

Lesson 4 - The Power of Presence

The most basic—and perhaps the most important—gift you can offer your coaching clients is your presence. If you have ever been with someone in whose presence you felt soothed, loved, cherished, relaxed, safe, and whole, you recognize that all forms of healing, including coaching, are based more on an energy transmission than specific words or actions. For that reason, a good coach must cultivate the power of his or her presence, not just in coaching situations, but at all times.

In our culture, presence in most relationships has been reduced to a trickle. In our fascination with labor-saving devices, mass production, lightning-speed technology, and unprecedented busyness, the human factor is relegated to a low priority. As a result, people crave someone to look them in the eye, call them by name, and recognize that they are a thinking, feeling, caring person. When you give a coaching client your full attention and presence, you are feeding that person in ways he or she hungers for, and your service is priceless. (Recommended movie: *Being There* (1979) with Peter Sellers and Shirley MacLaine)

I used to see a chiropractor who was a good doctor, but he was enamored with his quest to increase his volume of patients and income. As a result, when I went to see him for an office visit, he would rush into the examining room, ask me a question or two, do a quick adjustment, and dart onto his next patient. When he left I still felt hungry for healing.

One week that chiropractor was on vacation, and a substitute doctor treated me. By contrast, this fellow sat down with me, looked me in the eye, touched me, and asked me about the elements of my lifestyle related to the symptoms I came to him to treat. He gave me his time, attention, and presence, and when he left I felt deeply healed.

I attended a church service at Princeton University, where the spiritual master Sri Chinmoy had been invited to give the sermon. At the appointed moment, Sri Chinmoy walked to the lectern, placed his hands in prayer position, closed his eyes, and went into a deep meditation. Twenty minutes later he opened his eyes, bowed, and returned to his seat. That was one of the best sermons I have ever “heard.”

Today and tomorrow, notice how present you are with the people with whom you interact. Are you really with them, or are you thinking about the next thing you have to do? Are you interested in what you are doing together, or are you wishing you were elsewhere? If you are a teacher, parent, or coach, are you focusing on the person you are with as if they are the only person in the universe, or are you mentally or emotionally trying to juggle the rest of your students, kids, or clients?

As you dive into fuller presence with your friends, associates, and clients, you will discover that what starts out to be a gift to them is really a gift to you. The more presence you offer your clients, the more peace and clarity you will feel for yourself.

While this introductory lesson may seem simple, it is ultimately the most profound. Whether you are an experienced coach or just beginning to learn coaching skills, this lesson, as well as the others this week, will serve as the platform to make your coaching practice successful and deliver to you and your clients the reward you seek.

Exercise:

1. In what situations and with which people do you feel the most present?

What do you do and how do you feel in these situations that is different from the moments when you are less present?

2. In what situations and with which people do you feel the least present?

What do you do and how do you feel in these situations that is different from the moments when you are more present?

3 . (To be done at the end of your day:) How present were you in your interactions today?

When were you most present?

When were you least present?

What did you discover today about the power of presence?

Affirm:

**I offer my presence to everyone I am with.
I feed my soul by feeding the souls of those I touch.**

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