

# TRANSCEND



## Coach Training at Transcend

### Our Approach

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# COACH TRAINING AT TRANSCEND

**Dedicated to helping cultivate performance, effectiveness, resilience, mental balance and exceptional well-being**

Coaching is a series of collaborative one-to-one learning conversations that facilitate improved performance through development and strengthening of optimal behaviours. Transcend coaches use leading edge, multidisciplinary, evidenced-based adult learning frameworks in a systematic and creative process of setting appropriate goals, exploring options, discovering / challenging limiting beliefs / assumptions, taking “skillful” action and reflecting on learnings. Coaching clients improve both their personal and organisational effectiveness through cultivating **exceptional emotional and mental balance**, thereby benefiting both the individual and their organizations.

## 1 BACKGROUND

The International Coach Federation defines coaching as “*partnering with clients in a thought-provoking and creative process that inspires them to maximize their personal and professional potential*”. That is a pretty broad definition and leaves a lot unsaid, especially about the “how” coaches go about helping people.

Transcend’s approach to coach training is particularly geared to equipping coaches to help their clients respond adaptively to the challenges of what might be termed as the “PAID” (Pressured, Always-on, Information-overloaded, Distracted) reality (Hougaard, Carter, & Coutts, 2016, p. x) <a consequence of the VUCA (Volatile, Uncertain, Complex, Ambiguous> world in which we live). These conditions are in turn the result of profound and simultaneous changes in the systemic complexity (including demographic, social, cultural, technology, governance, consumer expectations, natural, regulatory and so on. What it all amounts to is profound, continuous and accelerating **change** which in turn creates a sense of “overwhelm” and, perhaps, threat for many of us! We can no longer rely on spiral-bound operations manuals or even previous “case studies” to solve many of the challenges we face today and will face tomorrow. People who are “adaptive” (see below), aren’t threatened by this, but are more likely to see opportunity and possibility rather than threat and limitation.

### 1.1 ADAPTIVE V TECHNICAL CHALLENGES

According to Harvard’s leadership guru Ron Heifetz (Heifetz, Grashow, & Linsky, 2009), “.....the single biggest failure of leadership is to treat **adaptive challenges** like **technical problems**.....”. This is particularly true today due to the challenges mentioned above.

What do we mean by this and why this such a profound observation?

#### 1.1.1 TECHNICAL PROBLEMS

A technical problem is relatively easy to identify and straightforward to work out the path to its solution. The problem or something similar has been seen before and can normally be solved by a leader or content-expert, applying or strengthening skills and knowledge. Some may require a change in just one local place, while other may extend to the furthest organizational boundaries. People are generally receptive to technical problems because they recognize the need and solutions can be implemented easily. Find a subject matter expert, learn some skills and its done. Technical problems, then, are those which are “*outside*” of the individual, can be solve by a skill which, generally, can be applied by an expert without “*internal*” interference getting in the way.

A simple example of a “technical problem” might be learning how to drive, become an airline pilot or, perhaps even, a heart surgeon. Success is a matter of strengthening, through practice, a skill to become

more and more competent. There is limited “emotional component” (internal) involved which might or interfere with the acquisition or the use of the skill in the “moment-of-choice”.

### 1.1.2 ADAPTIVE CHALLENGES

Adaptive challenges are more difficult to identify as they tend to be “*internal*” rather than external in nature. They often require a change in values, beliefs, roles, relationships, ways of thinking about things, or approaches to work. In adaptive challenges, people who have the problem often do the work of solving it. Using our language, adaptive challenges require shifts in the way the mind “makes meaning” or “sense” of events that happen on the outside.

An example of an **adaptive challenge** might be the shift from geographic reporting line structures to matrix structures in organisations, or, perhaps, learning to receive feedback as a gift rather than as a threat. People often resist changes associated with adaptive challenges because the changes required might make them feel threatened or unsafe in some way. They often may not even know why

Many if not most of the challenges we need to deal with today have an adaptive component. Adaptive challenges permeate all areas of our lives from improving relationships, dealing with difficult conversations and learning to make and negotiate requests to learning to deal with self-limiting beliefs which prevent us moving forward in the direction of the things we really care about.

Solutions to adaptive challenges require a shift to the way we “make sense” or “meaning” from phenomena appearing to our awareness. For example, how we make instant decisions about what is threatening or rewarding for us and then how we react to these. In other words, we may need to learn to “see things differently” in order to respond differently to change, threats or even simple distractions. It is this “sense-making” that creates emotions, thoughts and ultimately actions which may be either in or out of line with our goals.

Transcend’s coaching process helps clients determine where the outcomes they are looking for may require adaptive changes on their part. We help our clients develop long-term adaptive capacity so they can respond optimally not only to the presenting challenge but also to other adaptive challenges they meet along the way.

In other words, we help the client not only with specific coaching outcomes, but also with their “**development**” towards being “self-transforming”. In this way, we help our clients see opportunity where others see threat, see possibility instead of limitations and keep focused on valued directions rather than problems and anxieties. We help them to see, and work with, their internal **FAKE news** (False Appearances (to the mind) Keeping (us) Entangled).

## 1.2 WHAT IS “ADULT DEVELOPMENT”?

According to Harvard’s Kegan and Lahey (2016), “adult development” is the process by which human beings can become more expansive, less distorted, less egocentric, and less reactive over time. The process of development proceeds through a number of stages and leads to the ability to see reality as it actually is rather than what is immediately projected by the mind. Higher stages imply the ability to “respond optimally” rather than “react” on autopilot to situations arising. Higher stages of development imply more patience, presence, trust, ability to accept what needs to be accepted and keep attention focused on things that can actually be done, ability to let go of mindsets and emotions that interfere with progress, ability to see into others points of view and better integrate these without triggering automatic defensiveness.

Perhaps the most important consequence of development is acute self-awareness and consequent self-management arising from the ability to seek the gift of feedback with curious, non-reactive attention. They are not threatened, but rather are curious, about any “disruptive” feedback. People who have “attained” higher stages are resilient and unthreatened by the inevitability of change. They have self-efficacy and trust that they overcome challenges that life throws at them and simply do their best.

“Developed people” tend to be motivated by things which can actually contribute to their happiness and are more focused on how they “show up” than anything they might get in return. They “trust” that showing up, again and again, in service of what is “right” for them (rather than simply what makes them feel better in the moment) is more likely to lead to the outcomes they want, and if they don't, they are better able to let it go!

In short, individuals at “higher stages” are more likely to act in service of what is really important, not just right now but also in the longer term.

The good news is that excellent developmental coaching creates the conditions for accelerated development in situations where this is necessary for movement towards goals in a way that holds up across genders, cultures and social groups (Kegan & Lahey, 2016).

## 2 STAYING “ON-TRACK”

### 2.1 THE ROLE OF GOALS

It has become evident that being adaptive and responsive to the reality of overwhelm and change so we can stay on track with the outcomes we want is the golden key that unlocks our ability to be at our best, even when the going gets tough! For this to happen, the changes, opportunities and stresses being presented to us need to be seen for what they are. At the simplest level, happiness and professional success arises from our ability to:

1. Discover or otherwise identify what is important to us (the results / outcomes we would like to have),
2. Connect to the “why” of these results, why is this important to us?
3. Work out what are the steps on the path to these results,
4. Understand and apply, in key “moments of choice”, **all of our available and appropriate resources**. These can include, of course, skills, behaviours, knowledge, experience and strengths but also mental, relational, environmental and systemic resources at the **right time** and in the right **context**.
5. At the same time, we may need to understand, as best we can, what might “**interfere**” or get in the way of taking the necessary actions in the appropriate moments (“key moments of choice”) to move to the desired outcomes and rehearse various “response strategies” for those moments. As above, this interference can come from a number of domains (mental, behavioural, systemic and relational).
6. Note that, at any stage, it might be that increasing awareness and clarity arises to the extent that there is a “shift” in what a client may think is important. When this happens, goals and directions can change. A coach must be ready to notice and “re-contract” with the client so the program and sessions continue to follow the client’s agenda.

### 2.2 THE 2 RULES FOR “STAYING ON TRACK”

Sometimes, interference results because, for whatever reason, there has been a change in the relative importance of competing goals. During coaching, increases in clarity can lead a client to realise, for example, that they are unable or unwilling to do what it takes to meet a challenge or move towards a goal. Sometimes, it the client may become aware that moving towards goal A may imply the need to let go of goal B (even though goal B may not have originally been “conscious”).

In other cases, there has been no such shift in actual long term importance but, perhaps, there was an obstacle, a distraction or maybe simply a move towards a less important but perhaps apparently urgent short term accomplishment (e.g. checking email or WhatsApp messages) rather than taking the next step to progress something perhaps more important in the long term but requires being tolerant of “discomfort” or the giving up of immediate “pleasure”. Transcend’s process trains coaches with a

number of ways of helping their clients “focus on what they choose” and, “ensure that they choose the right thing”. Adapting from Potential Project ([www.potentialproject.com](http://www.potentialproject.com)) we call this “The 2 Rules for ‘Staying on Track’” (see also Hougaard et al. (2016)).

### 3 TRANSCEND’S APPROACH TO ADVANCED COACH TRAINING

As alluded to above, our approach is grounded in the following core principles:

That the basic job of a coach is to:

- Help a client to discover or clarify what they (really) want. Once this is done then goals can be set which lead towards desired outcomes (which may be big picture, such as “I would like to become more resilient to stress” or more molecular, such as “I would like to better be able say no when no is the appropriate response”. Developmental / transformational coaches will be alert for how changes to the way the client’s patterns of impulse, emotion, anxiety etc may derail or support their efforts to change in the ways necessary to achieve their goals and have the outcomes they want.
- Once a client is clear on what they want, then the coach’s role is simply to help the client to move forward. This sounds simple but in reality, there are many things that may prevent movement towards goals as is described below. Sometimes the issue is with the goal itself or the way that it has been articulated. Other times the goal is genuinely important and well formed but nonetheless the client may not take the necessary actions in “moments of choice”. Perhaps they keep being distracted by either physical distractions (common in the PAID reality). Perhaps they simply “forget” in the moment the steps they need to take or how they need to respond skilfully to cognitive / emotional matters (often arising subconsciously) which may arise in the moment to strip attention away from the goal, its benefits and the steps necessary. In such cases we need to help the client to pay attention, at the right time, to the right things, so that resilience arises and movement can be sustained. This requires knowledge of the mechanism of distractibility and ways to help the client deal with it.

#### 3.1 HELP DISCOVER / REFINE A WELL-FORMED GOAL (WHAT DO THEY WANT)

Help a client discover what outcome(s) they would like, why they would like it and what goals and actions support these (we call this “cultivating motivational balance”) (see 2.1 above). In other words, we help the client create a goal which is “well formed” and capable of inspiring movement in the “moment of choice”. Sometimes we need to help the client to establish a clear connection with what is meaningful for them about movement, connecting with underlying aspirations and values.

Sometimes, it becomes evident that the nature of the goal or how it has been defined is not driving the necessary action in the moment. Such goal related factors can include:

- Lack of clarity of the goal – the goal and the necessary actions may not be clear enough to be “available to the mind” at the moment when it is necessary to take the action. The goal may not have been defined in a way that makes it “actionable” in the moment. This is very common in busy environments where there is always something to do. In such conditions we may simply miss the opportunities to practice new behaviours or mindsets in service of what we want.
- The goal may not be meaningful or motivating enough to overcome short term obstacles to taking necessary action (see below). In this case it may not provide a powerful enough “motivating force” to overcome needs for short term gratification or discomfort avoidance.

#### 3.2 SUPPORT CLIENTS MOVEMENT IN THE DIRECTION OF WHAT THEY WANT

1. Once an initial “well-formed goal” is established, coaches are able to help the client build the various competencies (cognitive, behavioural, emotional, relational and systemic) together with, if needs be, underlying skills, so that they are able to take the necessary actions (2.1 above).

2. Helping the client create accountability and support structures so that they continue to take appropriate actions at the appropriate time (we call this self-transformation).

There can, of course, be many reasons why many are unable to achieve goals. Some of these reasons include those below:

Factors related to the nature of the goal itself.

These in turn might include

- The goal might require behaviours which create unforeseen consequences in other areas of work or life which one is also consciously (or unconsciously) committed to. A simple example may be where actions necessary for career success may conflict with actions necessary for happiness in other areas of life (e.g. family). In such cases choices need to be made which are best grounded in values. At the same time we need to be able to skilfully communicate (and potentially “negotiate” with others so they understand what we are prepared to do (or not do) in such contexts.
- It might be that the goal itself does not result in a source of happiness for the client, perhaps because in some way it conflicts with either a consciously held or subconscious value. Goals which are purely “material” in nature (such as I must be promoted by XXX or I must have XYZ wealth by ABC) are more likely to create dissonance in moments of choice as forcing such outcomes has a habit of undermining clients’ core values (e.g. such values as patience, kindness, presence) or other “derived / composite” “outcome values” such as health, family etc).
- On the other hand, there may be genuinely important matters which “come up” on the journey which were not anticipated at the initial WFG stage. This is perfectly normal and coaches need to allow the client space to continue to reflect on what is most important now.

## 4 ADVANCED FRAMEWORKS TO HELP CLIENTS REMAIN ON TRACK

Over the course of the course, our students become skilled in using a number of frameworks grounded in a variety of psychological models<sup>1</sup> in an “integrative” manner, so our students can help their client to develop in such a way that they can set goals skilfully and move towards outcomes they desire. We provide this interdisciplinary approach in recognition of the fact that people are different and respond to different interventions. In this way, the client can develop long term competency to be to remain adaptive to the rapidly changing conditions which characterise today’s work and personal lives.

This implies that the client can set goals capable of inspiring movement, and then to make the required movement steadily and inexorably, making changes as circumstances change and acting in all cases in accordance with that is the most important thing in the moment (being agile and adaptive as necessary).

### 4.1 THE 4 BALANCES FRAMEWORK

Transcend coaches help clients with this through, among other things, helping the client cultivate or strengthen what we call “The 4 Balances” (as adapted from Wallace and Shapiro (2006)). These are :

***Motivational Balance***

***Attentional Balance***

***Cognitive Balance and***

<sup>1</sup> Evidence Based Psychological Grounding : Narrative Psychology, Acceptance and Commitment Theory, Cognitive-Behavioural Theory, Constructive Adult Developmental Theory, Mindfulness-based Cognitive Therapy, Various neuroscience findings, Integral Theory, Positive Psychology, NLP, Rational-Emotive-Behavioural Theory

## *Emotional Balance*

### **4.1.1 MOTIVATIONAL BALANCE**

Motivational balance implies that there is an understanding of the nature of skilful goals and what supports these. A person who has strong motivational balance knows who they are as a person (in the context, for example, of what is really important to them in various contexts in both short, medium and long term. They are able therefore to make decisions which come from a place of depth, responsive to their values.

Motivationally balanced people (provided they are also imbued with the other balances as described later), know what they want and why. They can remember the benefits to self and others of the outcomes they would like. They know what they are prepared to “let go of” as they make choices of behaviour which lead to the outcomes they desire. They often have a strong sense of purpose and connection to values and their goals tend to be less “hedonic” (pursuit of short-term sensory pleasure) and more towards the “eudaimonic” (concerned with “bigger picture” matters which are in service of some greater benefit to something than simply their own pleasure) in their nature. From a neuroscientific point of view there is evidence of strength in connectivity in what Kathy Kolbe called the “conative circuit”. (Kolbe, 1990; Snyder, Shapiro, & Treleaven, 2012).

### **4.1.2 COGNITIVE BALANCE**

Achieving desired outcomes will require some actions from us in what we would call “moments of choice”. These actions will move us in the direction of the goals we have set along the path to the outcomes we are looking for.

Cognitive-behavioural and rational-emotional behavioural theory and the highly evidence-based interventions which arise from these are grounded in the idea that an individual’s neurological, emotional and behavioural response to the phenomenological world is:

- Often automatic (the mind will often make automatic decisions about what needs to be attended to in a particular moment relative to a particular situational context) and determined through the process of “salience” (Chen, Cai, Ryali, Supekar, & Menon, 2016).
- Involving an interplay of cognitions (mental processes) and emotions which synergistically combine to create the observed behaviour. Again, these interplays are often encoded into the brain in the form of “patterns” or “mental / emotional highways”.
- Related to a situation that triggers a set of conclusions or beliefs about the situation its consequences and impacts, and what we need to “do” about it (sometimes described as “coping strategies”). These conclusions and strategies had protective benefit to us at earlier stages in our lives and are often supported or driven by strong emotions which create immediate impulses to act in a particular way related to the situation which has arisen (Neenan, 2018, pp. 10-19).

Generally, the “stories” which drive these cognitions / emotions are not true and/or not relevant to our current situations / lives. When we are not aware of their presence, they unfortunately are able to exert powerful influences in the moment and derail our attempts to progress goals.

Having been “installed” early on in our lives when we were much more vulnerable, these patterns often run deep and, making matters worse, are often beneath our awareness (operating sub-consciously). The problem with this is that new behaviours necessary to achieve or move towards goals can be easily replaced in the moment of choice by these (often powerful, self-protective and hidden) cognitions and emotions. When this happens, we find (often later on) that we have, once again, missed the opportunity to execute the new strategy necessary to move towards our goals.

A mind which is able to “see” these processes operating in the moment and to keep the developmental (coaching) goal salient as appropriate is a mind which we would say is in “cognitive balance”. In other

words, cognitive balance implies that we are able to notice when our attention has been “hijacked” by an old pattern and to bring our mind back to “what is” rather than what is projected (by the mind).

### 4.1.3 ATTENTIONAL BALANCE

Attentional Balance is a precondition for behavioural change as it implies that we are able to know what we are about to do before we actually do it, so we may, if needs be, make a conscious adjustment which brings us back on track with what we **really** want.

Attentional balance is a quality of mind which, perhaps, is best correlated with what we describe as “actionable self-awareness”. Actionable self-awareness in turn has 2 main components:

1. Knowing what is in our mind and knowing what is in our “emotional field”, moment-by-moment (and particularly in those key “moments-of-choice” where we need to choose an appropriate (often novel) action in line with desired outcomes. We call this “immediate self-awareness”. AND...
2. Knowing our goals, values, commitments, desired outcomes, strengths, skills, knowledge and next steps towards these outcomes. We term this aspect “peripheral awareness” or “self-remembering”.

With the above 2 aspects of attentional balance we are able to make a conscious adjustment of attention if this is the “right thing to do” in the moment. Attention can remain oriented to outcomes, benefits to self and others of these, and all the resources available and necessary to support movement. Distractions which may come from physical (e.g. noise or other sensory phenomena) or cognitive / emotional phenomena will not trouble the attentionally balanced mind. They will be able to notice the “distraction” and move attention back to their resources. It is the coach’s job to help their client manage their attention and, indeed, it can be argued that this is what all excellent coaches (and also leaders and therapists) are actually doing without knowing it.

Strengthening attentional balance necessarily involves neuroplastic changes to important structures in the brain including the Insula Cortices (the seat of “interoception” and heavily involved in ‘telling’ the brain that “I am possibly off track”), the Dorsolateral Pre-frontal Cortex (dlPFC (the part of the brain which supports “doing the ‘right thing’ when the right thing is the more difficult thing” in the moment (e.g. giving up short term reward in favour of a possibly bigger reward later) and the “Anterior Cingulate Cortex”, sometimes known as the “error processing center” of the brain. It concludes whether we are off track or not and helps “switch attention” back to what is necessary.

Such interventions as mindfulness have been shown to develop these structures both in terms of their size AND the level of activity and connectivity with other parts of the brain. Transformative / developmental coaching, if skilfully executed, cultivates the physiological state and traits which correlate with mindfulness. Attentional balance, as defined above, is very similar to the state of awareness known as mindfulness.

### 4.1.4 EMOTIONAL BALANCE

Emotions are powerful drivers of behaviour and create very fast (often automatic) reactions borne of (often subconscious) predictions of how what is happening in the moment might impact on our future flourishing (Pally, 2007). “Afflictive” emotions, once triggered, create a cascade of physical (feeling) and psychological (thoughts) responses designed either to get away from (appraised) threat or move towards goals / (appraised) rewards (Ekman, 2007) - the little word “appraised” here is important, as often the threat that we are reacting to is, in fact, non-existent and the reward we think we are driving towards may not be a source of happiness or success for us – it behoves the coach to help the client to work out whether the appraisals they are making are actually accurate.

Emotional balance implies that we feel the emotions of ourselves, and others, without an immediate reaction. Emotional balance implies that we are able to insert a temporal space between stimulus. In this space we are able to insert a choice of response.

Emotional balance also implies that we are able to see emotions as being “physiological” rather than “existential” phenomena (Nummenmaa, Glerean, Hari, & Hietanen, 2014). We are able to notice the somatic component and how it is acting upon us to create cognition and behaviours in the moment. An emotionally balanced mind knows that “unskilful attention” to emotion (being “caught up” in the emotion – often termed the “Amygdala Hijack”, often leads to behaviour which is soon regretted.

Emotional balance implies the ability to notice the “spark before the flame”, get ahead of automatic reactions in favour of “wise” responses in line with who we really are and what we really want.

Our program introduces students to the theory emotion and to a number of tools, practices and exercises oriented to cultivating emotional self-awareness and self-management, resilience empathy and compassion, all of which are necessary both for the coach to help their clients with necessary developmental transformations and are also necessary for the client to develop and transform as needed. Emotions are the primary signal that there is something to look at. To pay attention to. Therefore the ability to be skilful with our own emotions and with the emotions of others is the key to self-management in service of our goals, relationships, values, success and, ultimately, long term flourishing.

## 5 CORE MENTAL STRATEGIES SUPPORTING THE 4 BALANCES

Changes necessary to meet developmental / transformational goals are not easy. The old patterns of thinking, feeling and doing are deeply “wired” and can be quite tenacious. The patterns which comprise our egos are also often protected by intense emotions which are, by design, meant to actually prevent change. Robert Kegan (2009) calls this phenomenon “The Immunity to Change” and it relates to the “subconscious, competing goals” we have which can interfere with our developmental or change goals. For example, the need to “always be seen to be clever” can interfere with our goals to be a better listener and fully allow others to express themselves.

Breaking the often subconscious mental habits that take us off track can be difficult as doing so requires different skills than those we are accustomed to using to solve everyday problems. In particular it requires awareness of the pattern and its consequences and at the same time remembering the goal, its benefits and steps. It also requires the application of one or more core mental qualities which help us, in the moment, to make wise choices in line with our values and goal. In other words, to do “the right thing” when, in the moment, that may have either been “forgotten” or is, in the moment, the more “difficult” thing (Sapolsky, 2017).

### 5.1 EXAMPLE

Imagine that you have a developmental goal to build the courage to speak up in meetings when you have something meaningful to contribute, rather than to hold back. The outcome desired is to show up as authentic and courageous person who is not afraid to say what needs to be said in service of the top level developmental outcome of cultivating “executive presence”.

In important meetings, you are afraid to speak up because you are concerned that your point may not be important. This “fear” is in turn driven by a subconscious competing goal (Kegan & Lahey, 2009) to “never say anything stupid” which is in turn driven by subconscious inferences and conclusions, such as, “...because if I say something stupid, they may think I AM stupid, and if they think I AM stupid then this will have a deleterious impact on my career and if that then ..... etc etc ... so – ultimately, I have a core belief that it is not safe to speak up because I am unable to bear the risk. I instead, sit in silence, but a silence tormented with self doubt, self-criticism and rumination; “why am I always like this”, which just makes matters worse as I am now attending more to this “mindstream” than to what is happening in the meeting !

1. Being aware that the pattern is running (or just about to begin to run). In many cases, we need to be

able to anticipate when the pattern is going to run so we can redirect our attention to the desired behaviour.

2. Applying the necessary “resource” to bring oneself back to what is really important to us. Sometimes this can simply be remembering the goal and the next step, sometimes it may be a value (i.e. How you want to “show up” in your life, or, what kind of person you want to be in that context, and sometimes it might be remembering one or another of the core mental qualities below (which, if well developed, underpin our ability to live in accordance with the values we aspire to and move towards the goals that they point to.
3. Having remembered the resource and applied the mental quality, we are much more likely to have the resilience to progress in the direction of our goals and manage obstacles (perceived or real) along the way.

Set out below are some of the core mental qualities that are thought to underpin our ability to do what we need to do so we can be who we would love to be (Hougaard et al., 2016; Kabat-Zinn, 2013).

## 5.2 PRESENCE

The ability to “stay with” tasks and resources as necessary to execute. It implies “knowing” what is in the mind and what might be distracting. Presence is the foundational mental skill underpinning all behavioural change.

## 5.3 PATIENCE

The ability to sit with discomfort / impulse without immediate reaction. Patience is a key skill for stepping off the “autopilot”, grounding focus, resilience and adaptability.

## 5.4 CURIOSITY

The ability to see things as they are rather than as they were or, more often than not, as we are! Being curious, we are able to separate the facts from mental “projections”. Curiosity and a “Beginner’s Mind” ground creativity, effective communication skills and are a precondition to change. Curiosity asks the question “...and what is about me that is causing me to react like that to this? What stories or hidden goals have me in their grip right now?...”. And with that question, we can move from reactivity to responsiveness.

## 5.5 ACCEPTANCE

The ability to know when our reactions to difficult situations make things worse. Acceptance enables us to know what to let go of vs. what calls for action. With the skillful cultivation of acceptance, we keep our attention on matters we can actually control or influence in service of what we are committed to. Resistance (the opposite of acceptance) puts us in “automatic mode” and prevents us from “letting go” of matters we cannot influence or, indeed, taking action on that which we can.

If nothing can be done, worrying and carrying around mental “baggage” cannot help. Move to a domain where something CAN be done, now or in the longer run.

## 5.6 LETTING GO / BE

Related to and following on from acceptance above. This is the ability to actually release unconstructive thought / emotional patterns which interfere with moving on our goals. It enables a redirection of mental resources to what is really important. This is related to attentional control and is mediated through brain structures such as the dlPFC (attentional control) and the tempo-parietal junction (goal orientation) as mentioned earlier. It is likely that great developmental coaching can strengthen this circuitry.

## 5.7 TRUST

Another pre-cursor to letting-go. Trust in this context means we allow ourselves to lean into the previous commitments we have made during the WFG process, in particular about what we might need to let go of in order to move towards our goal. The problem is the mind has a habit of forgetting these commitments and defaulting back to the old protective strategies, thereby taking us off track in the moment. We need to trust that the “stories” the mind is creating subconsciously that drive these patterns are either not true or are creating more dissatisfaction or unhappiness than if we were to simply let go of them. The stories tend to be about “safety” in the moment. They tend to be about minimising short term discomfort or maximising short term emotional or sensory pleasure. We need to bring conscious attention to a sense of “trust” that letting go of old, unconstructive, patterns is the most reliable way to obtain new, different, positive results.

Together with patience, acceptance, curiosity and letting go, trust grounds courage and resilience, which both imply the ability to move forward in the face of adversity, obstacles or even fear. At the same time these qualities prevent mindless stubbornness and support cognitive flexibility.

## 5.8 APPROPRIATE “JUDGMENT”

The ability to see how we automatically label and categorise events based on our previous experience and bias: such labels as “good/bad”, “appropriate/inappropriate”, “like/dislike”, “want/not want”. The ability to see how these automatic “categorisations” (also called “old reactive patterns or schema”) can hijack our attention and get in the way, then adjust as appropriate by seeing reality as it is.

## 5.9 POSITIVITY

The human mind, sadly, has an evolutionary legacy of negative bias. Positivity implies an understanding of how this may impact on our impulses in moments and implies the ability to see things from differing perspectives (psychologists call this “cognitive restructuring”). We our own negativity biases and to give voice to alternative, more positive interpretations of events (Seligman, 2012).

Cultivating positivity through understanding our default negative bias reduces stress, supports resilience and a “growth mindset”, improves outcomes and helps with “crucial conversations” among many other things (Dweck, 2008).

The ability to connect with the difficulties that others are having as they go about their work and lives. Knowing that others are “just like me” trying to do their best with the information they have.

## 5.10 COMPASSION / KINDNESS

Compassion and kindness cultivate an egoless self-confidence that is the key to enabling and inspiring others. They ground the elusive quality of “executive presence” as well as effective collaboration / communications.

# 6 MORE ON “HIDDEN GOALS”

Human beings are by nature “goal-oriented” creatures. Everything we do serves a goal which may be either explicit (we know what the goal is and our actions are consciously serving it), or implicit (the goal that is “driving” us in this moment is not known to us (first described by Robert Kegan – Professor in Adult Learning and Professional Development at Harvard Graduate School of Education – see

# 7 SOME TOOLS AND MODELS

Set out below are some of the tools and models you will be trained to use during your sessions and also with yourself for your own developmental journey. Please note this is not an exhaustive list!

- Topics of Concern (TOC) Tool
- Integral Model
- GROW
- T-GROW
- GROW on The Go
- Well-Formed Goal Model and Tools
- The Performance Formula
- The PROG model (Problem, Remedy, Outcome, Goal)
- Trust Model
- Transcend Values Pyramid
- Values Discovery Tools
- Transcend Values Cards and Worksheets
- Discovering limiting narrative
- Naming the stories
- Liberating from the Narrative
- Intake Documents
- The ONION Model of Development
- The “5 Elements” Model
- The ORACM (Outcomes Results Actions Choices Mental) Model and Tools
- ABC and ABCDE Model and Tools
- A Variety of Journaling Tools
- The 4 Balances
- The Emotional Episode Journal (and Diary)
- The DWQM Model and Journals
- Discovering Narrative Tool

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