



If all the world is indeed a stage then coaches must act the part, both in the client's drama and in their own

MORALITY PLAY

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As coaches, we need to be fully immersed in the client's agenda, experiencing the challenges and pain from their perspective. Such immersion not only provides the empathy and trust essential for effective coaching, but also the contextual storyline and creative force to embark on a change journey with the client. But don't be fooled: satisfying as it may feel, this is merely a prelude to the real game.

If the agenda, the immersion and even the solutions, are merely a prelude, what is the main play? This leads us to a bigger question – the purpose of life. If we see life as a stage on which to evolve ourselves individually and collectively, then the fundamental purpose of coaching is to understand and evolve who we really are and to serve the evolution of human consciousness.

Coaching becomes a stage drama for each character to come into play and for the client to discover an effective way to evolve these characters in his or her psyche.

There are multiple actors or sub-personalities in our cast, each with their own brilliance and potential to create or destroy. The director (the higher self, "I") must get to know his or her actors, tune into their

talents and balance their shortfalls. Then the director can design a master play which fully leverages the creative talents of each actor.

Such a play will contain well-designed costumes and props. These are not there to dazzle the audience, however, but to serve the characters and evolve the story. Many coaching techniques and methodologies are useful but inadequate to address the fundamental purpose of coaching.

Let's not be naïve in assuming that our cast or even what appears to be the authentic "I" are all benevolent. I have little patience with the New Age scripture of unleashing human potential with the assumption that there is all good and no evil inside us. It's just like Chairman Mao's little red book (which I grew up with), an ideology on a

single mindtrack with a love heart on its cover. It is constructed with a twisted perception of human nature, inflating our inspirational qualities and denying our shadow natures. This feel-good ego is built on a romantic mirage and could cause destruction in ourselves and others.

For example, a native American Cherokee elder was teaching his grandchildren about life. "A fight is going in inside me," he said. "It is a terrible fight, and it is between two wolves. One represents fear, anger, envy, sorrow, regret, greed, arrogance, self-pity, guilt, resentment, inferiority and superiority.

"The other stands for joy, peace, love, hope, sharing, serenity, humility, kindness, benevolence, friendship, empathy, generosity, truth, compassion and faith. This same fight is going on inside each of you and in every other person."

The children thought about it for a minute. Then one asked, "Grandfather, which wolf will win?"

The elder replied, "The one I feed."

In other words, both sides exist in us. Coaching is not about eliminating the dark side but cultivating the power of conscious choice. What we are not conscious of tends to grab hold and push us off balance.

Coaching trains us to get in

touch with the gravity around us and develop our muscle power to harvest it for balance.

Values-based coaching is a way of understanding and evolving the cast – the motivational forces in individuals and groups. Values are deeply held principles that people adhere to when making decisions. Individuals express their values through behaviour; groups through their working culture.

There are positive and limiting values, which have an impact on performance and fulfilment at individual or group level. By exploring values at various depths, we start to get in touch with the multiple characters in our psyche and discover the dynamic, complex and conflicting life forces that drive us towards destruction or fulfilment. ■

“ The fundamental purpose of coaching is to understand and evolve who we really are ”

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