# CHAPTER 7

# COACHING FOR RESULTS

***You may get the ingredients and the recipe***

***correct, but the only true test of success***

***is the finished result***

Although life coaching has an approach that is personally designed according to the needs of each client, there are several models that can provide a sound foundation. You may like to think of this as being similar to the motor manufacturing industry, where a common framework and design can allow the public to choose from a variety of models from the basic and practical box on wheels to a sleek and sexy coupe.

One of the most useful coaching models is I-CAN-DO, which has been adapted from several sources, including the G.R.O.W model by John Whitmore. This is fully described in his book *Coaching For Performance*.

The I-CAN-DO life coaching model is flexible and easily adapted for applications focused on overall life aims or, for setting and evaluating the outcomes of a session. The mnemonic is a perfect fit for the ideal mental approach that your clients should work towards.

At the outset, I tell my clients, I base my life coaching on the, I-CAN-DO model. This sets the frame in a client’s mind that the responsibility for the achievement and success comes from them rather than from me.

Here are some simple guidelines to its use and application. Having told your client that you will be using the model, explain that the letter I stands for *Investigate*. Continue. “This means that I want you to investigate what is important to you and what you know about how I can help you. Spend some time before our first coaching session thinking about you. When this is done, send me an email with your thoughts, your current situation briefly described, and state your overall aims in life. To guide your thoughts I will send you a chart. This covers the areas in your life that I want you to consider”.

Explain that you need an honest and detailed account of the amount of time spent on the topics in a typical week. The ninety eight-hour week allows for seven days, each of 14 hours. You can be flexible if your client suggests a longer or shorter typical day, but do not be conned, each category must be completed. When you know the time spent in each area, you will have a perspective of client’s priorities. The results often reveal serious deficits in one or more of areas, which indicates an unbalanced life style. Once you have received the completed chart, you have finished the first three stages of the I-CAN-DO life coaching model. (**I**nvestigate, define **C**urrent situation and identify **A**ims.]

**Life Coaching Chart**

| Topic | Current Situation | Hours per 98 Hour week | Future Aims |
|---|---|---|---|
| Health<br>What is important to you when you consider your health? | | | |
| Wealth<br>What constitutes a wealthy life for you? | | | |
| Family<br>What & who are important to regarding your family? | | | |
| Relationships<br>Who is important to you? | | | |
| Contribution<br>How important is your contribution to the world? | | | |
| Spiritual | | | |

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| What is important to you as far as spiritual growth? | | | |
| Career/Job<br>What is important to you in your work? | | | |
| Playtime<br>What do you do just for fun? | | | |
| Lack<br>What other areas in your life require attention? | | | |

I-CAN-DO LIFE COACHING MODEL

**I** ***Investigate*** what is so important to the client that they decided to hire you?

**C** What is their ***Current*** life situation? (use the Coaching Chart)

**A** What are their ***Aims*** in life?

**N** What is the ***Number*** of alternative ways of achieving the aims?

**D** What ***Date*** do they want to achieve their aims?

**O** What are the ***Outcome*** achievement indicators?

The completion of this chart allows time to prepare yourself for the first coaching call with sufficient information for you to make an impact for your clients. This approach is also a tremendous indicator of your client's commitment to life coaching. In life coaching terms, commitment is where the client continues to complete the task long after their initial mood, when they decided to do it with you, has left them.

If the client does not send you the completed chart before your first planned session, you *must* challenge this lack of response and commitment. There may be a valid reason for them not sending you the information, like a death or tragedy in their family. However, if they do not have a valid reason for neglecting these first steps of the I-CAN-DO model, then you need to make a serious choice. Do you want this client?

In most circumstances I would refuse to work with this client and immediately issue a full refund. I would remind them of our first discussion when I told them, *I need to be convinced that you are committed to achieving results because I have a hundred percent success rate. I will not take you on if you are not committed to working hard for change.*

This is why the R.A.B.I.T model (Chapter 6) works well. When you use it during the first contact call with a client, you can quote it confidently if the need arises. There is a huge risk in accepting a client who does not provide you with the first task. There is no risk to the client but your reputation will be negatively affected. Your morale, motivation and self-belief will also need constant boosting when you work with a client who lacks commitment.

You just might accept a client, who has fallen at this first hurdle, but only where the circumstances are exceptional and the client demonstrates absolute remorse. Ask why they did not accomplish this critically important task. Immediately after listening to the explanation from the client, terminate the telephone call, explaining that this is the standard procedure. Tell them that the cost of this call will come out of the prepaid programme due to the allocation of your time. Suggest they use the remainder of this particular call time in preparation for the next call by completing steps I, C, A of the model - as previously agreed, and then forwarding it to you.

It is important that the client understands that your time is valuable and that they will have to pay for time wasted. In reality, it has very little to do with the payment, although time allocated to one client is time not charged to another. Of course you need the material resources to grow your practice but here, the principle is more to do with respect for your professional time.

Charging for missed or misused call time brings your practice in line with dentists, lawyers and all other professional services. Failing to charge diminishes your professional image and can set the precedent of disrespect from this client. Ignoring this expense and conduct is giving the client a *green light to go ahead with the behaviour*, which they will take as an indication that there will be no impact on them for not completing tasks or for missing any and all appointments with you.

It is essential that you are fully prepared for each coaching call and you should allocate about 15 minutes for this, immediately before the call.

Firstly locate the client file. This is where you store all your information on this client. It may be a physical written file or an electronic computer file. Whichever format it takes, you must have taken into account the Data Protection Act (Chapter 18).

Study the file from the very first coaching session to the most recent and familiarise yourself completely with this clients background. Do not be tempted to limit your study to the last call because this will not fully prepare you for anything that may arise. Clients often assume that you know a part of their personal history, even if they have never told you about. Without a full review of all your notes, you will be unprepared to challenge this assumption. With a full review prior to the call you can confidently say to your client, I am sorry Paul, but I am confident you have not spoken about this before. Please take a few minutes to get me up to speed on this topic. Or, Paul I remember all of our calls clearly and you have not mentioned this aspect before. Please give me a brief summary so that I can help you in this area.

Make sure you have checked and arranged all your administration tools and they are close to hand.

- A pen or pencil.
- A note pad or the client forms that you work with.
- A telephone within easy reach and with a dial tone.
- A drink of water handy.
- You have been to the toilet (this may seem over the top, but I can assure you many life coaches have been caught short because they did not relieve themselves before taking a coaching call).
- Any reference material or books (names and addresses of professionals you are happy to recommend) or other resources that you may want to offer to your client. It sounds unprofessional if you are scrabbling around for contact details whilst in the middle of a coaching call.
- Your appointments diary.

So much for the administrative details. Now turn attention to the critically important aspects of your personal preparation. What do you want to accomplish during this call? How can you best serve this client? Do you have any mental barriers relating to the potential of this client?, What are your values and what is your philosophy for life coaching?

The singular most important question before you pick up the telephone is, Am I in a peak state? The answer to this question must be yes.

If the answer is ‘no’ or ‘not sure’, you must do some rapid state control work to change to your peak state. The conditions for outstanding life coaching sessions are completely reliant on this. In peak state you are feeling great, mentally alert and excited about the forthcoming coaching call. Anything less does yourself and the profession a disservice. Learn how to get into a peak state in a clock tick because that is all it takes for the phone to ring and a client to speak to you. Preparation is the key to life coaching success.

Some of these preparations start as soon as you have received the chart from your clients. As you read their goals and aims you need to consider a Number (The N of I – CAN - DO] of different methods, routes or ways that your client can take or make, to secure a successful outcome. During the coaching call, ask your client if they can think of another way (from the original method they volunteered) to reach the aim or outcome. Guide them into giving you at least two or three alternative routes to a successful outcome, as this will open their eyes to flexibility. Flexibility is a fundamental skill needed by the client to increase their number of successfully achieved aims.

Health is one of the chart topics that I am very concerned with. Your client must have a commitment to being healthy by putting into place a carefully planned nutritious diet. I do not mean a slimming diet – I mean a diet in the terms of planned selection of food. They should also take some form of exercise.

It is your responsibility to encourage your clients to work on all aspects of their health. If you do not encourage and challenge your client to commit to a health regime, the *health* topic of the chart eventually becomes the *lack* topic. This can easily happen when clients neglect their health in the belief that they will always be fit. After all, this has been true so far in their lives. The problem is that it takes years of compounded maltreatment for their health to eventually break down. Usually when their health does eventually break down, the results are fairly dramatic. Thus the *lack* of health becomes a goal – the goal being the need to regain the health. It is your role as client guardian to prevent this happening. Should a client say that he or she wishes to do more [or some] exercise, you need to ask what they had in mind. If this client does not normally undertake any exercise they will normally answer, I should join a gym. On the surface this sounds like a great idea. However there are two problems with this statement. The first is the use of the word *should*. It is a modal operator of necessity (Chapters 13 & 14) and indicates a lack of true commitment to the task. The second problem is that they are currently not a member of a gym and feel that joining one is the only option.

If a client proposes going to the gym as the option for getting healthy, you must ask the following questions.

'Have you belonged to a gym before'? If the answer is 'yes', you need to find out why they stopped going and how much they enjoyed it before exploring alternatives. The best possible answer is, 'I did enjoy going and look forward to going again.' Unfortunately, this is not often the case. If the answer is 'no', they have not joined a gym or they did not enjoy it, then you must discover the reason behind the negative response. It will be a complete waste of your efforts to get your client to a fit state of health if they are resistant (no matter how small the resistance) to attending a gym.

Here is where the Number of alternatives in the I-CAN-DO model comes fully into force. You need to guide your client into looking at different ways of achieving fitness. A good question to ask is, 'what other everyday things could you do to increase your level of fitness?'

You are seeking answers like, ' I could walk to work', 'I could use the stairs instead of the lift every time', 'I could park my car a couple of roads away from work and walk the distance every day,' ' I could get off the bus one stop before my home and walk the distance'.

The key to attaining fitness is a *daily* change to routine both with diet and with exercise. If you can get your client to walk the stairs instead of taking the lift every day, their improvement will be steady and more permanent. Another tip is to encourage your client to discuss what forms of exercise they used to like doing or that they have done whilst on holiday (i.e. swimming, dancing etc). If they mention that they swim on holiday, ask them if they could incorporate swimming once or twice a week into their routine. Listen for hesitation!

Coach You said you liked swimming on holiday. What do you need to do in order for you to enjoy going for a swim locally?

Client I'm not sure

Coach Would going with a friend or colleague from work make swimming more enjoyable?

Client Mm, possibly. This is a Danger signal.

Coach On a scale of 1 to 10. 10 being fully committed to becoming fit, where are you? (You need an 8 or above for results).

Client About a 7

Coach Do, <u>right now,</u> what you need to do to take your commitment to being healthy to a 10. Wait quietly for a response. (If you are dealing with an away from client, rephrase this question as, your commitment to preventing a serious illness.)

Client Well now you mention the reasons why I decided to consider my health it is a 10.

Coach So on a scale of 1 to 10 how committed are you to becoming healthy?

Client 10.

Coach If your commitment to becoming healthy is a 10 what is your commitment to walking up the stairs instead of taking the lift?

Client 10.

Coach Are you absolutely sure, because I do not want to get to our next call to discover that you have taken the lift instead of walking?

Client Yes I am sure.

Coach Great, now on the subject of swimming, how committed are you?

Client Well uh, about an 8.

Coach How are you going to ensure that you go swimming once or twice a week?

Client Well, I don't really know.

Coach If you did know, what would you do?

Client Well I could join the aqua aerobics class.

Coach Why the aqua aerobics class?

Client My friend Val goes to the class and she enjoys it, I could join her.

Coach Would joining Val help you to keep to your commitment to increasing you fitness?

Client Yes it would.

Coach On a scale of 1 to 10, how committed are you to joining Val at the aqua aerobics class?

Client 10

Coach 10, are you sure?

Client Yes.

Coach What do you need to do immediately after this conversation in order to ensure that you attend the next aqua aerobics class?

Client I need to ring Val and arrange to go with her.

Coach What time will you ring Val?

Client Val works during the day so I will ring this evening.

Coach Great, what time this evening?

Client Between 6.30 and 8.00.

Coach So, you are committed to ringing Val this evening between 6.30 and 8.00 to arrange to go with her to the aqua aerobics class, yes?

Client Yes.

You will have noticed that the process seemed quiet repetitive and may appear to be patronising. You do need to take care not to patronise whilst also ensuring commitment to tasks that your client has spent years avoiding.

Apply repetition until you are *absolutely* sure that the client is going to do the task. As soon as you are convinced, you must summarise the task and the commitment. Some clients are committed from the beginning and you do not need to use the commitment scale. One of my clients used her sessions to tell me what she has done and what she intended doing before the next session. My input was very little; she only needed the structure of a reporting system to impel her into action.

When you have reached agreement with your client on which tasks are going to be done and by which method or route, they have to appoint a realistic Date by which the task will be finished. [The D of I–CAN–DO] Listen very carefully for the tone of commitment to the proffered date. Clients often indicate, by their voice tone, a lack of commitment to a task when they feel trapped into deciding a time for completion.

When your client consults their diary or, if they respond confidently and quickly with a date, then you can be almost sure that the task will be done within the time. However, if there is hesitation, you can be just as sure that the task will not be completed when agreed. It is all in the tone of voice, listen very carefully.

If you detect that your client does not sound completely convincing during the Date part of I-CAN-DO model, you can once again use a questioning and refining process along the lines of, How committed are you to hitting this target date on a scale of 1 to 10?

Finally, you need to distinguish how your client will know their Outcome (The O of the model] has been successfully reached.

Ask, 'what would success look like with this outcome? What evidence do you need to show this outcome has been achieved?' or, 'Describe exactly how you will know that you have triumphantly reached your outcome?'

This step is critical for both you and your client. It is easy to assume that you both know what success looks like. Then you can be astonished when it is not reached, simply because you had a different concept of what success meant. Always ask your client for outcome indicators as it provides you and them with exact measurements on results.

Client representational systems are covered [Chapter 11] It is important to ask your client to describe the outcome indicators in their preferred representational system. Briefly, clients predominantly use one of the following three senses, *visual*, *auditory* or *kinaesthetic*. Clients will clearly and precisely describe their outcome indicator when they are asked to do so using the language of their preferred representational system.

For example, if a coach asks a visual client to describe the outcome indicators using *visual* words the conversation could proceed like this.

Coach: What would this outcome *look* like when you have attained success?

Client: I would be wearing a bright red suit with matching accessories. My black zipper briefcase would be in my right hand. The grass would be very green, the sky blue and everyone would be *looking* very happy and smiling at me.

If a coach uses *visual* words, this makes it easy for the *visual* client to describe their mental vision in great detail.

Now, if a coach was to ask an *auditory* client for outcome indicators using *auditory* the conversation could *sound* like this.

Coach: *Tell* me what would this outcome be like when you have attained success?

Client: I would want to *sing* about it and *shout* from the rooftops. Everyone would be *saying* how happy they were for me and *congratulating* me on my success.

Notice the difference, the situation is the same but the client experiences it very differently. Finally the kinaesthetic client scenario.

Coach: What would this outcome *feel* like when you have *reached* the outcome?

Client: It would *feel* wonderful. I would be *strong*, *proud* and full of *courage* and everyone would be *patting* me on the back and *shaking* my hand.

Using the clients preferred representational system at this stage in the I-CAN-DO model really makes the difference for you and your client. Clients will give you a very *clear*, *sound* and *solid* measure for determining their own outcome indicators. Beware that the converse can present problems for the coach and client. If you do not speak in your client's representational language pattern you make it harder for them to understand what you want. Misunderstandings occur and outcomes are confused. Spend time studying chapter 11, which will help you to conduct effective coaching sessions with your clients.

The I-CAN-DO model of life coaching should be used on each individual aim or goal that your client presents. All the areas of the matrix; health, wealth, family, relationships, spiritual, contribution, career, and lack should be processed through the model. If, for example, a client under the health aim wants to loose some weight.

I What is your reason for wanting to loose some weight?

C What is your current weight?

A Exactly what weight do you want to be?

N What are the successful methods of weight loss you have heard about or experienced?

D By what date do you want to be your ideal weight?

O How will you know you have succeeded?

The temptation on the outcome indicator is to assume that the scales will be the measure of success - and in most cases they will. However, clients have answered this final question in many different ways. One of my male clients said he would know he had reached the ideal weight when his dinner jacket fitted him again. Interestingly he had given me an ideal weight goal in kilograms but when he said he had reached the goal he only judged success by the jacket fitting. He did not use the scales to measure his goal achievement, nor did I ask him to do so. The reason I did not pursue his use of scales was because, during our conversations, he clearly revealed that he was not interested in actual body weight but only interested in fitting into his old jacket.

Use the model on each client goal and keep a note of what is discussed. Many life coaches and life coach trainers have rigorously discussed making notes during a life coaching session. The argument for not taking notes during the coaching session is to allow the coach absolute focussed attention on the client. To be *there* experiencing and attending to the client fully. If the coach is busy making notes during the session the client is not getting the undivided attention.

One excellent life coaching trainer, Sangeeta Mayne of L.I.F.T. International says, ‘it is really important to stay in the moment, be present and really connected with your client in order to fully understand their experience.’ By being completely focussed on your client and living in the moment you will be able to fully recall the experience to make any necessary notes at the end of the session. This method offers the coach and the client a spiritual experience, which grows and develops during the relationship.

The downside to leaving the note taking until after the session has finished, is that each client uses extra time and the coach needs to allow for this extra time during the appointment scheduling. Therefore a client session will include the preparation time, (usually about 15 minutes) the actual coaching session time, (between 30 to 60 minutes) note making time (depending on detail, between 10 to 20 minutes. The longest time for one client would be somewhere around 100 minutes. The important thing is not the amount of time spent but the amount of time charged for. If you believe that you should be *fully present* and *in the moment* with your clients you need to charge accordingly. All time spent on a client, directly or indirectly, should be charged unless you are coaching for a charity, coaching children or have specially agreed circumstances and arrangements.

Charging in this way may be difficult when you are first starting your practice and you may choose not to charge for the time spent outside of direct contact. Remember that you can change your method of charging at any time, as long as you give your client advanced warning. The best time to introduce a new charge scale is at the end of a series of coaching sessions. So, if a client has purchased 12 sessions on a renewable basis, you can advise them, during the 11th session, that the basis is changing. This gives your client warning and sufficient time to decide whether to continue with you.

You will lose some clients when introducing a fee increase, but you can reduce the impact by broaching the subject in a positive way. Start by reminding your client about the successes that they have achieved during the partnership with you. Then briefly explain your new pricing structure, followed swiftly by refocusing on their outcomes or goals.

Use their metaprogram (Chapter 15) to help you. For example, if your client is *Towards* goals, they like to achieve, attain, and prioritise. Remind them of their achievements and the exciting new goals yet to be attained. Get them to imagine what it will be like when they have reached their new goals.

*Away* from clients recognise what should be avoided. They want to get away from a problematic situation. Motivate them by emphasising what they have left behind since your partnership and ask them what it would be like to remain in their current situation, rather than moving away from it.

The opposing argument for note taking during the coaching session is just as valid. If you take notes as you are going along you have an instant record of the coaching session. You know what was agreed and when it will be accomplished. The agreed tasks can be easily recalled by looking at your notes at the end of the coaching session.

Another advantage of taking notes during the session is that you save the note making time after the call and this can be used for further coaching sessions. The disadvantage is that taking notes requires some of your attention and this is therefore not focussed fully on your client. Some clients will automatically feel the distraction and be unsettled by note taking. Other clients will be perturbed if you are not making notes throughout the conversation as they will feel that you are not listening and making notes.

You must decide which works best for you. There are no rules stating that you must only do one method to the exclusion of the other. This means that you can take notes with some clients and not with others. If you are going to make notes during the coaching sessions, it is recommended that you ask your client. 'I would like to make notes as we go along to ensure that I remember all your important goals and aims, as I do not want to miss anything. Is it alright with you that I make notes as we discuss points?' They will have the opportunity of expressing their feelings and you will both get off to a good start. If you take your notes electronically ensure that all the sounds have been removed and that you have full agreement to take notes in this manner from your client. Some clients are offended by the sound of clacking keyboards and associate the sound with poor customer service. This is possibly because of a bad previous anchoring (Chapter10) experience with a monolithic customer service department of a large corporation.

At the end of the coaching session, after you have completed the I-CAN-DO model against all the topics on the chart or matrix, you must summarise the agreed tasks. Some coaches like to tell their clients what tasks they believe have been agreed upon with their dates for achievement. The advantage of this method is the client is made emphatically aware that you were paying attention to them and you know what has to be accomplished. The disadvantage is the unlikely event that you may forget one or two of the agreed tasks. If this occurs you are in trouble and you will have lost your clients confidence. One way of overcoming this potential disaster is to be honest and say why you missed the tasks out. The reason could be as simple as the two tasks were on the other side of the page and you did not turn it over.

The preferred approach to use during the summary part of the coaching call is to ask your client to tell you what they believe they have agreed to do. Then as they are telling you what they agreed, you can confidently confirm each point. An added advantage of this approach is that when a client has forgotten one or two of the tasks, (generally the ones they were not too keen on doing), you can remind them. This sends a very strong message that you were fully attentive to the client throughout the session and that you will not let them get away with anything.

It can be a good time to bring some humour to the call and lighten the experience for the client. If you think your client would enjoy being teased you could say, 'Ah ha, you thought you could pull the wool over my eyes did you?' or, 'You thought I would forget that one didn't you. Well no chance of that'. Remember you and your clients need to enjoy the coaching experience and a little humour goes a long way.

Now that we have reached it, we need to explore the topic of humour. It is a tricky servant and will trip you up if you do not take everything into account. Some clients would find great fun in a joke about mothers-in-law, others would be absolutely horrified. Some clients would find a comment about them not achieving a task, 'You slippery eel', as funny and endearing - whilst others would take great umbrage at this remark. It is often the little remarks, said in jest with an endearing intention, that cause the big problems. The little witticisms that we banter with our friends and our business colleagues are easily quoted in an unguarded moment with a client. If you are fully engaged and congruent with a client this is unlikely to occur. However, it does happen, so you need to be alert to signals about what is acceptable with each client if your coaching style includes humour or banter.

A recent area for concern is the email joke. It is a trendy and virulent pastime of web surfers to send jokes by email. Never send email jokes to a client, even if you are absolutely sure that they will find it really funny. The trouble with email jokes is that you are not there when the email is opened and have no control on the state that your client is in at that time. Think about this for a moment. You have sent a very funny joke, via the email, about an undertaker who loses a corpse. You know your client really well and are absolutely sure they would find the joke hysterically funny. What you do not know is that today their father died in a car crash. The joke is now not at all funny.

As a rule of thumb, never send jokes of any kind over the Internet. Limit light humour during sessions with clients when you have a really strong relationship. This would generally mean the client has been with you for two full programmes (24 coaching sessions) and you are fully aware the risk you are taking by being humorous can be offset by the great achievements you have made with your client. Avoid humour and jokes with new clients.

During the coaching process there may be times you feel worried that you do not know what to say. This is more likely to occur during your early stages of life coaching. Do not worry. If you are coaching from a genuine desire to help your client this will never happen. However, to put your mind at rest, if you do ever hit a blank, always fall back on trusty questions. Some really effective questions are, What advice would you give yourself if you were the coach? Clients always have the resources within to answer this question. Fear that a client may retort You’re the coach not me! can sometimes prevent us from asking this valuable question. Overcome this retort with, ‘Yes, I am your coach and my experience tells me that clients usually know what is the best route for themselves but are afraid to speak it for fear of failure or fear of success. So, what would your advice be?’ Another way of putting this is, ‘Yes, I am happy to be your coach. My experience tells me that clients in the same situation as you are currently facing, usually have the answer but are afraid to speak it for fear of failure or fear of success. So, what would your advice be?’

Another useful question to ask is, ‘If you could go back 10 years and had the opportunity to coach yourself - what would you have said’? The trick here is to give your clients time to answer. They will need time to consider and reflect to produce a suitable response. Wait quietly and patiently for their reply. If they become stuck gently nudge them by offering this, ‘If not you, what advice would a (fortune teller, wizard, prophet, mentor, wise master) have given you?’ Clients will come up with extraordinarily insightful responses, which will amaze and enthral you. The greatest gift of being a life coach is that you get to be coached yourself during these golden moments.

I sometimes use hypnotic language to encourage clients to come up with the answers they need. ‘Imagine for a moment that you have a friend who knows you inside out, what advice would they give you’? After the client has told you the advice the imaginary friend would give, you need to follow up with these questions, ‘So is this good advice?’ and, ‘Will this advice help you towards your outcome’?

An auspicious question for many situations is, ‘If there is one thing you would have done differently what would it have been?’ This question often gives your client insights that they have not previously considered. Once more, it is vital to give your client time to respond, as time usually furnishes remarkable results. The advantage of this question is that it works with life goals and equally as well with small tasks that were not successfully achieved.

The underlying skills of outstanding coaching sessions are asking the right questions and emphatic listening to the responses. Within the chapters on language patterns you will find valuable questions to assist you as you grow and develop as a life coach.

There are occasions when a client becomes really stuck and I fall back on the I-CAN-DO life coaching model using it as an incantation – I Can tation.

I encourage my clients to chant ‘I can do’, whenever they have the need for resources or the desire for motivation. It is best to explain that incantations can be positively used by us as an incantation or conversely used to destroy confidence as an incantation. Clients are familiar with incantations they use them all the time. You will often hear a client saying, ‘I can’t do that’, and they believe the chant they have just spoken.

Chanting is very powerful; you only have to watch the All Blacks rugby team prior to a game to see how powerful chanting can be. The enigma here is we all chant every day and usually several times a day but the chants are I can’t chants not I can chants. Life coaching changes the chanting to positive affirmations and removes the negative affirmations. This enables clients to reach goals they never dreamed they could reach.

Occasionally a client will come to you presenting a serious life problem and it is your job to support them through this emotional period. Life coaching is about change and, if you are a good coach, you will aid and assist clients to change in many different ways and in all areas of life. Sometimes the client becomes almost unrecognisable to their family or friends and this can cause huge problems.

The family or friends could feel threatened by the changes in your client and this can be the source of much anxiety, anguish and arguments. Understand that it is your client changes *because they want to change* and that, at all times, your client chooses the responses they make. Do not become involved, other than in a coaching way, with domestic or friendship disputes. Never recommend divorce. Always coach for reconciliation and, if reconciliation fails, you have a clear conscience to support your client through any troubles, which present themselves.

There have been marriage breakdowns, divorces and loss of friendships during life coaching programmes. These life problems are predictable when clients are changing into successful, confident people. Clients will evolve as they achieve more and more mastery of their own destiny. The evolution process will change the status quo within existing relationships and the relationships will flourish or wither.

If this happens to one of your clients do not feel guilty (a natural reaction) Remember that your client has chosen to behave in such a way as to bring about the breakdown, not you. Your role is to support your client to achieve goals. Clients going through these types of changes need slightly more sensitive management and encouragement.

A steadfast question for just this sort of dilemma is, ‘Have you overcome difficulties in the past’? Follow with, ‘What were your strengths that you called upon that helped you to get through that time? Were there any other strengths that you used?’

Coach to draw out as many different strengths as your client can recall and offer any that you think may have been used but overlooked. During one particularly testing coaching session, I asked my client to go away and immediately write a list of all the good things they had done in his life. I told him to write down everything, large and small, to include donations to charity, feeding a neighbours cat or picking up someone’s mail. He rang back the following day a confident and adjusted client ready to tackle his goals. As clients rush around in their busy lives they can become overwhelmed by others success and forget their own qualities. Remind clients how good they are at being the good person they are by giving them this self-appreciation exercise to do.

There are two more questions that you might consider using during the I-CAN-DO life coaching model. 'Is doing XXX morally fair to all concerned?' and, 'Will doing this task take you closer or further away from the major outcomes in your life'? The first question is valuable when a client is thinking of making a major career change or major life style change. It transforms the focus from within the client to the external impact of the changes. From navel gazing to star gazing. A long silence following the asking of the first question may indicate some internal struggle. A sharp intake of breath is a good indicator that your client had not considered the full consequences of his or her choices. You will be glad you asked the question.

The second is a barometer question and should be used when you can clearly see your client is going away from the original goals or aims and you want to refocus the energy. If you allow clients to go off on tangents you are taking the energy from the main outcome. This will have the impact of elongating the time span for accomplishing the overall outcome and will lessen the power of life coaching. Your client will not be truly passionate about the beneficial effects. It could also have an impact on your referral system, which was discussed in the previous chapter.

Occasionally you will have the wonderful experience of a rapport ruiner. Developing flexibility for dealing with a rapport ruiner is a communication technique that will serve you well for all situations where you encounter them. A wonderful experience, because it allows you to practise your flexibility as a life coach and at the same time it tests your ability to control a judgmental disposition, should you possess such a thing. What is a rapport ruiner? Have you ever come into contact with a person who if you said white he would say black, if you said go he would say stop – that is a rapport ruiner. They cannot help themselves for they are compelled to respond in a contrary manner. Usually these behaviours will test most life coaches' flexibility to its limits and beyond.

Interestingly, the rapport ruiner does not consider himself or herself as being negative in their approach but most of the recipients of their behaviour would consider it negative. You will be able to detect a rapport ruiner during their first contact with you either face to face or over the telephone.

If you tell a rapport ruiner how life coaching can help them to achieve their goals, they are likely to respond with the fact that you could not possibly do that until you knew what their goals were. It is a waste of energy and time trying to rationalise with a rapport ruiner, so use this contact opportunity as a personal development experience for yourself. Take up the challenge and practise your state control (Chapter 10), your linguistic skills (Chapters 13 and 14) and your rapport skills (Chapter 12). To help you deal effectively with a rapport ruiner there is a great linguistic trick. This actually brings you into rapport with the rapport ruiner by breaking their behaviour pattern giving you a chance for positive communication.

Before I reveal the trick you must prepare yourself. Open your mind and promise that you will not unfairly judge what I am going to recommend, also make a pledge that you will use the technique at least three times before you pass your verdict. It is a linguistic pattern and therefore needs fluency when using the phrase to a rapport ruiner. Consider the method of learning this trick as exactly the same method for learning a foreign language – you would repeat phrases several times before you spoke the foreign language, you must do the same with this phase.

During a normal coaching session with a rapport ruiner you might suggest,

Coach Have you considered going to your manager?

Rapport ruiner No. It wouldn't work anyway

Coach What about going to human resources?

Rapport ruiner No. They wouldn't do anything if I did go to them.

It is quite probable a coaching session with a rapport ruiner would continue along these lines and you would feel frustrated dealing with the continuous resistance. The trick is a linguistic pattern changer and the pattern needs to contain at least three negatives to be effective. For a non-rapport ruiner the sentence will not make sense nor will it sound pleasing. The important point is that it works, that is all we need.

Coach <u>No</u>. You <u>wouldn't</u> want to go to your manager, <u>would you not?</u>

Rapport ruiner Yes I would

The rapport ruiners compulsion to be contrary will get you a positive response. This linguistic pattern changer really works, the hurdle for you is making a sentence with three negatives sound fluent. That is where the practise is important. Remember, any sentences that you construct to combat the rapport ruiners impact must have at least three negatives.

In the last chapter we looked at how to build a coaching practice but we also need to consider how to keep a practice ongoing and profitable. Renewals and referrals are the mainstay of the life coaching practice and without which there would be no practice and no profit. Referrals have already been extensively covered in Chapter 6.

Renewals need careful planning and preparation. You should not consider renewals as a separate entity to the individual coaching sessions. Renewals are harder to achieve if you leave the work until the last session of a life coaching programme.

Putting all your efforts into convincing the client to renew during the final session can cause you enormous pressure and is often unsuccessful. If you continuously provide an excellent service throughout the entire life coaching programme for each client, there is a much greater possibility your clients will renew with you. To increase your chances of clients renewing their contracts, ask yourself, this question during each session, if this client had to decide *right now,* whether to continue or renew their coaching programme with me, would they do so? The answer should always be a convincing 'yes'. If you are unsure that this client would renew, you will need to perform a detailed evaluation of the coaching session in doubt.

Questions you could to ask.

- What needs to be improved for this client to want to renew with me?
- Was I in a peak state throughout the entire life coaching session?
- How did I listen?
- Did I allow myself to become distracted at any time whilst I was engaged during the session?
- Did I miss any non-verbal clues?
- Did I assume, delete or distort information from this client?
- How judgmental was I?
- What needs to be improved for the next session?
- Are there any actions I can take between now and the next coaching session to improve my service to this client?

Concentrate on providing an outstanding service to your clients at each and every life coaching session and the renewals will follow automatically.

Renewals are the most profitable clients because all the costs of marketing and winning their business have already been accounted for during the sale of the first coaching programme. Renewal contracts are almost pure profit. You do not have to finance further marketing, further sales presentations nor free coaching sessions. The costs of renewal may only incur the reissuing contracts (if you originally chose to issue contracts) the cost of minimal stationery and the downloading of emails. There does not have to be any other costs involved.

It is in your financial interest to renew all life coaching programmes and here lies the dichotomy. The most cost-effective way to run your practice is to renew all contracts with your clients. It is ethical to terminate a contract with a client as soon as you have completed the original goals. The decision you have to make is, did I manipulate my client into renewal or did my client renew because of the outstanding service I provided?

Be careful not to manipulate to gain renewals because you do not want clients with subsequent regrets. They will not recommend you to other people and they will be extraordinarily demanding throughout the life coaching programme. If you accidentally manipulate a client and you think you they may be suffering renewal regrets, confront the problem by asking your client directly if this is the situation. Issue an immediate refund with a thank you for your patronage card. If you bury your head in the sand and continue regardless, you will pay a hidden cost for this action in the future.

### *Synopsis*

Using the I-CAN-DO life coaching model will help you to grow your practice and increase result attainment with your clients. The life coaching chart or matrix will provide a framework for you to coach each client. Charging for missed appointments is part of marketing and image not just loss of time. Should you make notes during a life coaching session? Dealing with a rapport ruiner by using a pattern interrupt. Renewals are the most cost effective way to build your practice.

***Summary***

- Use a coaching model

- Life coaching is about all areas of your clients life

- Use the Internet to help you

- Referrals and renewals are critical to your success

- The dichotomy of the life coach