

10 SPECIAL
EDITION

BUSINESS

COACHING

**COMMUNICATING
EFFECTIVELY & CULTIVATING
LEARNING AND GROWTH**

Section C & D





EDITORIAL

In front of you is a new issue of our Special Edition format of the magazine “Business Coaching” magazine and the final, third part of ICF’s new coaching competencies covered by Cherie Silas.

Certified coaches, who apply the recommendations given by the ICF, can provide their clients with the gold standard of coaching. This edition is our contribution to the promotion of coaching as one of the most powerful tools for people development.

Cherie Silas processes the ICF guidelines in a very detailed and understandable language. She created added value for coaches, but also for all managers involved in people development.

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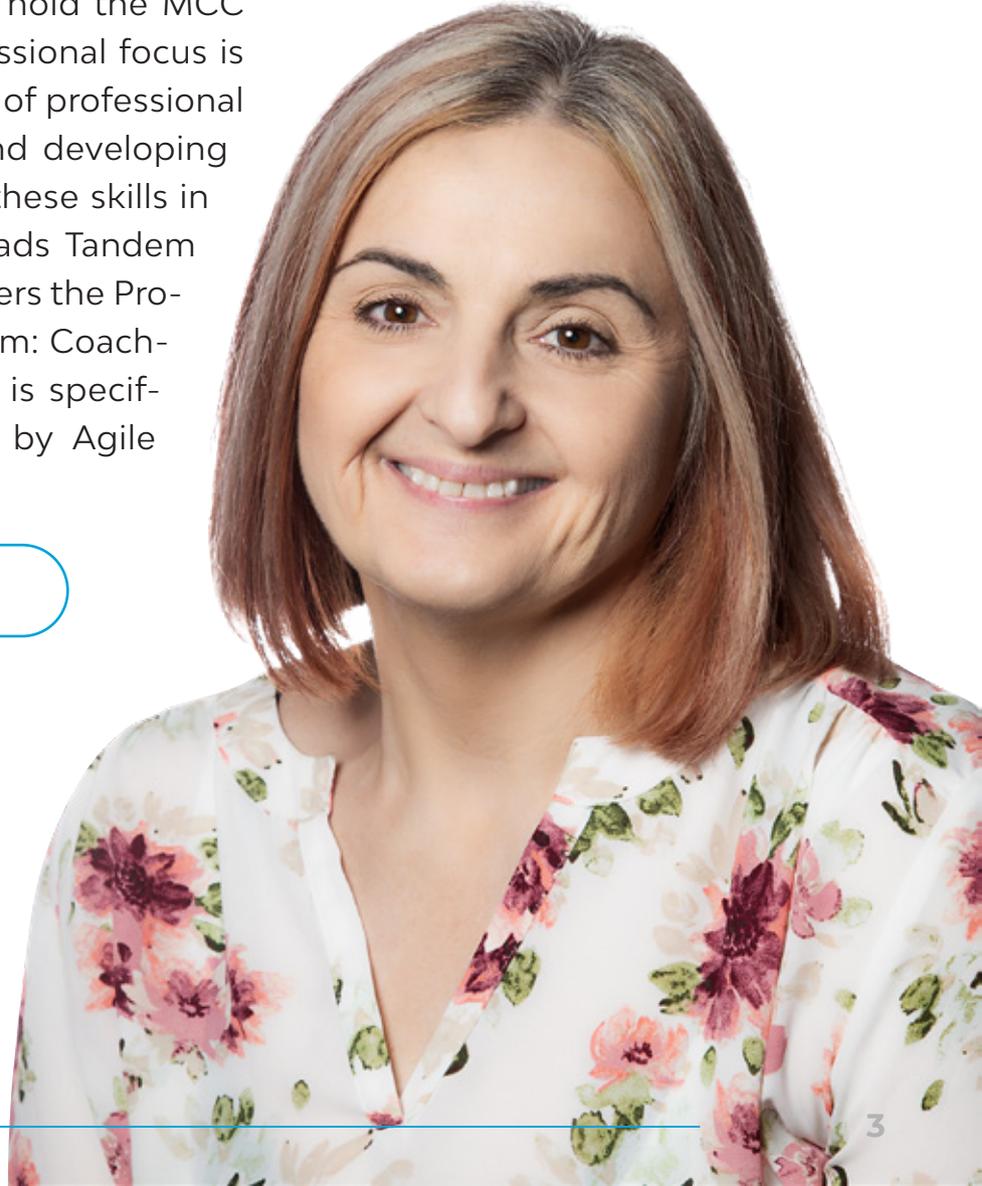
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Tandem Coaching Academy



LISTENS ACTIVELY: DISCERN CLIENT TRENDS AND PATTERNS



Competency 6: Listens Actively is found in the ICF Competencies under Part C: Communicates Effectively.

ICF defines this competency as “ Focuses on what the client is and is not saying to fully understand what is being communicated in the context of the client systems and to support client self-expression. The markers that are most closely related to one another in this competency are 1 and 6 which I’ll address in this article.

1.Considers the client’s context, identity, environment, experiences, values and beliefs to enhance understanding of what the client is communicating

6. Notices trends in the client’s behaviors and emotions across sessions to discern themes and patterns.

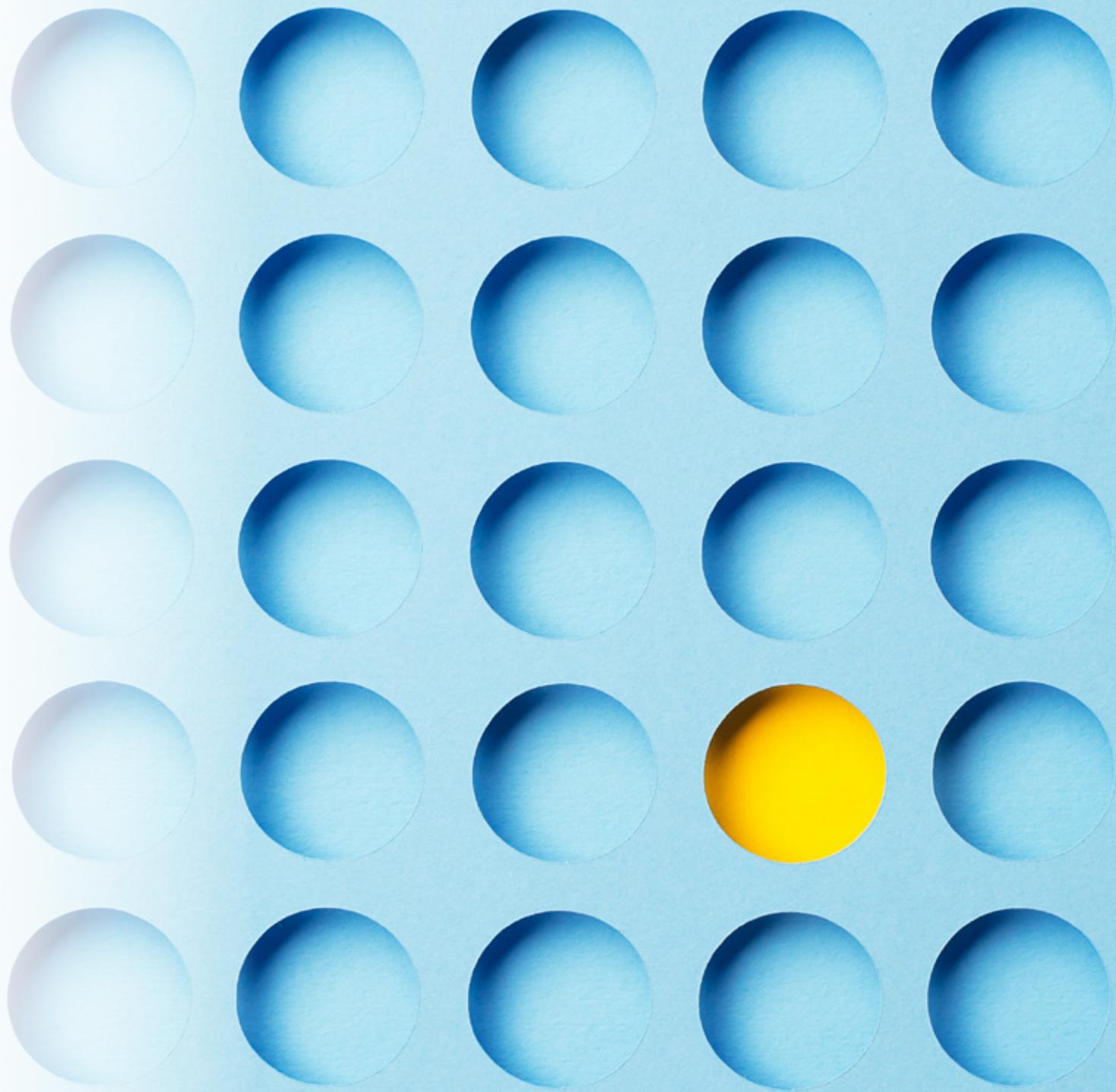
These competencies of listening actively point out that the coach must be fully engaged with the client and, over time, understand how the client thinks, reacts, behaves,

and speaks. There is also an aspect here of understanding their beliefs, values, and life experiences that add to how they perceive their world. To do this, we must take a big picture view of the client. Not just how the client is in this specific session, but how they are overall. This enables us to notice trends in their behaviors and emotions throughout the engagement. When working with a client over time you start to know their story and how they came to be who they are today. Then, you can also begin to identify patterns that arise where the current reactions and thinking patterns seem to be connected to things previously discussed. I often have clients that throughout the course of our coaching, we identify that some of their beliefs, behaviors, and thinking patterns stem from the way their family of origin was around those things. If the parents were risk averse, often that behavior is picked up by the child and as an adult they are fearful of making decisions. If their family had certain views on money and conflict etc., then those views are picked up by the child. Or, if the parents labeled the child in some way such

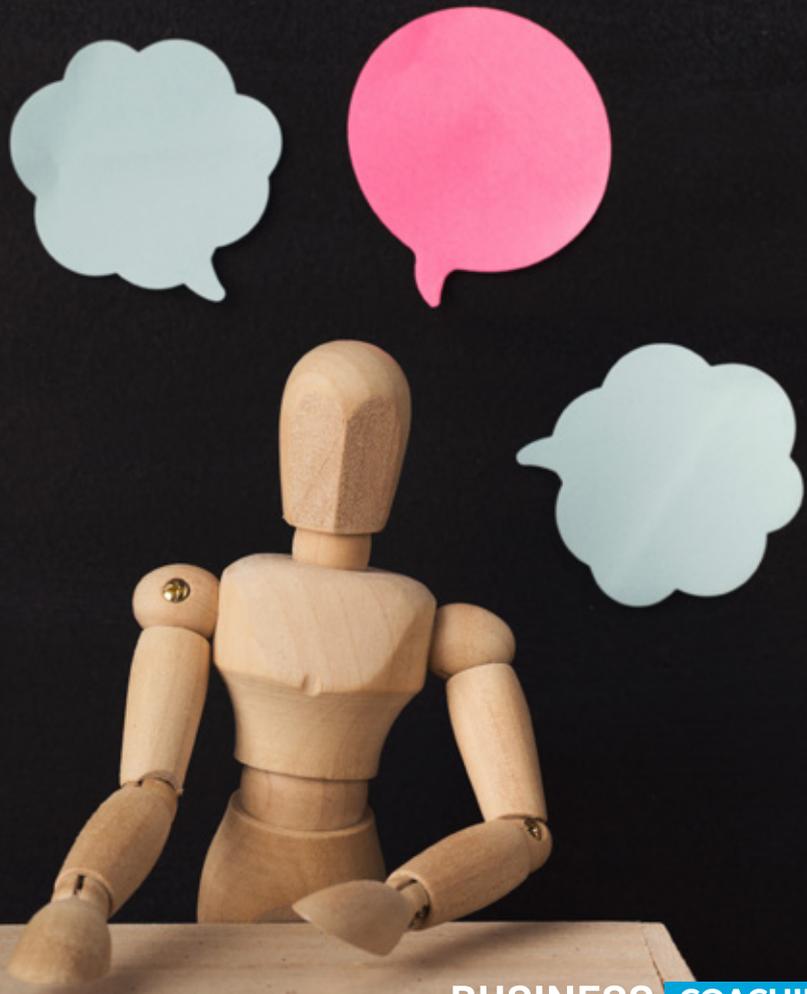
as “the best,” “daddys good girl,” “clumsy and backwards,” “a disappointment,” etc. the child brings that belief into adulthood and those labels and views continue to impact the way they see themselves and their place in the world. Perhaps, this information comes out in a coaching session. Now, the coach has this information on how the client sometimes has thinking patterns and beliefs that aren’t the most helpful and that they may stem from their family of origin. In the future, when the client is stuck in a belief about themselves or how to move forward, the coach can step back and identify this as the same pattern that arose when the family of origin was involved previously. Then, they can ask questions that can help the client explore if that is once again the root of the stuckness. Once the origin of the beliefs is identified, the client can then make a decision if they want to continue to hold these beliefs as an adult or if they want to formulate new beliefs that are more helpful.

Another common occurrence is when the client has a previous life experience that is

impacting current life experiences. Let’s say a client worked for a company that was driven by a micromanaging leader who had to approve everything they did and often reacted badly when things were not perfect. When that client moves to a new company, the trauma of the previous company might spill over into how they perceive their new environment. The client may be stuck and experiencing challenges with confidence, courageousness, transparency, and initiative to do things. The coach can step back and remember how the client described their experience in the last company and begin to ask questions about how the client might be attributing the previous company’s culture to the new company though there is no evidence that it is similar. Perhaps there are things the client needs to leave behind in order to step forward courageously into their new role in a new company. It is by knowing our client that we can have wider view insights that enable us to ask how things from the past might be connected to current thinking that is holding them back.



LISTENS ACTIVELY: HEARING BEYOND WORDS



Competency 6: Listens Actively is found in the ICF Competencies under Part C: **Communicates Effectively**.

ICF defines this competency as “ Focuses on what the client is and is not saying to fully understand what is being communicated in the context of the client systems and to support client self-expression. Markers that are closely related in this competency are markers 2 through 5 and I’ll address them in this article.

2. Reflects or summarizes what the client communicated to ensure clarity and understanding

3. Recognizes and inquires when there is more to what the client is communicating

4. Notices, acknowledges and explores the client’s emotions, energy shifts, non-verbal cues or other behaviors

5. Integrates the client’s words, tone of voice and body language to determine the full

meaning of what is being communicated

Coaching skills revolve around being a great listener and communicator. It’s about creating an atmosphere where the client feels seen and heard, so they can feel comfortable being vulnerable and reflective. Empathy also plays an important role in our ability to understand our client’s perspective and goes a long way in building trust. When we can understand how our client might be thinking and feeling, it gives us the perspective to make powerful observations that can open up new learning for the client. Listening competency in coaching isn’t just about hearing, it’s about communicating in ways that only someone who is in tune with what the other person is saying can. It’s about hearing beyond the words and listening to the whole person and the whole of what they are communicating. When we do this, we will hear the client say things they don’t realize they are saying and can play that back to them for their benefit. Reflecting and summarizing doesn’t mean that you just repeat back everything you just heard. That

doesn't create new awareness for the client to work with. The reflections and summarizations are built from what you hear beyond the words. They should be short reflections with curious questions that cause the client to think beyond where they were thinking. In order to do this well, we have to understand the whole of how clients communicate. In order to be a good listener, we must understand that most communication isn't delivered through the actual words spoken. Communication comes through tone, speed of speaking, body language, volume, energy, etc. It can be very powerful for the coach to go beyond just quietly noticing when the client communicates in these ways. By acknowledging what we see, hear, and feel in the client's communication and then helping the client explore it, they can reach new levels of awareness and change their ways of thinking. By integrating the client's language into the way we communicate, we can both give them new insights and build rapport that helps them to fully express themselves without barriers. Matching the client's ener-

gy and body language, utilizing the client's words when asking questions, and pulling on their metaphors to dig deeper into unconscious thoughts are all powerful ways to demonstrate that we are actively listening and create the awareness the client needs to have breakthroughs.



EVOKES AWARENESS



Competency 7: Evokes Awareness is found in the ICF Competencies under Part C: Communicates Effectively.

ICF defines this competency as “Facilitates client insight and learning by using tools and techniques such as powerful questioning, silence, metaphor or analogy.” This article will address markers 1-4:

1. Considers client experience when deciding what might be most useful
2. Challenges the client as a way to evoke awareness or insight
3. Asks questions about the client, such as their way of thinking, values, needs, wants and beliefs
4. Asks questions that help the client explore beyond current thinking

It’s always interesting to me that when people first start to learn coaching, they believe that the goal of coaching is to get to a list of take away actions at the end. I’d like to challenge that belief. I firmly believe that

the goal of coaching is to help the client become aware of things they were not aware of before the conversation. You see, if a client becomes more aware, they have more information to work with. When they start to understand how they are currently thinking and can see other perspectives there is a greater chance that they will change the way they think. Changing the way they think creates new ways of believing and behaving. So, while a client may leave the coaching with some actions to do between sessions, the most sustainable change comes from the shift in mindset that occurs during the coaching. This is where focusing on the person and not just the problem fits into the picture. We want to focus on what the client is thinking, believing, and experiencing and this will help them access the information hidden in the recesses of their mind.

There are multiple ways that we can work with our clients to generate new awareness and think beyond where they are currently focused. As coaches, we have to learn to understand our clients and what is contributing to new awareness and what is not. In order to do this we need to consider what

is happening to the client at the moment. Is the current technique resonating with the client? Is the line of questioning creating new learning? If not, we have to recognize that and be willing to shift. We also have to consider our client's past experiences and our experience working with them in previous sessions to decide what things will resonate with them. What words can they relate to? What metaphors have they used in the past? By fully knowing our clients and seeing the bigger picture beyond today's conversation we equip ourselves to be most effective.

We can get to know our clients more while helping them discover more about themselves. Asking them questions about how they think and feel will help them to get clear on these things. It is also data for the coach to store away and draw on in the future. By asking them questions about their values we can help them to discover what motivates their actions and responses. Asking questions to help them explore what they need, want, and believe can provide them with answers to the "why" ques-

tions they have about themselves. This new awareness helps people to identify what beliefs are not helpful and to make conscious decisions to change their ways of thinking to ways that are more useful.

It is often helpful to challenge clients to expand their thinking. We might challenge them when we hear beliefs that seem to be limiting them. Challenge is often helpful when clients seem to be saying one thing and doing another. By knowing what the client wants and values you may find times when challenging them on violating their values or not going after what they really want can be very helpful to moving them forward. A caveat to remember when challenging the client is that we must leave space for them to respond to our observations and challenges. Perhaps what we said missed the mark. We want to be sure that the client feels safe to say, "No, that's not right." So whenever we make a challenge or observation we want to allow the client to validate if what we have brought into the conversation is accurate and is worth exploring.



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AWARENESS FOR FORWARD MOVEMENT



Competency 7: Evokes Awareness is found in the ICF Competencies under Part C: Communicates Effectively.

ICF defines this competency as “Facilitates client insight and learning by using tools and techniques such as powerful questioning, silence, metaphor or analogy.” This article will address markers 5-7:

5. Invites the client to share more about their experience in the moment
6. Notices what is working to enhance client progress
7. Adjusts the coaching approach in response to the client’s needs

Coaching focuses predominantly on what clients can learn through the process. One way that we can enhance the client’s learning is to ask them to reflect on what’s happening for them in the moment as they are discussing their topic. It may seem redundant after the client has talked through things and even mentioned new things they dis-

covered to ask them what they are learning or experiencing through the conversation. However, don’t discount the power of creating the moments for reflection. Most people don’t recognize what they have discovered in the process until they specifically focus on articulating it. During the conversation, the client is focused on figuring things out and they come up with lots of ideas. However, they aren’t focused on what they are learning. They are simply focused on working out their issue. Another reason to ask about what the client is experiencing and learning in the moment is that when they articulate their learnings they are saying and hearing them. So, the learnings are more likely to settle in and become permanent. By asking the client what’s happening in their bodies or emotions as they discuss issues, the client can gain new information they didn’t realize was available.

Much of the work coaches do is a mix of intuition and skill. Therefore, it’s important that we pay close attention to what seems to be working for the client both in the moment and over time so that we can adjust

our interventions accordingly. Every client is different. So, different ways of working will resonate with each client. For some clients, working with metaphors can be powerful and for others they just fall flat. For some clients strong challenge works and for others empathy and support are better. The key is to pay attention and learn what is working for each person. And, be open to the fact that during a given session, something that usually doesn't resonate might be exactly what they need to move forward. So, experiment. Try things. And pay attention to how the client is reacting. Their response will show you what to do.



CREATING AWARENESS FOR FORWARD MOVEMENT



Competency 7: Evokes Awareness is found in the ICF Competencies under Part C: Communicates Effectively.

ICF defines this competency as “Facilitates client insight and learning by using tools and techniques such as powerful questioning, silence, metaphor or analogy.” This article will address markers 8-11:

8. Helps the client identify factors that influence current and future patterns of behavior, thinking or emotion

9. Invites the client to generate ideas about how they can move forward and what they are willing or able to do

10. Supports the client in reframing perspectives

11. Shares observations, insights and feelings, without attachment, that have the potential to create new learning for the client

Coaching zeros in on the client’s agenda

each session to help the client gain new insights and generate ideas about how they can move forward. The client determines what they will focus on each session. However, the coach must always keep the bigger picture in mind. The client has overall outcomes they wish to achieve through coaching so it is important to keep those outcomes in perspective. Checking in on the progress towards those goals every few sessions can be important for helping the client not lose sight of the bigger picture. Another way that the coach keeps the bigger picture in mind is by noticing patterns that arise over time. These patterns can be important information for the client to consider as they are focused on the topic at hand. For example, it is a common occurrence for clients to have default ways of thinking and believing that stem from the way their family of origin functioned. It doesn’t mean that the family was dysfunctional. It simply means that all families have ways of doing things and beliefs and values that get adopted by children. And, as adults we all get to make our own choices about what we believe and value

and how we want to do things. By paying attention to patterns the coach can help the client quickly identify when they are stuck in a way of thinking that they picked up as a child that is no longer serving them. By highlighting these patterns it brings new information into the conversation and provides the client with the awareness that they can choose a new pattern that better serves them.

When making intuitive observations such as in the example above, it is important to remember that intuition is not always right. So, hold your opinions lightly. Share what you are sensing with the client in a way that doesn't come across as authoritative. For example, rather than saying, "This is the same situation like we spoke of a few weeks ago." instead, say something like, "It seems like this pattern might be similar to the one we spoke about a few weeks ago. What do you think?" This holds the coach's opinion lightly and requests the client to respond to the intuition to validate its accuracy.



CULTIVATING LEARNING AND GROWTH



Competency 8: Facilitates Client Growth is found in the ICF Competencies under Part D: Cultivating Learning and Growth.

ICF defines this competency as “Partners with the client to transform learning and insight into action. Promotes client autonomy in the coaching process.” The following markers are indicators of competency. Markers 1, 6, and 7 are closely related, so they will be addressed together.

1. Works with the client to integrate new awareness, insight or learning into their worldview and behaviors
6. Partners with the client to summarize learning and insight within or between sessions
7. Celebrates the client’s progress and successes

These three markers are about facilitating the client’s sustainable forward movement. Coaching is intended to create new aware-

ness in our clients. Part of the coaching process is helping clients to realize and articulate their learning so they can become rooted in their current thinking. This doesn’t only mean that at the end of a coaching session the coach should have a check the box question, “What did you learn today?” It goes deeper than that. When you recognize that your client is making progress putting new ideas together or making new discoveries, ask what they are realizing. The human mind works so quickly that realizations flash through our mind without us having to fully think them through. Because of this, getting the client to slow down their thinking and articulate their discoveries can be a powerful learning experience for them. Learning isn’t just something to sum up at the end of the session, it should be done throughout. Even asking questions like, “What progress are we making towards your goal so far?” can bring new awareness and insights to the client. These questions also help the client move further along because they are reflecting on the progress they have made so far that they may not have realized.

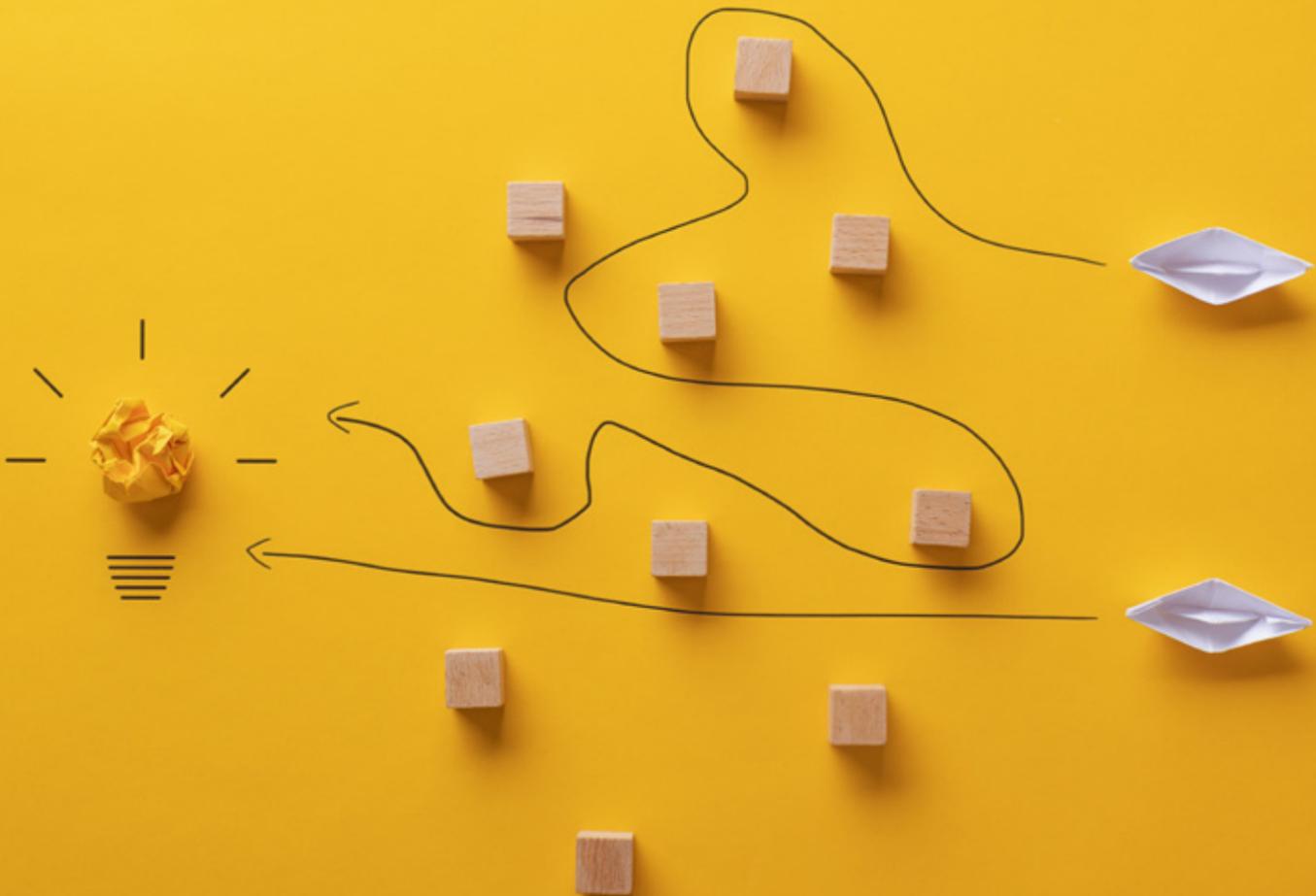
Recognizing and articulating new awareness helps the client to embed it into their minds. It is also important to help the client integrate the new learning into their worldview and behaviors. Questions like, “What will you do differently now that you are aware of this?” or “What changes will you make as a result of this new learning?” or “Now that you have this new information, what will you do?” are designed to create sustainable change for the client. It’s not enough for them to simply make realizations. Incorporating those realizations into their lifestyle, thinking, and behaviors are where the real power of coaching outcomes resides. I also check in with my clients at the beginning of each session to see what relevant progress or experiences they have had between sessions. Keep in mind that the client owns the agenda so checking in on progress should be client owned. What I mean by this is that instead of asking them directly what progress they have made, it is better to ask them if there is anything they want to check in on before getting started with the session. This gives the client the option to share anything

they believe is relevant and doesn’t force them into feeling like the coach is “holding them accountable” for doing action items between sessions. What is important is not that action steps were taken but that our clients continue with forward progress between sessions.

There are several ways to celebrate client success and progress depending on what is happening in the session. You might take a moment to acknowledge progress that happened between sessions. You might reflect on progress over the course of the relationship by checking in and looking at overall progress towards the outcomes desired of coaching. You might also reflect on progress the client has made during the session such as moving from one way of thinking to another. All these things help the client recognize and build on momentum.



GOAL SETTING AND FORWARD MOVEMENT



Competency 8: Facilitates Client Growth is found in the ICF Competencies under Part D: Cultivating Learning and Growth.

ICF defines this competency as “Partners with the client to transform learning and insight into action. Promotes client autonomy in the coaching process.” The following markers are indicators of competency. Markers 2-5 and 8 are closely related so they will be addressed together. With these, I will close the series on the New ICF Competency Model.

2. Partners with the client to design goals, actions and accountability measures that integrate and expand new learning
3. Acknowledges and supports client autonomy in the design of goals, actions and methods of accountability
4. Supports the client in identifying potential results or learning from identified action steps

5. Invites the client to consider how to move forward, including resources, support and potential barriers

8. Partners with the client to close the session

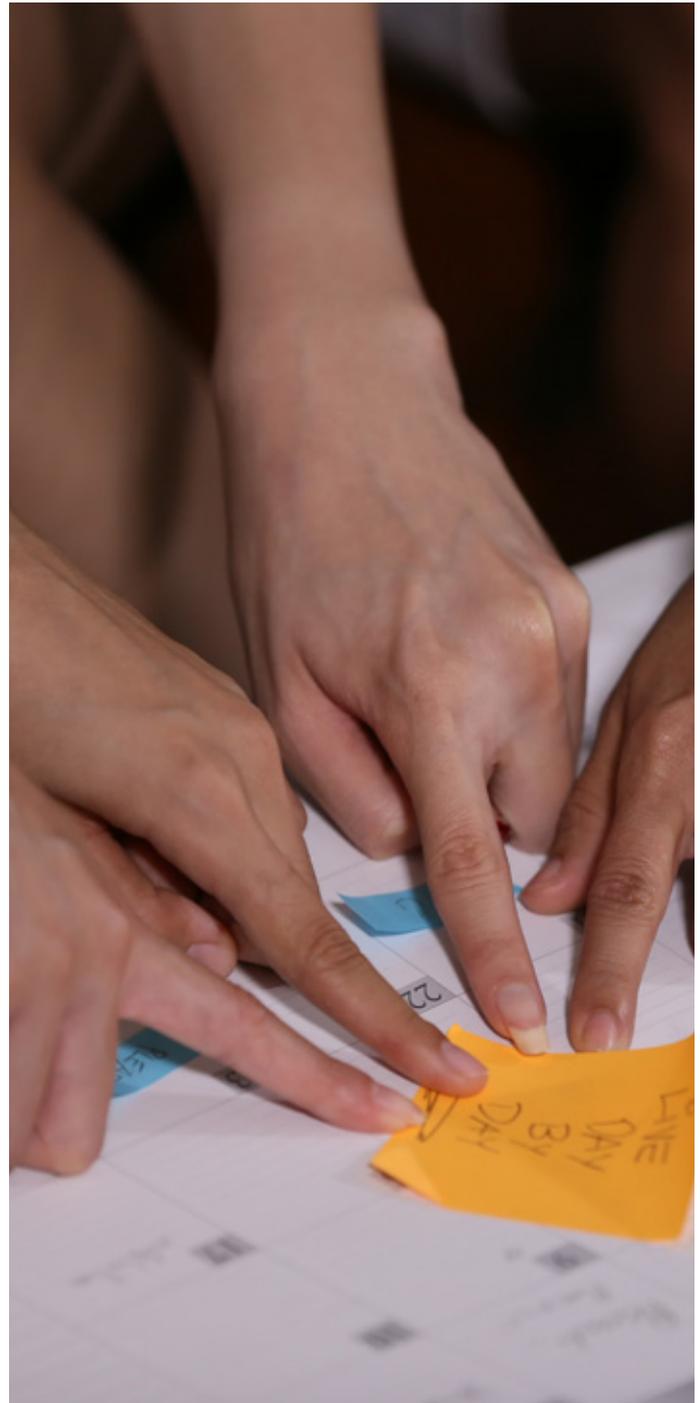
When working with a client to design goals it is helpful to think of goals as both the goal of the session and the goal of the things the client will do between sessions. At the beginning of the session, during the coaching contract the work is to collaboratively determine what the client wants to accomplish during this session and how it will bring them to the outcomes they desire. Throughout and often at the end of a session the coach and client work together to determine how the client will continue moving forward towards the outcomes they desire between sessions. Sometimes this means that the client will continue thinking about something that came up during the session. Other times this means that there will be an action or series of actions that the client takes between sessions. However, facilitat-

ing learning and growth goes beyond simply generating a list of action items. In order to help the client learn and grow in the direction they wish to move, it is important to help them understand how the actions they choose will bring them closer to the outcomes they desire. It is also important to help the client think about what they have learned from the session that they can integrate into their daily lives and what actions they will take to do so. The most impactful way I have found to do this is to ask the client throughout the session what they are discovering. These questions often come after we have dove into a discussion about a particular point. I do this because while we are focused on thinking about the problem the client wants to solve, they are focused on innovating ways they can shift their thinking and behaviors to meet their goals. By simply asking what they are discovering as we talk through this, it focuses the client on recognizing what learning they can generate from the discussion we just had. By asking the client to speak their learnings out loud it solidifies the learning because they have

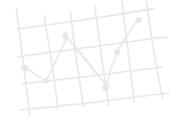
to actively think about the learnings, say the learnings, and listen to the learnings. Without this action the client may not realize what they have learned or if they do realize it, they may forget when the session is over. Then, by asking the client how these new discoveries can help them as they move forward they have to think about how they will integrate what they have just realized into their life moving forward. This critical step further solidifies the learning because the client will not only realize what they learned but how they will implement the learning.

When helping the client generate a plan for movement forward between sessions, I generally ask them what they would like to do rather than repeating the ideas they have mentioned during the session. This is the opportunity for the client to decide which ideas they've had will best bring them the direction they wish to go. It is also the time when they will make a personal commitment to themselves to take those steps forward. Once they decide which steps they would like to take between sessions, I gen-

erally dig into what impacts these steps will have for them and what they would like to learn through these actions. I also ask them questions about how they will practically implement these actions. By asking them what might hinder their progress and what resources or help they may need it helps them create a more successful plan. I often also ask them about their backup plan in case things don't go down the happy path they have just outlined. Lastly we talk about accountability. What structures or assistance does the client need in place to make sure that they keep this commitment to themselves? By designing their own methods of accountability and not depending on the client to hold them accountable, the client is able to be responsible for their own growth and change which is simply more sustainable.



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