

sticky situations

EXPERT GUIDANCE ON CRITICAL COACHING ISSUES

“Differentiating intuition from fear”



the situation

“My client is considering a career change from marketing to coaching. We’ve been discussing what she calls her intuitive hunches about her passion to help people, but when she gets close to making a decision, she feels that her intuition is telling her she’s not ready, or other fears crop up. She keeps wondering how to tell the difference between a true intuition and realistic fear thoughts. How can I help her differentiate intuition from fear?”

the experts weigh in

By Craig Carr, PCC, CPCC

When it comes to trusting intuition, this is the BIG question. I would guess that more than a few articles in this issue of *choice* are addressing it in one way or another. Moreover, the client is asking, “How do I begin to trust that intuition is a real communication from the part of me that has my best interest at heart?” Other questions we often hear are things like: “How do I know I’m not just making things up?”; “How do I know it’s not an inner critic or saboteur messing with me again?”; “How do I know it’s not just wishful imagining or fantasy”? ... and so on.

These are important questions to resolve and we all know an important part of a coach’s job is to support the learning and refinement of new life skills. A coach has to believe that noticing intuition – and trusting it – are skills that will make a tremendous difference in the quality of their client’s life.

Even though it’s a ridiculously huge topic for just a few paragraphs, I want to focus directly on the question of differentiation because it is essential for you to get a handle on it. I’ll tell you what Anne Armstrong, a renowned intuitive who was in her seventies when I worked with her almost 30 years ago (Google her for more info), said about this. I’ve built on her teaching about intuition ever since, and I paraphrase: “When I see a mental image the picture

is in full color with sharp edges, not black and white or blurry; when I hear a voice the sound is crisp, clear and certain, not fuzzy or distant, and when I feel the truth it is with my whole body, every cell gets the message. There is no questioning or fear.”

This is a skill that is best developed from a baseline measure. When I have worked with coaching students or clients to develop intuition and trust, it has been most useful to identify a time when they know they had an intuitive insight and acted upon it in a way that worked out well for them. I’ve found that more often than not – even among those who won’t dabble publicly in such conversation – people know what I’m talking about and are quite proud of their intuitive victories. It certainly doesn’t hurt to ask ...

This baseline can be a launch point from which you bring awareness to the sub-modalities that made up the experience. If you have some NLP in your background you know I am referring to sensory data that is remembered vividly by the brain. You can work together to build confidence in differentiating intuition from imagination.

If your client says they have never had what they would consider an intuitive moment in their entire life, then you have a slightly different task in front of you. Your work will be more remedial as you coach them around paying close attention to their body, their desires and their feelings, and trusting the truth of what their senses tell them.

Are you grappling with a sticky situation?

You don’t have to go it alone. Let our senior coaches give you some different perspectives to consider. Email your situation to: editor@choice-online.com and put “sticky situations” in the subject line.

By Carol Adrienne, PhD

Intuition is a clear, quiet voice that brings a new awareness, solution, path or perspective. The intuitive thought or insight is not colored with a fearful emotional quality that incites us to confusion, uncertainty or self-doubt. Ask your client to think back to when she decided to change careers. How did she experience this new idea? Did it feel right, but a little scary? Did it bring a quiet knowing? Chances are her memory of that moment will help her distinguish the clarity she felt then as contrasted to the confusion that arises out of fear of the unknown or self-doubt as she faces new territory and the reality of making her dream come true.

Intuition, when it comes, does not engender fear. It might say, "Stand back now," not, "Watch out for the truck!" The tricky ego, however – always intent on maintaining status quo – interjects fears of how we might fail, indecision, and focus on obstacles. There are two sure ways to know when you are in the grip of fear and not intuition. The first is that you start feeling bad about yourself. The second is an intense sense of urgency or fear of loss ("This offer is too good to miss!" "I'll never have another chance! It's now or never!").

Some common tricks that we use to stop growing are: always talking about dreams or goals but not taking

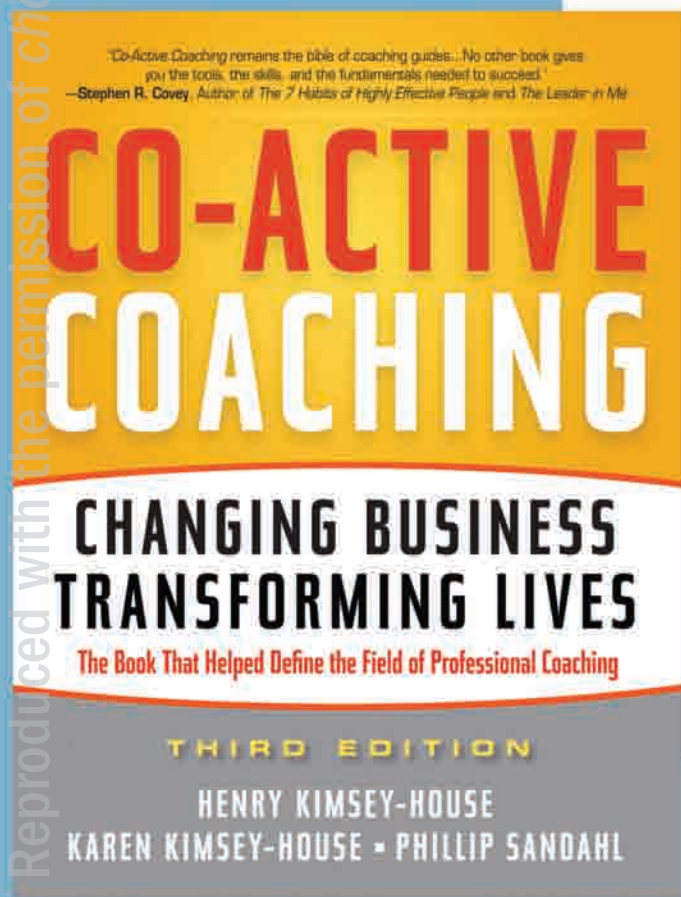
even one small step (procrastination); rationalizing that we must wait until we have 100 percent clarity about outcomes (clarity and certainty at the outset never happens.) I often hear clients taking refuge in the common haven of "feeling confused." As coaches we have to help clients sort out what is a realistic problem and what is subtle sabotage. We can help support clients in realizing that it's okay to be on shaky ground during a transition.

Here are some points I would suggest you make with your client. Remind her that the intuitive voice uses short, clear statements. It is unemotional and factual, and gives one message at a time. Ego tells it like it should be. Intuition, tells it like it is. Insight leads to commitment. Taking action on intuitive guidance relieves stress (particularly the stress of feeling paralyzed with fear.) Intuition helps us change direction as needed. It's not invested in the past, in popular opinion, or in what others think we should do. Yes, intuition moves us outside our comfort zone, but somehow it feels like a positive evolution. Intuitive messages tend to be persistent (unless you don't take any actions, in which case it might stop talking to you for a while. That period is often called being in the void).

Our life purpose unfolds through listening to our intuition and taking new steps.

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"Co-Active Coaching remains the bible of coaching guides."

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When *Co-Active Coaching* was first released in 1998, this pioneering work set the stage for what has become a cultural and business phenomenon and helped launch the profession of coaching. The release of the revised third edition marks the 20th anniversary of both the profession and the first coaching courses taught by the authors, the founders of The Coaches Training Institute, the foremost coach training school in the world. The new edition features:

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By Victoria Trabosh, CDC®

I believe that nothing stirs our doubts and fears as deeply as reaching for our dreams. Our dreams represent new territory, and if we do not enter these new territories with some trepidation and caution, we will go crashing wildly through our life with no sense of direction. That's not a plan, that's a reaction!

What if fear could be our friend? What if fear dialed down became the voice we needed to truly succeed? Whether you call the fear the doubter, the gremlin, the dream killer or just the whiner within, your client can use this voice within to her advantage.

If her intuition is speaking to her and telling her there's something greater she can be doing, to find out if her fear is greater than her dream, first have her completely describe what a coaching business means to her. What is she doing? With whom is she working? Beyond her experience of marketing, what does she know of the coaching business model? Is she an entrepreneur? Does she like to spend a lot of time gripping and grinning (networking)? How much money does she want to make from a coaching practice? Is she willing to invest in coach training for credibility and learning?

After that extensive conversation what's her passion level for the business of her coaching practice? Much

of her fear may be based in not knowing how to run a business and the rest of the fear is probably based on limiting beliefs about her own value.

As an executive coach for the last eight years, I can sincerely say that you must believe in yourself first or no one will hire you. Can she walk the talk of coaching? While all of these questions may seem overwhelming, when you begin to really delve into her thoughts she'll soon see if she's more committed to her dream of a new business or the reality of good and bad days on her journey to begin a new venture.

Is this doable? Absolutely! As long as you get to the root of her fears. Fear and intuition are not mutually exclusive! I believe that my fears slow me down long enough to really investigate my passion and interest in new areas. Her intuition should not be limited by her fears. Facing her fears with a coach will allow her the freedom to look beyond the surface to her commitment level and clarity of what she really wants. She will then design (with your help) the coaching business that she intuitively knows she can have.

We make up our biggest dreams from our hopes, our spirit and our intuition. We overcome our fears from clarity, strategies and belief in ourselves and in those with whom we partner. •



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