

MASTERLEARN COACHING PHILOSOPHY

NEWSLETTER



ON SILENCE

Silence is an ocean with no name, no solid frame but uses the space allocated for it.

Silence can be seen as a vacuum requiring someone to fill it.

This emptiness though provides an environment for clients to do what they may have never done before: seriously self-reflect and change in the moment.

Newly-minted coaches may feel uncomfortable with silence. It's understandable. In a 1-1 session there are only two people involved and the assumption is someone should be exchanging information.

But underneath the surface there's a third party. A session involves the coach, client and space / non-verbal communication. In Taoist eyes, it's the nothingness, the invisible element that's always there. Formless yet houses substance.

Silence for the coaching art is both activity and information.

Particularly in the Gestalt-style, emphasis is placed on what the client experiences in the moment. Using powerful questions intuitively timed, the coach prompts the client to go inward and evaluate what emerges in the Now, not what may happen Tomorrow.

The qualitative difference in questions lies in how they're framed. A coach can give a leading question or open-ended. Both can be useful in their proper moment. One may be best suited for embracing silence.

Leading Question: *"How did you like speaking in your presentation?"* — Not a bad question but assumes the client had a positive leaning towards the event. It focuses the mind on conversation around the likes. Also preassigns feelings to experiences that may or may not be true.

Open Question: *"How was your experience presenting?"* — Eliminates differentiation and challenges the client to conceive of one's own leaning, feeling allocation and value to the experiences.

Both questions can apply silence. All that means is...as the coach, when delivering the question, to be quiet. And keep quiet and observe until the client finishes their exploration.

The coach may be tempted to interrupt this process and solve something right away, compelled to speak because someone apparently should be, right?

In the silence, communication is happening and can be recognized if the coach invests attention.

If a client is unfamiliar with this territory, self-reflecting and then verbalizing the experience, they may struggle.

It shows up somatically; body becomes fidgety, slurred or hesitant speech, eyes diverting; it's nervous energy emerging from the subconscious that, like all energy needing to flow, has to express in some form.



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Sometimes a client may cry. Sometimes they don't have much to say. But once going through this seemingly simple exercise, there is a transformation. Having the space (silence) to think, sense their physiological responses in the moment, they can then give language to them. With the language comes the power to make a change, eventually transmuting an inner block.

"Do you feel nervous right now?" — Nope. Leading question. Pushed by a preconceived idea.

"You must be afraid to do it again." — Absolutely nope. Providing a full interpretation before the client comes to realization. Strong agenda. push.

"What are you experiencing right now?" — Yes. A potent question when a client reaches this point. Then silence. Allow the client to continue self-evaluation, to discover their own lexicon for what an experience brings them. Once they accomplish this, the coach has an opportunity to assist with further exploration, and then move on to the practical, actionable side of things.

Some of the strongest somatic expressions of this caliber tend to surface around topics on finance, wellness and relationships. Each creates some form of a bond to self-identity unique to each person; a coach needs a mature responsibility sense to handle this container so the client feels safe to explore.

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LISTEN

