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choice

the magazine of professional coaching



Coaching Healthcare Leaders

Navigating the chaos to bring
out the best in its people

Coaching the
Care Givers

How Providers
Become Leaders

Physician,
Heal Thyself

Deep Connection

Coaching through intersubjectivity

What impact do we humans have on each other's lives? Would any of us really be different without each other? The answer is arguably yes. There are reams of research that tell us the benefits of connection in human development from babies to the elderly as well as the sick and impaired, etc. But why is this? What is happening to us when we get together?

According to Christian de Quincey in his book, *Radical Knowing*, when we engage with one another, we are sharing meaning and presence. Through our communication, either linguistically or through signals and empathy, we are actually sharing a state of being.

De Quincey, a professor of Consciousness Studies at John F. Kennedy University, speaks of this as 'intersubjectivity,' the state of two sentient beings sharing the same subjective state of consciousness. He goes on to propose that through the relationship that develops between two sentient beings, we develop a different state of consciousness or being. In short, we are actually co-creating a different level of being for ourselves and each other.

Do you find this fascinating, or does it seem a bit farfetched or woo-woo? Or maybe you are one of those who are saying, "of course that's what happens!" In any event, it is why I do the coaching work that I do.

This deep connection happens when we move from our subjective perspective of the experience toward the other's point of view of the situation.

As humans, we are conditioned early in our lives to 'fit into' our culture, religion, tribe, etc. This conditioning often results in suppressing our ability to perceive a deeper, more authentic, level of self. Because we are taking on behaviors that often mask what we are authentically feeling, we block the possible intersubjective state we might experience in relationships.

When we connect to our deepest, most conscious state, something happens. We experience a more complete aspect of ourselves. From that place we can engage with others in a powerful way that includes another level of communication



and connection. Once we recognize and are able to duplicate these interactions we can learn how to coach from that place, creating an entirely different evolution of possibility for relationships with others, including our clients.

This deep connection happens when we move from our subjective perspective of the experience toward the other's point of view of the situation. As a result of this understanding, the other person (or client) moves into a different state as well; one where trust is high and expression is freer. There is a meeting in the middle forming yet another state of being that includes both you and the other person; that's what we are calling intersubjectivity.

Although I've been a coach for over 20 years, my coaching took an evolutionary turn when I began interacting with others from this place of intersubjectivity. From this perspective it is possible to uncover powerful places that have been unconscious for much of our lives, giving us more to work with in relationship.

This state of being enables us to recognize and integrate these unconscious feelings, memories and emotions into our consciousness in life and work. Karla McLaren's book, *The Language of Emotions*, helps us know that our body and emotions have answers that our current, and often unconscious, perception can't grasp. Connecting with others energetically, physically, emotionally and spiritually gives us access to our whole selves. From this place of interaction, we experience intersubjectivity and all of the possibilities this state of consciousness and being offers.

Masterful coaching is a beautiful example of the intersubjectivity that happens between coach and client. Coaching from this place of shared consciousness is communication and connection at its best. It is a powerful way to partner with others and create value for our clients through using our whole selves. ●