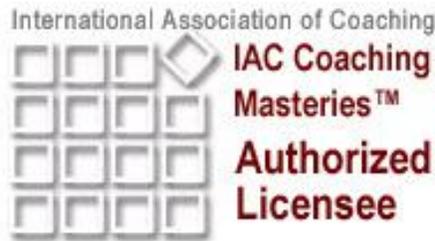


Applying the IAC Coaching Masteries™ to Your Online Work

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proud to be



Coaching is a transformative process for personal and professional awareness,
discovery and growth

The IAC Coaching Masteries



International Association of Coaching

Our Vision: To advance coaching to the highest standards of universal excellence

Our Mission: To offer a rigorous certification process that advances the profession through the demonstration of coaching mastery.

#1. Establishing and maintaining a relationship of trust

Definition:

Ensure a safe space and supportive relationship for personal growth, discovery and transformation.

Ensuring a space and a supportive relationship for personal growth, discovery and transformation online must include the technology and method of delivery.

The first step in establishing and maintaining a relationship of trust begins with the coach's website or directory listing. The coach's ability to describe his or her approach is essential as well as biography/background information that is professional but easy to understand. Additional information can be linked as well, such as any certifications, training or membership the coach holds. This helps establish trust and builds the potential client's confidence in the coach.

The client's confidence in the coach's ability to set forth steps and instructions about how the process online will begin is important. This most likely entails a description and steps on the coach's website or other online directory listing.

For instance, how will the potential client first contact the coach? If the coach instructs the potential client to email the coach the email process should be one that is secure and encrypted. This may be through an online 3rd party platform that the coach uses for all online communication or it may be through an email platform such as Hushmail.com.

Click here for an example of DeeAnna Nagel's Hushmail form: <https://forms.hush.com/deeanna>

The coach may offer a Hushmail form that offers the potential client the opportunity to give the coach background and information. By offering a secure and encrypted means as an entry point to services, trust begins and the potential client will gain the sense that his or her privacy is of utmost importance, even before the coaching relationship begins.

Another approach may be that the coach prefers a telephone conversation first and may state this explicitly on the contact page. For instance, the contact page may state,

DeeAnna would like to speak with you confidentially about your coaching goals. Please call her at 877.535.3300. You may leave a voice message as this phone is a secure line.

In addition to the initial steps for contact, explaining the process of online coaching and how the coaching will be delivered is important. A coach may only deliver text-based coaching (email, chat or journal coaching for instance) or the coach may only engage in phone or video-coaching. Other coaches may use a combination of session deliveries including in-person. Delineating this information up front so that that potential client has the opportunity to determine if the coach's approach fits his or her needs can be very reassuring. If the coach's various tech deliveries offer the client choices in how the process will take place this also aids in establishing a supportive relationship. For instance, offering a questionnaire that the potential client will fill out prior to the first session may ask a question about the client's preference for coach delivery.

Are you interested in in-person or online coaching or both?

What is your preferred online mode of communication, email, chat, audio or video?

Once the coaching relationship is contracted, the coach can offer guidelines for issues related to possible technological breakdown and how to re-establish contact should a break-down occur. For instance, a video session may suddenly end and unless the coach has explained the guidelines to the client, the client may not know the end of the session was not intentional. Likewise, telling the client similar guidelines about the use of email or journal entries is important as well. See the following statements as examples,

Please know that I will never disconnect during a session with you on purpose. Should we become disconnected during a chat or video session online, try to re-establish a connection. If that is not possible, email, text or phone me to reschedule.

OR

I will always respond to your emails within 3 business days. If you have sent an email and you do not receive a timely response, please do not hesitate to send a follow-up email.

OR

Your journal entries are a vital part of your growth process. Should you send me journal entries between our scheduled sessions or in between email exchanges, know that I may not have the opportunity to reply to each journal entry. When we meet again, (or- when I email a formal reply) I will ask if there is a particular journal entry that you would like me to review and offer feedback.

Another key element in establishing a safe environment when working online is to discuss the [Online Disinhibition Effect](#). This can be accomplished very simply by explaining to a new client that working online often has positive rewards because we tend to be able to open up easily. Encourage the client to become aware of his or her comfort level as they disclose information. For instance,

You may find that working online works for you because some people find it is easier to be open and honest about the coaching process- how you are progressing on your goals or what seems to be difficult. We have time, so be sure to check in with yourself about how much you are disclosing. It is easier to open up but sometimes when we share too much too quickly, we might feel a bit vulnerable afterward. If this happens, feel free to talk to me about it.

Because of disinhibition, establishing “between session strategies” is important. One example that we have already referred to is journal writing. Keeping the client engaged between sessions can aid in the client feeling safe resulting in the likelihood that the client will take more risks in the coaching relationship. Other examples of “between session strategies” might include sending a positive affirmation text or emailing an article of interest to the client.

With regard to online communication, pacing and cues are different. Educating the client about the nuances of online conversation may be necessary but can also give the client a feeling of security

knowing that the coach is willing to teach him or her about the unique aspects of the communication. For instance, during a chat session, the coach might write,

When you are typing out your thoughts, take your time. You can send me bits of information at a time by simply entering after you have typed a sentence or two. Likewise, I will do the same. If you ask me a question and I am pausing to think, I will type [pausing] to let you know I am with you but I am contemplating your question.

OR

Sometimes during an audio or video session, depending on our connections, we may hear an echo or one or both of us may experience lag. And sometime eye contact may seem different than being in an in-person session. If you have an external video camera, feel free to adjust the camera to best suit your view.

#2. Perceiving, affirming and expanding the client's potential

Definition:

Recognizes and help the client acknowledge and appreciate his or her strengths and potential.

If the client appears hesitant about the use of technology, becoming accustomed to the platform the two of you will be using through a simple and effective introduction by you can be helpful. You can create a simple "How to" page on your website or direct the client to a video tutorial if available. This is not much different that a client seeing you in person for the first time, hesitant to make that initial contact. This step has the effect of the client having a greater appreciation of personal capabilities and potential within the coaching relationship and expanding that confidence and potential beyond.

Key elements of this mastery include being in empathy with the client. In using the written word via chat or email, the coach may use the following sentence in the initial session or email to describe an empathic understanding:

"It sounds like you are struggling with X (eg time management) but I can hear your determination to move forward."

Distinctions in the coaching relationship mean that the use of language, both verbal and written, must be intentional and articulate to ensure that the words reflect believing vs. judging, enabling vs. pushing and expanding vs. stretching. Often in textual online coaching, the verbatim transcript is available for coach and client to access after the session there for the accurate use of the written word is essential.

One way to practice the use of the written word effectively is to record a live in-person session and transcribe that session. Review and study the transcript for the proper use and intent of the words. If you were to have conducted the session online without aural or visual cues would you have used different words to convey the meaning?

Sample effective behaviors include connecting the client's potential with possible opportunities and resources within the client's organization (if applicable). The coach can ensure that the client knows about additional online or intranet resources that may assist the client.

Sample ineffective behaviors include cheerleading or using exaggerated or insincere enthusiasm. In online coaching, using chat rooms or asynchronous communication, an example would be the overuse of emoticons or abbreviations.

Another ineffective behavior is described as accepting rather than being curious about the client's perceived assumptions, limitations and obstacles. Using simple phrases either verbally or via the written word can include phrases such as "I am wondering if..."

Creating or encouraging client dependency is also ineffective. When a coaches offers online coaching, this can often be a way to offer services as an adjunct to in-person coaching or a stand-alone. Because online sessions are sometimes easier to access due to lack of travel time to an office and more convenient scheduling, creating a step-down coaching schedule can be effective. For instance, 30-minute video, phone or chat sessions are can be very effective as a step-down from full hour sessions.

Email sessions (a session equals 1 full exchange from the client with a coach full coach exchange reply) can be arranged every other week as the coach relationship winds down.

Measures of this mastery include the coach encouraging more action from the client beyond the client's previous comfort zone, motivating the client to complete assignments and the client becoming more aware of behaviors.

The coach can lead the client to more action by offering written assignments and online or app related assignments. An incentive for the client to be inspired in completing the assignments might be that the client can send the assignment to the coach "between sessions" instead of waiting until the next in-person meeting time. If the client knows the ability to reach out to the coach between sessions with completed materials or thoughts toward a goal this can affirm and expand the client's potential. Being sure to check in with the client regarding the translation of the assignment to real-world application is essential as well.

#3. Engaged Listening

Definition:

Gives full attention to the words, nuances and unspoken meaning of the client's communication, the coach is more deeply aware of the client, his/her concerns and the source of the issue, by listening beyond what the client is able to articulate.

Key Elements of this mastery include the coach listening beyond what the client articulates. This is necessary in textual communication too- to be able to "listen" beyond the client's written words. This is also referred to as the latent vs. manifest content. To hear the latent meaning in dialogue requires a consultant, coach, or manager to listen at times with an "analytic ear", that is to listen to what is being said in a state of suspended attention rather than with the usual focused attention we give to people we are talking to. All conversation can be read for its manifest and latent content. At times the latent content is more significant than the intended communication. This also helps to identify the "core issue" the client may be bringing to you but not necessarily identifying it as such. An example of this may be a client who is reaching out to a coach to work on motivation to complete a project. This is what the client discusses with you during conversations online or in-person. During the time you work with the client you discover through the client's self-report and through demonstration of late submission of assignments, that your client has a pattern of not completing or being late with the projects within a project. You determine the it may be helpful to work on the larger topic of motivation and procrastination rather than just applying your coaching to the current project at hand- or, you may determine to accomplish both simultaneously, using the current project as an example of how the client can work future projects as well. This is accomplished by listening to the latent and the manifest content within the dialogues.

Sample effective behaviors include using nominal cues to give the client the opportunity to reflect or respond and this can be achieved textually in a chat by first observing whether or not the client is typing a response. Most chat programs give an indication when the other person is typing. You can further offer support by typing phrases like, "Take your time." You can encourage clients to enter the typed response every few sentences so that you can be reading the response as the person continues typing the complete thought.

In asynchronous communication such as email, both the coach and the client have an opportunity to reflect due to the nature of the correspondence.

Another sample effective behavior is noticing nuances in the client's communications. More misspelled words than usual may indicate the client is feeling rushed or is distracted for instance.

Confirming a client's communications might include the coach reflecting in the written word or verbally,

What I hear you saying is...

It sounds like...

Correct me if I am misunderstanding...

In addition, with textual communication, the listening may continue between sessions as the coach has the opportunity in most cases to review the verbatim transcripts of the session.

Effective behaviors also include discerning the appropriate coaching method to use based on the client's needs and concerns and this also translates to discerning the appropriate methods of delivery. For instance, more preparation is needed on the part of the coach and the client if the method of delivery begins online and transitions to in-person due to the disinhibition effect (see previous reading on this topic) yet moving a client from in-person to online or phone is much less difficult and can be used effectively to accommodate the client's needs or scheduling constraints. This is also an indication that the coach understands the mastery by adapting the coaching methodology and strategy, as needed, for the client.

Sample ineffective behaviors include missing the client's deeper points in the communication (this may include the latent content). When using multimedia approaches such as webinar platforms or video platforms, client communication can be missed as the coach multitasks, listening, typing in the chat area, and paying attention to multiple conversations during a group session. In addition, because the progression of the conversation is not linear, communicating in a chat room requires constant eye scrolling both up and down.

One **measure of effectiveness** is noting that the client's tone and flow of ideas becomes more open and effortless. This is evidenced in email as the client's asynchronous exchanges become more fluent and narrative rather than simply answering previous questions or clarifying for the coach. The client's story (manifest and latent) begins to emerge.

As mentioned in the mastery guide, a common mistake coaches make is thinking the coach has to speak when the client is quiet. This silence may come across differently on the phone as opposed to in a chat room or video so coach awareness of the varying nuances in the different methods of technology delivery is also important. For instance, silence may mean that the client has not responded in a while (perhaps a week or 2 has passed) and setting a protocol for sending an alert to the client can be important. An example follows:

Hi Mary,

How are you? I am checking in as I have not heard from you in a couple of weeks. I just wanted to let you know that I will be closing the file in a week or so assuming you feel you have accomplished your goals. However, I would love for us to continue as I think we could accomplish a bit more. If you would like to proceed, just send me an email in the next few days.

Warm Regards,

Coach

#4. Processing in the present

Definition

Focus full attention on the client, processing information at the level of the mind, body, heart and/or spirit, as appropriate. The coach expands the client's awareness of how to experience thoughts and issues on these various levels, when and as appropriate. The coach uses what is happening in the session itself (client's behavior, patterns, emotions, and the relationship between the coach and the client, etc.) to assist the client toward greater self-awareness and positive appropriate action.

This has the **effect** of the client being able to express and engage with present reality. Depending on the cues available to the coach, the coach can monitor the client's affect to be sure that the client is staying in the present not just within the conversation but with mannerisms that are congruent as well. If the coach and client are communicating via written communication the coach will use empathic mirroring and listening skills beyond what is typical in an audible conversation by checking in with the client, using clarifying statements such as, "I hear you saying...."

Key Elements include the coach being aware of the dynamics occurring within the session, within the client and between coach and the client and understands how the dynamics are affecting the client and the coaching. The coach also has the ability to discern past from present in the client's dialogue and has a simultaneous an holistic awareness of the client's communications at all levels. This involves listening with a "third ear" or using one's "sixth sense", or seeing with the "mind's eye." When paralinguistic and/or audible cues are removed from the communication process, we tend to rely more on our instincts or intuition.

The coach can guide the client as the client remains in tune with his or her body in the present. The client may also be aware on a visceral level what effect written words or the online experience (particularly in a virtual world setting) is having so that the client is paying attention to gut reactions and conveying this to the coach. This becomes an **effective behavior** for the coach who checks in with the client about thoughts, feelings and intuition and checks in with the client about what the client is feeling in his or her body as appropriate.

Another important factor specifically related to the online session is to be sure that the client and the coach have prepared the space for the coaching session. Being aware of distractions that may lead one or both off focus and being aware of possible distractions such as deliveries or landscapers is crucial. Closing all other browser windows so that neither is distracted by pings from others on social media is important. Encouraging the client to explore different levels of knowing outside of session may be beneficial- such as experimenting in a virtual world or online gaming environment, or writing down thoughts in an online journal writing platform, or joining a support group or discussion forum. Encouraging the client to explore his or her own inner knowing can be part of exploring different levels of knowing within cyberspace. The coach who can "hear" the deeper levels of the client's story can guide the client toward a reached goal.

It is also important too to realize that in the present, when using technology, if the connection is slow and there is lag time in a video session, this is the reality of using technology and the inherent glitches and not part of the coaching process exclusively. In the here and now, continuing the communication despite the glitches or deciding to reschedule is part of being focused and attuned.

Distinctions include being in the here and now vs. past or future and coaches can pay particular attention to this with regard to client email responses. For instance, if a client is writing a long narrative about historical issues or wishing for what might be in the future, this is a clue for the coach to redirect the client. Redirection with a client's journal writing so that the client remains in the present with the writing experience is to ask the client to reflect on the following after writing a particularly long entry that focuses on the past or the future:

I was

Surprised by...

Aware of...

Curious about...

I noticed...

I felt...

#5. Expressing

Definition

Attention and awareness to how the coach communicates commitment, direction, intent, and ideas- and the effectiveness of this communication.

This mastery has the **effect** of the coaching interaction being enhanced with the client being at ease and trusting with a key element for the coach to be client-focused. The coach has an opportunity to offer client-focused attention by meeting the client where they are at- and in the case of online coaching, this includes accommodating the client's time and schedule and meeting the client in session with a method of delivery that suits the client. Meeting the client where they are at also includes the coach's use of online language and netiquette skills so that the client feels understood but in a way that allows the coach to maintain a professional online presence with appropriate online boundaries.

Distinctions include how the coach conveys support and encouragement vs using word alone for expression. In textual communication this can be accomplished by using two effective strategies. The first, *descriptive immediacy*, allows the client to know what you are thinking. For instance, if the client says, "I had a really good day yesterday at work! I met my deadline!" The coach might respond with, "I imagine a big smile on your face right now." Another strategy is to use what is referred to as *emotional bracketing*. Using the same client statement, the coach can convey his/her own emotion by simply responding with, [smiling...]. While some chat programs also allow for the use of emoticons, writing the words either in the descriptive immediacy format or the emotional bracketing format can have a more meaningful impact. This is due to the overuse of emoticons in more casual online conversation.

Building and maintaining rapport through tailored communications is a **sample effective behavior** that can be achieved online. The coach must be aware of timing in online communication; in asynchronous communication this may include attention to between-session emails or emails that depart from the coach dialogue. Responding to the emails appropriately without alienating the client is important. For instance, within the context of a face-to-face coach relationship, should the client email between sessions with an idea or with the desire to share an "Aha moment," the coach can acknowledge without the client expecting the online dialogue will continue. If the coach has not already established an expectation with the client via the informed consent process (for instance, ...*You may email me between sessions at any time but I may not always have the opportunity to read your emails or respond...*) then a simple reply such as, *Thank you for sharing Mary! I look forward to discussing this with you in our next scheduled session...* serves to illustrate warmth and caring while maintaining professional boundaries.

Another effective way to demonstrate rapport through tailored communications is by accommodating the client with technology. As discussed previously, some clients may need to cancel an appointment due to scheduling or transportation issues. Or perhaps the client is on vacation but does not want to miss a session. Arranging for an online session can assist with ongoing continuity and rapport building. In addition, depending on how fees are structured, a coach may be able to tailor varying methods of delivery for a client who is dealing with a financial hardship. An example might be arranging for phone sessions bi-monthly with one or two email exchanges (generally priced at a lower fee per exchange than a full-on 1-hour session) in between phone sessions.

Common mistakes made by coaches include jumping in with too many questions, even if well-intentioned. This can also occur in an email dialogue whereby the coach asks too many questions and does not reply with a narrative about what the client has previously presented. While it may be necessary to ask clarifying questions in response to a first email exchange received by the client, additional responses from the coach should include more narrative reflections and suggestions than questions (see required reading for additional pointers in structuring a coaching email).

Indicators that the coach understands this mastery include proper pacing within technology-delivered services. Attuning to the technological aspects of voice and video are important and maintaining a demeanor that is self-assured can be helpful in the event of technology glitches such as the sound breaking up or video delay. The coach can take the lead in reassurance in such cases, particularly if the technology glitches repeat in each session. For instance, if the coach is using video to communicate with a client in another country, there may always be a lag. Timing responses that take lag into account can help with the pacing of silent moments and conversation.

#6. Clarifying

Definition

Reduce/eliminate confusion or uncertainty, increase understanding and confidence of the client.

This mastery demonstrates to the client that not only do you hear their concerns and ask clarifying questions, but most of all; you ask the right clarifying questions at the appropriate junctures within the online sessions.

As stated previously, asking too many questions, particularly in an email response, can end up resulting in the client simply answering questions instead of weaving their own interpretations and additional narrative (the story the client brings to the session) into their reply. The coach's ability to hone in on the "core issue" is paramount and must be accomplished amidst the technological nuances that exist within online coach delivery (glitches, pacing, proper use of emoticons, netiquette, and effective use of textual language).

Recapping, the following statements are examples of ways to clarify:

What I hear you saying is...

It sounds like...

Correct me if I am misunderstanding...

If you detect an overarching theme this may be the clue to determining the core issue. A clarifying statement in this regard may be, "I understand that you are wanting to accomplish A, but I am wondering, since you have reported X,Y,Z, if we can take a look at B." Asking for the client's feedback reinforces your desire for clarity with the client. "What do you think about that?"

As previously noted, with online communication, there may be access to the verbatim transcript which can serve the coach in ensuring that fewer client statements were missed or ignored. With verbatim transcripts such as email and chat, the coach can revisit a statement the client made if in the initial session, the coach truly missed an opportunity with the client.

A sample **effective behavior** is connecting to something the client already knows or has experienced. One way to accomplish this is to simply ask, particularly in an initial email as the coach establishes rapport and attempts to clarify the core issue,

"If you have reached this goal or a similar goal in the past, how did you do it? What worked (or didn't)?"

This gives the client an opportunity to tell you more. You might also inquire about the client's support system. "Who is most supportive to you as you work toward this goal?" This will give the coach more information about whether or not the client is supported and if the client's goal is realistic.

Common mistakes include thinking the coach knows the right answers or what is best for the client. The client is less likely to think the coach is telling the client what to do if the client is adding in occasional

questions like, “Does that seem like something you could do in the next week?” or, “What are other ideas you might have?”

#7. Helping the client set and keep clear intentions.

Definition

Helps the client become or remain focused and working toward intended goals.

In addition to helping the client to become or remain focused and working toward intended goals that the client has brought to the coaching relationship, the coach can also weave the appropriate use of technology into the client's "plan." Mentioned previously, accommodating the client via technology is important, but also, establishing a clear plan for the use of technology is equally important and helps the client stay on task with clear expectations regarding the coach/client relationship.

This is most effectively established through informed consent- both the written informed consent agreement and through other ways a client becomes informed about the work. For instance, the coach can clearly state on his or her website and in the written informed consent agreement how the work will take place. An example may be:

...I see clients in-office and online. I use the jigsawbox platform which allows you me to post information for you to review (articles, videos and podcasts) and gives us a secure and confidential area to discuss your impressions.

If you need to reach me between assignments for housekeeping issues, I utilize hushmail, a secure and confidential email service.

If you are traveling or not able to access our standard communication methods we can arrange for a telephone session...

This offers the client a solid foundation for the work by establishing boundaries and a contained process for communication, goal setting and goal attainment.

Another important **element** in ushering a client to intended goals is understanding the client's "online identity." A competent online coach understands the impact cyberspace may have on people's lives and strives to support the client's efforts within the context of cyberculture as well as in the offline world. If the coach is uninformed or misinformed about cyberculture, the coach may inadvertently lead the client toward goals that are incongruent with the client's cultural identity online. For example, a coach and client may have established regular in-person or phone contact for session. The coach may have additional assignments between sessions for the client to complete. Rather than point the client to an online method for completing the task, the coach states, "I will mail the assignments to you so that you can complete them in the next two weeks and mail them back." While the assignment content may be perfectly appropriate to the client's intended goals, if the client is has a strong online presence and uses cyberspace for work and leisure activities, the mere action of mailing the assignments to the client may be off-putting.

A writer or an editor may be more inclined to discuss goals with a coach using email coaching since this readily draws on the writer's natural abilities and talent.

A busy executive who travels a lot may welcome a flexible coach who can switch between methods of delivery- from phone to email as necessary.

Another **example** illustrates the vast opportunities in cyberspace that the coach may not be aware of or is hesitant to engage. Perhaps a client has the goal of a new position at another company and is seeking a career coach for the purposes of updating his or her resume and gaining stronger interviewing skills. He is an illustrator and he likes his job within the comic book industry, but he would like to explore possibilities in the gaming industry. While the coach and client see each other online via video sessions, the mock interviews they conduct in these sessions are leaving the coach and the client feeling flat. The client might be better served to engage in mock interviews within a 3D virtual world using avatars because research has demonstrated that skills learned in a virtual world are transferable to real world, sometimes more so than if the client learned the skills in the real world. The client may not have had the expectation that coaching services would be conducted in a 3D virtual world setting, but if the coach is aware of the possibilities for coaching within a virtual world, the client may feel more congruence in the coaching relationship and expand possibilities because learning interview skills in a simulated virtual world is a close companion to illustrating for an online game such as World of Warcraft.

#8. Inviting possibility

Definition

Creating an environment that allows ideas, options and opportunities to emerge.

This mastery has the **effect** of the coach helping the client transcend barriers and the client has more options.

When we think of online coaching as a way for the coach to offer the client more options for meeting with his or her coach, right away we see that opening the coaching relationship up to online delivery and technological tools gives the client more options. We can also see that if the client, for whatever reason, has barriers to accessing in-person coach sessions, offering online sessions can be a way to bridge that gap.

Even if the coach initially states that he or she is only interested in in-person sessions or phone sessions, the coach can let the client know that other options are available. When the client may miss an appointment due to travel or traffic or even illness, online coaching can prevent the loss of momentum in the coach-client relationship.

This has the **distinction** of being Creative vs. Prescriptive. Prescriptive indicates a set time every week in the office while the clock ticks for 50-60 minutes. Creative indicates the possibility of a 30 minute chat session twice a week or a one-hour video session twice a month with an email exchange in between. Creative means your client keeps an online journal or an online vision board and invites you to read or view so that the two of you can discuss further in the next session. Creative suggests that you might text your client a positive affirmation in between sessions to affirm a desired goal.

Sample effective behaviors include using appropriate tools and techniques to create the environment for expansion, inviting opportunity. The use of technology, not just in the delivery of the coach session, but as a tool in personal growth can enhance the client's progress and the coach-client relationship. Offering tools that move the client quicker toward goals has the effect of the client's awareness being expanded. With a plethora of apps for everything from meditation to To-do lists, and with websites ranging from self-help and self-motivation to journaling and the creation of vision boards, the client's possibilities are expanded and opened. Even the use of [Pinterest](#) can encourage individual expression and the thoughtful emergence of ideas.

Additionally, the coach who may use a variety of techniques or coach modalities, has the opportunity for horizons expand by utilizing technology. For instance, we might say that Narrative Coaching is a modality that draws on the client's various scenarios, circumstances and cultures to expand the client's options, demonstrating **effective behaviors**. Narrative coaching is but one approach to coaching and as with narrative therapy, the modality is particularly well-suited for the exchange of emails or "letters" that solicit the story from the client and feedback from the coach.

#9. Helping the client to create and use support systems and structures

Definition

Helping the client identify and build the relationships, tools, systems and structures he or she needs to advance and sustain progress.

Key elements include the coach suggesting possible support systems and structures appropriate to the client's needs. This may include a proper search of the internet for local in-person support, meetings or networking groups that may aid the client OR online support, meetings or networking groups that may serve the same purpose. Social media may be a way for the client to reach out beyond the local community if necessary, joining groups on LinkedIn, Facebook and other relevant online networks. The client may also benefit from enhancing his/her own online presence, whether for professional or personal endeavors. This may involve teaching the client social networking skills or enhancing the client's Internet search skills and depending on the client's Internet experience, additional education may be necessary regarding netiquette. The coach can serve as a model for the client regarding appropriate use of the Internet for networking and social/professional support.

Sample ineffective behaviors include the coach recommending resources, structures, or systems without first identifying the individual client's needs. Examples of this may be suggesting the client join specific LinkedIn groups with a focus on career advancement when the client has not identified this as a desired goal, but instead would like to network with like-minded people in his/her profession. This requires the coach to listen and clarify to be sure the coach is guiding the client in the right direction and focused on the client's core issue because the Internet is vast and without narrowing choices for the client and assisting the client with a proper Internet search, the client may feel overwhelmed. At the same time, the coach must be careful not to "take over" and allow the client to seek out resources on the Internet independent of the coach. The coach can continue building rapport by being available between sessions to help should the client become "stuck" resulting in an Internet search that leaves the client lacking in resources.

The balance between giving the client resources and helping the client find resources is one that the coach must be aware of, otherwise the coach risks making the common mistake of identifying all, or most of, the actions and systems, rather than involving the client.

One **indicator** that the coach understands the mastery is addressing any inner conflict that might interfere with sustainability. For instance, if the client is reticent to disclose in online groups, validating the client's fear is important. This fear may be due to a lack of experience on the Internet or may be because the client does not readily share with others online or face-to-face. When offering online support groups or mastermind groups to clients online, it is paramount for the coach to discuss with the client that some online groups are open while others may be password protected only but not encrypted, with the most secure communication online being in a group or cohort that communicates within an encrypted environment online.