
Path To Mastery

A user's guide

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with revisions by Ed Britton,
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Rev: January 20, 2015

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How to Conduct a Successful Coaching Triad (and Study Group)

International Association of Coaching

Path to Mastery

Welcome to the IAC Coaching Masteries program.

Coaching triads and study groups have been touted as powerful tools for increasing coaching skill and mastery. If you're goal is certification, or you want to become a masterful coach, or you want to continue to maintain and grow your coaching mastery, these relationships can help.

Summary

Section 1: Getting Your Coaching Triad Started

Section 2: Tips for a Successful Triad

Section 3: How to Give and Receive Effective Feedback

Section 4: Observers Guide for the 9 IAC Coaching Masteries ®

Section 5: Observer's Feedback Form

Section 6: Tips for a Successful Study Group

Section 7: Path to Mastery Links for Support and Resources

Section 8: How to Connect for Sessions, Record Your Call and Submit Recordings for Certification

Observer's Report

Summary (the short version)

Path to Mastery is an opportunity to partner with three other coaches who are members (or student members) of the IAC to learn and practice about becoming a masterful coach. It can also involve 3 to 6 coaches who hold study groups on coaching topics. You might do this to work toward official recognition or certification, or simply to get better at coaching!

Path to Mastery is primarily conducted in triad coaching partnerships where one participant acts as coach, another as client, and a third as observer-commenter. Coaching is based on the IAC 9 Coaching Masteries ®. Pilot programs involve 6 coaching sessions that are documented and reported on by an Observer to ed.britton@certifiedcoach.com

Those are the basics. For details and resources – read on!

Note: For additional information and resources, register on - iacfamilyroom.groupsites.com

Section 1: Getting Your Coaching Triad Started

You will need:

- 3 coaches (you may wish to have alternative coaches to stand in if one of your group can't make it to a session)
- Appoint a member to be the 'Triad Leader' to take responsibility for organizing the group.
- A bridge line or conference calling software
- IAC triad materials and worksheets
- The willingness to grow and the commitment to showing up consistently, on time and ready to learn!

- An agreement with each member that this is a safe, non-judgmental space where mistakes are truly viewed as opportunity for learning. You may wish to draft an informal commitment letter that outlines the operating principles for the triad.

Using 'Find a Coach' to Find Triad Members

To use 'Find a Coach' to find triad members, do this ...

Login

1. Go to CertifiedCoach.org and click on 'Member login'
2. Enter your email address and password to login.

Update your Account

1. At the top of the page, click on 'Welcome [your name].'
2. In the left hand menu, click on 'Account Details.' Fill in everything!
3. Make sure you check off the box for 'Display Short Bio on public site.'
4. Scroll all the way to the bottom and click on 'Submit.'

Set Your Preferences

1. In the left hand menu, click on 'Preferences.'
2. If you want to be found through 'Find a Coach' so you can participate in the professional community, then click 'yes' in these fields. If not (!), then click 'no' (you will be displayed as a member but without contact information).
3. At the bottom of the page, click 'Submit.'

Double Check

1. Click 'Find a Coach' on the top menu, and type in your name and city. Check to make sure your contact information is properly displayed.
2. Finally, click 'Find a Coach' again, and this time leave your name off, and type in your country and city, and click 'Triad/Buddy Coach.' Make sure your name comes up. If it does, this means that you can be contacted.

Here's how a triad works:

The group agrees upon a session calendar so that triads (or study group sessions) are held about once a week. Each week, at the predetermined time, 3 coaches meet to conduct a coaching or study group session(s), followed by a feedback debriefing.

In triads, coaches will alternate positions each week: coach, client, observer

Client: Come to call prepared with the topic in which you'd like coaching.

Coach: Remember, this is to learn and grow, so be open, relaxed and trust your self and partners.

Observer: Start where you are in the understanding of the Masteries. Don't worry about "getting it right", as the three of you will be discussing the session as a group, with you leading the discussion. In pilot programs, complete the Observer's Report found at the end on this User's Guide to ed.britton@certifiedcoach.org

Section 2: Tips for a Productive Triad

(see also, Section 7: Tips for Productive Study Groups)

- Do your social visiting another time, or start the session early
- Observer will be the time keeper, so decide ahead when you'd like reminders of time, so you can complete the session without feeling rushed or incomplete
- Observer must listen on "mute" so not to accidentally distract the session
- Observer will listen with the attention on the coaching, rather than the client's "story"
- Listen for shifts in energy, awareness, reactions from the client, and respond accordingly
- Debrief the client first, by having them talk about what they experienced
- Debrief the coach second, asking how they would assess their coaching
- Observer then shares what they heard, concluding with a three-way discussion. (For pilot programs, please complete the Observer's Report at the end of this guide and submit it to Ed Britton at ed.britton@certifiedcoach.com)
- Read the following "How to give feedback" instructions

Section 3: How to Give and Receive Effective Feedback

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by Gloria Auth

Much of this material is adapted from Toastmasters' International.

To develop coaching skills, practice is a must. Coaching with triads/buddies will develop your coaching skills with people who are there for the same reason you are. You practice being a coach; you practice being a client; you practice being the observer. The relationship draws strength as you take pride in helping each other grow and develop. It's a mutual support system that makes learning fun.

For the Coach: How to receive feedback

Be aware that some nervousness is normal and a common trait of most coaches who are being observed. Try to understand that your observer is trying to help you. Don't allow yourself to become defensive. Concentrate on how the comments can help you improve your coaching. Notice if there are patterns from your observers with similar recommendations for improvement. Focus on these areas for improvement. Consider everything your observer says. Some of the comments may not be useful, but attempt to understand the point of view of the observer. If it doesn't apply, let it fly. Ask questions to clarify the feedback. The feedback is an opportunity for you to change.

Specific requests by the coach: If you have a specific area that you want your observer to look for, let them know in advance. For example, "I would like to work on developing my skill of asking provocative conversations. Would you please be on the lookout to see if I am using that proficiency?"

If you truly want to improve as a coach, you need feedback. You get to see areas where you are improving, and with more feedback, how to continue improving. Thank the observer for their feedback.

For the Observer: How to give feedback

You don't have to be an expert to offer worthwhile feedback. Everyone has valid and worthwhile feedback, regardless of level of experience or expertise. Your role is primarily to hold up the mirror to the coach, and tell the coach your observation of the coaching. Your critique is from your point of view. Keep your tone light and neutral. It's not just what you say, but how you say it.

Your goal is to provide honest reaction to the coach's coaching skills in a constructive manner. You are not a judge or person with all the answers, but a source of potentially helpful feedback. You are a friend trying to help. Your job is to provide the coach with information on the basis of which the coach may consider changes in his coaching.

Write down a few triggers. You don't need to write extensive notes, just a few key words to help you remember what you were thinking. You don't want to take your focus away from the

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coaching.

Be sensitive of the level of the coach.

The **novice coach** needs a high level of motivation to keep them in coaching. They are terrified of being observed. Remember your first time being observed? Use the words "next time" throughout your evaluation as a form of encouragement for them to stay with coaching. Boost the coach's confidence by noting one or two coaching strengths you observed. It gives them a place to start the next time. This is not the time to mention all the other proficiencies they didn't use. Concentrate on a single proficiency for improvement. They will be overwhelmed if you give them 5 - 10 areas to work on. Pick the most serious problem that will have the greatest impact on improving his/her coaching. Share specific tips on how to do so. Consider paring a novice coach with a more experienced observer.

The **experienced coach** really wants to know how to make their coaching better. It's not easy to critique an experienced coach. They are not looking for a pat on the back; they are looking for ways to improve. They have enough confidence in their skills to take more critical critiques. Touchy-feely evaluations are not effective for the experienced coach.

The Oreo Cookie approach:

1. Point out the **strong points** of the coaching session. People remember what earned them praise and will try to repeat those things in the future. Praising the coach's strong points will help reinforce them. Keep your tone positive so the coach feels good about him/herself.

Start with a positive comment. Praise the coach for something done well.

"What I admire about your style...

"I'm impressed with the way you

"I really liked how you...

"That was very impressive how you...

2. Every comment that **points out a weakness** should also have a suggestion for overcoming the weakness. Avoid the well-intentioned "whitewash" - or "soft-pedaling"(great coaching/wow) - not giving the coach comments on areas where they could improve. This will only allow small problems to grow into large problems. If you are confused, say so. Be sure to check with the coach to confirm he/she understands your remarks, so there is no misinterpretation of your meaning. Your job is to help the coach grow - in an open, safe, supportive, sensitive environment.

Avoid phrases such as, "You did..." or "You were...." "You should..." "You must..." Or "They say. Also avoid "Do's and Don'ts" and "Rights and Wrongs".

Use personal statements whenever possible, describing your reactions to the coaching. "I felt...", "It seemed to me..." "I wonder if..." "I sense

Avoid "but" and "however" - "You started out very strong, but/however... The "but" and "however" negates everything you said before. Make two separate sentences or connect them with "and."

Give honest, helpful appropriate suggestions. Point out tactfully some area for improvement.

"There may have been a missed opportunity..."

"It's a small thing, but be aware of...."

"The one thing you might look for is..."

3. End with a positive encouraging remark. Never end with a negative.

"I really admire your courage in stepping up for this demonstration."

"Overall, I very much enjoyed..."

"We are very pleased and lucky to have you as a member of CoachVille/our community..."

"You have some wonderful ...natural coaching skills ...and with practicing and learning new skills, you will be a masterful coach."

Section 4: Observers Guide for the 9 IAC Coaching Masteries©

When you are in the role of observer of the coaching session, use this guide to observe the session.

- Write notes for your debriefing discussion.
- Remember, you are not evaluating the coach, you are observing what is happening in the session as a way to more deeply discuss the process with the three participants afterward
-

Below are a couple of key points for each mastery that you can be tuning in to as you observe.

1. Establishing and Maintaining a Relationship of Trust

The way a coach can be effective with this mastery is to keep a keen awareness on their own reactions about where the client is coming from. A coach's opinions, though certainly called for in certain circumstances, are not appropriate when building trust. This is about having a strong sense of self so that the coach can allow the client the freedom to open up authentically. This is one of the most profound benefits of having a coach.

Avoid: Thinking you know what's best for the client

2. **Perceiving, affirming and expanding the client's potential**

This is where the coach's intuition and gut feelings can come into play. A coach who is hearing between the lines about what the client is saying will get curious and ask from a place of genuine interest. This can help the client to accept affirmation, thus expand effortlessly.

Avoid: Advising the client rather than enhancing the client's self understanding.

3. **Engaged Listening**

Coaches who have cleared their mind and are fully present with the client will hear everything. The only way you can really listen to the client is to forget everything you think you know. The skill here, is to be able to inter-connect what you have already learned about the client without letting it interfere with what you are hearing in the moment. This is the difference between connecting the dots and making assumptions.

Avoid: Listening to your own impressions of the client instead of listening with a fresh outlook.

4. **Processing in the Present**

Bringing the client into the present moment is a skill that can help beyond measure! When a client recognizes that any stress, fear or limitation is only a product of past perceptions or future projections, the space that is created for insight is profound. A masterful coach will sense how and when to invite the client into the present without negating any attachment they might be feeling to the past or future.

Avoid: Using force to get the client to see the "now".

5. **Expressing**

The coach understands the importance of being client-centric. The energy of the client is evident to the coach, and the coach knows how to effectively express themselves so the client will best benefit

Avoid: Being an expert that the client should learn from.

6. **Clarifying**

When a coach approaches this from a genuinely interested and curious vantage point, the client has the ability to hear themselves and their own answers. When a coach questions what they've heard in order to be in collaboration with the client, the client will feel the support and be willing to look at other possibilities. Restating to be sure you've heard the client correctly will allow the client expand on the thought.

Avoid: Clarifying for the client, based on what you think is "right".

6. **Helping the Client Set and Keep Clear Intentions**

When a client is working towards an inspired goal, *they* will come to *you* with their progress. If progress is not happening, it's time to dip into one of the other masteries and get to the underlying reasons. When doing the steps to get to the intention is effortless, you know your client is in harmony with their purpose.

Avoid: Cajoling or badgering the client into action.

Inviting Possibility

Exploring and discovering with the client in a way that honors their unique value in the world can be extremely liberating for the client, and for the coach. Imagine a blank canvas and both client and coach have the brushes and tools to create a masterpiece. There are no “right” and “wrong” ways to paint this picture, only possibility.

Avoid: Thinking there are limits to the way something can be approached.

7. Helping the Client to Create and Use Support Systems and Structures

Support systems work when they are in integrity with how the client operates successfully. You will know from the client’s response in the moment, and in future sessions, if the systems are effective. The point is to help the client continue the flow of growth beyond the coaching session. Also be aware that these structures and systems are woven throughout the coaching session, as each step of the conversation emerges.

Avoid: Thinking this is something you just do at the end of the session.

Section 5: IAC Coaching Masteries® Feedback Form

After each coaching session, help your coach improve by giving feedback with this form.

1 = totally disagree, 2 = somewhat disagree, 3 = partly agree, 4 = mostly agree, 5 = totally agree

	1	2	3	4	5
M1 Establishing and maintaining a relationship of trust I feel safe to talk about everything that's on my mind, even things I hadn't realized were important.					
I freely express my emotions, fears and dreams to my coach. I do not feel judgment from the coach.					
M2 Perceiving, affirming, and expanding the client's potential I now recognize and believe more fully in my strengths and abilities.					
I am more motivated to achieve my potential. The coach shows genuine interest on my behalf.					
M3 Engaged listening I feel fully heard and understood.					
I speak with my coach freely, openly and at the optimum pace for me.					
M4 Processing in the present I am more aware of what I am thinking and feeling in the moment.					
I feel like my coach understands me on a deeper level than most people.					
M5 Expressing My coach speaks authentically, directly, and sensitively to me.					

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The coaching conversation is like a springboard for me to discover more and improve my results.					
M6 Clarifying I feel clearer about myself and my situation. We were able to determine what was below the surface of my words and thoughts.					
I see myself and my situation from new perspectives.					
M7 Helping the client set and keep clear intentions I am clearer about what I really want, and what my goals are. I feel inspired by my goals.					
I am more engaged, excited and confident about my future.					
M8 Inviting possibility I feel like there are many more options available to me now.					
I realized something new and/or surprising that is very helpful.					
M9 Helping the client create and use supportive systems and structures I feel I have many resources and tools to help me reach my goals. We have created meaningful structures and systems that pull me forward effortlessly.					
I feel responsible, empowered and enthusiastic to take my next steps.					

Comments:

Section 6: Tips for Productive Study Groups

Coaching study groups are an effective approach to developing mastery. Compared to coaching triads, study groups are more focused on knowledge-based learning and less focused on practice. So, the two approaches are different and complimentary. Here are some suggestions for organizing effective virtual coaching study groups.

1. 3 to 6 participants are ideal. While 6 might be a little crowded, often one or two people can't make it on a particular day so the group is still manageable.
2. Select a group leader so that someone is responsible to provide leadership.
3. Select members who have similar goals so that the group can focus study on common interests.
4. Between 30 and 60 minutes is probably ideal.
5. It is preferable to have a set schedule to facilitate planning and minimize confusion.
6. Develop a set of guidelines/operating principles during the first session.
7. Be coach-like to maximize effective communication.
8. Stay on topic!
9. Select topics, set goals, make assignments and complete them!
10. Short role plays to test ideas are on.
- 11.** Periodically evaluate your performance as a group. You might want to use the [Teamwork Rubric](#) as a guide.

Section 7: IAC – Path to Mastery Links for Support and Resources

Some important points and links :

- iacfamilyroom.groupsie.com – please register on the groupsite to participate in discussions, keep up to date and access additional resources to support your pursuit of coaching mastery.

- Link to Natalie’s welcome video :

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6oQzJnnizwU&feature=youtu.be>

- The email ID of Program Administrators created for this initiative :

path@certifiedcoach.org

Use this email for all of your communications with Path to Mastery administrators.

- The link to the IAC mastery resources is:

http://www.certifiedcoach.org/index.php/my_iac_community/overview_of_benefits/

Note: Your IAC membership must be current to access these resources. On the screen that appears, type in your email address and password, and enter. Then, on the next screen that comes up, click on [MORE] in the ‘New Member Benefits’ box.

- Open Chat Calls – From time to time the IAC hosts 'Open Chat Calls' with leading personalities in the IAC. These calls usually focus on the masteries from some perspective and are wonderful opportunities to get some time with some of our masters. Lots of chances to get your coaching questions answered by some of the world experts! Watch for the next Open Chat Call posted in the IAC VOICE newsletter and also at:

<http://www.certifiedcoach.org/index.php>

Section 8: How to Connect for Sessions, Record Your Call and Submit Recordings for Certification

Recording your call in Windows

‘Sound Recorder’ comes with Windows and can be used to record any call that is done on your computer. On my computer, I find it by clicking Start - ‘All Programs’ – ‘Accessories.’ I created a Desktop Shortcut so that it is just one click away.

Remember, you need to record the following permission at the start of any call that will be submitted for certification purposes:

*“Membership Number: 112*** [insert your own membership number here]*

Do I have your permission for this session to be recorded for the sole purpose of IAC certification as stated on the signed consent to tape record form.”

Further, please follow the instructions [here](#) as you prepare and submit recordings for certification.

[Skype.com](#)

Skype Is the most popular Internet based communications for person-to-person and small group conferences. You can hold free conference calls with up to 25 people over your computer, provided everyone has a Skype account. (So three people on a triad coaching call is no problem).

Group video calls are now free on Skype, so you could have all three members of the triad on video – although I would recommend only the coach and coachee on video, with the observer just listening. The use of video can reduce the sound quality, so if you are having problems turn off the video.

You can dial phones if you purchase an upgrade. It’s an inexpensive way to call phones internationally and I use this feature for online meetings and coaching.

You can also download special programs that will record Skype calls. Click [here](#) for more information.

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ooVoo.com

ooVoo is similar to Skype and is a good alternative if the quality of your Skype connection is poor.

To learn how to record video calls with ooVoo click [here](#).

freeconferencecallhd.com

You can set up a conference call for your triad coaching by using a conference calling service such as Free Conference Call. Participants receive information about how to dial into the call using their phone or computer. Calls can be recorded. Your call can be recorded and saved. The advantage is that phone lines can be used if the call quality on Skype/ooVoo or similar services is poor.

There are many other ways to connect online – these are just a sampling!

PATH TO MASTERY

OBSERVER'S REPORT (To be submitted at the end of each Coaching Session)

NAME OF COACH :

NAME OF CLIENT:

NAME OF OBSERVER:

TRIAD NUMBER: SESSION NUMBER FOR THIS TRIAD:

DATE OF THE SESSION : TIME:

OBSERVER'S OBSERVATIONS ON THE COACHING PROCESS:

What went off well?

What could have been better?

Please add more pages, if needed.

DATE: _____

SIGNATURE: _____