

choice

the magazine of professional coaching

Aha Moments &
Breakthroughs

Brief Brain-based
Coaching

Systemic
Constellations

Creativity
in Coaching
Tools, tips
& techniques

Creative COACHING:

Tools, tips & techniques

Introducing new stimuli into your work can open up new possibilities with and for your clients. How can different tools and techniques make the work you do stand out as memorable? How do they add value and help your marketing or branding? How can you “break the ice,” get out of a rut, shift perspective and create aha moments? Join us as we explore coaching tools, tips, techniques and creative processes.

By Emma-Louise Elsey, BSc, NLP

Nothing in my life has been quite so humbling as growing my coaching business. When I started 12 years ago I thought it would be easy; I had a degree in business and technology along with 10 years of corporate experience in project management. But all this mattered little as I struggled with confidence and getting clients

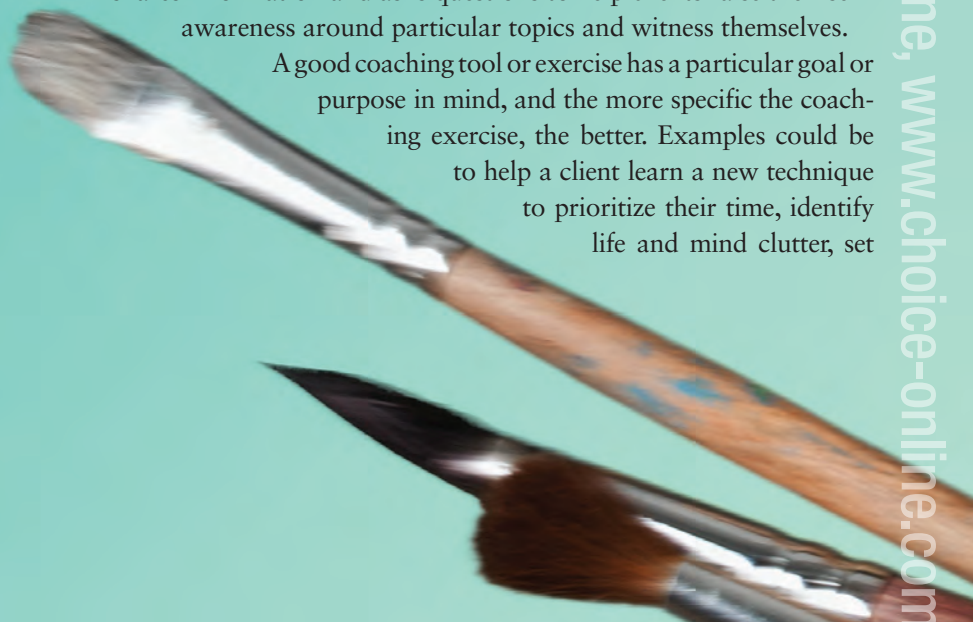
My answer was to get out there, run workshops and meet people. As part of this I also created coaching tools and exercises for people to complete.

These fun coaching tools and exercises helped people to reflect learn about themselves and commit to action. They also gave people a taste of coaching and concretized the coaching experience. Plus they were great marketing – something tangible and branded the workshop attendee or potential client can take home.

What do I mean by coaching tool?

I like to use lighthearted, visually appealing, printable forms that get clients away from technology and distractions. This kind of coaching tool or exercise shares information and asks questions to help clients raise their self-awareness around particular topics and witness themselves.

A good coaching tool or exercise has a particular goal or purpose in mind, and the more specific the coaching exercise, the better. Examples could be to help a client learn a new technique to prioritize their time, identify life and mind clutter, set



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Tools You Can Use

10 types of coaching tools and exercises

1. A series of powerful questions that brainstorm or explore possibilities around a particular topic. A pondering or powerful questions worksheet can be a great tool to get things started with a new client.

2. An inquiry or journaling prompt to help clients envision or explore an issue, such as “The Rocking Chair Exercise” (imagine you’re 90 years old and looking back over your life) or “Describe your ideal day.”

3. A series of questions that walk your clients through a process to gain awareness or take action around a particular area of their life, such as a personal SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis, values or identifying healthy daily habits.

4. Powerful lists! Never underestimate the power of a list as a way to raise your clients’ awareness. Ask them to list the following: “What am I tolerating?” or “What makes my heart sing?”

5. A visual representation or something for your clients to draw are powerful ways to help people make sense of things, notice patterns or see things in a creative new way. Examples include “The Wheel of Life,” a life map or drawing their “gremlin” representing their limited beliefs and self-judgments.

6. A reframe to give your client new perspectives, such as asking, “How do your weaknesses serve you?”

7. A story or metaphor. Our brains naturally consider how stories might apply to us, so they can be a real help for clients to understand their situation better. Buddhist teaching stories like “The Second Arrow” are great examples.

8. Share a helpful model, concept or technique. Examples include Tuckman’s Team and Development Model or Stephen Covey’s Urgent-Important Matrix.

9. Informational handouts, reports or eBooks with useful information to help your clients grow. Examples might include a list of “Cognitive Distortions” or a SMART goal-setting eBook.

10. Quizzes. We’ve all seen these in magazines and books. Instead of ‘telling’ people who or what they are, a good quiz can be a great pointer and tool to increase awareness and start a conversation. Examples could include a self-care or motivational quiz.

You may already use coaching tools like these within your practice without even realizing. If you don’t, what are you waiting for?

goals that are meaningful to them, learn to say no, feel happier at work or take action around a nagging issue.

Why not just have a coaching conversation?

One-on-one coaching conversations are just one option available to you. Coaching forms, worksheets and exercises are another tool in your toolbox – and another opportunity to help your client learn and grow.

Results can be deepened by actively coaching your client around their responses on the forms, by simply asking questions that help your clients understand the significance of their answers. Challenge them, delve deeper and create more “aha” moments to spur your clients on.

A good coaching tool has a particular goal or purpose in mind, and the more specific the coaching exercise, the better.

For example, one client completed a personal SWOT analysis (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) as homework. She listed one weakness as “dealing with emotion.” As we explored this further she realized she had a belief that she was too emotional because she had been regularly told this as a child. Her big aha moment? Her “rigidity” and unwillingness to explore her feelings was stifling her creativity and ability to enjoy life, which was her goal for coming to coaching! It was a major turning point in her life.

How do tools supplement the coaching relationship?

Whatever coaching tools and exercises you use in your practice, they are not a substitute for coaching and the coaching relationship. Whether used in session, in workshops or as homework, they provide extra opportunities to raise our clients’ awareness and help them take meaningful action. They also create precious time for reflection giving clients space to develop their own insights into themselves – which they can then discuss and delve into more deeply with you.

Ultimately, the purpose of coaching tools is to enhance the experience for your clients and help your clients get the re-

Help You, Help Your Client

Coaching tools, forms and exercises help you:

- Keep your clients in a coaching frame of mind between sessions with helpful homework.
- Create additional opportunities for learning and aha moments.
- Concretize coaching and demonstrate value to prospects and new clients with something visual and physically tangible.
- Allow clients to explore helpful, or additional, topics at their leisure.

- Provide great marketing handouts for workshops, trade shows, meetings and sample sessions.
- Offer a great incentive to sign-up for your newsletter.

Not only that, but your own coaching forms, tools and worksheets position you as an expert. A great handout with knowledge from your niche or specialty can help people gain powerful learnings and take action while giving them something to remember you by. In short, your worksheets are a walking brochure for you that people want to keep.

sults they want, with more fun, faster. They give you another opportunity to help clients learn more about themselves and grow. And when your client brings a completed tool back to you, you can add your coaching magic.

What coaching tools and exercises could you use, create or develop further in your coaching practice?

Coaching tools, forms and exercises help your clients:

- Identify their thoughts, beliefs and feelings about a topic, issue or goal.

- Connect to what is important to them, and witness themselves.
- Discover their blocks: what or who is getting in the way.
- Reframe their life, situation or behaviour – seeing it through a new lens.
- Brainstorm new ideas.
- Identify and commit to actions.

By incorporating tools, forms and exercises into your coaching, you can help your clients while at the same time helping yourself to a more successful coaching practice. It's the ultimate win/win.

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