

Lesson 8 - The High Art of Reframing

One of your most trustworthy tools in your coaching practice, as well as your personal life, is **reframing**. To reframe is to regard an unpleasant or fear-inducing situation from another angle, so you click on a perspective that yields empowerment rather than distress. When you reframe you do not deny, change, or overlook any of the facts of the presented situation. You simply find a new way to see it that feels better and closer to resolution.

No situation has intrinsic meaning. All meaning is assigned. Your experience of any situation depends entirely on how you interpret it. When you or your client regards a situation as negative or victimizing, you are seeing the issue through a lens of fear. If you can find a way to re-view the situation through a lens of peace, ease, or trust, three things will happen: (1) You will feel better; (2) You will have access to options, paths of action, and solutions that were not available when you were seeing through a dark lens; and (3) You will attract people and events that yield tangible positive results. Thus your role as coach becomes primarily *a facilitator to shift perception*.

You can make anything out of anything. Your client has already made up a story about an event. She can just as easily make up another story. You can help your client find a new story that works. To the extent that she is willing to do so, she will find relief and success.

Reframing is a great deal of fun, and you can practice it anywhere at anytime, for your own benefit as well as your clients'. Use the next few days to practice being a masterful reframer, and you will be amazed at how great you feel and how well things work out.

Here are some examples:

1. After the great Argentinean golfer Robert DeVincenzo won a tournament, he received his prize check and left the clubhouse. As the champion walked to his car in the parking lot he was approached by a young woman. She congratulated him on his victory and told him that her child was seriously ill and near death. She did not know how she could pay the doctor's bills and hospital expenses.

DeVincenzo was touched by her story, so he took out a pen and endorsed his winning check for payment to the women. "Make some good days for the baby," he said as he pressed the check into her hand.

The next week he was having lunch in a country club when a Professional Golf Association official came to his table. "Some of the boys told me you met a young woman in the parking lot last week after you won that tournament."

DeVincenzo nodded.

"Well," said the official, "I have news for you. She's a phony. She has no sick baby. She's not even married. She fleeced you, my friend."

"You mean there is no baby who is dying?" asked DeVincenzo.

"That's right," said the official

"That's the best news I've heard all week!" DeVincenzo answered.

2. When my Japanese client Yoshi was in kindergarten, her teacher assigned the class to draw pictures of their mothers for Mother's Day. The teacher posted the drawings on the bulletin board until the last day of school before the holiday.

When the time came for Yoshi to take her picture home, she discovered it was missing. Another student had taken it. Yoshi was terrified to go home and tell her mother the news. But she forced herself to do so.

Instead of the scolding Yoshi expected, her mother smiled and told her. "Wow! You must be a really great artist if someone wanted your picture enough to take it home!"

3. A client told me that she had had a "rude awakening."

She had had a job working as a surgical technician until she injured her hand, rendering her unable to work at that job anymore.

"You've told me about the rude part," I replied. "What about the awakening?"

"To be honest, I didn't really like that job. I was on call 24/7, and there were times when I'd be driving home after a long day of work and the beeper would go off and I'd have to go back to the hospital. When I couldn't work anymore I spend a lot more time with my kids, which I had really been missing. I also took psychology courses and I am now on my way to becoming a counselor, which I have always dreamed about."

4. In a small town near my home, a Jewish congregation was looking for a meeting space for their Sabbath services. After hunting for a while, the only feasible place they found to meet was in a Christian church. Although this was not their ideal, it was the best choice available, so they took it.

After the first Sabbath service, one of the congregants took the rabbi aside and pointed to the large cross on the wall over the altar. "Rabbi," the fellow asked with concern, "Doesn't it bother you to pray under the shadow of that cross?"

"Shhh," the rabbi answered, his finger to his lips. "It's a 'T' for 'Torah.'"

Exercise, Part 1:

Suggest a reframe for each of these situations:

1. "I really want to go to art school, but my parents want me to become an accountant."

2. Your spouse says to you, "I was so busy today that I didn't have time to prepare dinner."

3. "My business is floundering and I don't know if it will survive."

Exercise, Part 2:

Choose three situations that seem troublesome to you or a client. Find a reframe for each one:

Situation 1:

Facts and circumstances:

Current interpretation:

Reframed interpretation that brings relief:

Situation 2:

Facts and circumstances:

Current interpretation:

Reframed interpretation that brings relief:

Situation 3:

Facts and circumstances:

Current interpretation:

Reframed interpretation that brings relief:

Affirm:

There is a way to look at every situation that leads to relief and resolution.

**I use higher vision to reveal opportunities and blessings
to my clients and myself.**

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