

Football Field

Paper 3 - Coach For Life Program

ICF Competency 7 --- Direct Communication - Ability to communicate effectively during coaching sessions, and to use language that has the greatest positive impact on the client.

Sub Competency 5 --- Uses metaphor and analogy to help to illustrate a point or paint a verbal picture.

Think of a ground 100 meters by 70 meters. That is difficult to visualise.

Now, visualise a football field. That is simple.

In many situations data does not work. Instead pictures, metaphors, stories, analogies have great use for coaches. Because they cut through the programmed networks and evoke visuals which are easy to associate with, and to recall. They influence thinking in new ways and show clients things that they may not see through conventional means. In the hands of a coach they can be used for creating goals, moving clients to action, creating awareness, celebrating success and much more.

Here are some that I have sparingly used in coaching situations. They are presented along with follow up enquiries. Their value has increased tremendously for me while articulating them – and now I find them worthy of much greater use.

1. Driving a Car – For explaining coaching and establishing the agreement

Let's say you wanted to learn to drive a car

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- **Therapist**, the therapist would help you find out what might be holding you back from driving the car. He would delve into your past to discover what kinds of experience you have had with automobiles.
- **Consultant**, the consultant would bring you an owner's manual and tell you everything you ever wanted to know about the workings of a car. The consultant would then leave you. He might return six months later to see how you had managed the actual driving part.
- **Mentor**, the mentor would share his experiences of driving cars and the wisdom and lessons he learnt in his experience
- **Manager**, will assess if you know how to drive, send you to a training program, set a target to reach, remove obvious obstacles & then rate you on performance.
- **Coach**, the coach would seat you in the car, place himself in the passenger seat, and encourage, endorse, acknowledge and support you until you felt comfortable enough to go it alone.

2. Habits and Flyovers – For encouraging new behaviour with a future focus

Habits are hardwired neural networks. They were, perhaps, useful at one time but have outlived their utility. How to change them? Changing them is far easier when create new habits rather than tinker with old ones. Imagine a road in a crowded city. You cannot change or repair it. It is always crowded not allowing time for repairs. The route cannot be altered because all around it are buildings. If you try to dig it up you disturb a lot of other infrastructure. Building a new flyover is far easier. It takes some time and effort but once it is ready the old road simply falls into disuse.

- a. *What are the roads that you are walking that have become crowded (which are your habits that were useful some time in the past)?*
- b. *What are the flyovers that you build (what new behaviour can you exhibit)?*
- c. *What is needed to build the new road (space & resources that you need to create a new route)?*
- d. *Are you willing to live through the dust and grime of a new construction (change can cause discomfort)?*
- e. *How much time will the new construction realistically take?*

3. Vacations and Goals - for setting goals & measures and celebrating success

Getting to your goals is the same as going on a vacation.

- a. *Scout for a destination, talk to family members, read up on costs, check weather etc – figure out what is important for you*
- b. *Decide on a destination – get a goal*
- c. *Plan the form of transport and route – plan the actions needed*
- d. *On the journey look at milestones to see how much have you moved – set up measures to check progress so that you have a sense of movement*
- e. *Take breaks to make journey comfortable – celebrate the smaller successes on the way so that everyone feels good*
- f. *If there are hold ups make a new route – make mid course corrections but do not give up and back down from goals*
- g. *Arrive and settle down for your vacation – congratulate people on a job well done*
- h. *Start planning your return journey – start looking for the next goal*

4. Looking Through a Telescope – for getting a correct perspective of tasks

When you look at anything through a telescope it looks larger than life – even scary.

- a. *Are you looking at your new challenge through a telescope?*
- b. *What would it look like if you turned the telescope around?*

5. Changing on a Treadmill – for understanding, accepting and adapting to velocity of change

Almost all corporate jobs demand a punishing schedule and the need to constantly push the envelope. It is like being on a treadmill with an exercise program running. Except that you do not always decide the content of that program. And what is even more challenging is that you are expected to change your clothes while continuing to walk!

- a. *Can you get a better sense of the program that is running you i.e understand your environment?*
- b. *Can you practice changing the length of your steps to match the program better i.e change some patterns in your work style?*
- c. *Can you wear lighter clothes i.e don't carry baggage and get flexibility?*

6. The Map and the Ground - for understanding and accepting the reality

During the war there was an ace pilot with exceptional skills. He also had an unerring eye for detail and was selected for the most critical and difficult missions. One of these missions involved landing at a remote place in enemy territory to pick up some soldiers who were trapped in the area. His navigator was a crusty veteran of many years. As they flew to their destination there was heavy fog. One hour into the flight and it was time to land at an unused airstrip. The navigator was a little unsure about the location. The pilot was confident of his sense of location. He descended quickly and seeing a strip landed there. There were no soldiers. He turned to the navigator and said the soldiers are late I am sure the map is correct. The old navigator just smiled and said the map is wrong if it does not agree with the ground.

- a. *what is your mind map saying ?*
- b. *what is the ground reality?*
- c. *What do you need to do work with the reality and not your mind map?*

7. Bird's Eye – For bringing focus to the fore

This is a story from the Geeta. Most Indian's are familiar with this story. And it has a great relevance for coaches.

Guru Dronacharya decided to test his students in their skill of archery. He hung a wooden bird from the branch of a tree and then summoned his students. He asked the first one to aim for the bird's eye but not shoot just yet. He then asked the student what the student could see. The student replied that he could see the garden, the tree, flowers, etc. Drona asked him to step aside and not shoot. He repeated the same process with a few other students. When it was Arjuna's turn, Arjuna told his Guru that the only thing he could

see was the bird's eye. This satisfied the Guru and he allowed Arjuna to shoot the bird.

- a. What are you looking at today – what is the bird's eye for you?*
- b. Is there anything else next to the eye?*
- c. What can we do to take it out from our vision – similar to the clearing exercise that we do at the start of the session*
- d. Does this happen often for you?*
- e. Are there things on which focus is easy and others where the focus is lost?*

8. The Lost Key – For keeping the context

This is a Sufi tale.

Late one night a man was walking home when he came across the Mullah Nasrudin on his hands and knees underneath a street light, apparently searching for something on the ground.

'What are you looking for, Mullah?' the man asked as he approached. 'I'm searching for the key to my house,' replied Nasrudin, still on his hands and knees. 'Let me help you,' replied the man, and he quickly got down on all fours next to Nasrudin and started scouring the dirt next to him, underneath the street light.

After a few unproductive minutes, the man asked, 'Nasrudin, where exactly did you drop your key?'

The Mullah pointed behind him into the dark street, 'Over there, in my own house.'

'Then why on earth are you looking for it here?' asked his companion, incredulously.

'Because there is more light here than in my own house,' replied the Mullah.

- a. What are you searching for? What is important for you today?*
- b. Are you looking at the right place?*
- c. Is there anything else which will open the door?*
- d. Can anyone support you in looking for the key?*
- e. What would happen if you do not find the key?*

9. The Consultant and the Fisherman – for linking actions to values

This is story that has done many rounds on the Internet.

A management consultant, on holiday in a African fishing village, watched a little fishing boat dock at the quayside. Noting the quality of the fish, the consultant asked the fisherman how long it had taken to catch them.

"Not very long." answered the fisherman.

"Then, why didn't you stay out longer and catch more?" asked the consultant.

The fisherman explained that his small catch was sufficient to meet his needs

and those of his family.

The consultant asked, "But what do you do with the rest of your time?"

"I sleep late, fish a little, play with my children, have an afternoon's rest under a coconut tree. In the evenings, I go into the community hall to see my friends, have a few beers, play the drums, and sing a few songs..... I have a full and happy life." replied the fisherman.

The consultant ventured, "I have an MBA from Harvard and I can help you..... You should start by fishing longer every day. You can then sell the extra fish you catch. With the extra revenue, you can buy a bigger boat. With the extra money the larger boat will bring, you can buy a second one and a third one and so on until you have a large fleet. Instead of selling your fish to a middleman, you can negotiate directly with the processing plants and maybe even open your own plant. You can then leave this little village and move to a city here or maybe even in the United Kingdom, from where you can direct your huge enterprise."

"How long would that take?" asked the fisherman.

"Oh, ten, maybe twenty years." replied the consultant.

"And after that?" asked the fisherman.

"After that? That's when it gets really interesting," answered the consultant, laughing, "When your business gets really big, you can start selling shares in your company and make millions!"

"Millions? Really? And after that?" pressed the fisherman.

"After that you'll be able to retire, move out to a small village by the sea, sleep in late every day, spend time with your family, go fishing, take afternoon naps under a coconut tree, and spend relaxing evenings having drinks with friends..."

- a. What is your goal? Building the business empire or having a satisfied life?*
- b. Is your goal aligned with your values?*
- c. What will happen when you get to your goal?*
- d. What / who has influenced your goals?*
- e. Are your short term / long term goals consistent?*

10. The Starfish

Another one from the Internet

One day a man walking on a beach saw a boy picking up something and throwing it into the sea. He asked the boy what was he doing. I am throwing starfish into the sea. The tide is going out and they will die. The man laughed and told him that there are thousands of them. You cannot make a difference

he added. The boy just picked up one threw it into the sea and said “ I made a difference to that one.”

- a. In what way are small actions useful?
- b. Can your goal be broken up into small chunks?
- c. Is the task that you are doing trivial for you but life changing for someone else?
- d. What value would you ascribe to your task?
- e. How can you keep your resolve going even when the task is big?

11. You as a Ship

This is reproduced from the website thecoachingsource.com. It is extremely comprehensive.

What if you were a ship?

- a. Where would you be going? (General direction – long term port)
- b. How accurate are all of the instruments for ascertaining location? (How well tuned is your ability to understand and be clear about where you are?)
- c. How accurate are the instruments you use to detect threats? Weather, pirates, underwater obstacles?
- d. What ports are you welcome at? (Where are you supported, where can you go to re-fuel/re-group? what is your community, where are you most comfortable?)
- e. Who is your crew (Who works on your behalf? Who are your friends?)
- f. What kind of ship are you? (What is your purpose? I.e.: pleasure, work, save the whales, generate income)
- g. How strong is your hull?
- h. Are you part of a fleet? (What are your roles in life?)
- i. How many lifeboats do you have? (Are you prepared for contingencies at all times?)

More food for thought:

The things that you tolerate in life are like barnacles on a ship: one or two is no problem, a couple of hundred are a huge problem. The moment, at which the barnacle situation crosses over from being a slight “drag” to being a factor in fuel efficiency and speed, the ships need to be dry docked for a scrub down and overhaul. Everyone needs a couple of scrub down days per year to keep the ship barnacle free. Stowaways can also be a metaphor for Tolerations or crossed boundaries.

Finally:

The larger and stronger the ship, the longer it takes to turnaround. Often people think they need a 180-degree turnaround when what they really need is a tiny adjustment in course, which over time and distance makes a radical difference in where they end up. Dramatic change is often difficult, costly and not particularly useful. A small shift makes a big long term difference.