or acknowledging when the client's manner of expressing does not match the content or emotion of what they are talking about (such as laughing when talking about how angry they are).
- Not listening for the deeper meaning in what the client is saying – accepting it at face value, not looking below the surface level of communication.

© 2007 International Association of Coaching ®

Indicators the Coach Understands the Mastery:

- The coach does not rely on only one or two methods/models of coaching. Rather, the coach adapts the coaching methodology and strategy, as needed, for the client.
- The coach is comfortable with silence during the coaching session, recognizing the client is processing information even when quiet.
- The coach understands that silence is an effective coaching technique.
- The coach focuses on the client's needs, not on the coach's "performance".
- The coach recognizes his or her own patterns of thoughts, as well as the client's.

#4 Processing in the present

Common Mistakes Coaches Make:

- Ignoring or not noticing the client's hesitation, enthusiasm, disinterest, etc.
- Not noticing how the client is experiencing the coaching.
- Being afraid to address the client's emotions.
- Letting the client ramble and/or jump from topic to topic without pointing it out or helping the client refocus.
- Focusing only on future goals and actions, ignoring the present.
- Missing clues the client drops, often in the form of off-hand or casual comments.
- Not noticing when the client brings something up several times within a session, or over several sessions.

© 2007 International Association of Coaching ®

- Not recognizing the coach's own counter-productive behaviors (such as interrupting, verbal tics, etc.).

Indicators the Coach Understands the Mastery:

- The coach realizes this mastery creates profound shifts because it allows the coach and client to get to the core of what is really holding back and/or supporting the client.
- The coach is comfortable addressing the client's emotions as indicators of the client's efforts, alignment with goals, and a source of information.
- The coach helps the client move from talking about what happened, to identifying the present meaning of it and how the client may use this meaning.
- The coach recognizes the coaching relationship is often a mirror for other areas of the client's life – a microcosm of what occurs elsewhere – and uses this as a coaching tool.
- The coach is aware that when the client is avoiding, resisting, or deflecting, it means there is something going on for the client, or something going on between the coach and client.

#5 Expressing

Common Mistakes Coaches Make:

- Over using verbal affirmations, to the point they become interruptions or distractions.
- Not matching client's level of enthusiasm (too high or too low), creating a disconnect with the client.
- Rambling in order to make a point.

© 2007 International Association of Coaching ®

- Repeating what the coach is saying, until the client agrees or gives in.
- Focusing too much on doing or saying the "right" thing.
- Jumping in with too many questions (good intentions, poor execution).

Indicators the Coach Understands the Mastery:

- The coach does not feel like they need to talk when the client is quiet.
- The coach is attuned to how their communication is moving the client forward, or interfering with the client's progress.
- The coach is not worried about making a good impression.
- The coach knows how and when to interrupt so that it serves the client.
- The coach is self-aware, and understands why they are saying what they are saying – not just talking to fill silence.

#6 Clarifying

Common Mistakes Coaches Make:

- Thinking the coach knows the right answer or what is best for the client.
- Focusing on symptoms or surface topics, not getting to what is really going on.
- Setting the agenda, rather than letting the client set the agenda, or setting it together.
- Not being clear whether the most important issue was identified and addressed adequately.

Indicators the Coach Understands the Mastery:

© 2007 International Association of Coaching ®

- The coach does not feel pressure to clarify for the client.
- The coach trusts the coaching process.
- The client's perspective shifts – they know something they did not know before – about themselves, their capabilities, the situation, their beliefs or assumptions, etc.
- The coach is curious and interested.
- The coach is actively participating with the client in a collaborative manner.
- The coach and client clarify thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and/or words.

#7 Helping the client set and keep clear intentions

Common Mistakes Coaches Make:

- Not noticing when the client is hesitant about a particular intention or agreement.
- Thinking the coach knows what is best for the client.
- Injecting or forcing the coach's own expectations onto the client or into the session

Indicators the Coach Understands the Mastery:

- The coach is not attached to the client setting a specific or particular intention.
- The coach recognizes that this mastery builds on Mastery #6 (clarifying) – that they must clarify in order to be on target with intentions.
- The coach pays attention to whether the client's commitments or intentions are believable.

© 2007 International Association of Coaching ®

#8 Inviting possibility

Common Mistakes Coaches Make:

- Coming up with all the ideas or possibilities themselves, rather than facilitating the process for the client.
- Thinking all the ideas need to be acted upon.
- Trying too hard to figure things out.

Indicators the Coach Understands the Mastery:

- The coach notices how ideas build on each other.
- The coach does not force this mastery into the coaching session. It occurs naturally as a part of the session.
- The coach helps the client expand on what could be – thinking beyond what was previously considered.

#9 Helping the client to create and use support systems and structures

Common Mistakes Coaches Make:

- Only identifying a to-do list of actions.
- Over-relying on accountability as a support structure.

© 2007 International Association of Coaching ®

- Letting the coach identify all, or most of, the actions and systems, rather than involving the client.
- Imposing their own systems.
- Only identifying support structures that are readily apparent (such as a spouse, coach, job description or current role in an organization).
- Not taking into account the client's or organization's culture – encouraging actions that would be inappropriate in the culture.
- Not building systems and structures around the client's core issue.

Indicators the Coach Understands the Mastery:

- The coach knows the difference between a system and an action plan.
- The coach addresses multiple structures or systems – such as physical, emotional, mindset, etc.
- The client understands what they need to do to ensure the effectiveness and sustainability of the systems and structures.
- The coach and client discuss what needs to happen for client to do this reliably and consistently, so that the issue is handled and does not become a recurring pattern.
- The coach ensures the client's structures are in alignment with their values and/or their identity.
- The coach and client address any inner conflict that might interfere with sustainability (another reason clarifying is so critical).
- The coach helps the client identify resources and support structures within their workplace or organization.
- The coach inquires about and addresses present circumstances, expectations, and possible constraints within the organization.

© 2007 International Association of Coaching ®