



Coaching for Positive Change

## **Overview of the Adler Approach to Coaching**

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The Adler Workplace Coaching Program (AWCP) is built on the foundation of the Adler Approach to Coaching. Hence, understanding the core concepts and principles of the Adler Approach to Coaching is a first step towards preparing yourself to deliver the AWCP. This document provides you with background reading on this approach. This reading will form the basis for our three tele-classes on the Adler Approach to Coaching.

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# I. THE ADLER APPROACH TO COACHING

## Core Philosophical Assumption

At the core of our approach to coaching, and by implication to coach training, is a philosophical assumption about the dynamics of being human.

We are all caught in a paradoxical tension between being ourselves and being in relationship with others. On the one hand, we are all unique individuals, with a strong need and desire to express our unique selves fully in our life and work. On the other hand, we are embedded in a web of relationships with other individuals, a member of multiple systems, and irretrievably part of humanity.

Our creativity in resolving this paradoxical tension between self-expression and embeddedness determines, to a significant extent, our level of success and fulfillment in life and work. The key to resolving this paradox lies in using our unique selves to make a contribution to others. We see coaching as a profession that distinguishes itself by helping people discover how to bring their choices and actions more in line with their unique “best self”, and to connect more creatively with the deep human desire to make a contribution to the betterment of humanity.

The existence of the Adler School of Professional Coaching (ASCP) and the involvement of our faculty and staff represent in part our response to the challenge of using our unique selves creatively to make a difference for the better in the world. Our hope and intention is to train coaches who also see their work as a creative response to this challenge.

Our goal is to develop coaches whose work will be thoroughly grounded in the intention to help clients resolve and transcend the paradox between self-expression and embeddedness creatively in their own work and life. Even when the coaching assignment is narrowly focused on a specific issue or area, we believe that operating from such a higher-level intention will enhance power and possibilities for the client.

## **Where we draw our inspiration and ideas from**

We intend to develop a mindset for coaching in our students, to support them in developing the core coaching competencies, and to introduce them to the best coaching practices. With these elements in place, plus grounding in our guiding principles, students will be able to evolve a personalized coaching approach that also incorporates their prior expertise and experience. Our aim is not so much to train students in a totally distinct model of coaching as it is to further their education as coaches.

This intention manifests itself in the ways we connect students with material from the newly developed field of coaching as well as older, more established fields from which coaching draws. While the specific ways we organize these ideas may be distinctive, they are inseparable from the many sources that inspired them. The following four sources in particular inform our thinking, teaching and coaching significantly:

### ***Alfred Adler's philosophy and approach to living***

Adler has been called the “father of coaching”. While our program’s approach is not specifically Adlerian, the majority of our guiding principles can be linked to fundamental Adlerian assumptions.

### ***The inner game***

The principles of the inner game, as articulated by John Whitmore *in Coaching for Performance* and especially by Timothy Gallwey *in The Inner Game of Work*, provide an elegant and powerful conceptual frame for coaching. From our perspective, the concepts of “awareness”, “choice”, and “trust in real self” truly lie at heart of coaching, and of learning and growth more generally. These concepts can be expanded and deepened in several ways to provide a frame for coaching over a wide domain.

### ***Appreciative inquiry***

The Adler coaching program takes an appreciative, strengths-based approach to generating positive change. Appreciative Inquiry, in the words of its founder, David Cooperrider, focuses attention on “the best of the past and present”, in order to “ignite the collective imagination of what might be.” Our vision for coaching is aligned with Cooperrider’s vision for appreciative inquiry, that “the arduous task of intervention will give way to the speed of imagination and innovation, and instead of negation, criticism, and spiraling diagnosis, there will be discovery, dream, and design.”

### ***Positive Psychology***

Closely aligned with appreciative inquiry is the fast expanding field of positive psychology. With its focus on human flourishing, both for individuals and systems, it provides a rich knowledge base for our approach to coaching. The positive psychology literature provides insight and understanding of optimal human functioning, as well as empirically verified tools and processes to support change and growth.

## ***Co-active coaching***

The co-active approach to coaching (*Co-Active Coaching*, by Laura Whitworth, Henry Kimsey-House and Phil Sandahl) provides a clear articulation of some of the core principles that inform us. These include:

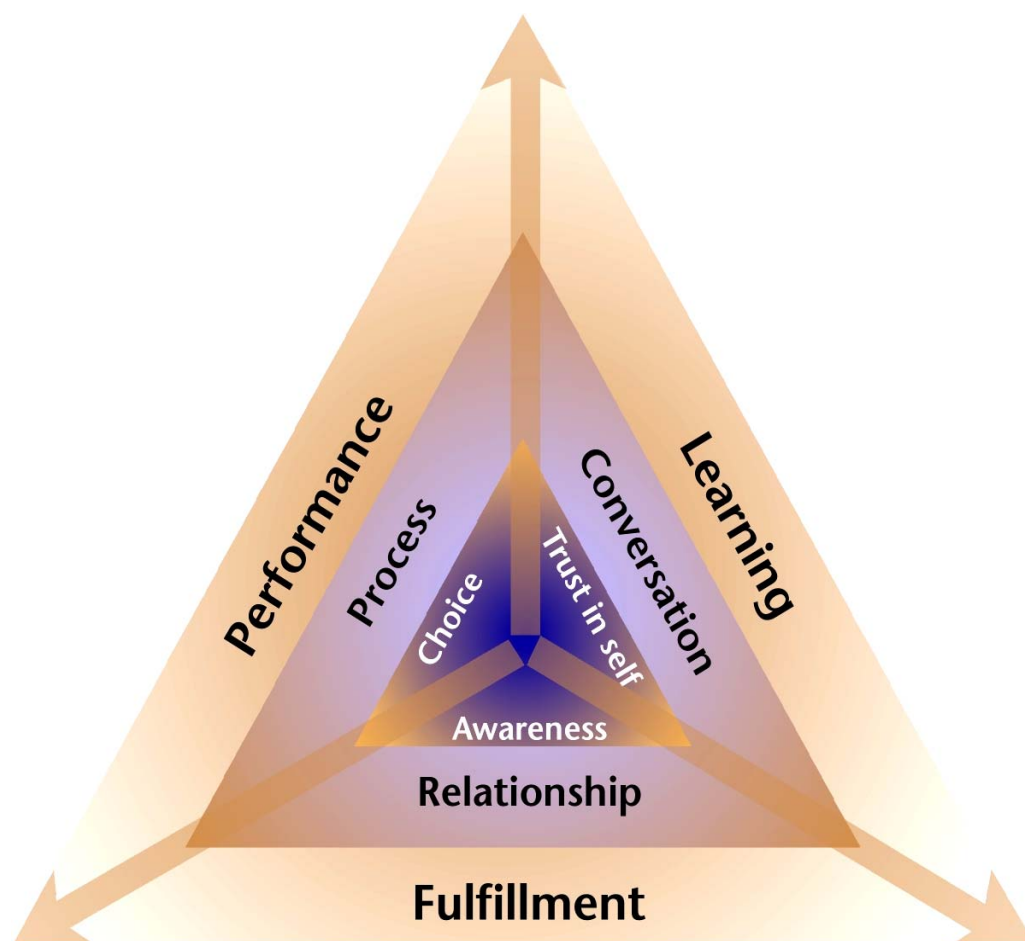
- the stance that coaching is in service of the client's agenda;
- the notion that coaching involves the active collaboration of coach and client;
- the strong emphasis on the quality of the relationship between coach and client as integral to coaching; and
- the premise that the client is the expert in their work and life.

It is interesting to note the congruence between these principles and fundamental assumptions of an Adlerian approach to counselling.

## II. The Three Triangle Model

Coaching is fundamentally about facilitating change that will lead to desired results: facilitating movement from a current state to a more desirable future state.

Coaching typically happens in the context of a one-on-one relationship between coach and coachee. Coaching can also occur in the context of a team.



*“Coaching conversations are geared towards enhancing awareness, expanding choice, and building trust in self, in service of greater mobility of clients towards their desired future state/their goals.”*

Timothy Gallwey

## What Makes Up the Three Triangles

The three-triangle visual on the previous page captures the Adler approach to coaching. This approach consists of three interlinked components: the goals for coaching, the conditions in the coachee that relate to their movement towards these goals, and the specific ways in which coaching facilitates this movement.

The goals of coaching are represented on the outside of the triangle. Coaches help coachees create results in the domains of:

- Performance – activities, results
- Learning – processes, skills
- Fulfillment – professional, personal

Change occurs and results are created as the coachee achieves greater:

- Awareness
- Choice
- Trust in their essential selves

Greater awareness, choice and trust are built over time in coaching through:

- Relationship
- Process
- Conversation

Effectiveness in coaching involves having an understanding of these nine elements and their interrelationships, and the ability to apply this understanding skillfully with coachees. The breadth and depth of the coach's insight into these elements impacts the effectiveness of the coaching.

The "3 x 3 model" outlined above is flexible enough to be applicable in a wide range of coaching scenarios. At the same time, the foundational nature of the concepts involved permit coaching at great depth.

The model clearly assumes an "inside-out" approach. Enhanced results in any of the three domains (performance, learning, and fulfillment) have their source in the client (their awareness, choice, and trust in their essential selves). Coaching, through relationship, process, and conversation, mediates between the result domains and the internal shifts around awareness, choice, and trust for the client.

This "mediating" role of the coaching relationship, process, and conversation is expressed in the visual representation of the Adler coaching model. The inner triangle represents the client, the outer triangle the domains in which the client seeks results, and the middle triangle the contribution of coaching.

The placement of Awareness, Relationship, and Fulfillment at the base of the three triangles, respectively, is by design. Their placement at the base of the triangles is a visual metaphor for the foundational nature of these three elements in each of their respective sets.

### III. GOALS FOR COACHING

Coaching is about facilitating a client's movement towards their desired results. But what kinds of results do clients come to coaching for? Or to use another familiar term: What goals are coaching clients wanting support on?

When people think of goals, they typically think first of having or acquiring something. For example, 'I want to build a retirement fund that will allow me to retire in four years time', or 'I want a meaningful relationship in my life'. In reality, of course, desired results and goals can come in several shapes and forms, of which the 'having' and 'acquiring' kind are only a small subset. The following set of distinctions is useful to help us discern more clearly and specifically what results our clients want. Also, with a more sophisticated understanding of desired results and goals, coaches are able to help clients identify the high-leverage goals beneath the goal or results area that they present initially when they come for coaching.

**Performance:** Something you do that brings about an observable change in the external world.

**Examples of performance goals:**

- Increase sales by 20% before end of next year
- Build a more effective team
- Finish the report on time
- Create a personal development plan
- Increase your income by 20%
- Sell your business and retire to your cottage by a certain date

Performance goals are focused on doing and taking action. They describe a single external accomplishment.

Performance goals may or may not require any change in capability on the part of the performer.

**Learning:** A change that takes place within the learner, often as a result of interaction with the external world. The change can involve a change in understanding based on adding new information or on a new interpretation of old information.

**Examples of learning goals:**

- Overcome fear or rejection
- Enhance my listening skills
- Develop empathy
- Increase my understanding of leadership
- Become a more capable communicator, or problem-solver
- Become a more patient parent
- Arrange my life to be more in alignment with my priorities

Learning goals represent changes in capability. Each learning goal has the potential to contribute to the achievement of many future performance goals. Hence, learning goals are high leverage goals.

Because learning happens in the individual, it is not easy to observe the accomplishment of learning goals until the results start showing up in the world of performance. This means that progress with learning goals has to be measured differently than the progress with performance goals. Learning goals require different strategies and tactics than performance goals.

Learning is about the unknown. Learning goals can only be set relative to what you already know about what you want to learn. But much of what you will learn is material that you didn't know that you didn't know. How to set goals about that? Be as clear as possible about what you want to learn and why. Then be prepared to follow your interest and be open to the unexpected.

Learning goals can cover a wide range, as illustrated by the following classification offered by Tim Gallwey. Gallwey uses the handy acronym **QUEST** to capture that learning goals can address **Q**ualities, **U**nderstanding, **E**xpertise, **S**trategic Thinking, **T**ime.

### **Qualities**

These include responsibility, integrity, initiative, creativity, task orientation, persistence, resilience, clarity, cooperation. We all have these qualities and more within us as potentialities. We have learned to bring out some of them more than others. Learning to access and express a chosen quality in our life and work is a kind of learning goal we can all set for ourselves.

*Which qualities would you like to see more of in yourself? Which would others in your life, at work, like to see more of, less of?*

### **Understanding**

This is about more than just information. It is about understanding the components of a particular subject or system, and the relationships among the components.

*Given your performance goals, what, if understood better, would make success easier or more likely?*

### **Expertise**

Expertise includes both technical or non-technical know-how and skill.

*What skills could I hone or develop that would enable me to attain a higher level of performance? What skills am I learning that I could apply to my present or future job? Which of these skills could be learned from experience at work and which need some book or classroom learning? What skills are already developed and don't require more time and attention?*

### **Strategic thinking**

This can be viewed as a quality, a skill, or an understanding. But it is a distinct kind of thinking. It is the ability to step back from the trees and see the forest. Is it the ability to lift one's thinking above short-term goals to long-term objectives.

*How strategically are you thinking? Do you have a strategic perspective or merely a tactical one? How clear are your priorities –at work, in my life? Are you thinking independently enough? Is your work-life balanced and in harmony with the rest of your life? Do you see your work in relation to that of others around you? Do you think strategically about your whole life?*

### **Time**

All work is done in time and related to time. Learning this relationship is critical to successful work.

*Does your work get done on time? How aware are you of the time required for completion of tasks? Are you feeling constantly pressured for time? Are you constantly behind your time lines? Do you procrastinate?*

**Enjoyment and Fulfilment:** The quality of someone's experience of their life and themselves. Enjoyment and fulfilment are about an inner state, rather than an aspect of the world out there. Enjoyment is about the quality of our experience in doing and learning. Fulfilment is about the quality of our experience of our being.

Examples of enjoyment and fulfilment goals:

- Experience more flow in work activities
- Discover more enjoyable ways to accomplish what we want and need to accomplish
- Discover our vision, values, purpose
- Clarifying our personal essence
- Experiencing a sense of inner harmony in our lives

The importance of enjoyment – both for its own sake and as a contributor to excellence in performance – is increasingly being recognised. Recent work on flow supports this. This work both show that an individual has the potential to create flow (which is a way to look at enjoyment) for themselves, and that this contributes significantly to quality of life.

Fulfilment goals take us beyond performance and learning, even beyond enjoyment, to expression of our essential selves in our work and life. While much of coaching is focused on doing and learning, fulfilment coaching has an element that is not about doing or learning, but simply about being. Frederick Hudson (*The Handbook of Coaching*) actually uses the term 'being coaching' to refer to this form of coaching. Unlike results in the other areas, there are rarely clear goals and outcome determined upfront. And while much of coaching is geared towards supporting the client in stepping out of their comfort zone, fulfilment coaching can be about simply appreciating ourselves more.

A coaching process would typically include coaching around performance and learning, as well as around enjoyment and fulfilment: being coaching. The ratios would differ in different relationships, and also change over time with a specific client.

Based on and adapted from: *The Inner Game of Work*, by W. Timothy Gallwey. Random House: New York. 2000.

## IV. AWARENESS, CHOICE, TRUST

### Awareness

#### *Key points about awareness in coaching*

- Awareness is about knowing with great clarity what is: about the present situation, about who you are, about what works and what doesn't work.
- Awareness is like light. Whatever it shines on becomes knowable and potentially understandable. Awareness brings clarity and distinctness to whatever is being observed.
- Through focused awareness we gain understanding beyond the superficial level. Hence, the quality of our awareness/ attention impacts the quality of our performance, learning, enjoyment, fulfilment.
- Focus can be broad or narrow. We can pay attention to the big landscape or to an individual leaf on a tree in that landscape. Coaching facilitates both broad and narrow awareness, depending on what is needed by the client.
- Coaching is about the client's awareness; the coach is primarily a facilitator of the client's awareness. Hence, all activities in coaching are motivated by how they will contribute to client's awareness, not the coach's awareness of client.
- Awareness is most powerful when it is non-judgmental -- an acknowledgement of things as they are.
- Awareness itself often automatically leads to or inspires changes. For instance, as a client becomes more aware of their personal values, they may start initiating changes and making shifts simply because of what they've noticed.
- Awareness raising can be challenging to a coaching client, e.g., when they become aware of aspects of themselves that they have neglected, or unproductive habits that get in their way, or limiting beliefs that have kept them trapped in a box. Awareness raising can also be exhilarating -- e.g., when clients become more aware of their true values and passions, and when with the support of their coach they start noticing their accomplishments.
- The coach listens for what the client is aware of, as well as what the client is not aware of, and uses coaching questions and observations to focus the client's attention also on those aspects.
- Note that awareness - of self and others -- is regarded as a key success factor in work today. See in this connection the references to Emotional Intelligence at Work.
- Coaching clients overwhelmingly report that raised awareness is an outcome and a benefit of coaching.

## Choice

*"What makes life work spectacularly is not what you have but who you are, or, to say it more accurately, who you are being. You are either nothing more than a bio-computer running the same program over and over and over and over, or, in addition to being a bio-computer, you are as much as possible the author of your life, a creative expression of your intentions. You are being skillful at generating the results you want."*

Lore, *The Pathfinder*.

### Key points about Choice in coaching

- Choice is about moving in a desired direction for the future. Where awareness is about the present state (positive or negative), choice is about the desired future. Choice, in other words, is about what we want and moving towards that.
- Choice is not just about choosing among the existing alternatives; it is also about creating options.
- Coaches may need to remind clients that they have the capacity to choose in virtually all areas of their life -- even if it is only their attitudes, how they want to bring themselves to their commitments.
- Awareness and choice interact in coaching. When we are connected to our desires, we will notice whatever is relevant for them. Desire, in other words, drives our focus/ attention.
- We have a choice over what desires to nourish and which to ignore.
- Through our choices we create the priorities which we act upon in the world. And in so doing, we create our future.
- When we are unclear over our choices, our agendas become conflicted, we lose a clear sense of direction, and we start reacting versus responding intentionally to stimuli.
- Dreaming and visioning is an integral part of Choice in coaching.
- The coach is committed to helping the client discover their true commitment -- their real desires. This can be fairly easy in some narrow local domains (e.g., how they would like to handle a specific interaction, the outcome of a specific project.) Or it can be more difficult and broader in scope -- e.g., what they want for their life, their next career, etc.
- The coach often believes in a level of accomplishment and possibility, and hence an expanded range of choices, beyond what the client can see as possible for themselves.
- Part of the art of coaching is to be able to sense the underlying commitment of the client's powerful self and not to buy into the Inner Critic's limiting conception of what is and is not possible.
- Sometimes the most powerful choice we can make is what attitude we adopt. Working with a client to identify a powerful attitude or perspective is often a far higher leverage point than helping them make a specific concrete choice in their work or life.

# Trust

*"Our doubts are traitors and make us lose the good we oft might win, by fearing to attempt."*  
William Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*.

## ***Key points about Trust in coaching***

- Trust is about having an optimistic and realistic belief in our true inherent potential, both actualised and not yet actualised. The higher our trust in ourselves, the more likely that our performance, learning and fulfilment will reflect our true potential.
- With high levels of trust, we feel resourceful and whole. We are willing to risk and take on challenges. With low levels of trust, we are hesitant to take on challenges; we are anxious and fearful of stepping outside our comfort zone.
- With high levels of trust, we are independent and autonomous. We know our real desires and act on them. With low levels of trust, we look to others for approval and suppress our real desires.
- The biggest threat to trust in our true potential comes from inside ourselves, in the form of a persistently negative voice that constantly and irrationally questions our abilities, chastises us for every little mistake, downplays every accomplishment, and wants us to stay firmly within our comfort zone at all times. There are several names for this 'negative, self-doubting' part of ourselves -- including Inner Critic, Voice of Judgement, The Gremlin.
- The coaching task around trust is to work with the client so that their levels of performance, learning, and fulfilment are determined more by their true capability than by the limiting perspective of their Inner Critic. It is about helping the client 'to get out of their own way'.
- The origin of the Inner Critic is not important in coaching. The job of the coach is to help the client unlearn the doubts, fears, and limiting assumptions that inevitably accumulate over time, and act more consistently in line with their true potential.
- For some individuals there might be deep-seated issues around their Inner Critic that require psychotherapy. For most of us, though, some fairly simple strategies might be all we need to minimise the power of the Inner Critic. The 'test' for coachability is simply whether the client can, with the support of the coach, move forward with their goals.
- The message of the Inner Critic is by no means always false or harmful. It wants us, though, to accept its dictates independent of our own direct experience or understanding.
- The key to minimising the impact of the Inner Critic is to simply notice it, without judging it. Coaching provides safety for the client to acknowledge their Inner Critic and courage to trust their potential. Notice that this is one of the points where Choice and Awareness intersect.
- Coaching for trust requires of the coach to trust the client more than the client trust his/herself. Trust from the coach's perspective means to get that the final authority and responsibility for learning lies within the individual doing the learning. The coach 'holds' the space for the client in their true potential, and not merely for the 'diminished' self created by the Inner Critic. It means that the coach interacts with the 'highest and best' of the client, and does not coach the client's Inner Critic.

- A coach can create this sort of trust in a client only when the coach has learned an increasingly profound level of trust in him/herself. Coaching for trust thus requires that the coach confronts their own Inner Critic and works on 'uncovering' more of their own potential. Perhaps more than in any other aspect of coaching, the coach needs to do the work their clients want to do first.

## V. RELATIONSHIP, PROCESS, CONVERSATION

How does coaching actually work? What does a coach do when they coach? How is a coaching process structured? What are the skills required for coaching? We claim that it is helpful to distinguish three distinct, but totally inter-connected, aspects of coaching:

- Coaching as relationship
- Coaching as process
- Coaching as conversation/ dialogue

### ***Coaching as relationship***

The coaching relationship is an intimate one, built on trust and openness, and is conducive to honest self-assessment, learning, constructive action and personal accountability for results.

The coaching relationship is a collaboration between coach and client in service of the client's goals. Typically the relationship takes place over a period of time and involves a number of interactions.

A coaching relationship starts with agreements/contracts that set out roles and responsibilities, process and desired outcomes.

Looking at coaching through the lens of relationship, there are actually several relationships involved. In addition to the primary relationship -- between coach and client -- these are some other key relationships that need to be managed:

- the coach's relationship with themselves
- the client's relationship with themselves

Relationships with external sponsors, managers and supervisors may also form part of the relationship web.

### ***Coaching as process***

Coaching is a process designed to facilitate change. This includes change created in the outside world in the form of objective results, as well as changes in the client's subjective experience of themselves and their world.

The coaching process supports change through learning and action. Results are created and learning happens through exploration, action, feedback and reflection.

Under 'process' in coaching we also include the specific structures/ tools used to manage and support a wide variety of aspects of the coaching process. Specifically, it includes the structures and tools

used by the coach to organise a coaching session, to handle specific client challenges, as well as to support the coaching over time.

### ***Coaching as conversation***

Coaching happens in conversations. A coaching conversation is a specialised form of conversation. In the course of this conversation the client gains clarity, explores possibilities, sets goals, designs actions, integrates feedback and makes commitments. For the coach, the key to effective coaching conversations is mastering the high-level communication skills that support coaching.

## More on coaching as relationship

### *Key points about the nature of a coaching relationship*

- Much of the power of effective coaching comes from the nature and quality of the relationship between coach and client. In coaching this relationship is integral to the process, rather than a desirable extra.
- Key properties of an effective coaching relationship include: trust, mutual respect, openness, freedom of expression, safety, honesty and integrity, support and challenge.
- The coach carries a major responsibility to ensure that an effective coaching relationship is established and maintained. Part of this responsibility includes modelling the key properties. At the same time, the client is also responsible for establishing and maintaining the coaching relationship. This shared responsibility reflects the fact that the coaching relationship is regarded as a relationship of equals.
- A real coaching relationship, no matter what the context, requires an authentic connection of two human beings. It is always a 'life encounter', even if the context is work.
- While the primary focus of the coaching relationship may be work-related (and could even be very narrow), it is always the whole person that shows up for coaching. The coach -- and the coaching process -- needs to take this into account.
- The coaching relationship is a collaborative relationship between coach and client, with coach and client as partners in a development process geared towards the client's goals. The nature of the relationship is that of partner, rather than 'expert' or 'adviser'.
- The coaching relationship is part of a larger web of relationships, including the relationship between the client and their organisation (if applicable), the coach and the contracting organisation (if applicable), the client's work relations, the client's personal relations, etc.
- The coach-client relationship may be impacted if the coach and client have another relationship -- e.g. boss-direct report, or family member.

## ***Key points about the client in the coaching relationship***

- Professional coaching is focused on the client's agenda. Clients set their own goals, examine their own feelings, evaluate options according to their values, make their own decisions.
- For the most part the client has the answers and the wisdom; the coach acts as a facilitator to help the client discover their own answers, helps them find the courage and confidence to implement their answers, and supports them through the change process.
- Coaching requires permission from the client. Coaching is not something done to someone, it is something done with someone.
- Coaching takes place in a context that includes the many overlapping systems of which the client forms part. The coaching both respects this and takes it into account.
- Coaches adopt a holistic perspective, even when the overt goal of the coaching contract is narrowly defined.
- The client's well being overall is a fundamental consideration in the coaching.
- "Whole person" includes the client's emotions. The coach has to work with the emotions that come up in the coaching process.
- "Whole person" also includes the non-rational and non-logical. There is space for playing with the client's imagination in coaching.
- Each client is unique, and the responsibility of the coach is to work with the client to design the process that will best suit the client. This requires flexibility and creativity from the coach.

## ***Key points about the coach in the coaching relationship***

- The coach adopts a beginner's mind and interacts with the client from a place of curiosity about their wants, needs, feelings, etc. This is essential for the process of mutual discovery that is at the heart of powerful coaching.
- The coach has unconditional positive regard for people, and a belief in people's potential and willingness to learn and grow. If a coach cannot hold this as true for a specific client, their ability to coach this client will be severely impacted.
- It is not the job of the coach to fix someone or to solve someone's problems. The coach's job is to create an environment in which others can work out their own solutions, including doing the required learning.
- The coach has in some sense to be a backdrop, allowing centre stage to the client. This means, amongst other things, that the coach has to be willing to set aside their own opinions, suspend judgement, give up the need to look good, give up the need to be right, and trust the process.
- Encouragement – acknowledging the potential in someone, helping them access that and helping them grow the best parts of themselves – is one of the most powerful things a coach does for a client.
- While the coach is committed to helping the client achieve the results he/she wants, the coach remains non-attached. The coach keeps their ego out of the way, both for success and failure.
- The coach's actions and communications are designed to serve the best interest of the client and not to protect the coach.
- The coach stays alert to the possibility that the coaching may move into an area where he/she does not have sufficient expertise.
- The coach is in learning mode all the time. This includes asking continuously what they are learning about themselves through the coaching, and where they might be getting in the way of the coaching.
- An important part of the coach's task is to manage themselves, and to ensure that their own stuff does not get in the way of the coaching.
- The coach takes care of him/herself, renewing their internal resources continuously so that they can be effective with their clients.

## Multiple relationships in coaching

### "Hard Stuff"

- Making choices
- Taking action
- Creating results

- Impacting client's perspectives
- Facilitating client's learning
- Leading to effective action

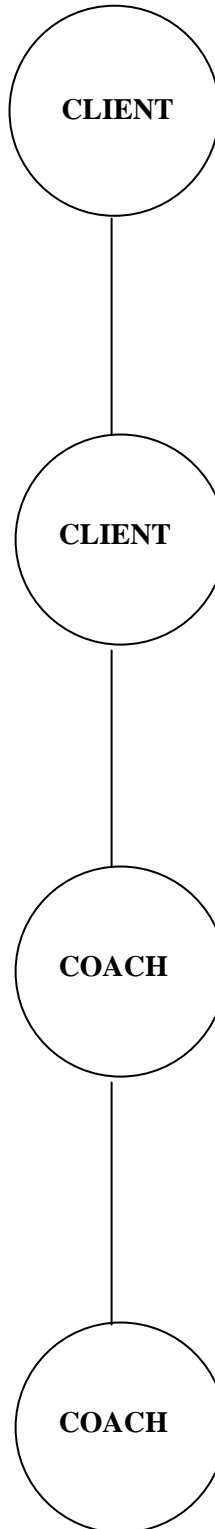
Using all available resources and information to listen and speak most effectively

### "Soft Stuff"

- Developing trust in self
- Managing self to stay of own way

- Building and maintaining a relationship
- Rapport
  - Trust
  - Openness

- Developing trust in self
- Managing self to stay out of the way of the coaching



This schema shows the multiplicity of relationships that need to be managed in even the simplest of coaching relationships (where there is no third party involved). It is not a model of how coaching works. Rather, it is a model that captures something of the complexity involved in coaching. In doing this, it allows the coach to identify areas where they can focus for improvement. And it provides a crude map to identify possible sources of problems when things are not going well.

The schema depicts two sets of relationships that somehow 'mirror' each other. On the left side we have the 'harder' aspects concerned with the more tangible, observable aspects of the relationships. Essentially, it is about managing information and executing actions. On the right side we have a set of relationships that involve the more intangible 'soft stuff' -- rapport, trust and openness, self-management.

### *Coach and client*

On the hard, left-hand side, the coach is working to impact the client's perspectives and facilitate client's learning, so that the client can take more effective action. The coach-client relationship is of course the central relationship in coaching. It is the relationship where the 'real work' of coaching happens and it is the relationship captured in the coaching agreement or contract.

On the 'soft', right-hand side, the relationship between the coach and client requires a high level of rapport, trust and openness. No matter how skilful the coach is, their impact on the client's learning and action is determined to a significant extent by the quality of their relationship.

### *Client and client*

On the left-hand side, the client actually takes action based on new perspective and learning. Essentially, the client manages his/her own behaviour and actions, to manifest the ideas/ insights generated in the coach-client interaction. In coaching the client is ultimately responsible/ accountable for their results. By showing action as a result of the client managing the client's choices and behaviours, this schema reflects this.

The left-hand relationship of the client managing actions and behaviour is mirrored on the right-hand side by the relationship of the client to their 'inner world'. The client not only has to manage their own actions; they also have to manage themselves, their own fears and doubts, their attitudes and habits, so that they effectively stay out of their own way as they start taking action. One of the coach's responsibilities is to help the client become more competent in managing himself or herself.

## *Coach and coach*

On the 'hard side' of the schema, the coach-coach relationship is about the coach using all the available resources and information -- including his/her coaching skills and competence -- to listen and speak most effectively, and hence having the best possible impact on the client's learning and action. In a way, this relationship is about how effectively the coach uses in the moment their knowledge base around coaching.

On the right-hand side, the coach, like the client, has a self-management task. Just as the client will learn how to manage themselves better as they pursue their goals, so the coach has to learn to manage him/herself, so that they stay out of the way of the coaching. In essence, the coach has to ensure that none of their own insecurities, fears, doubts, biases impact the way in which they use their coaching skills and competence. Some of the typical challenges for coaches in this domain include: Resisting the lure of fixing/ problem-solving; Patience; Being self-aware; Being comfortable with not knowing and ambiguity; Not being attached or judgmental; Confidence.  
[See list below for a list of some of the things in the coach's world that come into play during coaching.]

The relationships on the left-hand side of the schema and those on the right-hand side of the schema are obviously interrelated. It is especially important to see that the relationships on the right-hand side are essential for the relationships on the left-hand side to work. You can have trust and rapport and self-management without the hard side. But the hard side cannot work without the soft side!

As a coach, there is certainly much to learn about the left-hand side of the schema. And much of what we teach in this course specifically addresses that. Over time, though, you will discover that your biggest challenge and your biggest leverage for growth as a coach lie on the right-hand side of the schema. Analogously, your impact on the client's learning and action, and their ability to follow through, will be impacted to a significant extent on their ability to manage themselves -- a process to which the coaching can make a valuable contribution.

## ***What are some of the things in the coach's mind that come into play?***

- All the information derived from listening to the client's speaking.
- All the information derived from observing the client through the senses.
- All the previous information about this client stored in the coach's memory.
- All knowledge about the coaching process, the client's goals, structuring the conversation, coaching tools, etc. This directs to some extent what you're listening for and what you're speaking to.
- All non-coaching related knowledge a coach has that could be triggered by what they hear or observe during the coaching.
- All the beliefs and assumptions the coach holds that could be triggered by what they hear or observe during the coaching.
- All the attitudes and habits that the coach has that could be triggered by what they hear and observe during the coaching.
- All the emotional memories of the coach that could be triggered by what they hear and observe during the coaching.
- All the emotional responses and bodily sensations experienced by the coach during a coaching interaction.
- Any idea, hunches, gut feelings, intuitive hits experienced by the coach as a results of the input and processing,

*The coach's challenge is to use all of this selectively to maximise the effectiveness of their listening and speaking in service of the client, and to guard against any of this having a negative impact on their listening and speaking.*

## More on coaching as process

### *Key points about coaching as process*

- Coaching is fundamentally about change. This includes change created in the outside world in the form of objective results, as well as changes in the client's subjective experience of themselves and their world.
- Coaching is designed to create short-term results, as well as to build the long-term capability of the client, leaving them more resourceful for the future.
- Coaching focuses on learning and growth, as well as on action and concrete results. Action and learning are fully integrated in the coaching process
- Coaching is designed to challenge and shift our perspectives, so that we see new possibilities to act on. This is based on the premise that our reality is determined by our perceptions, beliefs, and attitudes – all of which we can change to uncover new possibilities for ourselves.
- Much of the 'work' of the coaching happens between sessions, as the client works on assignments and engages in real-world action that will support them in moving towards their desired results.
- The coach adopts a collaborative stance. This means that the coach has to let go of his/her own biases, working with the client to define and analyse the issue from the client's perspective, to determine the costs and benefits, and to create a solution the client feels comfortable with.
- Coaching can take place in one-off events, or short-term processes, where there is a specific objective to attain.
- Typically, though, professional coaching is not a quick-fix consulting type of arrangement; it is a longer-term developmental process designed to develop the strengths and resourcefulness of the client.
- Barriers may require work on a level deeper than that at which the original issue/ problem/ challenge presents itself.
- Coaching takes place in real biological time, not electronic time. This requires patience – from coach and client.
- The coaching process must include space for resistance, relapse and failure.
- Tools and techniques are useful elements in the process, but ultimately they are only helpful within the context of a relationship of trust and openness.

## **Perspectives on change in coaching**

### ***What gets us going? What's the impetus for change?***

#### **Operative question: *What do you want?***

The impetus for change comes from structural tension – creating the desired future in the imagination and setting stretch goals (Robert Fritz). This means that the desired results (or the vision) come first. Then come the action and learning and personal growth as part of the 'pull' to realise the results. The vision is what provides powerful motivation for the process.

*Coach's role:* Challenge to stretch, hold a greater vision of what is possible, inspire, clarify and elaborate. Here is a place for tapping into imagination, dreams, and desires. As the process cycles through the other phases, the coach's role is to remind the client of the vision and to help them stay in touch with it. This is one of the ways in which a coach acts as a navigator – helping to keep the client focused on the purpose, on the 'why' of it all. Without the ongoing support of the coach, this can easily become buried under the details of every day and the onslaught of the urgent but unimportant.

### ***What are our most powerful resources? What is the platform from which we launch into change?***

#### **Operative question: *What works best?***

The most effective resources for moving forward are existing strengths. In line with the philosophy of Appreciative Inquiry, powerful coaching builds on what already works. This means that the primary focus is not on correcting what is wrong, or moving weaknesses to strengths (which will only lead to mediocrity). Rather, the focus is on appreciating and leveraging strengths. Development is in service of leveraging strengths in the pursuit of the vision/ goal. Note: The focus on strengths does not exclude learning new skills, changing unproductive habits, or learning to manage vulnerabilities. In addition to strengths, an appreciation of what works best for the client in terms of their enjoyment forms another powerful part of the platform for change.

*Coach's role:* Facilitate discovery and appreciation of strengths. Facilitate awareness of areas requiring development. Acknowledge client so that they will fully own their strengths and play fully. Support clients so they can let go of what gets in their way. Help build self-confidence, so that clients will express more of their strengths in the pursuit of their vision and goals. Facilitate discovery and appreciation of what ways of doing and being the client finds most enjoyable. Support the client in finding ways to incorporate these into the solutions and paths they create.

*"It is when their vision becomes more powerful than their resistance that clients have breakthroughs."  
Hudson, *The Handbook of Coaching**

## ***What builds mobility? How do we clear the path?***

**Operative question:** *How can we minimise the interference between potential and result?*

When there is an exciting result to work towards and a focus on strengths to move towards that result, then progress requires us to eliminate anything that interferes with the translation of potential into performance, learning, and enjoyment. The key here is awareness of what is (current reality), trust and choice. Almost invariably this part of the process involves dealing with those elements internal to the client that negatively impacts performance, learning and enjoyment (the Inner Critic, the Judger Self, etc.).

*Coach's role:* In this phase of the coaching process, the purpose of the coaching conversation is to increase mobility (Gallwey, *The Inner Game of Work*). The coach raises client's awareness through inquiry and discovery (including self-discovery and feedback), design with client ways to 'grow' through the internal challenges, brainstorming options and solutions for dealing with external obstacles, keep the client at choice. The focus is not just on the results, but also on making the process itself enjoyable and fulfilling for the client. The process also requires noticing and celebrating progress – in itself a mobility enhancing process.

## ***What improves the process? How does feedback get built into the process?***

**Operative question:** *What do I need to change based on the results I've got so far if I want to maximise my chances of creating my vision/ reaching my goals?*

Getting into action is necessary to create the results – and from the results we get we will learn what to change, whether it be mental models, goals, methods, etc. Coaching helps us 'mine' the impact of our actions for maximum learning about where we need to fine-tune or even to change course drastically. This draws on the work in Action Research and Reflection-in Action.

*Coach's role:* Expand and deepen the value of what is learnt through inquiry and reflection, provide support, help deal with failures and disappointments, acknowledge and champion to keep client motivated and operating from their strength. If necessary, support the client to change the goal when appropriate.

*"For many clients, initial goals can be accomplished relatively quickly. On the other hand, working with a coach may extend over a long and even indefinite period. That's because each new goal reached can create a life shift."*

Lowry and Menendez, *Discovering Your Best Self*.

## More on coaching as conversation

*"The primary medium for all coaching interventions is conversation. Coaching conversations are those where we speak and listen from a particular intent. We interact with the intention of helping people create a vision based on what they passionately care about; we speak and listen with the intent of helping people surface, question, and reframe assumptions ... "*

Hargrove, *Fieldbook for Masterful Coaching*

Coaching happens primarily in conversation. When most people talk about coaching, it is actually the coaching conversation that they refer to. The ability to conduct a coaching conversation is valuable to anyone who works in a facilitative role with others to create new solutions, results, learning and growth. Professional coaches are just a subset of people who find these skills valuable. What distinguishes the professional coach from others who coach, are the high level of competence to which they push the skills for conducting a coaching conversation and the special way in which they integrate these skills with a particular kind of process and relationship.

To have a coaching conversation means to listen, speak, and to make choices about what to listen for and what to speak to. The simple schema on p. 32 below captures this perspective of coaching.

Making generalisations about coaching conversations is as challenging as making generalisations about coaching, given the wide range of uses for the term. Taking the kinds of coaching conversations that happen as part of a professional coaching relationship as our reference point, here are some key distinguishing features of coaching conversations:

### *Content and flow*

- The agenda for the conversation is the client's. The coach's role is to facilitate the conversation to move the client towards this goal.
- While the client determines the topic of the coaching conversation, the coach is responsible for managing the direction and flow of the conversation so that it best supports the client in meeting their objective.

### *Intent*

- The intent of a coaching conversation is for coach and client to collaborate and co-create in service of the client's agenda. Through effective coaching conversations, coach and client will:  
create new learning (above and beyond what either coach and coachee has)  
create new possibilities (above and beyond what either coach and coachee sees going in to the conversation)  
make better use of what is already there in order to create what is desired

## *Roles*

- The client's primary roles in the conversation is to explore, think, play, mine deeper, and live with creative tension. The client uses the coach's contribution as a stimulus or catalyst for his or her own process. The client is also the one with the responsibility for results.
- The coach's primary role is to speak and listen in order to 'draw forth' or to evoke insight/ solutions from the client. The coach is not responsible for the client's results, although the client may request the coach to hold them accountable for certain commitments.

## *Communication skills*

Coaching conversations can take on different forms and have different primary foci. They can be about possibility, about planning, about awareness, about accountability, etc. Whatever the form and focus of the coaching conversation, the coach uses the same basic set of communication skills. Mastering these skills to a high level of competence is what enables the coach to have effective coaching conversations and to skilfully use the various coaching tools and structures in their inventory.

Note that virtually all the skills presented below are based on ordinary language functions. In coaching, though, these skills get taken to a whole new level of refinement and sophistication. Also, as the description will show, the intention and the conditions for effective use are in some cases quite different than for 'ordinary' language use.

The similarity between ordinary language skills and the way in which these skills are used in coaching presents both an opportunity and a challenge. On the positive side: The basic infrastructure for these skills is readily available to anyone who has mastered language. On the challenge side: Learning these skills requires the ability to notice some subtle distinctions in order to grasp how these skills operate in coaching. In moving to this level of competence, the learner-coach often has to 'unlearn' habits of a lifetime in how he/she speaks and listens. The good news, though, is that the higher level to which we take these skills will show up in many places in your interactions with others.

*A structure for a basic coaching conversation*

### ICA Coaching Conversation Framework

<b>I</b>	<b>Issue Insight</b>	<b>What's up? What do you want?</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>Choice Commitment</b>	<b>What are your choices? What do you commit to?</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>Action Accountability</b>	<b>What's next? How will you be held accountable?</b>

# ICA Coaching Conversation Framework: Tips

<b>I</b>	<b>Issue</b> <b>Determine conversation focus</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask questions to identify the issue or focus for this coaching conversation</li><li>• Explore what the coachee's current situation is in relation to this issue/focus</li><li>• Explore specifically what the coachee wants to gain or walk away with from this conversation</li></ul>	<b>Insight</b> <b>Enhance awareness and create new insight</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Explore coachee's chosen focus in depth</li><li>• Ask questions to determine how coachee is thinking and feeling about the situation/issue</li><li>• Generate insights, expand awareness and create learning, through questioning, offering observations, exploring alternative perspectives, and reflecting back what you hear</li><li>• Help coachee clarify their intention in light of their new awareness and insight</li></ul>
<b>C</b>	<b>Choice</b> <b>Expand choices</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Generate a range of choices for achieving the intention through questioning and brainstorming</li><li>• Examine the pros and cons of the choices</li></ul>	<b>Commitment</b> <b>Commit to a choice for moving forward</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Help coachee narrow down the choices to move forward on now</li><li>• Explore what it would take to commit to this choice</li><li>• Support the coachee's commitment and trust in self to move forward, by encouraging and acknowledging</li></ul>
<b>A</b>	<b>Action</b> <b>Design the next actions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Collaboratively design an action plan and choose the next steps for the coachee</li><li>• Ask: what, where, when, how?</li><li>• Identify potential obstacles and how to handle them</li><li>• Explore what additional resources and support coachee needs</li></ul>	<b>Accountability</b> <b>Determine accountability</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask how coachee will hold themselves accountable for the commitment</li><li>• Offer your support</li><li>• Agree on next conversation</li></ul>

## VI. The science, art and heart of coaching

*"It is also dangerous for coaches to imagine that the use of any technique, however powerful, will allow them to escape engaging fully with the client with openness, courage, and curiosity. Techniques cannot replace human heart and creativity in coaching."*

Flaherty, *Coaching, Evoking Excellence in Others*

"Techniques cannot replace human heart and creativity in coaching". This is a good way to conclude this section on the 'how to' of coaching with its focus on process and skills.

There is undoubtedly an aspect of 'science' to coaching. Aspects of it can be spelled out and captured in procedures. There are techniques and tools to learn. This aspect of coaching is in many ways the easiest part to learn -- because the learning is mostly at the cognitive, 'know about' level.

Executing the processes and procedures effectively is, of course, another matter. The gap between 'knowing that' and 'doing it' is bridged by artistry. In coaching, this art lies mostly in the mastery of the coaching skills. Knowing what each skill entails, choosing an appropriate one, and artfully executing the skill are different matters altogether. Mastering the art of coaching requires time and practice, patience and dedication, and an ongoing reflective attitude.

But beyond science and art, coaching is about heart. It is about creating a trusting, open relationship with the client. It is about trusting yourself enough so that you can bring your authentic self to the relationship and the process. It is about being courageous when courage is called for. Without heart, the science and art of coaching are the proverbial sounding brass.

In the journey to coaching mastery, the coach has to invest time and effort in all three aspects -- the science of structures, tools, and techniques, the art of skilful use of language, and the heart of authentic presence and trustful relationships. Of the three, the most powerful learning for the coach will undoubtedly happen in the area of heart.

The importance of heart in coaching -- and the related importance of the personal growth and development of the coach -- becomes even clearer when we look at what coaching is all about. It is almost impossible to coach with integrity around some of the core issues of coaching, without being engaged in a journey/ process similar to that of the client.

## VII. Nine Guiding principles

The Adler approach to coaching is based on a number of guiding principles, nine of which are outlined below. Each principle has a number of corollaries for coaches, coaching, and coach training. For each principle one of these corollaries is noted below.

### **Anchoring us in our essential selves**

A first set of principles help anchor us in our unique, best selves. The essence of these three principles is captured in the triangle on the right.

#### **1. Every human being is creative and self-creating.**

Corollary: A coach assumes that clients are creative, capable of change, and able to generate their own unique answers. Part of the coach's role is to help clients discover their answers and to bring more of their inherent creativity to their work and life.

#### **2. Every human being is by nature meaning-seeking and meaning-making.**

Corollary: A coach has the ability to help individuals discover which goals have meaning for them, and helps clients tap into their inherent motivation, by linking action and effort to meaningful goals.

#### **3. Every human being has unique strengths and gifts with which to create a meaningful life.**

Corollary: A coach has the ability to help clients connect with and nurture their unique gifts, and to help clients express them optimally in their life and work.

### **Supporting the development of our potential**

The next set of principles help guide us in developing our full potential. The triangle on the right captures the essence of these principles.

#### **4. Reflection and inquiry are essential for enhanced awareness, which in turn is a key in the quest for greater excellence and meaning in working and living.**

Corollary: A coach has high-level ability to engage in conversations, relations, and processes that support reflection and inquiry and promote awareness.

#### **5. A human being is an integrated whole consisting of many different aspects: mind, body and spirit; thinking, feeling and imagination, etc. Effective and meaningful working and living require congruence and synergy among these different elements.**

Corollary: A coach has the ability to interact with a client from a holistic perspective, and to help the client access and express different aspects of themselves.

**6. As human beings, we always have both the freedom and the responsibility to choose.**

Corollary: A coach holds the client accountable for both their actions and attitudes.

**Entering into meaningful and productive relationships with others and the world**

A third set of principles guide us in relating to others and the world around us.

**7. Our subjective view of reality - our beliefs, assumptions, mental models, “stories” about ourselves, others and the world in which we operate - influences our choices and actions.**

Corollary: A coach has the ability to help clients identify the subjective views through which they are perceiving their world, and to help clients construct and explore alternative views, to create a shift in possibilities and design more effective actions.

**8. As human beings we are embedded in a multi-faceted life, and we form part of many different systems of relationships.**

Corollary: A coach has the ability to take a system perspective on their client's world and help the client explore their options with due regard to the bigger picture. At a deeper level, a coach is able to help a client increase their awareness of their inter-connectedness with humanity and the cosmos.

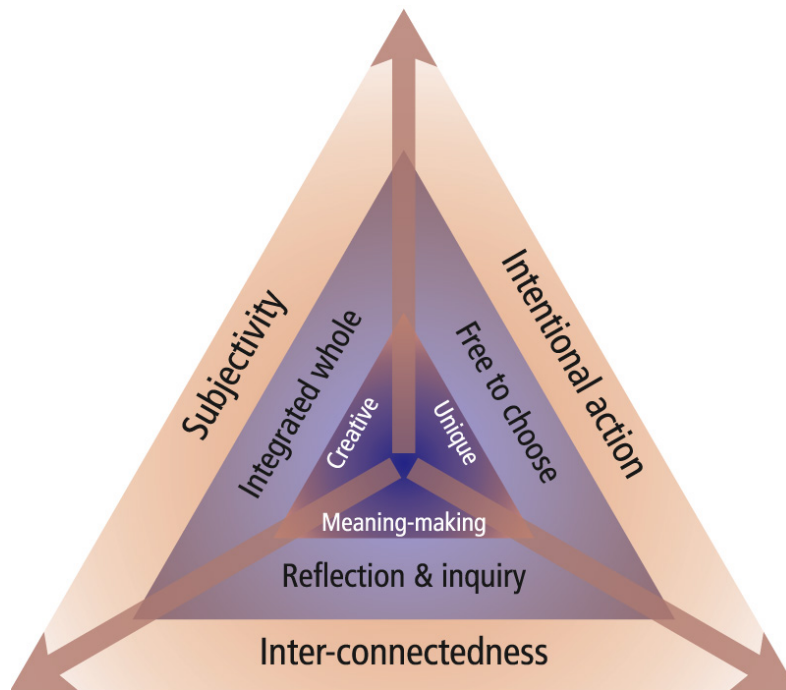
**9. The guiding principles outlined above provide grounding for intentional action, leading to the creation of meaningful results.**

Corollary: A coach has the ability to guide clients in articulating well-grounded intentions and designing actions that will lead to meaningful results.

The visual on the following page captures the essence of these nine principles.

The triangle at the core of the model below represents the principles related to our core – our essential selves. The next triangle represents the principles related to our growth and development, while the outer triangle represents the principles that guide us as we relate to others and to the world.

## OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES



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## VIII. Nine core values that inform us

Our program, our training and our interactions with one another are informed by nine core values:

### Values that anchor us in who we are

- Integrity
- Authenticity
- Creativity

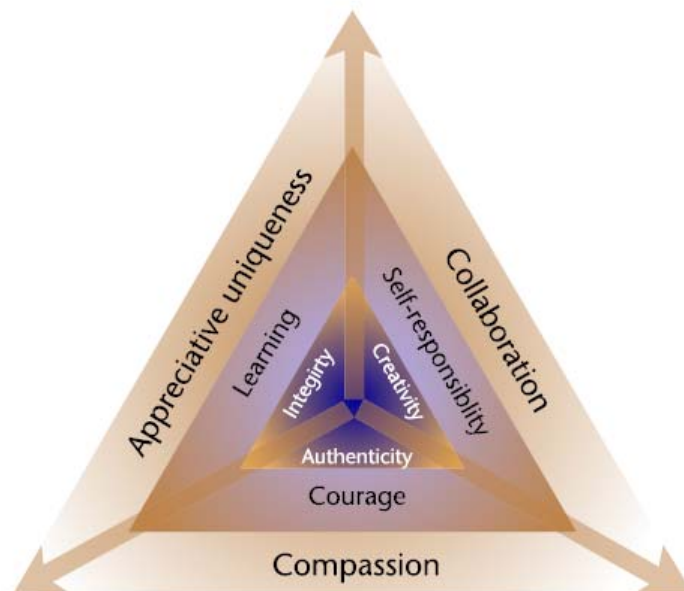
### Values that guide our development towards realizing our potential

- Courage
- Continued Learning
- Self-responsibility

### Values that guide us in creating and maintaining meaningful and productive relationships:

- Appreciating Uniqueness
- Collaboration
- Compassion

These values are summarized in the nested triangles below - with those values that serve to anchor us in our essential selves most deeply embedded.



**Adler Core Values**

