

**YOUR
TOTAL
COACH**

YOUR

50 Ideas for Inspiring Personal

TOTAL

and Professional Growth

COACH

KEITH NELSON

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Introduction

Welcome to *Your Total Coach*, a book that seeks to provide coaches with 50 inspiring ideas that can be used to both inspire personal and professional growth. These 50 ideas can be applied both to the coach's clients and to the coach himself. The coaching journey that sits at the heart of this book is one of discovery – whether that is the coach's or the coach's clients. The 50 ideas are divided into three tiers of coaching, each representing growing personal development and professional growth within the coach. The more capable the coach, the more effective the coaching.

Your Total Coach is developed upon two fundamental principles that run throughout the three levels and 50 chapters.

Firstly, that coaching is focused upon **raising performance**. The goal of coaching is to raise performance. Whether it is applied in organisational, community, family or personal contexts, the concept of raising performance is used here as a very broad descriptor. It goes way beyond winning a cup or achieving a business target and extends to many different areas of life – such as working with a client to:

- Develop more effective interpersonal relationships
- Define or redefine what he wants in his life
- Raise personal confidence levels
- Increase effectiveness at work
- Make fundamental choices about life's directions

The second principle is that successful coaching, leading to raised performance, is based upon **psychological principles**. Henry Ford said: *'If you think you can do a thing or think you can't do a thing, you're right.'* An outcome of performance-focused, psychologically-based coaching is the client going away from the coaching with a mindset that not only that he can, but he does!

Marianne Williamson explained: *'Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure.'* Effective coaching can help the client to overcome fears – to move away from the voice that says 'I can't'.

Why this book?

The purpose of this book is to provide coaches with 50 ideas that will support and enhance their coaching. To provide structure and enable progress, the 50 topics are divided into three tiers. By dividing the coaching development into three distinct layers, the aim is to create an aspirational framework that supports coach development. These three tiers:

- Are distinct. Each tier represents a different stage of coach development.
- Overlap. These are broad categories and there are areas of overlap which are not mutually exclusive.
- Are progressive. They represent development and progression.
- Are intended as a framework.
- Have performance improvement and psychological factors running through them as twin golden threads.

The three levels are:

TIER 1: SUCCESSFUL COACHING

TIER 2: ADVANCED COACHING

TIER 3: TRANSFORMATIONAL COACHING

For coaches who want to develop their practice and for would-be coaches wanting to enter the profession, the three tier coaching approach, which has been developed from training hundreds of coaches from around the world, provides a broad framework for effective practice, clear progression and sustained development at all levels of the profession.

While some authors have described differences in coaching such as ‘skills coaching’ and ‘development coaching’, this approach does not distinguish between the two. Learning a skill and developing personally both involve raised performance and psychological factors to be effective.

I have been persuaded, encouraged and driven to create this approach for the following reasons:

Firstly, because of the ongoing challenges that coaches in training face when seeking to internalise what coaching is. Coaching requires much learning and unlearning, self-reflection, self-development and the capability to work in areas of enormous complexity and ambiguity. The

journey that is described here seeks to describe the steps that coaches can take to integrate performance-focused, psychologically-based approaches into their practice.

Secondly, coaching's dramatic growth over the last few years has largely been unregulated. There are many authentic coaches who act responsibly and voluntarily sign up to ethical codes of practice. Equally there are coaches whose approaches don't. In the right hands, coaching can be a wonderfully transformative, enhancing experience.

The three tiers

The three tier model seeks to lay the foundations for effective development that is designed to enable coaches in development to understand what coaching is about and to work professionally and ethically, delivering value to their clients.

TIER 1: SUCCESSFUL COACHING

Tier 1 focuses on many of the building blocks for coaching and are the basic essentials that enable effective coaching sessions to take place. They represent the core skills of coaching and without these in place, there would be limited development. These are also easily taken for granted.

Listening is one of these, and listening lies at the heart of all coaching. Most of us like to think we're pretty good listeners, but as we explore in chapter 8, real listening – sometimes called effective, active or deep listening – is real work. Students in practice sessions invariably report that even after a short 30-minute coach practice session, they are tired. As I said, listening is real work.

Coaching at this level encompasses listening and questioning, generating and giving feedback, goal-setting and understanding problem resolution. It means creating time and space, learning to hold back and not step in, understanding and applying models to help the process. (By tier 3 the confident and capable coach can let go of many of the tools learned in tier 1 – goals don't need to be set, models don't need to be used.)

Fulfilling tier 1 status means that the coach is competent to conduct a coaching session. Businesses around the world are grasping the fact that reaching this level of competence isn't an option for their managers these

days, it's an essential. Why? Because effective coaching can achieve many things, including:

- Raised performance;
- A more positive working environment;
- Helping people, teams and organisations navigate their way through a world in which there is less certainty and more rapid change than ever before. More and more people are working in roles that didn't exist a few years ago. There is no manual, no instruction book for success in the twenty-first century.

If every manager in every organisation could coach to tier 1 status, there would be a massive upsurge in productivity – quite simply, coaching is the single most effective tool for raising performance.

TIER 2: ADVANCED COACHING

As the coach becomes more proficient, the coaching and the coaching relationship take on different characteristics. It becomes more mature, more meaningful and more emotionally intelligent. It becomes a strategic partnership between coach and client. My experience of training coaches at this stage is one of reaching out to clients and simultaneously ensuring their own houses are in order.

The qualities described here do not suddenly magically appear – the three tiers are not mutually exclusive. Indeed, I would sincerely hope that the coach is already using these qualities at tier 1. It is that they become very figural at this stage of coaching development. Unless the coach can become competent in these areas, then he is limiting his capability.

To use an analogy, compare coaching to learning to swim. Tier 1 is the equivalent of learning to swim in a swimming pool. Tier 2 is swimming in a more challenging environment, such as a lake or river. Tier 3 is swimming for a mile or more in the ocean.

All the fundamentals for swimming in the ocean are learned in the swimming pool. As the swimmer progresses, she learns to swim more confidently. She learns to swim out of her depth, gain confidence and go swimming without seeing the bottom of the ocean. She learns to tread water, be mindful of currents, swim through waves and so on. The coaching development journey is not dissimilar.

At tier 2, the coach is:

- Caring for the client;
- Developing high level skills in rapport and empathy;
- Understanding the importance of values – both for the client and self;
- Managing the relationship with the client;
- Taking on high levels of personal responsibility for self;
- Extending personal comfort boundaries.

This is such an exciting stage of coaching development. It is reaching out to the client.

If tier 1 is focused upon coaching as a practice, coaches in development at tier 2 are focusing on the client, the relationship and themselves. Moving on to tier 3 is the most profound journey of all. It is where the coach grows and changes to fully integrate these entities. This becomes the gateway to transformational coaching.

TIER 3: TRANSFORMATIONAL COACHING

There is no roof, no limit here. Upper level coaching reaches for the sky. Much leading edge coaching is taking place here. And, as coaching as a profession is still in its infancy, there are many exciting journeys of discovery ahead.

The coach's development journey precedes the client's. I firmly believe that the coach's self-development is an essential precursor, a critical success factor to working effectively with clients. How can the coach support the client to explore themselves and raise their awareness if they haven't applied this approach to themselves? Such psychological mindedness and awareness is essential to work effectively with others.

If coaching is emotionally intelligent, this is where emotional intelligence is most present, most powerfully used. It is where the coach learns to work comfortably and eventually seamlessly within the psychological and emotional dimensions of coaching. This is where the coach can do important work in the lives of their clients. As an example, if the client's life is likened to a rollercoaster, the effective coach is the one who can:

- Sit alongside the client in the rollercoaster;
- Get out of the rollercoaster;

- Encourage the client to stand on *terra firma* and look up at the rollercoaster from ground level;
- Invite the client into a helicopter to look down on the rollercoaster;
- Ask the client what the rollercoaster looks like from the boss's / partner's perspective;
- Ask the client what the rollercoaster looks like from the employees' perspective.

And so on. This is where the coach is aware of and deals with transference issues, has highly developed psychological mindedness and can create a safe environment for the client and for himself.

Many coaches in training want to understand, compare and contrast coaching with counselling. At this level of coaching, there is inevitably common ground between the two, and as is stated throughout, coaching is based upon psychological principles behind performance.

At the leading edge of coaching development, there is an increased fusion between coaching and therapeutic approaches, whether cognitive behavioural, Gestalt, psychodynamic, transactional analysis or others. Does the coach need to be psychologically trained? Does the coach follow one school or explore different approaches that can be used in different contexts or situations? These questions are being explored within coaching today.

Enjoy the journey!