

Using the “S” Word in Coaching

Beyond the nay-saying ego lies the spiritual side of coaching

By **Melanie DewBerry-Jones**

Three years ago, Maureen, Garry, myself, and our guest for the day, coach Jon Benfer, were sitting around my dining room table in Half Moon Bay, California, sharing a vision to create a magazine that would galvanize the coaching community. We wanted a magazine that would give coaches a voice and keep abreast of the latest news and technology, a publication the coaching community could call its own. We were looking for a name that embodied the very spirit of coaching and our brilliant minds were blank. Finally, Jon looked up with a smile as he announced: *Choice!*

“Yes, Jon,” I responded, “We want to be at choice with this.” Garry and Maureen looked at me with the sympathetic smiles only the kindest of colleagues can have for one another when they just don’t get it. I realized what I’d missed, and joined in with a resounding yes! *Choice!*

The power of choice

And so the magazine had a name. More than just a name, it was a clear statement to the world that coaching is about being at choice. Without choice, we are subject to the effects of life: victims of events and circumstance and powerless to affect our destiny. Sounds pretty bad, doesn’t it? Yet coaches know that many people live their lives this way. The misery when you can’t fathom a life beyond the limitations of what you see. Perhaps that’s why you became a coach. You wanted to commit to helping those who want to help themselves, people who also want to be committed to something beyond limitation.

Choice was such a natural fit with coaching that I marveled at its simplicity. (I also wondered why I didn’t come up with it). Effective coaching helps our clients know that they are always at choice, no matter their life circumstances. In the power of choice, they are no longer hijacked

by the old stories, wounds, or limiting beliefs which formerly propelled them into default behaviors that didn’t serve their being. That is the power of coaching.

Fueled by spirituality, coaching teaches our clients that we are all at choice, and that being at choice is the power in life that serves us best. Coaching clients from a spiritual perspective is much like the astute observation of Albert Einstein, “We can’t solve problems by using the same kind of thinking we used when we created them.”

Adding a new dimension

Taking a spiritual view of problems is like finding a way out of checkmate. Metaphysical principles (such as “What you put your attention to is what you expand”) make us conscious of choice. Being at choice is the most powerfully responsible thing we can ever do. In fact, choice equals power + responsibility. The ability to powerfully choose

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whom you will be, what you will do, and what you can have keeps us sane in insane circumstances.

Powerful choice takes the burden out of responsibility. Imagine a life in which, our clients trust themselves with life’s events. They come to deeply know that events do not dictate who they are. Choice empowers them to rely on emotional and spiritual maturity to navigate the highs and lows. This is spiritual adulthood, real adulthood. This is living on the “cause” side of the cause-and-effect equation.





A perfect blend

Spirituality and coaching are natural companions, complementing each other like good companions. Spirituality in coaching mixes responsibility, power, and choice in a powerful elixir that imbues the client with a self-awareness that shouts, “You have a place here, a purpose and an impact—go forth and create.” Spirituality in coaching takes choice to a higher level. As clients mature, they are able to lean into their spiritual Self to choose, giving spaciousness to the process of their lives. Slowing down to listen deeply often opens the door for those elusive answers we get ourselves into a tizzy about, allowing creative answers to emerge with a clarity and speed our minds cannot will.

Clients who rely on spiritual consciousness are able to relax the ego’s desire to formulate answers to the curve balls life throws us. The ego beats us up when we fail. It tells us not to take risks and undermines our natural, adventuring, creative desire. The reason why? Because it knows the ego cannot deliver stellar results. It knows it does not have the source of creativity that the soul does. Why would it set itself up to fail? The ego doesn’t want to fail. It sees no value in it. In fact, the ego loves mastery, adulation, and praise. It wants to do a good job. It’s our job to let ego do that, but the key is to not assign it tasks that are beyond its job description. When a client allows their soul to have dominion, the ego is free from failure, as there is no failure from a spiritual view, only compassionate learning and growing.

Spirituality in coaching can find a home in any client, regardless of religious affiliation or its absence. Spiritual beliefs can have as much or as little bearing as each person desires. What is essential is that we, as coaches, see and help the client connect to their own humanity and put them in touch with the place inside them that is an encyclopedia of intuitive information. Both our humanity and

our intuition can be overstepped by the demands of a fast-paced life and the nay-saying negative ego.

Incorporate the spiritual with any client

An executive, a stay-at-home dad, a college student, or an artist—all can be served by spiritual coaching that leads them to self-worth and self-love. What person would not be served by that reunion? Spirituality in coaching is not some ethereal, pie-in-the-sky concept. Coaching with spirituality is tangible, practical, and applicable in our clients’ lives. When clients have more of themselves available, they are more creative and productive.

We’re taught to push spirit away. We think it’s not appropriate for the work place, that it’s too “woo-woo.” This archaic way of thinking isn’t working. People want to be acknowledged, not for their title, but for themselves. Businesses are responding to heart-centered leadership. They’re valuing others for who they are, not what they do. Spirituality softens our taut edges as we connect from our heart (our source of love) rather than objectifying others.

Each person is human and needs to be engaged humanely. A coach need not be steeped in spiritual concepts or language to help others. By tapping into their own deep connection to their true self, they automatically become of greater assistance. That is spirit in connective action!

Becoming conscious in your spiritual development is a choice. Yet spirituality doesn’t demand development. It doesn’t demand specifics beyond the choice to elicit the heart’s endorsement for the odyssey of life. Coaching that puts the client in touch with the heart is deeply spiritual.

And so it is! ●

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