



## 101 COACHING MISTAKES TO AVOID

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### Mistake #1

#### **Not sharing your inklings.**

- Inklings are what you sense that you can barely feel or put words to.
- Inklings are even more subtle than intuition.
- Most coaches wait too long before sharing inklings because they don't want to be mistaken or needlessly divert the client.
- Get over it. Develop the type of relationship with your client where you can share what you inkle.

### Mistake #2

#### **Being too "noisy."**

- Some coaches are too loud - not just voice or decibel level, but emotionally needy or consuming or even needing the client to succeed.
- They compete with clients for the available space and energy during the coaching session.
- These coaches experience high client turnover.
- Solution is to let clients be the way they are and enjoy them that way, and not use clients to get your validation needs met.

### Mistake #3

#### **Jumping in too soon with advice.**

- When you "know" you've got the perfect advice for a client and feel the need to interrupt them to share it with them, your advice probably won't be heard properly.
- Remember, clients need to share first (and be heard) before they are open to advice/solutions.
- Ask yourself: "Why I am so eager to jump in with my tips, suggestions, advice, solutions?"
- This is a major problem with coaches today.

### Mistake #4

#### **Chasing the client down tunnels.**

- Client presents the coach with many possible avenues to walk down.
- The trick is not to race down the first path the client presents, or that you can see where to go.
- Instead of speaking too soon, wait and listen more until a very powerful place to talk appears.
- You'll know it's the right place, because the client quiets down and begins to look with you, instead of tossing you lots of stuff to look at.

### Mistake #5

#### **Diagnosing psychological conditions.**

- Coaches are not therapists. As such, coaches don't work with clients in certain areas, called diagnosable psychological conditions.
- Psychological conditions include (among others):
- Drug addiction
- Depression
- Paranoia

- Schizophrenia
- Personality disorders

#### Mistake #6

##### **Working with the wrong client.**

- You won't be good with every type of client.
- Don't work with clients whom you don't like, who are at a very different place than you are, who don't understand or benefit from what you have to offer, or who are not excited and motivated.
- Don't coach clients who have needs that are beyond your training, expertise, experience or interest.
- Always have coaches to refer these folks to.

#### Mistake #7

##### **Trying to coach the uncoachable**

- Some clients just don't want to change how they do things. We call the clients "uncoachable" because coaching would include the process of growing, developing and evolving oneself.
- They may be very fine people; just not coachable, right now.
- Educate the client on how to be very coachable and give them fair warning before letting them go or referring them to another professional.

#### Mistake #8

##### **Coaching every client the same way.**

- While not every coach is or needs to be a chameleon, it is important to customize your approach to fit for the needs of each client.
- True, you will maintain your own special style, but utilize the tools, concepts, distinctions, strategies and advice that will most benefit the client.
- Some coaches slip into the trap of "This is me; take it or leave it." Keep opening yourself up.

#### Mistake #9

##### **Taking responsibility for the client.**

- I take full responsibility for the quality of my coaching, but never for the client's success - that part is up to them.
- Some clients want/need you to lead their lives or solve their problems for them. Protect yourself.
- On the other hand, don't step back too far - lend a big hand, arrange for extra support for the client facing a big challenge/problem. Do go out of your way to assist. But do so from a place of choice, not obligation or responsibility.

#### Mistake #10

##### **Being linear.**

- Linear coaches see life, growth and success as a logical progression from A to B to C to D, etc.
- You know you are linear if you try to impose your order on your clients or think clients have to go through certain steps to reach their goals.
- This approach isn't very effective in a world that is becoming increasingly chaotic.
- Tip: To loosen up, learn about attraction, synchronicity, synergy and serendipity.

#### Mistake #11

##### **Coaching "at" the client.**

- Some coaches talk "at" people in general, including clients, instead of dancing easily in a natural, give-and-take, two-way conversation.
- These coaches don't realize this until someone points it out. Periodically, ask your clients if you are talking at them, or if you are able to be with and speak with them.
- Having a mentor coach who can point this out is another good reason to have a mentor coach.

#### Mistake #12

##### **Giving lame advice.**

- Some advice is so out-dated, bland, and/or ineffective that it should be embarrassing to the coach.
- The solution is to work with a coach who is hip, progressive and wise enough to learn from similarly-minded colleagues. And to read current magazines and books so that you are current.
- Otherwise, you're in the recycling business.

#### Mistake #13

##### **Being a mouse.**

- Eek! Eek! It's one thing to be gentle and patient. It's quite another to be a wimp or mouse.
- Sometimes, it's a personality style or limitation. Other times, the coach lacks confidence or hasn't been trained properly.
- The trick is to have access to the full spectrum of communication styles - from quiet to loud, from patient to challenging, from responsive to initiating.
- Most clients want a coach who isn't afraid.

#### Mistake #14

##### **Waiting to say what you're thinking.**

- Most coaches are hesitant to share their inklings/thoughts until they are more sure of what they feel or think, so they wait for evidence or the right language to phrase and share.
- Coaches are also hesitant to offend the client, so they hold back some of the negative reactions they are having.
- Clients deserve to hear your thinking the moment something occurs to you. Share it professionally, but don't withhold it.

#### Mistake #15

##### **Expecting too little from clients.**

- You won't know how much the client can actually do until you ask them 3 times to do something far bigger than they brought to you.
- In other words, double/triple the goal and see what type of response you get. Ask again. ● In some cases, don't take no for an answer if you believe the client is up to it, but afraid. ● Remember, these are clients, not kids or friends. You are being paid to expect/ask a lot of them.

#### Mistake #16

##### **Slipping into a parental role.**

- Most clients don't know quite what role to put their coaches in - sports coach? Friend? Parent?
- It's our job to teach our clients how to work with us as a collaborative partner in their life.
- You know you're being parental when:
- Your tone slips into parent-to-child-talk.
- You care more about the client's success than they do.
- You seek to protect the client from life/themselves.
- You see your client as a child/helpless.

#### Mistake #17

##### **Pushing the client too hard.**

- How hard should/can you push a client and still have coaching be about their life and not yours?
- You know you are pushing too hard if:
- You feel tired at the end of the coaching calls.
- The client is fighting/resisting your pressure.
- You are convinced that your way is smartest.
- You are frustrated by your client's slow pace.
- You get angry, hot or righteous during the session.

- Solution? Talk to the client about it and/or pull back. Let the client lead the coaching for a while.

#### Mistake #18

##### Needing the client's coaching fee.

- If you are at the edge financially and can't afford to lose a client's fee, you will not be able to coach clients fully because you cannot afford to.
- The trick is to have 50% more billings that you need for all business and personal expenses - this provides a healthy reserve that gives you room to coach from your heart, not your checkbook.

#### Mistake #19

##### Blindly accepting the client's goals.

- Very few clients are crystal clear on their goals at first, so take the time to make sure you (and the client) are clear on the best possible goals instead of the first goals presented.
- Go for value-based goals when possible.
- Encourage client to let go of the pipedream goals.
- If too many goals, it is likely that the client's personal needs are not being met or that their integrity is weak. (Really.)

#### Mistake #20

##### Trying too hard.

- In your quest to serve, you may try hard to:
- Make a difference
- Coach properly
- Push the client to change/evolve
- Keep the client motivated and focused
- You know you are trying too hard when you feel tired or frustrated and/or the client is resisting.
- If the client is fighting you, ask them why and ask them to direct the coaching for the session.

#### Mistake #21

##### Not hearing what client is saying.

- At some point during most conversations, people stop listening because they can guess what the person is about to say next.
- The trick is to listen newly to each client, even if you've "heard it before." Fact is, you've never heard this before because every time is different.
- Respect your clients; pay attention. Ask questions, even if you're sure you understand. Seek to learn, not to assume.

#### Mistake #22

##### Letting the client rattle you.

- Clients will say things to you about you or your coaching that may upset or rattle you.
- Don't step over any digs, diss', or off comments.
- Find out what's behind their concern and, at the same time, extend your boundaries to protect you.
- Clean, clear and full communication is a part of the agreement between coach and client, and it's up to you to ensure that the client honors this.
- Clients are human and have bad days. Do understand and be patient, but don't step over it.

#### Mistake #23

##### Laying your Personal O.S. on the client.

- Personal O.S. = Personal Operating System, aka laying your trip on the client.
- What works for you won't necessarily work for, or even be right for, some of your clients.
- The stretch for the coach is to be comfortable - and effective -- with clients who think, operate and live from a different set of rules, priorities and assumptions than yours.

#### Mistake #24

##### Getting sidetracked by diversions.

- When clients don't want to achieve something, solve a problem or face something, they will create diversions (consciously or unconsciously).
- Typical diversions include:
  - Personal or professional crisis
  - A new "much more interesting" goal
  - Sudden interest in you/your life
  - Sudden interest in abstract/conceptual conversations
  - Rat-a-tat talking about themselves/unrelated issues
- Solution? Press client to stick with and complete what they set out to achieve or resolve.

#### Mistake #25

##### Pushing client hard through blocks.

- All clients get stuck; how you (and they) handle this is important.
- I prefer to obliterate the block than to push, pull or convince the client to move through the block.
- In any case, blocks are there for an often very good reason, so help the client fully understand the nature and dynamic of the block instead of stressing the client to push through relentlessly.
- With true understanding and full acceptance, most blocks disappear on their own.

#### Mistake #26

##### Avoiding difficult/touchy topics.

- Clients hire you for specific work, but it's hard to do great coaching if you cannot include all relevant aspects of a client's life, work/business.
- Rather than avoid sensitive subjects, simply ask the client how much room you have to speak about stuff that they haven't brought up themselves.
- Or, ask directly: "Can we talk about X?"
- If X is important to you, it's probably important to the client as well.

#### Mistake #27

##### Not initiating topics of discussion.

- You don't have to limit what gets discussed during a client coaching call strictly by what the client brings up.
- 25-50% of the topics discussed are ones that I brought up, at the beginning/end/during the call.
- Obviously, segue to and from your topics and let the client decline if they aren't interested, but do bring stuff up that you feel is relevant. It's another way to add value and stay ahead of the client.

#### Mistake #28

##### Talking about yourself too much.

- I feel it is valuable to share stuff about yourself (relevant experience, commiserating stories, illustrative anecdotes, personal challenges in that area, etc.)
- The trick is to keep your sharing short. Any personal story of yours that runs over 60 seconds is suspect.

#### Mistake #29

##### Not sharing personal experiences.

- Coaching isn't therapy; you can and are encouraged to share stuff about yourself and relevant life experiences when it will help the client better understand themselves/the situation.
- If you put a limit of 30-60 seconds on your share, you'll probably not go too far.

#### Mistake #30

##### Holding the client back.

- In an effort to protect the client from failure, stress or pain, the coach sometimes holds back their coaching or suggests the client scale back their goals.
- Tough call, but I prefer to fully inform the client of the possible risks of their large goals and seek

permission to be totally upfront as needed and then see how far the client can go.

- The mistake coaches make is to play God or to hold the client down to what the coach could do.

#### Mistake #31

##### Using clients to meet emotional needs.

- If you're getting high/really excited about your client's successes, you might be getting your needs met vicariously through their success.
- It's cool to feel great/happy for the client, but if your mood is altered significantly (up or down), you may be getting some of your personal needs met by the client.
- Remember, your coaching is 'over' at the end of each session. The results are a great by-product.

#### Mistake #32

##### Needing credit for client's successes.

- Coaches never really know exactly how much their coaching contributes to a client's success.
- I've found it easier to seek/take no credit for my clients' success than trying to figure out the difference my coaching has made with a client.
- I used to feel slighted when my clients didn't appreciate or recognize the full value of my role/wisdom, but that was just my stuff.
- Be happy for your client's success; don't seek credit, even if your role was absolutely key.

#### Mistake #33

##### Using cliché's and jargon.

- We all use cliché's and jargon to some extent, so it's a simply a matter of frequency.
- The problem with personal development jargon is that it confuses one party and/or weakens the discussion because you are hiding behind jargon.
- Use a non-jargony mentor coach to replace jargon with simple words and to replace your cliché's with fresher advice.
- Jargon puts people off. Cliché's make you sound dumb.

#### Mistake #34

##### Falling into the "I-am-the-coach; you-are-the-client; listen-to-me" trap.

- This is a power trip.
- Some clients like/need it, but it's remedial coaching and can create a dependency.
- If the client is that resistant, find out why or work on an easier goal.
- Modern coaching is a collaborative partnership.

#### Mistake #35

##### Underestimating the client's abilities.

- My view is that humans operate at 20% of their capacity - creative, intellectual, emotional, spiritual - so there is lots of room/potential!
- I ask far more of my clients than they would ask of themselves and keep asking until they say stop - you never know how much the client can do until you push them far beyond their "limits."
- Don't play God and ask your clients to do only what you feel they are "ready for." Bad form.

#### Mistake #36

##### Expecting too much of the client.

- How much should/can you expect of a client? If you're not sure, ask the client - they'll tell you!
- I've found that I often would expect my clients to be as quick as I am and to make huge changes in minutes. I was frustrated, the client stressed.
- Every client has a natural pace that they can handle/sustain. Find out what that is and adjust your coaching expectations accordingly (or find out if the client wants to accelerate that pace as a coaching goal itself).



#### Mistake #37

##### Teaching concepts without context.

- How can you teach attraction without teaching about personal foundation?
- How can you teach love without teaching acceptance and forgiveness?
- How can you teach success without gratitude?
- How can you teach strategy without vision?
- How can you teach coaching without wisdom?
- Whatever you teach, include the context that gives it meaning.

#### Mistake #38

##### Ignoring/missing the client's clues.

- Clients will tell you everything you need to know about them and what's most important to them, if you will learn to listen for this instead of coaching so much.
- Clues to listen for:
  - Flip comments - the truth resides behind these.
  - Euphemisms - the truth is the opposite of what's said.
  - Silence - the truth is there; waiting to be articulated.
  - Dissonance - the truth is either one or the other.
- When in doubt, ask the client to keep talking until something gets clear.

#### Mistake #39

##### Accepting euphemisms as truth.

- Clients sometimes put a positive spin on stuff they may not want to get into with their coach, but it's the coach's job to pick up on this spin and ask the client about it.
- Remember, coaches are in the truth business; anything less, and the value of coaching diminishes.
- If you don't get what your client is saying, speak up and ask them to be speak more clearly. Often, they want you to point this out and bring it out.

#### Mistake #40

##### Using a patronizing/parental tone.

- Some coaches' tone isn't clear and clean. It carries a charge or weight to it, which gets in the way of clean communication.
- Sometimes, a coach takes a patronizing tone, speaking to clients like children or idiots.
- Is this you? You won't know unless you ask 5 clients and 5 colleagues the question "Is there any trace of patronization or parenting in my tone?"

#### Mistake #41

##### Using email to discuss touchy subjects.

- Email is good for routine client service and even for creative discussions.
- But when the client is struggling with something, it's better to pick up the phone and reach out for a real-time talk. Works wonders.

#### Mistake #42

##### Missing client appointments.

- It happens, about 1-2% of the time, maximum.
- Anymore than that, and take it as sign to do something drastic about your schedule, system, self or clients.
- Tips:
  - Schedule clients in back-to-back banks of calls.
  - Have client call you if you don't call them on time.
  - Set up a reminder system do you don't forget.
  - Use an alarm clock.

#### Mistake #43

### **Being blunt/direct without warmth.**

- Clients are paying for truth, but not for cruelty.
- The truth can hurt, so be sensitive and caring.
- When communicating touchy stuff, keep your tone "charge neutral" (clean, without gooey-ness or criticism).
- Feelings matter; truth without compassion is needlessly harsh, and is unprofessional.

#### **Mistake #44**

### **Interrupting the client's sharing flow.**

- Many clients create as they speak; let them.
- Even if the client sounds unclear, give them room to talk it through and make sense of it themselves.
- Don't pepper with questions or comments; be there in mind and spirit, but don't interrupt. ● Be quiet even when client reaches lull/takes a breath; the good stuff is just about to surface.
- Don't let your penchant for clarity cause you to interrupt your clients thinking/sharing process.

#### **Mistake #45**

### **Peppering the client with questions.**

- Asking questions is an important part of the coaching process.
- You ask questions for two reasons:
  - To get information from the client
  - To help the client to clarify a goal, value, problem, strategy, need, idea, situation or priority.
- The mistake is to ask many different questions without 'hearing' what the client has said and responding to that. Peppering is annoying.

#### **Mistake #46**

### **Not having the client feel heard.**

- In a quest to coach well, sometimes coaches don't make sure the client feels heard. They don't realize that when the client feels heard and gotten, that something new opens up for the client, which is a key part of the coaching process.
- Remember, you hearing the client and the client feeling heard are two very different things.
- Find ways to let your client know you both hear their words, feelings, ideas, concerns and dreams - all of it, not just the words.

#### **Mistake #47**

### **Correcting the client's language.**

- In an attempt to helping a client improve what they are trying to say, some coaches force clients to speak the way the coach does and eradicate:
  - Any "negative-sounding" words or terms.
  - Feelings that are not 'productive and positive.'
  - Attitudes that aren't picture perfect.
  - Humanness.
- These coaches are afraid of experiencing the full range of emotions and restrict their clients freedom to feel the way they do. Unfortunate.

#### **Mistake #48**

### **Thinking you should have the answers.**

- Sometimes you'll have answers to the client's needs/problems/questions, other times, you won't.
- Don't feel pressure to have the answers, unless the client has hired you as an expert in that area.
- If the client is pressuring you inappropriately, ask them to stop, and work with them to find their own answers or refer to someone who does.

#### **Mistake #49**

### **Letting clients follow advice blindly.**



- Don't let clients follow your advice unless you're sure they've filtered and adapted it to fit for them and their situation.
- Clients follow advice blindly because:
- They want to please you.
- They don't want to or cannot think for themselves.
- They want someone available to blame if they fail.
- They are stuck in a child/client role.
- If occurring, stop giving advice and ask client to generate their own solutions and strategies.

#### Mistake #50

##### Being too directive with clients.

- Some coaches are directive; others are non-directive - it's your choice, as a coach where you want to coach along the directive-ness spectrum.
- Best to choose, based on each client's needs.
- You know you are being too directive if:
- You are doing most of the talking during the session.
- The client depends on you for marching orders.
- You feel like you are managing the client's life.
- You are not bringing out the wisdom of the client.

#### Mistake #51

##### Poor scheduling of client calls.

- Proper scheduling of client calls is important to your well-being and the effectiveness of your coaching.
- Examples of poor scheduling:
- Scheduling an evening call with a client for their convenience, but at a bad time for you.
- Having time gaps between coaching calls.
- Scheduling calls over more days of the week than necessary.
- Coaching at time of the day when you're not your best.
- Scheduling too many calls without a break.

#### Mistake #52

##### Slipping into a past professional role.

- Most coaches have come from other professions, careers and roles, so it's natural to slip back into what you used to do.
- But remember, you are now a coach and coaching is a distinct profession with a unique set of skills, strategies and methods.
- When you do slip back, recognize it, release it and come back to being a coach.
- Within 2-3 years, you'll stop drifting back.

#### Mistake #53

##### Focusing simply on tactics, actions.

- Getting the client into action is useful, and tactical advice is immediately practical, but don't limit your coaching to short-term solutions
- Take the time to design/weave in:
- Strategies | Resource allocation | Systems
- Positioning | Education | Prioritization
- Simplification | Internal shifts
- New/better goals | Skills training
- You can work on background stuff (strategies) and foreground stuff (tactics) concurrently.

#### Mistake #54

##### Being passive with you clients.

- Coaching is a lot more than reflective listening.
- Coaching is interactive, collaborative and an active, creative sharing of ideas and strategies.

- Some coaches prefer a less directive approach; others prefer more directive with clients; others coach along the full spectrum. (recommended)
- Clients are paying for your opinions, reactions, thoughts, ideas, suggestions, questions, thinking and strategies.
- Share these; all of these. It's coaching.

#### Mistake #55

##### Letting coaching sessions run late.

- Even if you've got the time, it's bad form because then the client comes to expect more time from you next time and feels shortchanged if you hold them to their 30-60 minute session.
- Best to have another client calling in at the end of the session, so you/the client have "no option."
- Most coaching really occurs in the last 7 minutes of the session anyway.
- Remember, it's coaching, not best friends talking.

#### Mistake #56

##### Taking sides.

- Sometimes, clients try to get you to agree with them that X is bad (X being a person, company, situation, product).
- Say something like, "I understand your frustration, but I don't take sides."
- This keeps you clean and helps keep the coaching relationship clean and professional.
- It also prevents you from getting fired when the client changes their mind about X.

#### Mistake #57

##### Venting at the client.

- If you find yourself venting your frustrations about the client to the client, the situation occurred because you have been improperly holding back from previous weeks or months.
- Stuff builds up; it's your responsibility to communicate everything that comes up, as it comes up.

#### Mistake #58

##### Getting emotionally invested in client.

- It's one thing to care and care about your client, it's quite another to get too close and have their goal/problem, become your goal/problem.
- You can maintain professional distance, yet be very, very caring, loving and supportive.
- Coaches get emotionally invested because the client reminds them of them at that stage of their life or in a similar situation and you tend to want to protect the client from feeling the pain, making the same mistakes or messing up the opportunity.

#### Mistake #59

##### Coaching beyond your competence.

- Readily admit what you don't know or don't know enough to properly serve your client.
- Note: Your clients do not expect you to know everything or to be competent in every area.

#### Mistake #60

##### Breaking a confidence.

- Coaches have similar ethical standards around confidentiality as do other professionals.
- The rule is to not tell anyone your client's name (or any hint), what you've discussed or what you're working on together.
- If you break a confidence, you can be sued.
- Include a discussion about confidentiality in your first session with a client, or in your client forms.

#### Mistake #61

##### Over promising results to a client.

- You have no control over what your client will or won't achieve or solve, so you simply cannot promise

any result at anytime.

- It's better/safer to say what other clients have gotten from your coaching or prompt the client for what they plan to get out of your coaching, than to sell hard the results of your coaching.
- Under promising has the client take more responsibility to their own success in coaching.

#### Mistake #62

##### **Talking about other coaches.**

- Two caveats here: First is gossiping about other coaches, and second is giving your opinion (negative or positive) about other coaches.
- Best to steer clear of talking about other coaches - it's just not professional, and it will likely get back to the other coach.
- It's bad for the profession, as well.

#### Mistake #63

##### **Not planting seeds for next coaching.**

- Most clients come to a coach with a single goal or problem in mind and often end coaching when that goal/problem has been reached/solved.
- I am always 'on the lookout' for new goals, skills, changes that I feel the client would love or benefit from, and I mention these often, way before the client is close to reaching the initial goal or solving the initial problem.
- This is good service as well as good selling.

#### Mistake #64

##### **Falling behind your client's needs.**

- The primary reason clients fire the coach is because the coach falls behind the client.
- Better to be out in front of the client:
  - Point out the next focus area
  - Ask big questions
  - Initiate stimulating discussions
  - Train the client on new skills
  - Gap the goal
  - Challenge the client's thinking/paradigm

#### Mistake #65

##### **Assuming client is ready for success.**

- Humans have set-points and ceilings about a lot of things: love, money, happiness, success.
- You can work to move/expand these set-points, but do this directly (as a specific focus) with a client instead of assuming that they will do this on their own or that they'll be "fine."
- Also, it's essential that you work with client for 2-3 weeks helping client to define what success means to them. Without this critical information, the value of coaching is quite low, even if highly effective.

#### Mistake #66

##### **Over-protecting your clients from life.**

- Some coaches are so concerned about the client's failing that they don't encourage them to take risks. This holds clients back.
- Clients have gotten along fine before you came along. Point out the risks and help clients to reduce the risks, but encourage them to be engaged in life and in discovering/creating new things because that's what it means to be human today!

#### Mistake #67

##### **Giving legal or investment advice.**

- This is both illegal and unethical.
- Every coach should have 5 legal and 5 financial specialists to refer clients to.
- Never, ever, give legal advice, even if you've "been there" and know what you're talking about. You

aren't licensed to do this.

- Never, ever give investment advice or even share how you handle your investments. You aren't licensed to do this.
- It's just not worth the risk. Just say nothing.

#### Mistake #68

##### **Criticizing your client.**

- You can be honest and direct without being critical of your client.
- Clients, like you, are human and are doing the best they can, even when they are not.
- And, remember, it's their life, not yours.
- Better to make requests of your client and to challenge them to do something differently instead of criticizing them, their weaknesses or choices.
- You can learn to be unconditionally constructive.

#### Mistake #69

##### **Avoiding underlying integrity problems.**

- Clients may want your help to work on cool goals or urgent problems, but before you jump in, find out what else is going on that may be undermining, blocking or limiting the client's life or potential for success.
- Point these out to the client and see if they will work concurrently on the underlying integrity stuff as well as the fun/cool/urgent stuff.
- Remember, when a client's needs are met and integrity is strong, results flow to the client.

#### Mistake #70

##### **Letting client chase pipedreams.**

- Part of the coaching process is to help clients let go of the seductive goals/pipedreams that have been distracting and diverting them.
- Your first step is to distinguish between dreams and mere fantasies and help the client let go of the pipedreams/fantasies so that space/energy is freed up to achieve the goals that readily provide the quality of life the client deserves.

#### Mistake #71

##### **Complicating your client's life.**

- You know strategies and systems that will ultimately help a client's effectiveness and happiness but the time/space it takes to learn and install such things may not be what the client wants or needs right now, given the learning curve.
- Look for the simple, do-able solutions to pressing and time-sensitive problems instead of trying to help the client make wholesale changes when they don't have the room - or need -- for these right now.

#### Mistake #72

##### **Being someone other than a coach.**

- Unless the coaching relationship has been well-defined, it's easy to slip into other, familiar roles:
- Best friend
- Brother/Sister
- Parent
- Consultant
- Counselor
- Financial advisor
- Lawyer
- Business partner

#### Mistake #73

##### **Stepping over stuff that doesn't ring true.**

- If it doesn't ring true for you, ask client to clarify what they are saying or trying to say.
- Your opinion/reactions count.

- This is a key way to create value for the client.
- Interrupt if necessary.
- Press for what is true until you are satisfied or until the client can't/won't go any further.
- Remember, coaching is a partnership, not just a professional listening or cheerleading service.

#### Mistake #74

##### **Creating a dependency.**

- Coaches create a dependency by doing too much for clients (too much support, reminders, structure) or getting too close to clients emotionally.
- You've crossed the line when the client's goal or problem has become yours.
- Continually challenge (and support) the client to create their own support structures, network, community, partnerships, etc. so that coaching can remain clean, independent and empowering.
- Note: Some clients like being dependent. Careful.

#### Mistake #75

##### **Look at clients as revenue sources.**

- Clients do bring you revenue, but if you slip into seeing them as a check, they will sense this and will likely opt out of coaching with you.
- Coaching is a calling even more than a 'business' and if you slip into the business side too much, you might temporarily increase revenues, but ultimately they will drop.
- Coaching is a relationship. The revenue stream is a by-product of that relationship.

#### Mistake #76

##### **Not walking your own talk.**

- Your coaching is more effective when you talk your own talk; otherwise, something will be off.
- Coaches often attract clients who are ready to go to the level the coach recently reached (in whatever area), so to get more/better clients, take yourself to the next level in knowledge, living, evolution, skill sets, professional development.
- That said, however, it is okay to ask clients to do more than you would be willing to do - why hold your clients to your own level of performance?

#### Mistake #77

##### **Raising fees before you are ready to.**

- It is important to charge the fees that you are comfortable with; that you feel good about. ● Don't raise fees just to raise fees or because other coaches charge more (or less).
- There is a fee that you feel you are worth and that your clients confirm.
- Raise fees when your practice develops a waiting list, or when you start coaching clients who get more value when they pay higher fees.

#### Mistake #78

##### **Coaching yourself vicariously.**

- Everything you are saying to a client, you're also telling/reminding yourself. This is normal.
- But when your needs, life, problems and goals are large, the risk is that you coach your clients as if they were you; your stuff leaks into your coaching.
- From time to time, verify with your clients that they feel coached about their lives, not yours.
- And have a coach of your own to work this stuff out with when it occurs.

#### Mistake #79

##### **Not learning from your client.**

- If you're too busy coaching, you're not going to be learning very much from your clients.
- Make the choice to learn cool stuff from clients:
- How they think; their success models.
- What limits the client; blocks to success.
- Technical skills; Internet skills.

- Current business thinking; demographic trends.
- The trick is to be interested, not just interesting.

#### Mistake #80

##### Talking people into coaching.

- Better that the client buy coaching than you try to sell coaching to potential clients.
- Rather than try to sell a person on the value of coaching, try one of the following instead:
- Sell the client on themselves, their dreams, vision, etc.
- Coach the client on-the-spot, so they experience it.
- Share a fitting/exciting business idea so they would have a compelling reason to work with a coach.
- Ask the client a question that gets them to want significantly more from their life, thus creating a gap.

#### Mistake #81

##### Multi-taking while coaching.

- During coaching calls:
- Don't read email.
- Don't do your nails.
- Don't pay your bills.
- Don't surf the Internet
- Don't read a magazine.
- Don't write a novel.
- If you're that bored, tell the client you are bored, tell them why and ask them do work on something that keeps your interest and fully uses your talents.

#### Mistake #82

##### Not following up after difficult session.

- After a session where the client is tender, overwhelmed or still stuck in a dilemma, call later that day or the very next day to find out how they are.
- Just that, how they are. Don't try to coach; just show that you care.
- Empathize, listen quietly, hear.
- No need to coach, remind or reinforce.

#### Mistake #83

##### Being too professional.

- Coaching is a collaborative partnership, not an arms' length professional service.
- You can get close to your clients and have a great time coaching.
- Take coaching and the client very, very seriously, and still be light and personable.

#### Mistake #84

##### Avoiding client's money problems.

- Money problems come in several forms:
- Overspending
- Late bill paying
- No/inadequate reserves
- Inadequate/fluctuating revenue
- While money problems are only 'one' part of a client's life, they do affect everything about that client - quality of life, thinking, creativity, freedom, evolution.
- I won't work with clients who won't handle their money; I cannot coach on top of irresponsibility.

#### Mistake #85

##### Playing therapist or counselor.

- You know you are playing therapist if:
- You delve into a diagnosable psychological condition (depression, anxiety, addiction, family of origin



issues, destructive behaviors, etc.).

- The client is not making reasonable progress toward their goals without a lot of support/structure.
- The focus of coaching is mostly on feelings/concerns.
- The focus of coaching is mostly on patterns/cycles.
- Therapists play a key role in the mental health of society and are trained, experienced and licensed to do personal work that coaches cannot offer.

#### Mistake #86

##### **Not knowing who your ideal clients are.**

- If you haven't described the qualities and goals of your ideal clients, you won't as easily know who you should be coaching.
- True, it's good to coach anyone you feel you can help, but it's also very important to know exactly who you most want to coach so that you can spot them in a crowd, inform your network who you are looking for and then attract them more easily.

#### Mistake #87

##### **Waiting to coach until you are "ready."**

- Some coaches study coaching and take a full complement of coaching classes but never actually coach paying clients because they don't feel 'ready.'
- This is an emotional block to resolve.

#### Mistake #88

##### **Coaching clients you've evolved beyond.**

- Just as your clients evolve, so do you.
- It's important to coach clients who are on the same plane as you; otherwise, you devolve.
- You know you've evolved beyond a client when:
- Their goals/wants seem silly/remedial to you.
- Their preferred strategies to reach these goals are old.
- They aren't able to fully hear/use what you suggest.
- You don't look forward to the coaching session.

#### Mistake #89

##### **Not being patient enough with clients.**

- Some clients take longer than usual to achieve.
- With other clients, you'll see absolutely no progress and then, boom!, instant transformation.
- If in doubt/frustrated, ask client what their typical style/pace is and adapt accordingly.

#### Mistake #90

##### **Not clearly laying out the ground rules.**

- New clients deserve to know who you are, how you coach, what you require or expect of them.
- Ground rules include things like:
- How quickly clients need to make important changes.
- How clients utilize you during their coaching sessions.
- How open clients need to be to fresh approaches.
- How honest the clients is expected to be at all times.
- Share the ground rules before starting with clients (and give them examples of OK/not OK).
- Remind clients of their agreement, if needed.

#### Mistake #91

##### **Being heavy or significant.**

- The best coaches I know are light and casual and don't get wrapped up into the coaching thing.
- True, clients are working on very important stuff, and the coach is respectful/caring, but at the same time, life is unpredictable and we humans are funny and problems are solvable.

#### Mistake #92

##### **Selling clients on "your" goals.**

- Sometimes, you can see a better goal for the client than they have for themselves.
- It's tricky to know whether to suggest/push for "yours" or help them reach theirs.
- When in doubt, ask the client to choose.
- You're inappropriately selling if you find yourself:
- Trying to convince the client to go in your direction.
- Getting upset because client doesn't "get it."
- Taking their choice to ignore your goal, personally.

#### Mistake #93

##### **Coaching someone you don't enjoy.**

- Either let the client go, discuss with the client what is annoying you, or find a way to truly enjoy the client.
- Otherwise, your coaching will be tainted and less valuable.
- And, life is too short to coach people who you don't enjoy.

#### Mistake #94

##### **Being a "Positive Pamela."**

- Some coaches force clients to interpret and/or describe their situation in only a "positive" way:
- "It's not a problem, merely a challenge..."
- "Oh, it's not you, it's just a limiting belief you have..."
- "Oh, you shouldn't use the word "should.""
- "What's the positive that will come from this?"
- The problem with this approach is that they don't honor the client's feelings and, in fact, cannot bear to have even a whiff of perceived negativity nearby.
- This is a common problem with emotionally rigid or "healing" coaches, where language protects the heart instead of releasing the truth.

#### Mistake #95

##### **Assuming the client got your point.**

- Points take time to sink in and be understood.
- When making an important/life changing point, take the time to find out exactly what the client heard and how fully they've integrated it.
- Due to filters/biases, most clients mishear big points or only hear a part of what you mean.
- Repeat, rephrase, give examples, discuss the nuances of your key points. Take the necessary time to ensure complete understanding.

#### Mistake #96

##### **Coaching the wrong clients for you.**

- You will feel invalidated and frustrated if you are coaching clients who cannot benefit fully from your experience, expertise or style.
- The clients will feel similarly.
- It's your responsibility (not the client's) to coach the type of clients who bring out your best and who you can help.
- Always have 20-30 other coaches to refer people to who you don't feel you can do a terrific job for.

#### Mistake #97

##### **Being rigid in your advice/approach.**

- Rigid coaches see things in terms of right/wrong, good/bad, smart/dumb, suitable/unsuitable.
- They are often stuck in narrow beliefs and are often fearful of risk/consequences.
- They would rather impose their opinions on the client about how life/business/success works than in co-creating new/clever/customized strategies with the client.
- You know you're a rigid coach if you aren't learning as much from your clients as you teach.

#### Mistake #98

##### **Putting a positive spin on everything.**

- Being positive is great, but some coaches feel compelled to make the problems clients are dealing with less 'serious' or negative:
- "Oh, it's not that bad."
- "You will work it out. It's just a temporary situation."
- "You are doing your best."
- The above may be true, but it's usually better to be frank and honest first and then be positive about a solution, instead of falsely positive about the situation. Sometimes, situations just suck.

#### Mistake #99

##### **Becoming complacent.**

- Coaching skills, techniques and technologies are evolving very, very quickly.
- The marketplace is demanding "currently" trained coaches who are specialists.
- Some coaches don't see the need to continually learn what's new in our business.
- This can put them behind the effectiveness curve and diminishes their reputation in the coaching community.

#### Mistake #100

##### **Exhorting your clients to change.**

- Exhorting means to "encourage, with pressure" and it's tempting when you can see a "better" way for the client to live or succeed.
- Remember, clients choose to change exactly when they are ready to, and while exhorting can and does work, the psychic time and emotional cost to the coach is high and an adversarial relationship can be created.
- Plant seeds, encourage readily; don't exhort.

#### Mistake #101

##### **Not being you.**

- At some point, you will find your professional voice and your coaching will be completely yours, not anyone else's.
- You find your voice after about 100 clients.
- It's beneficial to learn, practice and master the 'official' phrasing, programs, coaching skills and strategies. But at some point, you'll put your twist to what you've learned and make it an expression of you and what you know works.

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