

BECOMING A LIFE COACH

FUNDAMENTAL LIFE COACHING TIPS
AND TECHNIQUES

BY JEAN-PAUL CORTÉS

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My lawyer made me say it

The ideas, tips and techniques in this e Book can be used to increase your life coaching skills and knowledge. However, what you do with these techniques is up to you. Because I don't know you, don't know your skills and – most important of all - don't know how persistent you'll be, I can't make any guarantees.
Jean-Paul Cortés

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INTRODUCTION

Why this ebook will make you uncomfortable

At first reading, the concepts in this ebook might make you think that there's nothing new contained within these pages.

And, you're right. There isn't!

However, as you delve deeper, you will find the little nuggets of wisdom that will help you see things in a new light. Sometimes breakthroughs come as small insights, others as big leaps in thought and changes in perception.

That's what Becoming a Life Coach is all about. It's about learning and sharing a new way of doing things. Recognizing what's important and changing the way you do things.

When I wrote this ebook, it started out as a tool to help you increase your life coaching knowledge and skills. Over time, it transformed in ways I could not foretell and it opened up many dimensions that give it much richer applications for its use.

You'll find that many of the messages are useful not only for your life coaching practice but in Life in general.

Are you ready to step into awareness?

You should be, because awareness is like breathing, a fundamental part of life.

Awareness requires that you look inward, knowing your beliefs, your mind, your thoughts and how you're related to the rest of the world.

That is the secret to becoming a life coach. The first step is allowing yourself to make a change; in that sense, this ebook is a learning pathway for your life and a way for you to help others progress in theirs.

I want to thank you very much for taking the time to read this ebook. You will join hundreds of others who have already taken the path of life coaching and have gone on to much higher planes in their lives and are helping countless others do the same.

Kindest regards from Costa Rica,

Jean Paul C.

Jean-Paul Cortés

San José, Costa Rica

HOW TO READ THIS BOOK

I'm aware of how busy your life might be

You probably don't have the time to read through two hundred pages of information. The chances are that if you have to read a BIG book, you're probably going to toss it aside never to pick it up again.

Nevertheless, the concepts contained in this book are important

Therefore, I have tried to include as much vital information as possible without extending the writing too much.

Because of this...

I'd recommend that you read this book several times. Why? Because each reading will bring new insights, new understandings which can be used to greatly improve your life coaching skills.

CHAPTER 1
UNDERSTANDING COACHING

*It's All In The **Definition***

The first obstacle you're going to be faced with as a life coach, will be explaining to people what it's all about.

“What exactly is it that you do?” “You're a life coach?” “I don't really need someone telling me how I should live my life.”

These are some of the questions and statements you'll hear from people when you mention what you do.

And while you may think that defining coaching is not that big of a deal, if your clients don't have a clear understanding of what they're getting into, how it works and what they'll be doing, you can be certain that you'll spend an enormous amount of time trying to convince them that they're doing the right thing.

That's if you ever get to speak to them again...

Think of it this way, the definition you give is the equivalent of your first impression. You have an opportunity to get it right, if you can't define what you do, why would someone want to work with you?

While you may end up changing your definition, as you learn and gain expertise, it's important to begin with a simple concept:

Life Coaching is a continuous alliance designed to help your clients get results in their lives.

Your job as a coach is to support, enhance and develop people's skills, resources and innate creativity towards achieving their goals.

Being a *Life Coach*

What does a life coach do? That seems like a good question to ask yourself, doesn't it? You'll probably find, that it can be a lot of things.

- You can help your clients clarify and understand their values
- You can act as a sounding board for your client's ideas
- You can lend support to your clients in taking decisions
- You can challenge your clients to identify and clear away limiting beliefs
- You can provide guidance to your clients for creating their life vision
- You can acknowledge, enthuse and encourage your clients towards achieving their goals and desires

Depending on the circumstances, you'll probably be doing one, all or many things like these.

Coaching is a distinct field of knowledge that blends concepts from business, psychology, philosophy, sports, spirituality, learning and many others with the sole purpose of helping people live better lives.

Life coaches are increasingly being sought out by people, as things seem to get more complicated, challenging and tough. Globally the term "life coaching" is searched over 300,000 times per month; there is plenty of opportunity out there and the trend doesn't seem to be slowing down.

All of which is good news for you, because there will always be a need for talented life coaches.

Your Coaching Model

Most coaches have either learned or developed a particular way of coaching. The series of steps or system that they use is usually referred to as a “coaching model.”

Think of a model as the BIG picture of how you coach. It's the guiding principles through which you help your clients achieve their goals.

There are many examples of coaching models, although the people that created them may not call them a “model.” Whatever the case may be, the model explains the process you move through to get to an end result.

How do you build your coaching model?

You may find it odd, but one of the most effective ways of doing so, is to work backwards.

You start by defining the end goal, asking yourself what you want your clients to accomplish with your coaching?

You then make a list of the steps that they need to take to get from where they are now, to where they want to be. Describe the specific behaviors that your clients would need to adopt, change or get rid of.

Rank the steps, put them in order. Can you simplify the process? Can you break them down even further? Are they needed and reasonable?

You should start seeing the beginning of the framework by then, start thinking of ways you can motivate the most important behaviors you noticed.

Take the behaviors you've defined and plan ways that will help people move through the process.

This should be enough to get you started. Test out your model, evaluate and adapt the structure and the behaviors. Both will change as you learn about your model, when you discover what works and what doesn't.

Your model should always be evolving, re-evaluate often.
Take a look at what your clients do and why. As you get to understand them better, adapt your model accordingly.

CHAPTER 2
COACHING FROM THE INSIDE OUT

Self-Knowledge

*“Knowing others is intelligence; knowing yourself is true wisdom.
Mastering others is strength; mastering yourself is true power.”*

Tao Te Ching

Before you seek to understand others, understand yourself. All coaching starts at this point. The greatest knowledge that you can have is that of your Self.

When you find who you truly are, you can accomplish your unique purpose in life and help others do the same.

We spend a great deal of our time defining ourselves according to what we think ourselves to be. We fail to recognize however, that much of this is based on the perceptions of other people that we internalize.

To go beyond this, is to find your essence. As the modern spiritual teacher Eckhart Tolle describes it, you set out to encounter the “inner space of consciousness.”

To know yourself, is to be aware. If we are to experience what it truly means to be alive, we have to set out to discover what we're all about, who we are and why we are here.

It's from this knowledge, that you are able to help others on their Life journey.

What Are You *Thinking* About?

“Your mind will be like its habitual thoughts; for the soul becomes dyed with the color of its thoughts. Soak it then in such trains of thoughts as, for example: Where life is possible at all, a right life is possible.”

Marcus Aurelius from Meditations

This bit of wisdom has been repeated over and over throughout history. Essentially, you are what you constantly think about.

For some reason though, we're pretty much in the dark when it comes to our stream of thoughts.

It's not entirely our fault. Before we even open our eyes, our senses are bombarded with so much information that it's hard to keep up. We inevitably pick up a lot of things that we're not even aware of.

All the more reason to seek an understanding of how we're influenced by our thoughts, how they they shape our reality.

Thoughts crystallize into habits, which solidify into reality. You attract not what you want, but what you are. That which you love, but also what you fear.

The good part is that we can learn how to change our thoughts. And once we do, we also end up changing our lives.

Be The *Change* You Want To See

"Be the change you want to see in the World."

Mahatma Gandhi

If you want change to happen in your life, you're going to have to be the change you want to see. There are dozens of reasons we give ourselves to rationalize why things don't go the way we want them to.

It's very easy to fall into the trap of believing that something other than ourselves is the main obstacle preventing change.

If you take a look at the lives of people who have changed the World, they are no different than you or I, with perhaps one difference that few of us notice, or may not want to see. They don't go around asking when will life answer their pleas for change, they rolled up their sleeves and started.

Sure, they probably had many doubts. It's likely that at times they also felt fear. We all do, we're human. But they also knew that the surest way of making things happen, was for them to make them happen.

What does this mean for you?

It means that in spite of whatever challenges you are faced with, you have the courage to still get up (at least most days :)) with a commitment to live your greatest life.

To transform your life, be the change you want to see in it.

Search For *Purpose*

“Musicians must make music, artists must paint, poets must write if they are to be ultimately at peace with themselves. What human beings can be, they must be. They must be true to their own nature.”

Abraham Maslow

How do you awaken to your life's purpose? I'm sure you've asked yourself this question, perhaps many times.

What you may not realize, is that the answer may have been right in front of your eyes for a long time.

Above the entrance to the temple of Apollo at Delphi, where the sacred Oracle can be found, the words *Gnothi Seauton* are inscribed.

The wisdom contained within these words cannot be understated. You see, in ancient times people would visit the Oracle to receive answers from it. They hoped to find their way and foresee what was in store for them.

They expected to receive great revelations, but it's likely they had not read the words at the entrance of the temple. They had not seen that they pointed to a deeper understanding than whatever the Oracle could tell them.

Gnothi Seauton - Know Thyself.

Whatever question you ask of life, whichever answer you hope to receive, make sure you ask the most fundamental question of all first:

Who am I? This is where you'll find your purpose.

Without this knowledge, what “truth” you find is probably only an illusion. Our purpose in Life will always be to realize who we are.

Don't Be Afraid To Dream

"I've dreamt in my life dreams that have stayed with me ever after, and changed my ideas: they've gone through and through me, like wine through water, and altered the color of my mind."

Emily Bronte

Do you think about your dreams and believe them to be a happenstance of your imagination? We cannot foresee future circumstances, but we can hold fast to our dreams.

After all, we've got to have a dream if we're going to make it come true.

Don't confuse wishful thinking with dreaming. Your dreams reflect your innermost values and intentions and they can give us a glimpse of who we really are.

Albert Einstein could not have imagined that he would go on to change our understanding of the laws of physics. How could he?

But it's fair to say, that had he given up on pursuing his dreams, had he not had belief in them, it would not have ever been possible.

The point is: have the courage to dream, let your dreams be the springboard for great achievements.

Trust Yourself

"Follow your heart, but be quiet for a while first. Ask questions, then feel the answer. Learn to trust your heart."

Unknown

Trust is a state of being, it's a powerful force that moves things forward and allows you to express the greatness that's within you.

But what stops most people from trusting themselves? How are so many people trapped by their limiting beliefs?

Lets start by paying attention to what's going on in our heads every day. This only takes a minute, I'm going to ask you to shut off that little voice in your head.

Ready?

Alright, go...

How did you do? I'm guessing that you started out pretty well. Then, around the 5 second mark, a little thought popped into your head, you suddenly remembered something, which brought you to another, then another.

Pretty soon you might have realized that, without intention, you were having an imaginary conversation.

We talk to ourselves every day, minute and second of our conscious life. We do it so much and we're so loud that we can't hear the one voice that will guide us in life.

It's called the voice of intuition. Of course tuning in to your intuition is easier said than done, it takes time and practice to be able to do so (partly because we're constantly receiving all sorts of messages telling us different things).

But when you learn how to pay attention to your intuition, you also gain a sense of deep trust in yourself.

And that's when things start coming together and you start moving forward. If you have any question that this isn't the case, let me ask you: What's the opposite of trust?

It's doubt, and it's also a state of being. One that's very debilitating if it's not recognized, acknowledged and shifted to one that's empowering - one that's trusting.

Seeking and Defining *Truth*

"All truths are easy to understand once they are discovered; the point is to discover them."

Galileo Galilei

What is the search for truth? To find the answer, we're going to look at the life of a great philosopher that lived a long time ago.

You may have heard of him, his name was Pythagoras of Samos, he lived between 570c. and 495 BC.

Pythagoras is best known for the Pythagorean theorem, indeed he is regarded as one of history's great mathematicians.

There are few people that know however, that he was also a mystic, having founded Pythagoreanism. It was through this facet that he became known as the "eternal explorer of truth," the seeker of truth *par excellence*.

When he died, many of his followers were persecuted and their meeting places burned, as were their teacher's writings and those he had acquired on his journeys to China, India, Tibet and Egypt. There was little if anything that remained.

It's believed that Pythagoras coined the word "philosophy" and that he was the first person to call himself a philosopher. The meaning he gave to the word was "love of truth" and thus a "philosopher" would be a friend of truth.

Implicitly, what he was saying was that he was a lover of wisdom. He believed that wisdom could only come from within, from a deep knowledge of yourself.

You attain wisdom through love. The search for truth is carried out with your heart, it can only be discovered through love.

*The Importance of **Mind-Set***

"When I was that 8-year-old kid in the audience watching David Copperfield, never did I imagine that 10 years later I would be doing what I am doing now. Now, on the other side of the footlights, I'm giving that same experience to kids who I may never meet showing them that, if you set your mind to it, anything can happen."

Brad Ross

How's your mind-set? Are you programming your mind for success, or are you filling it with negative thoughts?

As Henry Ford put it: "Whether you think that you can, or that you can't, you are usually right."

If you've never listened in to your thoughts, you might be surprised, appalled might be a better word, to discover how much you're probably sabotaging your chances for success.

It all comes back to the messages that you feed your mind, for many people it's like they're running a horror movie inside their head that no matter how bad it is, they feel impelled to play it over and over again. The result is evident, a life filled with despair, anger and fear.

Why would people subject themselves to such pain?

Well, modern Positive Psychology suggests that we have a hard-wired tendency to see the negative, attaching ourselves to all the problems that we see in front of us.

Does this mean that there's no way out? Not at all, but we have to wake up to a different reality.

It turns out that we can also learn to re-wire our minds to be more inclined to notice and tune in on the things that are a positive influence in our lives. How?

By being mindful. It's when you pay attention to your inner discourse that you can, with practice and consistency, change

your mind-set; you can learn to be an optimist by learning the skill of mindfulness.

Never Stop Learning

"Anyone who stops learning is old, whether at twenty or eighty. Anyone who keeps learning stays young. The greatest thing in life is to keep your mind young."

Henry Ford

Here's the thing, life is going to put you in some pretty uncomfortable situations, whether you like it or not and regardless of if you think you're ready for it.

It's all part of your learning. There's a lesson contained within everything that happens, it's your job to figure out what it is.

Before you start thinking that you know more than life and begin feeling sorry for yourself, you might want to think again, because it's exactly what you need at that moment.

Why would you waste time trying to argue with reality, you'll inevitably lose. Rather, try to extract the lesson that you need to learn, rest assured that life is not making a mistake, it in fact is giving you an opportunity to learn.

There are many things that are outside of your control, this creates a problem because there might come a time when you can't really tell what's moving you forward or on the contrary what's getting in the way.

So you create a whole bunch of ideas of how the world works and then, once you get fixated on this notion, it's pretty hard for you to change how you think about things. You've closed yourself off to learning, you've already learned what you need, why would you need anything else?

If this is happening to you, it's time for you to step off the beaten path, the one you've created for yourself and can't get off. It might be a stretch for you, moving out of your comfort zone usually is, but it's the only way to really acquire new

learning.

There's a little story about a university professor who went to visit a famous Zen master.

While the master quietly served tea, the professor talked about Zen. The master poured the visitor's cup to the brim, and then kept pouring.

The professor watched the overflowing cup until he could no longer restrain himself. "It's overfull! No more will go in!" the professor blurted. "You are like this cup," the master replied, "How can I show you Zen unless you first empty your cup."

It's the same with learning, you're going to have to empty your cup and realize that life is all about learning.

It's about keeping an open mind and never becoming so enshrined with your conceptions that you stop learning.

*It's a **Love** Thing*

"The best and most beautiful things in the world cannot be seen or even touched. They must be felt with the heart."

Hellen Keller

Love is the all important force that moves everything around us. It can't really be explained, cajoled into words or encapsulated.

It has always existed and sadly there are a lot of people out there that don't practice it.

There have been thousands of books written on the subject and if you've ever paid attention any of the great teachers throughout the ages, their message is the same: it's one of Love.

Here are some of my favorite quotes on Love, the first one is from the Bible:

"You have heard the law that says, 'Love your neighbor' and hate your enemy. But I say, love your enemies! Pray for those who persecute you! In that way, you will be acting as true children of your Father in heaven. For he gives his sunlight to both the evil and the good, and he sends rain on the just and the unjust alike. If you love only those who love you, what reward is there for that? Even corrupt tax collectors do that much. If you are kind only to your friends, how are you different from anyone else? (Matthew 5:43-47)

From the Buddha:

Hatred does not cease by hatred, but only by love; this is the eternal rule.

From Rumi

Come out of the circle of time, and into the circle of love.

From the Prashna Upanishad

*The wise see the Lord of Love in the sun,
Rising in all its golden radiance
To give its warmth and light and life to all.*

From His Holiness The Dalai Lama:

Forming a new world religion is difficult and not particularly desirable. However, in that love is essential to all religions, one could speak of the universal religion of love.

It's clear that this force represents the transcendent energy that is within you and me, and it can guide you in life and in your coaching.

As a life coach, you have the possibility to help many people live better lives. What you choose to do with your knowledge and how you end up doing it, is entirely up to you.

Our next chapter is devoted to developing your skills as a coach, starting with one of the most fundamental abilities you can learn – listening.

CHAPTER 3
BASIC LIFE COACHING SKILLS

Powerful Listening

I know that you believe you understand what you think I said, but I'm not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant."

Robert McCloskey

Human beings normally have two ears, nevertheless it's our one mouth that takes the show. Even if most of us describe ourselves as "being good listeners," what we end up hearing most of the time is ourselves.

We may be born with the ability to listen, but listening effectively is a skill that must be mastered. If you're a life coach, ever the more so.

As with learning any other skill, there is theory and then there's practice. First, the theory:

The essence of powerful listening is being able to focus on what another person is saying without being distracted.

When someone speaks, they want to feel heard, this need is ingrained in all of us. Human beings need to communicate, when we can't or feel that we're not being listened to, it affects that most basic part of ourselves – our self esteem.

As a coach, sometimes you're required to listen to what's behind the words being said to you. Words describe our reality, what we interpret our world as being like, although it may not be immediately apparent.

True listening can provide the insight you need to help your clients shift perspectives that may be harming them.

Listening allows people the space they need to articulate and see different and more empowering perspectives. The central purpose of listening is to understand other's point of view, how they think and feel and how they move through the world.

As a life coach, you're listening for what inspires a client, what excites them, set them free and keeps them moving forward. You listen for what would fulfill their dreams and

hopes, and for what may be getting in the way of their fulfillment.

How To Tune In

How would you describe yourself as a listener?

Do you believe that listening is just about hearing until the other person has stopped talking, so you can share your thoughts about the situation?

I'm sure you must have caught yourself doing, or thinking, about other things while someone has been speaking with you.

It's hard to be an effective listener, but here are some tips to help you on your way:

- Practice awareness: mindful awareness of what's going on within and without allows you to notice all the little things that are usually hidden behind our mental discourse.
- Be in the present: this is the only place where we are anyway, and yet most of us usually are remembering the past or planning for the future. Being centered in the present moment forces you to pay attention to what's being said.
- Remain silent: give a few seconds pause after someone stops speaking, you may be surprised that the other person has a lot more to say.
- Repeat back what you've just heard: we usually interpret what's being said with our own thoughts about the situation. Repeating back what you think you're hearing, allows you to step into the other person's shoes and clarify what is truly meant.
- Check for perceptions and emotions: there are hidden emotions and perceptions within the words we speak, be careful to notice them early on.
- Be patient and give space: sometimes it takes time to get to the root of things.

- Gently push: most people are afraid of talking about their feelings, aspirations and thoughts; a skillful listener strives to create a safe environment where fear is diminished.
- Don't judge: you may think that you know best what your client should do, but the truth is that each one of us has to see things for ourselves in order to change them.
- Trust your inner guidance system: intuition is our best ally in listening; your inner self knows the importance of listening, pay attention to it.

Losing Perspective

"You have your way. I have my way. As for the right way, the correct way, and the only way, it does not exist"

Friedrich Nietzsche

We all see life through our own particular lens. This is our perspective, our point of view of how things are.

Our perspective is part of our belief system and although you're literally a manifestation of what you believe in, you're normally only conscious of a small part of this complex whole. You only see what you choose to see and how you want to see things.

As you're reading this, there are several things that are going through your mind. Over the years, you've picked up or developed thousands of beliefs, and you structure your world by what you believe to be true.

We come to see things not as how they are, but as we'd like them to be. We create perspectives about the circumstances we find ourselves in and when the circumstances don't fit with our view of the world, we feel lost, confused and everything seems to crumble under our feet.

We get caught up in the way we see things. And we don't realize that it's our perspective that determine the experience, not the circumstances themselves.

As soon as you realize this, you can then choose to change your perspective at any time, and you can help others change theirs as well.

How? By acquiring new information that will effectively change your perception of reality.

Let me tell you a story to help you understand. When I was a teenager, I had gone to camp for the summer with a friend of

mine. Back then, you could say that I wasn't someone that took many risks. There were a lot of things that I was afraid to do, I was somewhat of a basket-case.

My friend was completely different, he was always the first to line up for every daring adventure. One day, the group was taken high up to a cliff overlooking a lake. I didn't have the slightest idea of what we were to do and I certainly didn't expect what happened.

As soon as we were up there, our group leader asked a simple question "Who wants to go first?"

There were a lot of us that looked at each other, not quite understanding what he had asked. I'm certain that if anyone had looked into my eyes at least, all they would have seen was fear.

I looked towards my friend, I was sure he was going to volunteer. Sure enough, he raised his hand first; but instead of asking to be the first one to jump, he pointed to me and with a big smile "suggested" that I would go first.

I stood frozen to my spot, there was no way I was going to jump first. I was sure that if I did, I would probably end up in the hospital with all of my bones broken. Needless to say I refused.

My friend wasn't one to give up so easily though... and I'm glad he didn't.

Rather than let me get away with my fear, he grabbed me by the arm with what felt like a steel grip, looked at me, smiled and started running towards the edge. I was a skinny kid and it didn't take much to pull me forward.

I found myself dashing towards my death, being pulled along by my best friend the Grim Reaper. We reached the edge, all I heard was my friend cry out "Jump!" And I did, as hard as I could.

For a few seconds everything stood still. I was falling and my heart was pumping hard; as I hit the water, something had changed though.

Things had changed for me. I didn't die, my bones weren't broken. The water was fine, it was in fact great.

I didn't exactly choose to change my perspective, my friend had a lot to do with it. But now, I realize how important this event was for me. It allowed me to change my perspective of things. Now, I still look before I jump, but I'm no longer afraid to go first.

As a life coach, you can also play an important role in your client's lives, when you help them shift their perspectives.

This process is called re-framing, and it helps your clients see things in a whole new way. Essentially you're opening their minds to other possibilities so they can be able to move forward in their lives.

How To Re-frame Perspective

Have you experienced a change in perspective? How can you use this knowledge to help your clients re frame theirs'?

What would happen if you could re-frame even the most difficult of situations? What do you think this would mean to your clients?

Can you identify your perspectives? How does it influence your results? Can you see it in a different light?

Mental Maps

"We don't have direct knowledge of the physical world; we only have knowledge of our ideas of it. This may seem like just an interesting curiosity until we realize that the world we know is not an objective record of the one that exists outside of us, but the version of it we create according to whatever else is going on in our minds at the time. We don't live in the world of atoms; we live in the world of ideas."

Charles Jacobs

Have you ever wondered how we make our decisions? Why you will do something, and not another? As you've seen, we all have a particular view of the world – our perspective.

We manifest our perspective through our behaviors, through the way we do things.

It's important then to ask if there's a reason for doing what we do, right?

If we don't know the root of our behavior, how else can we change it?

Back in the 1970's, a scholar by the name of Albert Bandura asked himself these same questions. And to get his answers, he and a team of fellow scientists conducted a whole array of experiments that eventually showed us the inner makings of behavior.

In one particular experiment, he set his mind on finding out if he could change the minds of people that were afraid of snakes.

If you're deathly afraid of these creatures, or even if you are not (since pretty much everyone has a natural fear of snakes), what would you say if I told you that throughout the experiment, Bandura was able to get his snake phobics to

actually have a 3-foot python on their laps?

How did he do this?

Do you think he pulled them aside or rounded them up into a room and convinced them that the snakes were their friends? Of course not, he knew better than that.

He was aware that the best way to overcome their fear is to confront it, this would give them the power they needed to exercise control over their emotions. But he also realized he was going to have a hard time getting people to do anything by lecturing them, let alone walk into a room with a snake in it.

So, he did something that was very intelligent. He got somebody else to handle the snake. And, he asked the phobic to watch, from a distance, with protection, as long as they just watched.

Only after that, would he eventually ask them if it was okay for them to watch with the door open, and after that, he asked if they could go into the room.

You get what I'm saying, small steps...

After about three hours of this, the same people that had been afraid of snakes for so long, had been healed. What an accomplishment, wouldn't you say?

We can draw an important conclusion from this: people act on what they believe will happen to them. In other words, what they expect will happen.

We all do this, we're all human (most of us at least), and we do it regardless of whether or not we really know if what we expect is really what will happen.

He found that our behaviors were guided by simple mental re-presentations of cause and effect. If I do *something*, then *this* will happen, even if what we think is not grounded in reality.

It turns out, that we can also change our mental maps, but how? Where do we start?

How To Discover Mental Maps:

- Start by noticing your own mental maps.
- Question your assumptions.
- If you find it hard to try out something that you normally wouldn't do, find someone who can and allow yourself to live the experience through this other person. If you use your imagination I'm sure you can step into this person's shoes, give it a try.
- Listen to the story you're telling yourself, do you really understand every aspect of it? What is it motivating?

Motivation *and* Ability

“Put yourself in a state of mind where you say to yourself, “Here is an opportunity for me to celebrate like never before, my own power, my own ability to get myself to do whatever is necessary.”

Tony Robbins

When something excites us, it's pretty easy to recognize our motivation growing inside. Most of us recognize the importance of being motivated to achieve a goal.

Motivation is important, clearly. It's important in the short term, it's especially necessary for the long haul.

But do you really believe that it's the only factor that it's going to take for you to achieve your goals?

Picture this: a friend of yours asks you if you'd be interested in running a 100 person workshop. You've never actually done something like this but it sounded great. Without thinking about it too much, almost by instinct you said yes.

You felt good about your decision, you felt very motivated.

That night, you sat down and actually thought about how you were going to structure the workshop. Suddenly, you realized you didn't have the first clue about how to do it.

You started sweating, anxiety crept in. You felt your initial motivation starting to drop like a stone. You realized that you were unable to do the workshop, at least by yourself.

What were you thinking of!

The point of the story is that you not only need to be motivated to do something, a lot of times you need to have the ability to do it. Motivation and ability are the two keys to achievement.

If people are convinced that doing something is going to be

worth it, and if they have the ability to do what's required, then it's a lot easier for you to help them move into action.

How To Mine For Motivation:

How would doing this feel to you?

If you were to have it just the way you want, how would that make you feel?

How much are you losing by not doing this?

Searching For Ability:

Do you have all the tools, resources, knowledge to accomplish your task?

What do you need to learn in order for you to achieve your goal?

Does anyone you know have the knowledge that you believe you need?

*The Power of **Great Questions***

"Judge a man by his questions rather than his answers."

Voltaire

So you're working on a problem, one that you've spent countless hours trying to figure out. No matter how hard you try, you just can't find a solution.

What would you say, if I told you that you were wasting your time? That your quest to find a solution, would be better spent taking a walk.

When most of us are trying to solve a problem, we try looking for the solution. It's the most obvious way of solving problems.

What we don't realize though, is that finding a solution is hardest thing to do. While it may sound odd, you don't want to try and find a solution, you want to spend a lot more trying trying to understand the problem.

And how do you do that? You ask a lot of questions. You keep on asking questions and eventually one of those questions will show you what your real problem is and it will also show you the solution.

Questions show us the problems that we are not seeing immediately. It's like looking at something from different angles. When you're looking at a problem from the just one angle your solution is going to be based on just one angle.

But if you start asking questions you'll see the problem in a different perspective, from a different angle, so it will show you a clearer picture of what you're up against, and when you can see all the angles, you can see all of the solutions as well, like magic.

So how do you apply this to life coaching?

Will you help people ask themselves great questions, such as:

If you were to fully live your life, what is the first change you would start to make?

What do you want more of in your life?

What can we work on right now, that would put a smile on your face?

What do you really, really want?

How can you make your goals more specific?

What do you learn from this?

What Are You Trying To *Communicate*?

"Communication works for those who work at it"

John Powell

Human beings are always communicating. We're constantly sending out messages to other people and very often, what we transmit will create uncertainty about its meaning.

You know how it goes, something is said, it's interpreted and then a response follows. But the response may be based on an entirely different interpretation of what was said.

If you've played a game called broken telephone, where in a group of people you give one message to one person and that person gives the message to another, again and again until you reach the last person you probably understand how this works.

The chances are that the original message has changed. Why? Because we all interpret the message in our own way, and we express it, communicate it in our own way. We reflect our own bias, our own perspective in the language we choose to use.

It happens all the time, you say something to someone, and that someone interprets it in his or her own way.

This gives us a powerful tool to enact change. If we understand that communication is based on our judgments, perceptions, interpretations, then we can ask questions to clarify what the message really is.

We make sure that both the transmitter and the recipient understand the meaning of the message.

For example, your clients says — I meditate every day. That seems straightforward enough, doesn't it? You have two

ways of going about: You could say – That's great, it's good for you. Or, you could ask a question, - How do you meditate or what do you mean by everyday? His answer could be – Well, every morning before I get out of bed, I mentally go through my day.

Because you asked a question, rather than make an assumption based on your interpretation of things, you clarify what meditation means to your client and you can then more easily help him or her by working with their own meaning of things.

How To Improve Your Communication

Start noticing your words. Your language reflects who you are, how you think, it is completely about you. By stopping notice your perspective, you can take responsibility for the message you're giving out. You own the message.

Remember that any message that's transmitted to you, has to do with the person transmitting the message and not with you. Whatever they say, is tinted by their own perception. Check the meaning, understand the whole story.

Recognize that when a person speaks, the message is about where they are at that time. By centering the conversation in the present moment, you can understand the meaning behind the message, this prevents many misunderstandings.

The Zen Way To *Achieving Goals*

"In order to govern, the question is not to follow out a more or less valid theory but to build with whatever materials are at hand. The inevitable must be accepted and turned to advantage."

Napoleon Bonaparte.

The primary motivator for most of us when we establish our goals in life, is control. We're mortally afraid of losing control of things, so we come up with all sorts of goals in an attempt to fit life into our own little box labeled "how I want things to be."

Please don't misunderstand, I'm not saying that you shouldn't have goals. We all need them, they keep us going. But the way you're probably going about creating, planning and executing your goals may be what's sabotaging you from achieving them in the first place.

How do you usually come up with your goals? How do you choose from among the many things you can do?

Goals that are worth going after, will necessarily be related to whatever life is manifesting for you at this moment. To understand what that means, you have to learn to let go. To achieve your goals, you let go of them.

Life is complex. We will never be able to truly understand its depth. We never experience it fully because we're too caught up in our version of things. We create an illusion of ourselves and we try to shape life according to it. And it separates us from who we really are.

We can wake up to a different way of doing things. And in fact, it's the only way that really works and it's called - living in the present moment.

When you focus on the Now, your entire illusion of control breaks down. There's no need to establish goals because

everything you do, is in accord with what is.

You flow through life, rather than struggle through it.

This requires stillness, attention and persistence; it's the hardest journey to take, but eventually, since we're all on the same road, we all end up having to walk it.

Questions To Ask:

- What's your relationship with the present moment?
- What can you do to fully be present?
- Can you set aside 30 minutes every day for inner contemplation?
- What are you paying attention to at this very moment?

*Creating Accountability **and** Commitment*

"Stay committed to your decisions, but stay flexible in your approach."

Tom Robbins

You're just about to go on a vacation, you're two days away from boarding a plane headed to Tahiti and you can almost feel the sand under your feet as you're enjoying a sunset in the Pacific.

Suddenly, you're interrupted by the sound of an e-mail alert and you remember that you have one hundred things to finish up before you can go. What do you do?

I have the feeling, that there is nothing that would stop you from getting on that plane. You'd make sure to get everything done, am I right?

Has it ever seemed to you that you get everything done right before you go on a vacation?

Why does that happen? Although you may not realize it, you're actually accessing an important trigger for motivating action. We tend to work harder if we have an upcoming deadline.

This is the secret that many successful people know, which allows them to get everything done in less time than it takes a regular person to just get started. When we know we're accountable for what we do, and we set ourselves a deadline, we'll psychologically push ourselves to achieve what we have to do.

Here's another tip: as well as establishing a deadline, make sure you that the commitments you get are active, public and voluntary.

This takes advantage of another persuasion lever, the

principle of consistency, where people align with their clear commitments. Even small seemingly trivial commitments can have a powerful effect on how people will act.

How To Gain Commitment From People:

- Give your client's deadlines, and make them accountable for them. Then follow-up before the time is up, that way you can reinforce the deadline.
- Make sure that the commitments are getting are active, public and voluntary.
- Ask people to write down what they want, have them say it out loud.

Generating *Trust*

"When I'm trusting and being myself as fully as possible, everything in my life reflects this by falling into place easily, often miraculously."

Unknown

What's the biggest obstacle in the way stopping you from achieving your dreams? Before you answer, let me tell you a story:

After a wine filled night, a drunkard stumbled out of his favorite watering hole and decided to walk home. His house was a only a few blocks away and it wasn't the first time he'd done this, he was pretty much on autopilot.

As he turned the corner, he reached in his pants looking for his keys. He looked in one of them, then the other and he wasn't able to find them. Somehow, he remembered he had stuffed them inside his jacket pocket and as he pulled them out quite forcibly, they flew from his hand landing in his neighbors' very unkept yard.

He looked around, cursed his stupidity, and then squinted his eyes looking for where his keys had landed. He suddenly realized something, out of all the lampposts on the block, the one right over the yard had burnt out.

The drunkard crossed the road, knelt down, and then started to look for his keys on the other side.

As it so happens, his neighbor was passing by and saw what had happened. He saw this guy walking round the corner, how he reached into his jacket pocket and how his keys landed in the yard somewhere. He also saw when the man crossed the street and how it appeared as if he was looking for his keys on the other side of the road.

Wanting to know what was up with this guy, he walked over

to him and asked “- Hey Bob,” (not his real name) “- I noticed that you dropped your keys, I think they fell over on the other side.”

Bob answered, “- Yeah, the damned things flew out from my hands, and now I'm looking for them.”

“- Well, they fell over on the other side. Why are you looking for them here?”

Bob looked at him, burped, and answered... “- Well, because the light is better here.”

So what stops people from reaching their highest aspirations? Easy, they do.

When it comes to finding our way, we always look in the wrong places. We look for things where the light is better, rather than where we're more likely to find them.

We seek answers outside, because deep down we are afraid and we doubt ourselves and this stops our progress in its tracks.

We fail to live from a position of trust and because of this, we are pulled apart by the many challenges we face throughout the course of our lives.

Those that learn to live in trust however, are more inclined to live up to their goals and commitments.

Trust and success are a mind-set, this is the lesson that many extraordinary people have taught us. It's your choice, you can view things from a position of doubt or one of deep trust.

Humans are very much a creature of habit, we learn by watching, reading and many other ways but especially by personal experience. This gives us a path to follow to build trust, we must first trust ourselves, in who we are and what we are capable of.

When we allow ourselves to enter the world from a position of trust, we open up to possibilities that we have never thought about. It is at the heart of all personal achievement and growth.

When your attention is centered on self-trust, it allows you to get into that "success" mindset; you become accountable for the choices you make and as a result you gain mastery over your life.

How To Build Self - Trust

- Ask your clients what their understanding of “trust” is. Explore to see if there are any issues around self-trust (listen for excuses, many times people will pile up reasons for not living up to their own expectations).
- Trust is an action that involves a voluntary placement of resources towards achieving your goal. Make people accountable for their own success, set up structures that support and encourage the belief they should have in themselves.
- Trust is a mind-set that must be built. When you find yourself coaching someone and you realize there are self-trust issues, make it safe, help them suspend doubt even if only for a moment. The experience of feeling total trust in themselves will create the freedom needed to continue to grow.
- Ask: What judgments are you making that might be making you doubt yourself?

Responding *and* Reacting

A samurai once asked a Zen master to explain the concept of heaven and hell. The monk looked at the man and answered with scorn, "You're nothing but a ruffian - I can't waste my time with the likes of you!" His very honor attacked, the samurai in a rage unsheathed his sword and yelled, "I could kill you for your impertinence." "That," the monk calmly replied, "is hell". Startled at seeing the truth in what the master pointed out, the samurai calmed down, sheathed his sword, and bowed thanking the monk for the insight. "And that," said the monk, "is heaven."

Zen Story

Think about when you woke up this morning, what did you do? Did you perhaps bumble out of bed and half-awake wobbled over to your bathroom for a quick shower that didn't remotely get you started.

Maybe you walked down the stairs, drank some coffee, skimmed over the morning's headlines, wrote something down, remembered the many things that you had to do that day, before jumping in your car (or whatever mode of transport you choose), and dashing off to face yet another day filled with hundreds of minutiae.

Suddenly you blink, you just realized you're at work. You vaguely remember what just happened, everything you did has faded away into an oblivious haze of sameness. The sad part about this, is that you go through it every day of your life.

Doesn't it feel like you're on a treadmill that's going much too fast for you to notice?

We've stopped paying attention. It's too hard, it consumes too much of our energy, we prefer moving well within our comfort zone, the comfier the better, where things never change and we believe the stories we tell ourselves.

So we always do things the same way, we react to

circumstances in the same manner, over and over, again and again. Our behaviors reflect our hunger for certainty, our need for things to remain the same.

Reacting is like getting on an elevator, you can only go up or down. You press the 1st floor button and you're going to the first floor, you press the 100th and you're going up to that floor. You don't really have a choice, it's always the same way.

You're not choosing your reactions, your buttons are being pushed and you're going to behave the same way, predictably and automatically.

So what is responding?

To respond, you have to pay attention. You have to be in the present moment. And you have to notice what your reactions are, before you react. I know what you're thinking, nobody said it was easy.

How To Stop Yourself From Reacting

- Uncover your reactions; what makes you feel bad, angry or annoyed? Can you stop yourself before your emotions kick in?
- Ask for other people's point of view and just listen. Don't try to offer your opinion, don't judge, in fact don't say anything (make sure you tell the other person what you're doing though, otherwise they'll probably think something's wrong with you).
- How do you prepare to stay in the moment? Mindfulness meditation, conscious breathing and other techniques help you focus your mind.

Providing Structure

"A World is not an ideology nor a scientific institution, nor is it even a system of ideologies; rather, it is a structure of unconscious relations and symbiotic processes."

William Irvin Thompson

When you think about structure, what's the image that comes to your mind? Buildings, foundations, pillars; those are the things that I think about when they asked me to think about structure.

It's what keeps everything together, not allowing it to crack and fall.

Although we may not be conscious of them, other people also have structures that support their beliefs, their ideas and all of the different elements that make up their lives.

From the time we're born, we start building or acquiring the walls which support our beliefs. Everything in your life is a structure that supports what you're committed to.

Take a look around, if you pay close attention you'll start noticing the things which make up the backbone of how you do things and why.

Your job as a coach, is to help your clients realize and notice their own structures. How? By asking what could their behaviors be supporting.

You'll be surprised, because most of us aren't willing to recognize those things that are too close to us, and we end up getting frustrated because we can't figure out why things never go the way we want them to.

But once we open our eyes, it gives us the key to unlock the door to lasting positive change. Why? Because knowing this, allows us to create structures that support our current goals rather than working over foundations that support other

goals.

We make change easier because we make it easier to take place.

Questions You Can Ask To Discover Structures

What would your life be like, if you created structures that support your goals?

List 10 things that you could change, that would influence positive change.

Ask your clients to keep a journal for a week, then have them look back on their notes, what can they notice? What can they change? What would make it easier for them to achieve their goals?

What things could they bring into their routines to support their new behaviors?

What do they need to let go of to allow themselves to achieve their goals?

*The Secret Power Of **Practice***

"An ounce of practice is worth more than tons of preaching."

Mahatma Gandhi

You've probably heard what people say, that practice makes perfect? I'm guessing that you agree that it's sound advice. So if all it takes to master something is to practice at it, why is it that most people will never even reach above average results?

You might think that all practice is perfect, but in reality it's not. There's a very important aspect to it, which dramatically increases its effectiveness and that most of us miss.

But let's not get too ahead of ourselves; first, we should look at how we tend to learn new skills.

Human beings have an outstanding ability to learn things. Since before we're born, we're already picking up new things inside of our mother's placenta. Our very survival depends on this knowledge and how we apply it.

We're also very much a creature of habit. Once we've found that something works for us, and we get reasonably good at it, we tend to stop our learning process and assume that we've reached our peak performance level.

It doesn't occur to us, that we can learn new and better ways of doing things; in our minds, it becomes too much of an energy drainage.

But coaches know better, we know that people can continually improve and reach unthinkable heights of achievement. Just look at many of today's world class athletes, they keep on pushing the bar ever upward – breaking world records every week, climbing further, longer and faster.

This ability isn't limited to sports, we can see it in practically every realm of human endeavor; from business to science,

philosophy to art. There are always examples of human beings excelling in any given field, art form or skill.

How do all these people do it? Is it possible for anyone to also follow the same path?

The answer is yes, we can. But we need to take a look at our practice, at how we do things.

Most people will center their practice on mastering everything at once. We see an elephant and we try to eat it in one full bite; we're also not very systematic in our training or very good on focusing on the things which will make us ever better.

And for many reasons, mostly based on incorrect beliefs, we can't conceive that mastery is possible for us. So we end up not pushing our limits or staying at the most comfortable level to get by.

The Right Way To Practice

- Never stop learning, you can always study and practice new and important skills and behaviors.
- Focus on clear-cut, defined and repeatable actions.
- Get coached; because receiving clear and immediate feedback against clear guidelines is the best way to continually grow.
- Break things down into small steps, establishing small goals that can be overcome in increasing degrees of complexity and difficulty.
- Work on resilience, emotional, mental and physical, because setbacks are part of the process.

Taking Action

“To create momentum in your life never leave the scene of a decision without taking action.”

Unknown

Lets start by asking a question: what do you really want? It's the most important question you can ask yourself. Because our wants drive our behavior. We're all pretty selfish on this point.

This means that if you want people to do something, you're going to have to find out what they want first. That's where you should begin.

With this knowledge, common sense tells us that it should be easy to get people to take action right?

It's not, for several reasons – competing commitments, fear, being in a comfort zone, etc.

To be effective at getting your clients to take action there are several things you can do.

How To Get Your Clients To Take Action

- Ask people if they're willing to just “try” something. Remember when you were a kid, and you were asked to taste something new? Most kids' answers are usually a big “NO,” but if they do take a chance, they may end up liking it. It's the same with adults, we don't take action because we might believe that doing so will produce some manner of pain; and yet if we do, we might surprise ourselves.
- Focus on how accomplishment feels like. Make people think back to something they've accomplished in the past, build from that feeling.
- Ask, “If you had no possibility of failing and would

have your results guaranteed, what would you do?

- Harness people's inclination to competitiveness and pride. We all want to win, in order to do so we have to be willing to play; games are a great way of moving people into action.
- Ask for people's view of who they want to be. We all aspire to be a greater than what we are today; working towards our ideal Self is a great motivator.
- Link action a person's value system. People are more willing to act when their values are somehow tied to what they need to do.

Closing Challenge

If you allow me to offer a challenge to you, I'd like to remind you that there's a big difference between knowing what to do and doing what you know.

While I've shared a great deal of practical knowledge within these chapters, action alone produces results.

So now it's over to you. I encourage you to take action towards becoming the best life coach you can be.

Appendix

Frequently Asked Questions

Is this an exhaustive book of all life coaching tips and techniques?

Of course not, there are many other tips, tactics and techniques that you can and should learn as a life coach. Look for more in a future ebook entitled "Advanced Life Coaching Strategies."

Why do you focus so much on "inner work?"

While you may think that life coaching is outwardly focused, without the inner work you'll never be able to truly

understand how to effectively apply many of the life coaching techniques to help other people. You need to know that before working with others, you need to work on yourself.