



“Keep this book at your side
at all times! It’s everything
a great coach should be.”

Kim Morgan,
MCC and Director of Barefoot Coaching

The Transformational Coach

Free your thinking and
break through to coaching mastery

CLARE NORMAN

Shift 49

OLD MINDSET: You work for me

NEW MINDSET: We work together

In a boss–employee relationship, there’s an inherent power differential. If I use the word ‘subordinate’ in place of employee, it’s even more obvious. The boss has power over the employee, and as an employee, we usually learn to play that power-under role. Respecting our superior. Doing the work that our supervisor needs us to do. Following the leader’s lead.

In coaching, our relationship must be a relationship of equals. The power differential needs to disappear. As we’ve touched on previously, this can be tricky if we use words such as ‘coachee’ to describe the thinker. The ‘-ee’ denotes something being done to the coachee, that they’re on the receiving end of coaching and diminutive (Benjamin 2017). That’s partly why I like Nancy Kline’s (2002) term ‘thinker’ to describe them. Again as we’ve seen, a thinker holds the power and agency to think for themselves.

But thinkers may sometimes approach coaching as though you, the coach, are their superior. They give away their power to you, seeing you as the expert or the one to whom they should defer. This can be a symptom of their employed upbringing. If you pick up that mantle of power, equality and partnership are lost.

As a coach, you must start as you mean to continue, shepherding the process of creating a partnership, where you:

- ➔ both have a say about whether you are a good fit to work together
- ➔ contract together to co-create a thinking environment that works for you both, including boundaries around cancellation, no-shows, lateness, completion, etc.
- ➔ use ‘we’ language rather than ‘I and you’ when you are discussing your ways of working, e.g. ‘How shall we do this work together today?’
- ➔ ask them what they think you need to cover together, where they want to start and go next, what would be most valuable to them,

what they are taking away, rather than making those decisions for them

- ➔ are unattached to anything that you offer – a question, an observation, a piece of feedback – accepting their response, whatever that is and letting go of your need to prove yourself
- ➔ take responsibility for the process (with the thinker's input), while the thinker takes responsibility for the thinking
- ➔ keep yourself organised, while they keep themselves organised and on track
- ➔ stand side-by-side with them, without any sense of knowing best, curious about what they notice
- ➔ acknowledge their beliefs, values and progress rather than praising them, which is judgemental and holds power (see also Shifts 7 and 25).

Coach and thinker are equals, not superior and inferior, not knowing and unknowing. All these aspects of partnership allow you to share power and responsibility. You'll need to hold yourself to account for staying in an 'Adult' space, inviting the thinker into that same space (Berne 1964), so that they can fully account for themselves rather than discounting themselves – 'discounting' in this case defined by Schiff et al. (1975) as 'to minimise or ignore some aspect of themselves' and losing their power.

Modelling that adult-to-adult relationship here will be useful to them in all other walks of their life.

Shift 50

OLD MINDSET: The boss says jump, you say: 'How high?'

NEW MINDSET: We talk about both our needs

The expression: 'When I say jump, you say, "how high?"' was something I saw played out repeatedly in my previous corporate life. Hierarchy trumped discussion. I'm guessing that at some point, people who did speak up had their heads bitten off (to a greater or lesser degree) and stopped speaking up. That could have been about ideas they had, different ways of approaching something, different work patterns that they wanted to carve out for themselves – you name it. If bosses tell us 'no' as a pattern, we stop asking or recommending or discussing alternatives, and sooner or later we vote with our feet by walking out of the organisation.

You might have inherited this same way of being when you became a coach: the thinker asks you to jump, you ask how high. The power dynamic here is the reverse of what I described in the previous mindset (see Shift 49). The thinker holds the power, demanding that we serve them. This reflects the consumer mentality that we talked about in Shift 38: 'I (the thinker) am paying for this, so you (the coach) will do my bidding.' (I'm exaggerating for effect here!)

But as we saw in Shift 38, coaches are not service providers, despite the money that changes hands. We're a partner, creating a space for thinkers to do their best thinking. Our role is to create the thinking environment; theirs is to do the thinking.

Coach and thinker both have needs here. The thinker wants to move forward in their quest for a better life. The coach wants to feel fulfilled in enabling the thinker to move forward in that quest *and* the coach needs to stay sane and earn a living while doing that. You may have other needs too, which it would behoove you to identify, so you can voice those needs as you contract with each thinker.

To feel fulfilled, I know that I need the thinker to be prepared

to work hard at the thinking and moving forward. As mentioned previously, I may need to nudge them into that, but ultimately it's up to them to come prepared to think and make their own progress.

We've also seen that to earn a living, you need some boundaries in place around cancellation, no-shows, lateness and endings. You'll decide what those boundaries are, and your choices have consequences for those earnings. These boundaries also help you keep your sanity (see Shifts 2 and 48).

To stay sane, coach and thinker also need to share responsibility. Your responsibility is for the process; the thinker's is for the thinking and moving forward. This isn't a 50/50 responsibility, as we aren't parsing out the same responsibilities between us. Again, your responsibility is for the process; the thinker's is for the thinking and moving forward. You each take 100 per cent responsibility for your part.

You also invest in supervision to enable you to resource yourself, and maintain your sanity.

Your needs are as important as each thinker's needs. The more explicitly you discuss both sets of needs, the more likely you are to work in ways that serve you both.

In summary, the ICF has a set of useful guidelines for the beginning of a new coaching relationship, encouraging us to:





- ➔ 'explain what coaching is and isn't and describe the process to the client and relevant stakeholders
- ➔ reach agreement about what is and isn't appropriate in the relationship, what is and isn't being offered, and the responsibilities of the client and relevant stakeholders
- ➔ reach agreement about the guidelines and specific parameters of the coaching relationship, such as logistics, fees, scheduling, duration, termination, confidentiality and inclusion of others
- ➔ partner with [the thinker] and relevant stakeholders to establish an overall coaching plan and goals
- ➔ partner with [the thinker] to determine [thinker]-coach compatibility'. (ICF 2019)

Do you ever doubt your coaching style is achieving the best results for your clients? Have you ever felt there's room for growth, but you're not sure how to achieve it?

To create a more sustainable transformation in the people you coach, you need to start with your own mindset. As a coach, you know you can't change what you do unless you alter what you believe first.

By shedding the ineffective scripts, trappings and beliefs that a lifetime of personal interactions, professional training and even your parents have taught you, you can reset your thinking to a beginner's mentality and so begin a fulfilling and exciting journey to coaching mastery.

In this fresh and highly effective field guide, Master Mentor Coach, Clare Norman gets into your head to help you pinpoint the attitudes that you need to unlearn and reframe. Through Clare's rich experience, illuminating real-life stories and practical guidance, you can shift towards more useful thinking and powerful skillsets by:

-  Spotting and changing your own restrictive coaching mindsets
-  Understanding how marginal gains can lead to maximal outcomes
-  Embracing replacement paradigms and new thought patterns
-  Rediscovering what you love about coaching and its power to resource people

It's time to ditch the old beliefs that are holding you back, free your thinking and make the move from getting transactional results to being a transformational coach.

“Essential reading for all coaches. Skilfully lays out the important mindset shifts required to become masterful in your work.”

Marie Quigley, MCC, EMCC ESIA, director and co-founder of Empower World

“Thought-provoking! This is a must-read for anyone who wants to get out of their own way and move further toward becoming a great coach.”

Roger Fielding, coach, mentor coach, course tutor at the University of Cambridge

£19.99

Coaching

www.clarenormancoachingassociates.com

eBOOK
also available

Designed by redeyoffdesign.com

 **Right
Book
Press**

