

Reproduced with the permission of choice Magazine, www.choice-online.com

Reproduced with the permission of choice Magazine, www.choice-online.com

choice

the magazine of professional coaching

Impact!

How coaching
is making a
difference

Coaching for
Rapid Impact

Gardening
for Growth

Impacts from
Coaching
TED Fellows

Coaching from the Heart

By Lisa Murrell, PCC, BCC

Coaching from the heart requires connection with all aspects of life, self and the coaching relationship. It involves specific skill sets and awareness. First you, as the coach, must have an intimate connection with your own heart before you can connect and empathize with your clients. This connection with self inspires a deeper level of awareness and reflection, setting the stage for coaching from the heart.

Although the phrase ‘Coaching from the Heart’ may be familiar, it is much more than a euphemism. The heart’s Electromagnetic Field (EMF) is actually 5,000 times greater than the Electromagnetic Field of the brain and can be detected anywhere on the surface of the body. This means that we actually experience life *through our heart* before we cognitively process what is happening to us. Many coaches are accustomed to working with Level III Listening. I call this interaction through the heart’s Electromagnetic Field, Level IV Listening! Coaching with this awareness is coaching with the most powerful rhythmic field produced by the human body: the Heart Field, according to research at the Institute of HeartMath.

Coaching from the heart is not just a poetic description of powerful and connected coaching. It is coaching using our entire bodies as a sensory device and recognizing that information as a powerful tool in supporting our clients to embrace their own wisdom. Following are some of the skills that facilitate coaching from the heart:

1. Emotions as Information – Emotions are our body’s inherent intelligence and communication system with our brains. Somatic sensation and the limbic system connect with the brain for cognitive interpretation. In other words, they have something to tell us.

Before the development of the neo cortex, our reptilian brains received information from the environment through our heart’s EMF. However, for cognitive-dependent humans, much of this information remains unconscious. This means that our hearts and bodies actually have information that our brains do not. Coaching from the heart includes awareness of emotions, and through the coaching process, helping our clients ‘re-member’ these feelings to help them find their own answers that they cannot find from only *thinking* about them. Understanding the messages behind our emotions is critical to coaching from the heart.

2. Emotional Agility – Emotions don’t often follow a linear



process and have the propensity for taking over a situation, both for the coach and the client. Therefore, as coaches, we must have what I call ‘emotional agility’: the ability to sit in uncomfortable emotions without *reacting, judging or analyzing*, sense and flow with the emotions of others, *without external or internal reactions* and discern any information they may have for us and the coaching conversation.

Here is a simple process you can follow to develop emotional agility. In a coaching conversation from the heart, this goes for both you and your client simultaneously:

- Be fully aware of what is going on around you.
- Feel your feelings and emotions in response to what is happening.
- Interpret the wisdom and messages behind these emotions.
- Respond accordingly.

3. Awareness of your Shadow Self – When I speak about shadow, I am referring to aspects of ourselves that are *hidden*, not ‘bad’. I call this ‘shadow wisdom’: those unrecognized and unaccepted aspects of ourselves that hold important wisdom – wisdom that when acknowledged, often leads to self-love and fulfillment.

Coaching from the heart involves helping the client to ‘re-discover’ those parts of themselves that support them to find their own answers. To do this successfully requires using emotion as information and emotional agility as well as recognizing our own shadow and the part it can play in coaching! ●