
Confidence

People have a presence when their outer behavior and appearance conveys confidence and authenticity and is in sync with their intent. It is about being comfortable and confident with who you are and allowing your real self show up.

This is a large part of coaching presence as it helps create a special and strong bond between coach and client.

According to the International Coach Federation (ICF), the coaching competency referred to as Coaching Presence is:

The ability to be fully conscious and create a spontaneous relationship with the client, employing a style that is open, flexible and confident.

This means the coach:

1. Is present and flexible during the coaching process, dancing at the moment.
2. Accesses own intuition and trust one's inner knowing—"goes with the gut."
3. Is open to not knowing and takes risks.
4. Sees many ways to work with the client and chooses at the moment what is most effective.
5. Uses humor effectively to create lightness and energy.
6. Confidently shifts perspectives and experiments with new possibilities for own action.
7. Demonstrates confidence in working with strong emotions and can self-manage and not be overpowered or enmeshed by the client's emotions

Understanding your value

For new coaches, one of the biggest blocks to confidence is doubt in oneself. We may be worried that we might not have enough experience or education. We might feel like a fraud in some ways. Or what if, at some point in the session, we don't have an answer, or don't know what to say?

So here's the message for you: YOU HAVE A LOT TO OFFER! Even without specific skills and background, here are some of the wonderful things that you may already provide:

Listening: Not many people really listen. Good listeners are few and far between. Most people practice the art of waiting for someone else to stop speaking so that they can have their turn. Really listening is a fantastic service to provide.

Providing structure: It's amazing how much someone will get done when they know someone will ask them next week: "How did you do?" By being there – across the table or on the other end of the phone – you're helping them focus their attention on what is important in their life. You are supported.

Partnering in their success: Many people run with a running partner. Without their partner, they might not run as far, or even at all. However, with a partner, their attention is focused on running. Partnering with someone in his or her success is a powerful service to offer.

A sounding board: Hearing ourselves speak out loud takes our thoughts to another level. Speech brings thoughts out into the open and allows us to 'test' our ideas/thoughts. It also helps us to hear them in a different way as the coach repeats back to us what we have just said. Putting ideas into words helps them become clearer. As they speak, clients get clarity about an issue. There can be value for them in simply speaking aloud whatever has been in their mind all week. Stating an idea, dream or vision gives it life.

A different perspective: We all have “blind spots”: aspects of our lives that we can’t see clearly because of habit, emotions or being too close to the situation. Often when we get a different perspective on our lives, it comes from someone who, in turn, has their own particular take on the issue based on their habits, emotions and relationship with us. Having someone who is both an objective third person and trustworthy is a winning combination.

Your life experience: No matter who you are, you’ve learned things that could be helpful to someone else. There are things you’ve learned along the way that will allow you to empathise with another. You can use your life experience to understand, listen, perceive, and help someone through a situation similar to yours.

Your prior training: You may have an education, therapeutic or HR background, taken more than a few professional development courses, read self-help books, earned a degree and spoken to groups of people. Undoubtedly, You have a very rich canvass of experiences and skills.

Re-framing and Confidence

How comfortable do you feel five minutes before a coaching session? How do you feel if it doesn’t go as planned? Are you comfortable enough to invite ALL of your friends and colleagues to experience a coaching session with you?

If you’re not, it may be because of your perspective. For example, if you feel that people have serious problems, which MUST be fixed, you might feel some pressure, or reluctance, even concern as a coach to move forward. Just as we support our clients to distinguish a perspective, and re-frame it, we invite you to do the same. You will know when you have made the mental shift because you will feel complete freedom to coach anyone.

First, you will need to find the perspective you are currently using so that you can then re-frame it. If you feel anxious about coaching, try to identify the messages that are going on in your head that are leading to this anxiety.

Here are some perspectives, which dis-empower:

- I MUST convince them I'm worthwhile and worthy
- I MUST keep them as a client
- I MUST make sure I get them as clients
- If I don't know what to say I'll look stupid
- I'm a fraud (they may think I am one)
- This client is counting on me! What if I let them down?
- If I give the wrong advice, I'll feel terrible
- What if, deep down, I'm really not a good coach or person?
- I don't know enough yet. One day I'll be a good coach
- I really hope I impress this person with my coaching

This last one is especially common. Notice how much attention you have on YOU and how you come across, instead of focusing on your client and what's best for them. This can limit your coaching presence and the success of the session.

The following are examples of re-framed perspectives that empower coaches:

- The client must live their life. I'll support them in the best way I can
- The client gets the credit for the work they do and is also responsible for their own actions
- I create value simply by being there, being present
- Every session is an exploration of possibilities
- I give up my need to look good
- How can I be of service in every moment?
- Life is fun! I'll remember that when I become too serious or significant
- I respect myself as a human being and as a coach. I know I'll do the best I can
- I trust that whatever happens with each client is for the best
- I give up my need to control everything and I am ready to be in the flow
- I will offer my coaching to EVERYBODY
- I'm going to have FUN in every session

With a perspective shift here, you can be more present at the moment, instead of feeling that you have to quickly do something and fix something, or feeling nervous about whether or not the coaching session will work out.

Here are some questions to consider:

- Can you sit with a client in silence?
- Can you hear a complaint and be still?
- Can you say to a client: “I don’t know?”
- Can you sit and create an intent for your coaching session or for your client?

These are all evidence of confidence and coaching presence. Coaching, like many of the so-called “human professions”, requires a high level of physical, emotional and spiritual health. If we are feeling low, we might find it hard to maintain enough emotional reserves to really be present for clients. If we are feeling physically unwell we might find it hard to muster the energy to listen intently for the length of the coaching session.

Trust yourself and continue to move forward. Ensure you have a support team working with you to achieve the success that you wish. This means, of course, getting a coach.

Reflection

1. Who do you know who feels completely free to coach? What is their perspective? What is yours?
2. What is your purpose as a coach and how will you achieve this? Write up an action list in your self-development plan.

How does a coach develop confidence and presence?

The following are key activities that develop a coaching presence:

1. Developing the practice of observation, becoming mindful with the use of meditation practices, e.g. focusing on breathing.
2. Developing self-awareness. By paying attention to ourselves in the coaching relationship we can become aware of things that get in the way of being fully present and work to address them. This requires a practice of self-reflection as well.
3. Supervision. This is key to developing and sustaining our presence. Regular supervision by a masterful coach helps us understand when and how we are present and how to deepen this in our practice. We have the benefit of regular and objective feedback.
4. Grounding and centring your body. Unless we are grounded and fully settled in our bodies we cannot truly be present and achieve a kind of flow. Somatic practices such as developing awareness of our bodies will help a coach become present.
5. Creating an ideal coaching environment helps in the grounding process. Limited distractions, calming or focused artwork and a comfortable supportive chair can support our effort to be present and in the flow.

Most importantly, a coach is always working to be fully present and engaged. It's a skill to develop – to be spacious in your listening and be in full connection with your client.

Reflection

1. What can you do to further develop your coaching confidence? Is there a perspective that is limiting it? If so, what is it and how can you reframe it?
2. How will you know your coaching presence is growing incompetency? What will you notice, experience or have?

Resource

[An Approach to Coaching on Presence](#)

A coach's presence and explore its impact upon the coaching relationship and how this is developed.

[Presence-Based Coaching: Cultivating Self-Generative Leaders](#)

[The Power of Presence and Intentional Use of Self: Coaching for awareness, Choice, and Change](#)