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Collaborative Coaching process

It is important to stress from the outset that this is a framework, not a methodology. It is not designed to be a regimented process that needs to be followed religiously. The idea is to offer a pattern that people can follow as and when appropriate. So the coach and client make the choices of where to go on the journey and what tools to use rather than some detached author sitting miles and miles away (hopefully in the sun).

The idea behind the coaching framework is to help ensure that the client is involved in the choice process. For example, one of my big frustrations in life is working with 'professionals' (doctors, accountants, solicitors, plumbers, etc.). I am always sure that they know what they are doing, but rarely do they share how they are going to do it. As professionals they have a client management process (implicit or explicit) and in their head they are being effective by following an expert and ethical process. The trouble is that I don't know what that process is! If I don't understand it, how can I know whether it is being followed, how can I make choices about its validity for my content and context, and how can I voice an opinion if I want to do something different?

By the very fact that the client process is not shared, I am automatically placed into a position of subordination and dependency. Think how you feel when you see the plumber or doctor and they give the sharp intake of breath. You know there is a problem but have no idea how they arrived at the decision and whether the analysis is valid. As such you are placed in the role of sacrificial lamb laid out for the slaughter. The dependency starts the moment you meet them, and even when they have left you are still dependent and emotionally or commercially hooked for the next time you need help.

The Collaborative Coaching model is built on the premise that the coach will always teach the framework before they seek to coach with it. This focus on the role of teacher helps in a number of ways. First, it ensures that both coach and client will have a shared understanding of the process to be followed. Second, it helps to transfer responsibility for managing the coaching process and associated outcome to the client. Finally, it should ensure that the client is able to self-coach and hence is not reliant on the coach to ensure that the change is sustainable.

The framework in summary

The framework is a seven-stage pattern that follows the themes shown in Figure 5.1. Within each of the seven stages in the wheel is a range of tools and techniques that help expand the diagnostic process. Again, the idea behind the tools is not that they are definitive solutions or that they should be followed religiously. The seven stages can be described as follows:

“The idea behind the tools is not that they are definitive solutions.”

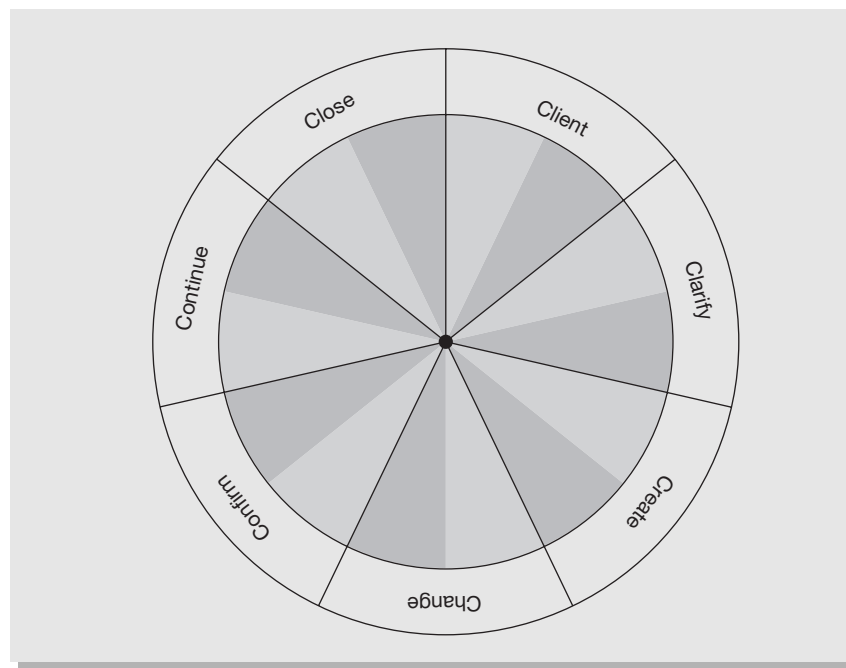


Figure 5.1 Collaborative Coaching wheel

1 Client: From the outset the coach will seek to ensure that the whole person is explored by understanding the client's emotional, logical and behavioural drivers. Once the person is clearly understood, the coach will seek to understand the topic that the client wishes to address. They will consider what has happened, what is happening and what the client wants to happen. They will want to understand the broad issues, the pragmatic factors and the microelements that need to be taken into account to ensure success. The framework uses two models at this stage:

- The '3D ME' humanistic model that underpins how we all feel, think and behave.
- The 'MPH' mapping tool that helps to extract the whole story from the client and not just those aspects they prefer to offer.

2 Clarify: The coach must be able to get beneath the client's skin to really understand what is going on. This framework seeks to deal with this by addressing two factors: what are the blocks and barriers that the client has created in the form of limiting beliefs? Second, what are the undiscussable issues that exist between the coach and the client? What is it that the client is not telling the coach and how might these shadow issues impact the outcome of the engagement? The coach must always seek to climb inside the client's world and not be prepared to be shrugged off when they feel that the questioning is getting difficult.

The two primary tools used in this stage are:

- The 'Fantasy Ladder', which helps to map and manage any limiting beliefs that the client might have about themselves.
- The 'Shadow Map', which helps the client to explore what undiscussable issues might exist in the relationship and how these might be surfaced without too much pain.

3 Create: There will always be time pressure in any coaching relationship. Both coach and client are busy people and the partnership is only a small element in a very busy life. It is this pressure to fix that can cause the client to seek out instant answers, and deliver quick solutions that can get the problem sorted so that they can get on with things. The coach has a strong role here to help the client consider new ways to solve old problems and, once the solution is identified, to then test and ensure that the choice is an optimum one and not a rushed or less-than-optimum solution.

The two aspects considered at this stage are:

- The CREATE framework, which is a simple but robust tool that helps the client look for diverse options and then helps manage the solution selection process.
- The CHOICE model, which offers a powerful framework that will help the client consider the cost and consequences of the proposed solution and ensure that they are using the optimum solution and one that will deliver sustainable value.

- 4 Change:** Once the diagnosis is complete and the solution is established, the client will be put under real pressure. Until this point everything is conceptual and the client can talk about what they are 'going' to do. At some stage they will have to 'do'. It is at this point they have to move out of the comfort zone of planning and really start to address what change they will need to make to achieve the desired outcome. The driving force at this stage may well have to come from the coach. This might be empathic or soft support to help encourage the client through the change or at the other end of the spectrum having to take a more commanding presence to drive the change.

Two core models are considered here:

- The Y-Curve considers how people go through change and how even the smallest of changes (even self-imposed) can result in either dissent or loss of motivation which in turn can trigger resistance.
- The CHANGE framework addresses the issue around mobilization in the coaching partnership and explores the level of force or control that the coach might agree to apply.

- 5 Confirm:** There is a natural human tension that means we are often scared to stand on the scales at the end of a week's dieting. Who really wants to face that pain of finally realizing that things haven't gone so well this week? As humans we almost instinctively seem to find ways to avoid the measurement process. However, measurement is a powerful process when used in a positive way. Sometimes you have to be brave and look under the bed in order to find out that there are no monsters lying in wait. The two models considered in this stage are:

- The idea of 'Cockpit confirmation' – or developing the client's capability to self-monitor and measure their level of achievement.
- The 'F-Games' model, which considers the games that people play when faced with the need to look in the mirror and honestly measure themselves.

6 Continue: There is no feeling like putting on that comfortable pair of old shoes. You have worn them for years and they have always served well. One day you decide to change and invest in a new pair. After a day or two your feet ache as the new leather fails to bend to the way you walk and you decide to go back to the old shoes just to save your aching feet. It is this natural resistance to new ways of thinking, feeling and behaving that often kills the engagement. The coach and client must counteract this repressive force with a positive one. The two themes are:

- The notion of ‘Buckets and Balloons’ and how to identify those things that will cause decay in the change and those things that will help it to last.
- The metaphor of ‘Miracle Mountain’ and the fact that people often look for miracle solutions and are not prepared to make the necessary investment to deliver sustainable change.

7 Close: Finally, you have just spent the last six months running a gruelling project at work that has really taken its toll on your work and home life. You are sure that everything is wrapped up and complete.

You are so confident that when one of the team suggests that you run a closure workshop to dot the Is and cross the Ts you politely tell them to take a hike. The job is done so now everyone can go on holiday. This is a natural process of coming down from a big high. The trouble is that you have to resist this pressure to ignore the last element because that

“This is a natural process of coming down from a big high.”

is where the learning takes place, the value is realized and any hidden problems are identified. The positive force required at this stage is one of perseverance, just to hold on to the end and celebrate the success of the change. Two key themes are considered here:

- The need to help the client ‘Look Back and Learn’ – so as to ensure that the outcome has been delivered and that learning has been gleaned along the way, both of which will have a profound impact on the sustainability of the change.
- Collaborative Coaching is founded on the principle of sustainable change not short-lived satisfaction. As such the coach must test to ensure that the client is able to ‘Fly Solo’ before disengaging and moving on.

These seven stages and 14 tools form the Collaborative Coaching model seen in Figure 5.2.

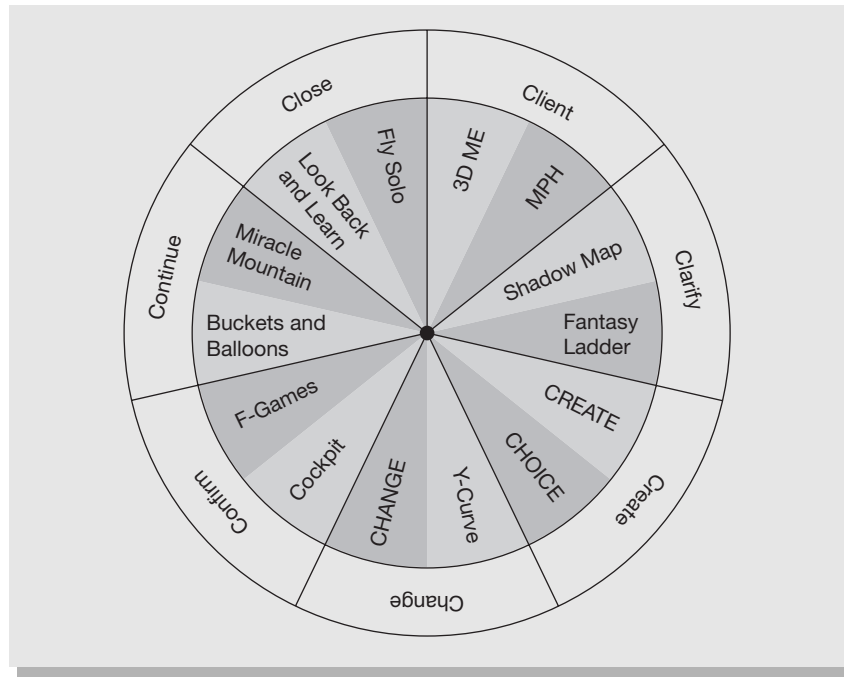


Figure 5.2 Full Collaborative Coaching framework

In the rest of the book we will go through each of the stages and tools on a step-by-step basis. A key part of each stage will be the questions presented at the end. Again, the questions should not be seen as the 'right' way of doing it, they are just questions you might use. Successful coaching will be based on your ability to internalize the tools and frame questions that work for you and help the client – not simply use the stock or standard questions that are included in the book.

Following the framework

In essence the Collaborative Coaching idea uses a seven-stage model where each stage consist of two core tools. This gives us the following tools to use when working with a client:

32 The Seven Cs of Coaching

<i>Client</i>	<i>Clarify</i>	<i>Create</i>	<i>Change</i>	<i>Confirm</i>	<i>Continue</i>	<i>Close</i>
■ 3D ME	■ Fantasy ladder	■ CREATE	■ Y-Curve	■ Cockpit	■ Buckets and Balloons	■ Look Back and Learn
■ MPH	■ Shadow Map	■ CHOICE	■ CHANGE	■ F-Games	■ Miracle Mountain	■ Fly Solo

In considering these various stages and models it is important to reinforce that the Collaborative Coaching pattern is not a mechanistic, linear, sequential pattern. It is not a case that you start at stage 1 with tool one and work your way religiously around the framework. The model is and never ever should be a rigid methodology that has to be followed. It is there as a framework that should aid the process rather than drive it. Because of this there is no right start point (you could start the coaching journey at any stage), there is no right tool (use any tool in any stage and if the tool doesn't work then throw it away and use one that does), and the framework is not bounded (these are just 'some' tools, not 'the' tools).

Be prepared to experiment and play with the stages, the tools and the order in which they are applied. The whole point of having a shared framework is to aid the collaborative process, so that either client or coach can suggest a diversion and if the diversion proves fruitless, it is easy to return to the

“Be prepared to experiment and play with the stages.”

original start point. If the client starts off by saying, 'I have a big problem', ask them, 'How do you know?' In this way you are making a choice to start at the Confirm stage – because that seems to be where the client is starting. If, however, they start by saying, 'I can never get this thing to work', the suggestion is that they have naturally moved to the Continue stage – so stick with them. Ask them about the times when it hasn't worked, why it hasn't worked and what the real issue might be. Doing this allows you to naturally move into the Client stage and so begin a deeper diagnostic process.

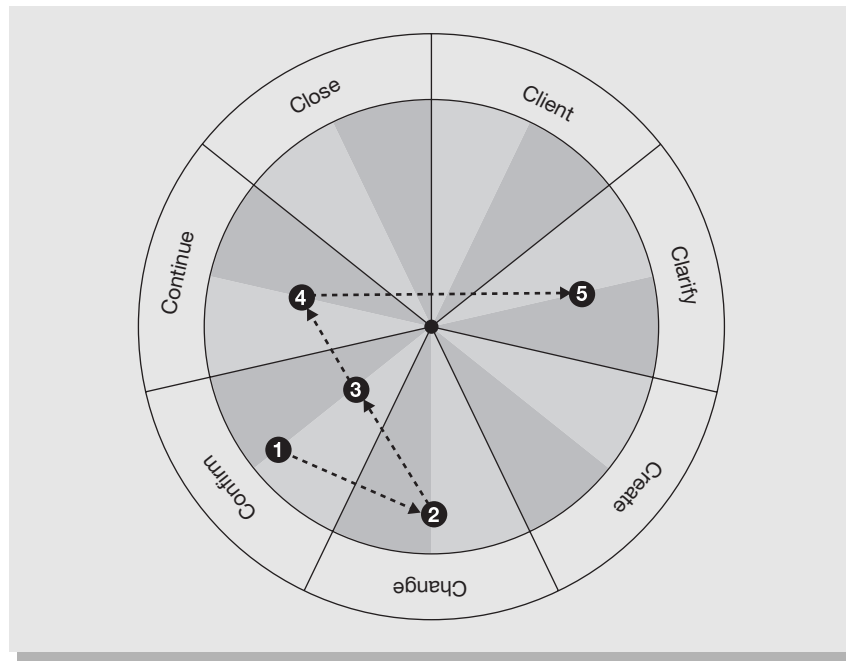


Figure 5.3 Flexible flow

For example, in Figure 5.3 the coach and client have spent the first part of the engagement focusing on a range of tools from the backend of the wheel. The flow went something like: (1) What makes you think you have a problem? (2) What is the change you tried to make? (3) How do you know it didn't work? (4) How long did it last for? (5) Why do you think it didn't work?

John's journey

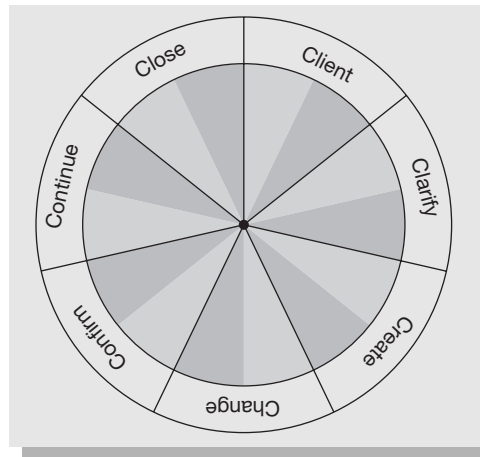
Taking the principle indicated in the previous section that education precedes action – Julie now sought to help John understand the journey they would be embarking on.

Julie built this around a three-stage approach. The first stage was to give John a series of questions to think about prior to a meeting. These questions are designed to put the onus on the client to think through and prepare thoroughly for the first coaching session. (NB: this set of

questions can be found in the Client Pre-work section later in the book.) John found the questions really challenging and felt that he could answer properly only 75 per cent of them. For Julie this was fine because John spent time thinking about the issues and uncovering the questions he couldn't answer, thus helping her to understand areas where exploratory time should be allocated.

The second stage was to take John through an overview of the 7Cs model. At this stage all Julie focused on was the outline model; she did not get into the specific tools that might be applied in each of the stages. John felt that this description really helped him to understand what he would be doing within the coaching engagement. What encouraged Julie was the fact that John was a willing and able student, but also he challenged the model and questioned why certain topics were being covered and why others were not included.

The final stage was to build an engagement plan using the 7Cs framework. The idea was to establish an outline structure of what stages would be covered and when. By doing this they were able to anticipate the likely meeting dates and duration. On a practical level this allowed John to match any key points in the process with his personal diary so as to ensure that he would not be in a position where he would need to cancel a meeting because of work commitments.



7Cs wheel