

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT SOLUTION-FOCUSED NLP COACHING

This document is designed to help you understand the nature of coaching and how to get the most from our partnership together.

What is Solution-Focused NLP Coaching?

Coaching is quickly becoming one of the leading tools and strategies used by anyone who wants to enhance their performance, deal with limiting blocks and so allow them to lead fulfilling lives.

NLP = 'Neuro Linguistic Programming' is an applied psychology approach to exploring how we can organise and express our thoughts, language & behaviours in the most helpful and empowering way possible ie '*The Technology of Personal Excellence*'

The coaching relationship is a partnership – *an equal relationship* -- allowing you room to move yet supporting you to be accountable so that your better future is secured faster; facilitating you to achieve the kind of life and work you really want and achieving your goals. You will discover 'solutions' for securing your best performance and so enhance your life.

What is My Responsibility?

- To clarify and encourage you to set the goals that you really want
- To discover ways you can achieve YOUR desired change
- To help you to focus better in order to produce results more quickly
- To provide you with the tools, support and structure to unleash your potential

How is Coaching Different from Counselling, Mentoring, Training, Consulting?

Coaching is not counselling or therapy which tends to focus on the past and look at issues historically nor is it consulting which generally involves coming up with expert opinions and answers. However, coaching does use techniques derived from clinical psychology.

- **Mentors say:** Let me show you the ropes - *Coaches assist beyond corporate ladders and work with the "whole" person*
- **Trainers say:** Here's how to do it - *Coaches assure you master that knowledge or skill*
- **Consultants say:** Here's the solution - *Coaches help you to find your own solutions and enable you to follow through and deliver*
- **Therapists say:** Here's why you're doing it [the past is explored] - *Coaching is action and solution-oriented, focusing more on the present and future.*
- **Solution-Focused coaches say:** The "answers" that you are looking come from discovering what's exactly right for you and then deciding how to move forward by adopting more constructive behaviours

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How do I Coach Clients?

As your 'Facilitative' coach, I will ask questions, encourage, advise, challenge, make requests and listen for your "essence" so that you are consistent with who you are in terms of your goals, your values and your vision. My focus will be on you and what you want and how you can best get it.

However, the coaching relationship is designed by both of us and may be refined by each of us in the giving and receiving of feedback. Although I am committed to the process, it still remains your personal responsibility to take action (or not take action) as you desire.

1. **I Expect Your Best:** The best results are achieved when you are ready to both do and be the best that you can be. It is about stepping up to the challenge and giving it your best shot. If there is a sense in which you may not be giving it your best, it is my job to bring that to your awareness so we can work out what you really want to do.
2. **I Make Specific Requests:** As the need arises, I will make direct requests such as, "Could you see yourself accomplishing X within the next two weeks"? You could meet the request ("Yes, I can do that"), provide an alternative option ("I can't do X, but I can do Y") or perhaps you might decline altogether (which rarely happens). Whichever way you respond though, I will support your action.
3. **I May Give Advice occasionally:** If I have a real sense of a particular direction, and you are open to it, I will ask your permission to share with you suggestions on how to handle a problem or an issue or make the most of an opportunity. It is always your responsibility to make it clear when such advice is exactly what you require and when it isn't. Your own discretion and judgment is what counts.
4. **I Am Respectful and Empathetic:** If for example, I hear a hesitancy in your voice or notice an inconsistency, I will generally ask you about it. Often, it is these particular moments that permit the opportunity to resolve something. It is only my job to highlight the issue and allow you to do with it what you will. If you want greater challenge, I can provide it.
5. **I Set Agreed Actions:** Typically, I ask you to work out perhaps two or three goals or actions to focus on between our sessions together. If these agreed actions aren't working, then the reasons will be explored in the next session. If you want to be pushed harder, it is important for you to say so.

How to Get the Most from Solutions Coaching

It is important that you benefit significantly from our coaching sessions as well as from the time in between. Outlined below are some of the things that you can do in order to maximise the value of your coaching experience.

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1. **Focus on What You Really Want** - Coaching works best when you have clear goals that are based on what you really want to achieve. Firstly, it is important for you to consider deeply what you want your work and your life to look like. Secondly, it is important to identify the gaps between the way things are now and how you would like them to be. It is true that many people struggle with this, but it is essential to unveil what you really want.
2. **Understand that You Will Develop & Grow** - Most clients take on a coach to work on specific goals and much of their time and energy is directed towards this. However, the coaching relationship also may allow you to discover something new about yourself and your goals. This is just a natural and hugely beneficial consequence of the coaching process. Accelerated personal and professional growth is the hallmark of coaching.
3. **Increase Your Willingness to Step Up** - Part of my responsibility is to ask you what degree of challenge you would like me to generate during the sessions. This is not meant to exhaust you or extend you beyond your bounds, but simply to ask more of you than perhaps you have felt able to ask of yourself recently. It is important that you be willing to experiment with fresh approaches and try out new ideas. I will encourage you to be honest with yourself, raise your personal standards and set appropriate goals. Although you are the best judge of what is right for you, the more you are willing to grow and develop, the greater will be the benefits from solutions coaching.
4. **Come Prepared to Each Coaching Session** - To get the most value out of each coaching session, it is important that you prepare an agenda for each session. To that end, the **"Coaching Preparation Form"** may be of assistance to you (this is also available as a download). Preparing your agenda does not have to be time-consuming, but experience shows that if you spend 10-15 minutes preparing, it has a significant impact on our session together. If we talk by phone for our session, you could e-mail me an agenda beforehand.
5. **Complete Your Agreed Actions** - After each session, you will decide on the actions or goals you want to focus on. I will work with you to make sure that you are setting worthwhile, realistic and achievable goals. If you know that you have a busy week or two ahead, your **'action plan'** might be as simple as putting into practice a new perspective. If you have more time, you might decide to handle more specific tasks with greater accountability. Irrespective, the responsibility for taking the actions agreed upon belongs to you.

Policies & Procedures

1. **Complete the Client Coaching Contract Form** . Fill out this form which I will 'share' with you after the preliminary complimentary session and send it to me via e-mail along with full payment for the agreed coaching NLP package at least a week before our first coaching session.
2. **Complete the Assessment Questionnaire before the preliminary 'complimentary' session.**
In this session, I will go through the contract with you to make sure that you are very clear about the fees payable, issues of confidentiality and how we terminate our coaching partnership if necessary.

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3. **How We Meet** – At the preliminary session we will agree to meet at a particular venue or to conduct the sessions by telephone or Skype for between 50 minutes and 1 hour. The first session however, is generally longer as we get to know each other and begin to focus on your goals and direction. If you live and work nearby, then face-to-face sessions are best conducted in my home office so that you are away from the distraction of what might be occurring in your own home or office and we can concentrate on your own issues without interruption. Occasionally however, and depending on your work circumstances, it could also be appropriate to meet at another mutually agreed location eg Hotel lounge or coffee shop. If the coaching is paid for by a 3rd party [usually work based] then it may be necessary to meet with your line manager, say, once a quarter to clarify how your organisation might be viewing your progress and development. If coaching is part of your school's professional development programme, then this might also be required.

4. **Cancellations & Appointment Changes:** Scheduled coaching sessions ought to be a priority. On the rare occasion when you need to reschedule, please let me know **at least 48 hours in advance**. Except in the case of an emergency, you will be personally charged for last minute cancellations or missed sessions.

5. **Value Added Service:** If between sessions, you cannot wait to share something or you need advice or have a challenge or just want to check something, please feel free to call or email me. Although my day is generally caught up with my regular sessions, I would like to provide this extra level of service. Of course, there is no charge for this additional time, but I simply request that you might keep those extra calls to a maximum of around 10 to 15 minutes.