

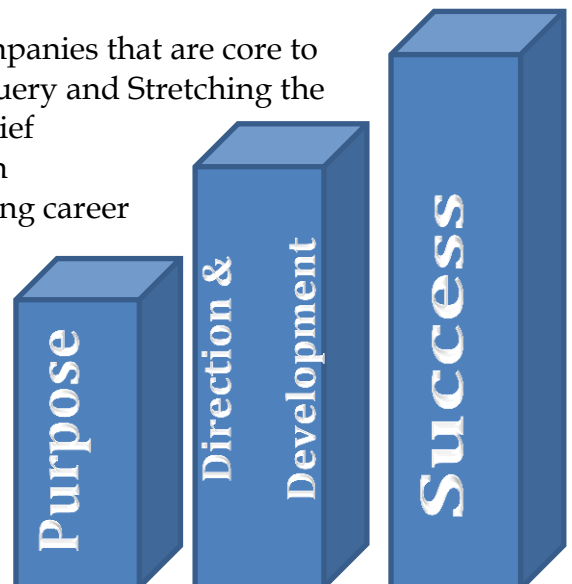
CAREER COACH COMMUNICATIONS

Module III

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Module III Overview

This module focuses on applying the coaching companies that are core to working with career coaching clients: Listening, Query and Stretching the comfort zone. As a coach, you will learn to be a Chief Motivational Officer, understand coaching through circumstances including grief and layoff, and putting career coaching into action.



|| CAREER COACHING COMMUNICATIONS

THE CORE COMPETENCIES

"The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place." - George Bernard Shaw, Irish playwright

Career Coaching applies communications and relationship skills. These skills must be learned and practiced in order to be mastered and effective. Using careful listening and gripping query techniques, you will learn how to listen and when to listen; when to interrupt the client to redirect, reframe, or brainstorm; when to ask the gripping questions, how to identify issues at hand, and when to issue challenges to lead clients to reach new horizons.

Some people are already excellent listeners or excellent at asking gripping questions to draw revelations from a client, leading clients through a process of exploration and self-discovery about their careers, and the creation of a viable career search campaign strategy. Other career coaches need to practice these competencies to master the process.

Career Coaching is a query-based approach to guiding clients to self-actualization and discovery of career choices and professions. It is about effective communications, to successfully lead your client to discovering for himself an appropriate career path and requirements, as well as building a strong foundational partnership between coach and client. Effective communications are critical to facilitate career success and progress. Learning to listen well and to pose gripping questions is the mastery behind Career Coaching.

Brainstorming with clients helps clarify needs through a rephrasing and mirroring process of query, and soon your clients should recognize that the process of seeking employment goes way beyond the résumé.

As you learned in the previous modules, clients who develop a purpose for seeking employment and recognize that the purpose relates directly to their values, career interests, personality, and life activities, begin to realize they are on a path of self-discovery to finding a fulfilling career.

As the Career Coaching Program begins, you will build a relationship with the client to gain his trust and set the atmosphere for the work ahead. You will present the client with an investment proposal and service agreement to meet expectations. After which you will listen to the client during a well-prepared query-based intake session that does two things:

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- 1) Provides you with the information you need to know about the client as a starting point to build the client's future career together and
 - 2) Allows the client to speak a lot, responding to your questions, further cementing the working bond.

Following the intake session, you may desire to engage the client in assessment testing and review those results together. The various assessments may include formal objective tests administered by you or a licensed colleague, or your client may be comfortable engaging in exercises provided in this program to help develop career interests, goals, and values, in a more informal, subjective setting.

Throughout all of your coaching sessions, it is important to remember to guide and lead the client to self-discovery, as opposed to offering advice and guidance. Of course, if you know your client may benefit from sage advice or you would like to offer guidance, simply ask the client, "Would you like me to offer some suggestions?" In addition, there are some instances, when you may actually talk more than the client, for example if you have a scheduled interview role-playing session or dress for success consultation – then you are wearing another type of coaching/training hat. Even so, as you describe interview scenarios for your client, ask them to tell you about previous interviews. Ask them to tell you how they think they would respond to certain questions and why. Ask them to describe how they feel when they are being interviewed. Incorporate listening and query into training sessions.

Career Coaching is a technique applying the following Career Coaching skills:

- Listening
- Query
- Open communications
- Brainstorming and breakthrough
- Comfort zone stretching and commitments

Your goal is to:

- Create awareness and enlighten your client
- Script a viable career marketing strategy
- Follow-through on progress and be an accountability partner with your client

Encouraging your clients, as the Chief Motivational Officer, is also an important aspect of the Career Coaching Program. We all desire to be prompted, congratulated, and noticed for our successes and achievements. We also appreciate a warm thought or comment when we are disappointed.

Miscommunications

Oftentimes people interpret something a person says or does (or fails to say or do) as a message in and of itself. Thus, the person receiving the message attaches his own meaning.

The skill of communicating is a learned behavior. People tend to send messages that will maximize their rewards and minimize punishment – which means some people manipulate their messages, to bring a sweet sound to the hearer. Reward and punishment often determine how an individual behaves.

Studies indicate that positive behavior produces positive results and negative behavior produces negative results. For example, a college class of 200 students in a lecture hall conducted an experiment with their professor. Whenever the professor moved to the right side of the room near the chalkboard, the class appeared to be uninterested in the lecture, bored, and falling asleep. He would lose charge of the class.

However, whenever the professor moved to the left side of the room, near the corner by the exit door, the class sat up straight, seemed quiet, interested, and awake. They appeared to take notes and ask questions. Therefore, within a week, the responses by the class moved the professor into the corner during his lectures. The professor was responding to the positive outcome of the students – he noticed the positive responses from the students and adjusted accordingly.

People must realize that they are always communicating through behavior, actions, non-verbal/body language, clothing, words, and tone of voice. People are always setting themselves up for miscommunication in how they act, dress, or what they say – or when they did not mean to say something in a certain way. What we say and how we say it, can present two completely different images in the mind of the listener.

People often perceive (distinguish, take in, observe, pick out) messages, rather than receive (accept, welcome, hear, gather, grasp) messages. Are you a perceiver or receiver? Why?

How can you practice reflective listening?

(Suggestions include closing your eyes for 2 minutes and then making a list of what you hear, i.e., background noises, sounds from outside, music, etc.; or ask someone to read you a paragraph from the newspaper, and report back what you heard.)

When a potential client calls on the phone and says, "Hi my name is Steve."

Do you remember your client's name?

Do you repeat the name back as you begin speaking with this person?

Do you remember the name of the person you met earlier at an association meeting?

As an exercise, the next time you go to a community event, faith-based service, or even an office party, where you may not know everyone, make a point of learning the names of at least three people and using their names frequently. Start every sentence with them with their name, i.e., “Well, Don, that is interesting.” “Don, tell me, where are you from originally?”

If you are listening to someone speak on the phone, write the name down on a piece of paper, and use it often during your conversation.

Matching Communication Styles to Listening

Listen, according to Webster’s dictionary, means to hear *with thoughtful attention, to be alert to catch an unexpected sound*. When people speak to us, they expect us to hear their voice and listen carefully to what they say. How we respond depends on how thoughtful and attentive we are to their comments.

Research indicates that the average person listens for only seventeen seconds before interrupting and interjecting his own ideas and thoughts.

Facilitators communicate and lead communications well:

- Get the client to talk and open up
- Ask questions to prompt the thinking process and invite discussion, leading to awareness
- Keep the dialogues on track
- Encourage two-way dialogues
- Can guide/lead without knowing about a specific topic
- Remain impartial
- Lead clients to find answers—lead them to make discoveries that last a lifetime!
- Listen and cue in on learning style clues (what is being said, how it is being said, and what is not being said)

Find out from your client, if they are a visual, auditory, or kinesthetic (tactile) in their listening abilities. Your client can clue you in on their listening style by using keywords (even over the phone)

Auditory Learners say

“I heard you say that.”

“I hear what you are saying.”

“I hear what you are saying.” (after reading a letter)

Auditory learners will benefit from clarification, brainstorming, and lots of telephone calls. They prefer to tell you about a situation, rather than write it down. Call them up out of the blue to say “Hi” and see how they are doing.

Visual Learners say

“I see what you mean.”

“I can visualize that.”

“I like that word picture.”

“I can imagine that.”

Visual learners will benefit from visual exercises, emails with instructions and tangible paperwork. Ask them to draw pictures. Send them worksheets.

Kinesthetic Learners say

“That makes sense to me.”

“I can relate to that.”

“That feels right.”

These learners benefit from role-playing, games, simulations, and projects. Engage them in activities and ask them how they feel about things.

As you move through a listening and query system, you want your client to engage in phases of communication that move to subsequent levels to promote their well-being and facilitate the coaching process:

1) Engage your client in experiential questions:

- What is going on?
- What would you be willing to try?
- What is the best/worst that can happen?
- What suggestions can you offer?

2) Move to a sharing phase:

- How did you react?
- What did you observe?
- What were you aware of?

3) Move to the interpreting/clarifying stage:

- How did you account for that?
- What does it mean to you?
- What struck you about it?
- How does it all fit together?
- How could it have been different?
- What does this suggest about you? /Your career future?

-
- Do you see a trend here?

4) Help the client to generalize:

- What can you pull from that?
- What did you learn from it?
- Does it remind you of anything?
- What does that help to explain?
- How does this relate to other experiences?

5) Application phase:

- How can you apply what we discussed?
- What would you like to do with that?
- How can you make it better?
- What modifications can you make?
- What are the consequences of doing or not doing that?
- What are your options? Which one will you choose and why?
- What does your action plan look like?

6) Processing phase:

- How was this for you?
- What were the plusses/minuses?
- What changes would you make for the future?
- How did you meet your goals?
- What would you continue/discontinue?
- What is your next plan/step?

As you listen to your client, rephrase, restate, reframe, summarize, and mirror the client's comments and attitudes to formulate and ask questions based on their comments.

Use clarifying and reflective listening questions to get additional information:

- Do you mean?
- Can you specify?

Restate or rephrase comments to check the meaning and interpretation of what you are hearing (rephrasing is not parroting – it is connecting):

- What I hear you saying is...

Use reflective (insightful and thoughtful) comments and questions:

- It sounds to me like you feel ___ about this situation?
- How do you feel about this situation?

Summarize the client's comments to wrap up discussions or topics or bring focus to the discussion:

- From what you said, it sounds like your plan is _____?
- From what I heard you say, the key issues are _____?

Samples

Coach: So, I heard you say that you like the finance industry?

Client: No, what I meant to say is, I really like customer service and working with the public. It just happens that I have only worked with an accountant thus far. I think I might like working in a loan department at a bank.

Coach: So, you are telling me you had a bad experience at your interview?

Client: Yes. It was awful. I never want to interview again. I know I will never get a job.

Coach: Why do you feel that way?

Coach: Please correct me if I am wrong, but you said you will attain your doctorate in social work in June of this year, and your certification next year?

Client: No, that is wrong. Did I say that – it is backwards. I will receive the certification first, based on the completion of 30 postgraduate level credits and the doctorate at the completion of the thesis paper a year later. Wow, I am glad you helped me get that right...I need to have it correct on my résumé and applications.

Use Empathy

You will draw from your clients, through listening and questioning, a path to help them resolve concerns and conquer goals.

Listening means to empathize with clients to build trust and encourage them to open up (when this skill is mastered, clients trust their coach for open discussions and exploration).

In order to prevent an interrogative approach, use **conversational skills** to lead discussions (do not always just bombard with questions – making the client feel drained). Maybe you need to include an icebreaker to prompt the client to talk:

- The weather here is snowy and cold. What is the weather like on your end of the country?
- I hear in your voice, you had kind of a bummed day; do you want to tell me about it?
- What would you like to talk about today?
- I am sorry the interview did not go well; do you want to break it down together?
- What do you think will help you interview better next time?
- Is there something I can say that will make you feel better?
- How are you feeling?

As opposed to:

- Well, I am sorry you had a terrible interview. What went wrong?
- How do you think you could have done better?
- Why were you not as prepared as you would have liked to be?
- What can you do now to improve for future interviews?
- Why did you not complete your homework from last week?

The questions above are not necessarily bad; they are just coming at the client in rapid succession, with a confrontational tone. The client already knows he failed an interview and most likely feels bad, so the *conversational tone* of query allows the client to express his feelings and tell you about the problems he encountered, without feeling “interrogated”.

Listening is a skill – that may need to be practiced. Human beings naturally speak more than listen – you know – two ears, one mouth – so you must learn to listen twice as much. However, most people want to talk and tell their tales. Practicing to listen can be uncomfortable for some – you have to practice being silent. You are

tempted to cut in on a story and regale the speaker with tales of your similar adventures – which will only shut them up, cut them off, and possibly discourage them.

And remember, times of silence in the dialogue is okay – let your clients process information, let them rethink what was said, let them think about how to rephrase the meaning of a comment, let them think about action steps, etc. In addition, you may need to process what your client is thinking. “Hum. I need to process that and think on it for a moment.” Or, “Maybe you need to think about that for a minute. I’ll wait.”

Listening Between the Lines & Using Your Senses

In addition to listening to the words that your clients are speaking, you need to listen *between the lines*, and listen for the tone of the message, the goals being presented, attitudes, and identifying your clients’ values, beliefs, career purpose, motivations, and concerns.

After an intake session and some give and take dialogues, you should be able to readily recognize changes in your client’s behavior and attitude:

- 1) A client who is normally very upbeat in conversation, and then is quiet and not willing to respond to questions during a coaching dialogue, may be sending a signal for help: They may be dejected, sad, or frustrated.

You may want to ask: “You seem distant today. Is there something you would like to talk about?” Or, “You don’t seem quite yourself, is everything okay?”

- 2) A client who is normally monotone during dialogues, and becomes somewhat excitable during a session, may be experiencing elation for a success or they recognized an opportunity or revelation from the coaching sessions that is propelling them forward.

You may want to inquire: “You seem very excited today. Is there a reason for it?” Or “I sense that you are jittery today – do you want to tell me about it?”

- 3) A client who is normally shy and hard to draw out, suddenly seems exasperated and angry in speech.

You may want to prompt: “You seem a little angry to me today. Is there something wrong?” Or, “I hear some stress and frustration in your voice. Did something happen?”

4) Perhaps you need to listen carefully to detect a change in direction.

You may want to interrupt and redirect the client. During a client dialogue you may politely interrupt the client and say, “Excuse me for interrupting, but during our last dialogue I thought I heard you say you wanted to get promoted to regional manager. Today, I am hearing you say, you would rather move to another branch and supervise a project team? Did I misunderstand you? What are you really thinking?”

Clients pay you to listen to them, guide them in navigating a career search action plan, and define career goals. However, before you speak, you must listen. To listen well, remove distracters and focus on listening – be attentive and practice silence.

Your clients must truly believe that you care about them and desire for them to seek secure and satisfying employment. The more you listen, the more they will come clean – and tell you their little secrets – “Oh you were fired from your last job. I’m glad you told me that, because now we need to design a strategy to overcome that hurdle on your résumé, with reference checks, and in the interviews.”

To listen well you need to remove distracters, i.e., telephone, children, music, barking dogs, “You’ve got mail,” and the TV, if you work from home.

Can you turn off the things in your mind – your own agenda, i.e., “I have to get the kids to soccer at 5 p.m. and figure out what to make for dinner.” Or, “I have to finish that other résumé by tomorrow, so I’ll just write a few notes while I am listening to my client.”

**What causes your mind to wander off when you are on the phone with a client?
Are you tempted to work on a résumé while you are speaking with someone?**

What type of environment do you listen best in? How can you make your office an optimum environment for listening?

Listening on the Phone

A large percentage of Career Coaching is done via the telephone – which poses some problems in listening and also offers some advantages: Note-taking is easy with telephone clients. Write down their names, pertinent information, and comments. Then summarize sessions, intake comments, or résumé information in email notes to rephrase, clarify, or mirror what the client said – to help them “hear” what they said.

As clients are speaking, you can also listen for their attitude or emotions – listening between the lines. A person’s voice transmits emotions and causes feelings and mood changes in the hearers:

- Oh, what you meant to say is ...?
- If I understood you correctly, you are saying...?
- I detect some blueness in your description of the interview you had? What went well today? What do you think did not go well today?
- Wow! You are very excited about the offer you received! Tell me about it? What questions do you have about it? Do you think it is a good fit for you?
- I can tell you are angry about being let go. Do you want to explore that today?

Voice Control

Pleasant voices present positive images.

Cold, distant, squeaky voices present negative images.

Some people have really loud voices, some really soft. Loud-voices can be irritating or overwhelming. Soft voices can cause frustration, i.e., “Please speak up.”

You can also coach your client to work on voice control, if you recognize that might be an issue.

After working with a coach client on the phone for a few sessions, you will be able to detect changes in voice and tone – and respond accordingly. You know, kind of like that ability to learn a person’s voice (but you have never met the person) and as soon as they call and say, “Hello,” you know who it is, “Hi Karen, glad you called today.”

As you listen to your clients and your clients know you are listening, you are able to effectively draw them out and formulate and pose questions that make them think. Thinking hurts for a lot of people. When I hear someone say, “I have to think about that for a moment,” I often respond with, “Don’t hurt yourself.”

The bottom line here is many people just do not want to do the *work of thinking* – as it may cause them to explore new options, stretch their comfort zone, or become aware of needs, goals, or other issues in their life or career.

|| THE QUERY SYSTEM – ENERGIZE THE THINKING PROCESS

"Two sure ways to fail: Think and never do, or do and never think."-Zig Ziglar

Does thinking really hurt? Are your clients ready to work hard and respond to challenging questions? Are they ready to take a deep look at who they are and where they want to go – and make a path to arrive at a specified destination?

Are you prepared to work hard to learn Career Coaching competencies and grow your practice?

Thinking involves a process of facing tough challenges, identifying obstacles, and planning the future. Thinking involves research and intelligence collection. Some clients do not like to think – it is too much work for them. They would rather skate by, expect others to think for them, or just plod along in a career search without putting much thought into it. People spend more time planning to buy a house or car, than preparing for a career – and yet a career will last the better part of a lifetime for most people. It is your job to make the process tough – not too easy for your clients.

Guide your clients to think for themselves and apply decisive thinking to the career search strategy. As you work with your clients, expect them to contemplate, deliberate, ponder, and reason – rather than ask someone else to reason for them or make decisions for them. The process of listening and query leads to exploring new opportunities and pursuing goals and dreams. You can guide the client in this process:

- Illuminate and clarify what the client is saying – “If I hear you correctly, you said you want ...?”
- Team up with the client to brainstorm and pool resources to build a career search campaign – or skill sets – or set and meet goals, etc. Brainstorming leads to breakthrough, and a heightened awareness of goals, desires, motivation, and other factors in seeking employment.
- Test and stretch the client to the next level. Encourage clients to “stretch” their abilities, plans, goals, and even dreams. Present them with challenges that require action steps and commitments.

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Sample Questions to get you started:

*"Bring ideas in and entertain them royally, for one of them may be king."
-Martin Van Doren*

- What is your purpose in contacting a Career Coach?
- What is your life purpose?
- What is your career purpose?
- What goals have you set for this week/month/year?
- How will you meet your goals?
- When will you meet your goals?
- What action plan have you created to meet your goals?
- Who will be involved?
- What is the first step?
- If you could have the career/position of your dreams and nothing matters, what would you do?
- What is preventing you from reaching your goals?
- Who do you admire in your industry? Why? What qualities do they have that make them successful in your mind? Can you make an appointment to meet that person? Why or why not?
- What improvements do you want to make in your ... (career, skill sets, financial status, quality of life, etc.)?
- What are your top three most marketable strengths/skill sets? Why?
- Are you willing to move for the perfect position? Where? Why or why not?
- What companies have you researched to date that interest you?
- Do you have a business plan in place if you are an entrepreneur? Tell me about it.

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- How many people are on your contact/networking list? How can you add to your list?
 - Where have you circulated your résumé?
 - Tell me about following-up on circulating your résumé.
 - What does leadership mean to you?
 - What kind of leader are you?
 - How do others describe your leadership capabilities?
 - What is your philosophy of education?
 - How did you reach this statement of philosophy? Tell me about your passion to teach.
 - What is the main value you offer an employer?
 - How can an employer know that you will provide ROI to his department?
 - How committed are you to meeting your career goals?
 - How would you like me to respond if you fall behind on your goals?
 - What has made you the success you are today?
 - What have you had to overcome to reach your current goals?
 - What are three of your top fears/concerns about changing careers?
 - What about your career do you like the least? What discourages you in your current position?
 - What part about your work/career do you like the most? What energizes you?
 - What is your average stress level?
 - What causes you stress?
 - How do you overcome or manage stress?

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- What are your salary requirements?
 - What made you become a teacher, lawyer, doctor, engineer, etc.?
 - What do you need to accomplish to become a better teacher, lawyer, doctor, engineer, etc.?
 - What does management or leadership mean to you?

Sample Query-based scenarios, which cause the client to THINK and apply revelations for application:

What are some questions you can ask to illuminate and clarify what the client has said?

- If I heard you correctly, you said ...
- If I understand you ...
- So, what you are saying is ...
- That is interesting ... can you tell me more about it?
- What do you like/ dislike about it?

Or rephrase or reframe what was said, which leads to hearing new responses and providing the client with a new revelation about what they said and why:

Career Coach:

You want to move to a new state for a great position, but your wife does not want to move. Is that right?

Client:

Right. The kids are set in school and my wife loves her job. But, I really want the job and it pays excellent.

Career Coach:

Oh, what are the benefits of moving?

Who benefits the most; you or the rest of the family? Why and how?

What are the drawbacks?

How will they impact your life?

What will happen if you do not take this position?

How will you feel about turning down this position?

What can you do to help your wife make a better informed decision (I can plan a weekend trip for her to visit the company, meet the boss, see the community, check out a school, etc.)

Career Coach:

When can you plan the trip?

What steps do you need to implement the trip?

As you navigate through the Career Coaching process, you provide direction and guidance to your clients. During brainstorming sessions, where you ask the client for permission to provide possible suggestions, your client may have a breakthrough, become aware and realize new opportunities, pinpoint career search activities, or apply new techniques.

For example, a client may realize that their personality is abrupt and that is what prevents them from interviewing well. Alternatively, a client may recognize that only posting résumés to one job board does not constitute a full career search campaign.

Or a client may realize they are working in a completely non-compatible career field/industry/position, i.e., they are gifted in communications and English and are pursuing a degree in pre-medicine (which burns them out), or they are managing a large team of employees as a project manager, and they prefer to work alone and not be responsible for managing personnel.

What can you ask a client to team up and brainstorm together to build a structure, strategy, or campaign and provide breakthrough, based on what the client says?

- What have you tried so far?
- If you had the answer to your own question, what would it be?
- Where can you find the answers?
- What program can you implement to pursue your answers?

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- What research have you conducted? Where? If not, where can you start your research project?
 - What will happen if you do...?
 - What is stopping you?
 - What are you afraid of?
 - What is the worst thing that can happen?
 - What are your current goals? Issues?
 - Where are you at?
 - Why do you think you are so frustrated?
 - Tell me more about that.
 - Why do you want to do it the way you stated?
 - Would you like me to offer some suggestions?
 - I have some thoughts on that subject, may I share them with you?

|| STRETCHING THE COMFORT ZONE & REACHING FOR NEW HORIZONS

"When you take on a challenge, it builds the core of who you are, even if you don't perform flawlessly." -John Ortberg

If your clients are not motivated to action, then there is little possibility of meeting goals and moving forward in the coaching relationship.

You will find some clients are not comfortable with being challenged – it means they actually have to step up to the plate and make something happen. It means for your client, initiating a pro-active, rather than passive, career search campaign. It means work. It means possible rejection. It means learning more about themselves, than they want to know. They may squirm or balk at challenges – they are very comfortable with the status quo and they are not interested in stretching their comfort zone.

On the other hand, some clients thrive on challenges and really like it when they can report back to you about their conquests and achievements. These clients are not afraid to learn more about themselves. They seek rejection as a challenge to conquer. They view the career search process as a hurdle to leap over. They feel unfulfilled if they are not regularly challenged. They set out to conquer one goal after another and they reach for new horizons daily.

Here are some sample action statements you may pose to your clients to help them make commitments:

- What are three things you can do this week, before our next session?
- What order will you put them in?
- How many résumés are you willing to circulate this month?
- What methods will you use to circulate your résumés? Can you send out 100 résumés by the end of the month? How many can you send out?
- I challenge you to call five companies and follow-up on your résumés this week.
- Since you want to be a better public speaker, can you join Toastmasters and start their meetings by next month?

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- I challenge you to attend three community networking meetings this month and meet and call at least six new contacts.
 - I challenge you to set a meeting with your boss and discuss your progress within the next two weeks.
 - I challenge you to contact the Chamber of Commerce for the city you want to move to and research realtors and homes on the web – by the end of the month.
 - I challenge you to contact a web site designer and set up a consultation meeting to discuss your needs by our next meeting.
 - I challenge you to set aside one hour each day, at an appointed time, to work on your manuscript.
 - To prevent being disturbed when you write at work, how about turning off the phone ringer for one hour each day for a week? Tell me how it goes at our next weekly session.
 - I challenge you to bypass fast food twice a week for a month at lunch hour, to move toward your goal of no fast food within 6 months.
 - What is preventing you from getting started?
 - Why do you feel stuck? What can you do about it?
 - I challenge you to bank your retirement pay and seek new employment that covers your bills.
 - How about if you join a new association this month? Can you can research associations and select one to join by the end of the month?
 - Since you want to buy a new car, please send me, on your next progress report, research from Consumer Reports about your top two selections?
 - Since your wife wants to stop working and stay at home to raise the children, please send me a budget, excluding her salary, and we can explore the options and see what needs to be done to make it happen. Can you have it to me at our next session?

List 20 questions you can pose to your clients to challenge them to the next level, test their determination or accountability – providing an avenue for new possibilities? What will your clients be willing to commit to?

(Think of your niche clientele and think of trends and patterns among your clients that you can use to stretch their comfort zones)

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20)

When your client is “stretched” he is often required to act and make plans. He may have to work a little to research new possibilities or step into an uncomfortable situation. If your client does not manage the challenge and fails to complete an assignment, you can ask why:

- What prevented you from joining the association this month?
- Why didn't you complete the research assignment?
- What will be the result if you don't complete the assignment in a reasonable amount of time? (Lost income? Poor quality of life? Stagnation? No raise or promotion? Not meeting goals?)

Now, the reason for not completing an assignment may be serious and/or unexpected, i.e., a parent or child became ill, or the boss went on a business trip and the meeting was cancelled.

But, if the reason was because the client simply is afraid to accept the challenge, i.e., he is so afraid to speak in public that he is intentionally avoiding the Toastmaster's meetings, then either you need to reissue the challenge, change the challenge slightly, or encourage the client to see a different type of career practitioner.

Challenges are good for those who accept them, as they can return to you and say, “I cannot attend three association meetings this month, as my schedule won't handle it. But I can attend one and I can commit to that.”

This way, the client takes ownership of the commitment and he determines the parameters of the challenge.

If you use a progress report system for your client prior to each session (see the Career Coach Gear Box), ask your client to jot down the commitment and the results each week. This system promotes accountability. Those who thrive on challenges will fare well and seek to meet each commitment or exceed each commitment. Those who struggle with meeting commitments can use the progress report to indicate why they missed their commitment and then a pattern can be determined to initiate corrections.

Perhaps, if they miss the same commitment over and over, you can suggest they change the commitment to become more realistic, i.e., “I can’t bypass fast food twice a week, but I think I can try once a week for a trial time period.” Okay, coach and client agree to work on a new commitment.

|| CHIEF MOTIVATIONAL OFFICER (CMO)

"The credit belongs to those who are actually in the arena, who strive valiantly, who know the great enthusiasms, the great devotions, and spend themselves in a worthy cause; who, at the best, know the triumph of high achievement and who, at the worst, if they fail, fail while daring greatly so that their place shall never be with those cold and timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat." - Theodore Roosevelt

I tell all of my clients that I am their greatest Cheerleader, Drill Sergeant (Task Master), and Career Coach/Trainer during the Career Coaching program. Many of my clients are military, so they “relate” to the drill sergeant title and most people recognize a cheerleader as someone who encourages and boosts morale – with a goal in mind to win.

A Chief Motivational Officer is a little of both – you encourage your clients to succeed, you impart career direction, you hold their feet to the fire and keep them accountable, and you maintain a positive approach. CMOs serve as a catalyst to help clients recognize and build their strengths and overcome their fears.

Motivation is something intrinsic – like a stimulus that is built-in. Some clients are charged by that internal stimulus and others need much prompting to jump-start motivation. A person who is motivated, is prompted to action – willing to supply high energy into the task at hand and willing to make a commitment to complete the task. As the Career Coach, your role is to furnish a strong motivational environment that fuels a client’s internal motivation.

Clients are well motivated when they recognize their Career Coach really cares about them and their career success. Clients are motivated when they believe

- You are confident in them and they are secure with you
- You will share in the planning and career search campaign process
- You will hold them accountable for their actions (including research, homework, practice, and goal-setting)
- You will be there for them if they encounter disappointments
- You will be honest with them
- There is a valid challenge set before them
- They are making progress to meet their goals
- You will recognize their achievements

People are motivated by different factors:

- Authority & influence
- Public acknowledgement
- Large pay check
- Risk & adventure
- Teamwork
- Conquer only one small goal at a time, i.e., time management
- Setting and conquering major goals/challenges
- Achievements (they seek excellence and perfection and they like recognition)
- Relationships (they seek affiliation and attachment to groups or people)
- Fear (fear of rejection, fear of losing a job, etc.)

How it Works

“You can’t hold a man down without staying down with him” –Booker T. Washington

A study of 51,000 employees indicated that with frequent praise, 9 of 10 people work harder to reach goals. With criticism only 3 of 10 do better (7 fail or do not improve/progress).

As you work with your clients, remember to throw them a rope – to help them climb to the pinnacle of success – but don’t let them drag you down. As you build a relationship with your client, ensuring client trust, you will learn to empathize with them and express concern for their circumstances. But, your relationship is professional. Your client makes his own decisions – you are not responsible for your client’s career outcomes. And you must detach yourself from clients who are needy or clingy. Use these sample statements to guide a client:

If a client calls unexpectedly and drones on about circumstances, you might reply:

“I would like to explore that issue with you at our next scheduled coaching session. If you feel that it is important to discuss it now (and your schedule allows for it), then I can charge you for an extra session this month.”

If a client seems very depressed, you might reply:

“You seem very depressed and I am concerned for you. I would like to suggest that you receive medical treatment / a physical from your physician to determine if

there are any medical reasons for your depression. Will you do that before our next session and report back to me?"

A cheerleader needs to use praise and honest encouragement as opposed to flattery or patronizing comments:

"That was a great success today. You learned and practiced your interview skills so the stress was removed from the interview process."

VS.

"You are the most excellent interviewee – that's why you did so well today!"

"I am sorry the agency cancelled the position announcement. Try not to get discouraged, but see this as an opportunity to send your résumé to other agencies for other positions that open in the coming weeks/months."

VS.

"Oh, it will be okay. You are fine. Don't worry about it. You know you are great. That is a lousy company anyway; you probably did not want to work there anyway."

Your clients will have very real concerns and feel quite dejected when they are rejected for a position or not selected after an interview. Moreover, as their Career Coach, you need to lift them up and encourage them to continue the career search marketing campaign.

There are a number of ways you can encourage and motivate your clients, some very inexpensive (query), others requiring some investment (money and time):

- Recognize your client's achievements, goals, and motivational factors. Recognize your client's personality traits. When the assessments are completed, for example, send an email that lets them know what the results are, and tell them how great it is to work with them.
- Ask your clients at the end of every session to name one thing they learned that day that was positive or that they could apply quickly to their current situation.

-
- Ask your clients to describe their greatest strengths and ask them to tell you what others say are their greatest strengths. Note these answers, and comment on these aspects in future sessions.
 - Ask your clients what motivates them. “How can I best motivate you to succeed or complete assignments?” you might ask.
 - Ask your clients if they are more motivated by accomplishments, relationships, or authority?
 - Ask a client if he is a procrastinator (does he wait until the last minute to complete an assignment), or does he complete an assignment early?
 - Ask your client what prevents him from completing a task.
 - Read and note successes on your client’s weekly progress reports. Send them a short email, indicating that you recognized their achievements:

“Hey, I see you reached goal number 3 from your goal form this week. I bet that makes you feel great. What do you have planned to conquer goal number 4?”

If your client is achievement-oriented, you may want to send him a certificate of achievement in the mail as he completes various tasks or meets certain goals – or at the completion of the Career Coach Program.

- Send short email notes of encouragement after Career Coaching sessions:

“I really enjoyed our discussion today. You are making super progress from where we started two months ago. You have circulated 100 résumés, posted your résumés on six major job boards, you conducted three professional career development dialogues with potential mentors, and you have explored two new career fields. Keep up the pace as you start accepting interviews.”

- Call the client directly if you get a message of a specific success:

“Hi Tom. I just got your email that said you felt very good after the panel interview from this morning. I just wanted to call and see how it went and get your perceptions. Do you have two or three minutes to brief me?”

“Hi Judy. I read in your email that you received a job offer. Is this the job you wanted? WOW! Congratulations on the offer! I bet you feel great. Can I help you with the offer package and salary negotiations?”

-
- Send a card:

Dear Susan, Congratulations on your new position! You worked hard to conduct a successful career search campaign. Keep me posted on future successes!

Dear Mike: I am sorry you did not get the job offer. I know you really wanted that position. I just wanted you to know I was thinking about you today. Let's keep moving forward, okay?

- Send a gift:

Give your client a flower to present to his/her spouse when they receive a position.

Send a client a giant eraser, if you make a mistake, and ask apologies.

Send a client a candy bowl shaped like an aspirin, if they seem overly frustrated with the search process.

Send the client a congratulatory gift, i.e., leather planner, a very nice pen to sign the offer papers, a business card holder, a coin of excellence, or other suggestion.

List 10 ideas you can implement to encourage and motivate your clients to succeed:

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____
- 9) _____

10)

What questions can you pose to your clients to identify their strengths and motivate them to success?

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

6)

7)

8)

9)

10)

What questions can you pose to your clients to help recognize what motivates them?

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

6)

7)

8)

9)

10)

|| COACHING THROUGH CIRCUMSTANCES

"If you don't think every day is a good day, just try missing one." -Cavett Robert

Do your clients experience a fear of change? Do your clients lack self-confidence? Are your clients shy? Are your clients blue due to lay-off or firing? Do you work with "I can't" syndrome clients?

Career seekers need to understand the obstacles that impede their growth. Career Coaches help clients expand their thinking and see the "big picture." Career Coaches can bring this to light with simple, open-ended questions, and asking clients to attach value to their goals and decisions (always clarifying or rephrasing as needed to ensure understanding between Career Coach and client):

- Why?
- Why do you believe you are not making progress in your career search?
- What do you need in your career search?
- How do you visualize the outcome of your career search? Describe it to me.
- Why do you want to leave your current position?
- Why do you want to work for that company? What is the reason?
- What will change in your life, when you meet your career goals?
- Since you said your new boss is a micro-manager, and you dislike micro-managers – then what type of position do you see yourself in when you make the transition?
- Why are you remaining at your current position, if you are dissatisfied? On a scale of one to ten, how dissatisfied are you with your current employer? Why?
- What is preventing you from moving forward in your career search?
- Is it realistic in your schedule to commit to career search activities for five hours per week?
- What is realistic for your schedule?
- Since you want to move closer to your elderly parents, what companies have you researched? What about homes and schools for your children?
- What value is there for you to move closer to your parents?
- What can you do? (as opposed to "What will you do?")

-
- What other options are you considering?
 - How will you reach your goals?
 - Who will help you reach your goals?
 - What would you like me to say if you do not reach your goals each month / week?

Life gets in the way for clients each week or even each day. People get sick, companies close, family members die, and babies are born. But in the midst of the daily life, career seekers can choose to create realistic career search plans and develop “I Can” career search strategies.

With the steering of a Career Coach, clients are encouraged to identify real opportunities and design a viable career search strategy with options for success. Career seekers are whole people with families, finances, and lifestyle issues. Their careers are only a part of who they are and what defines them.

The Wounded Client (Experiencing the Grief Cycle)

During times of recession and high unemployment rates, clients can become very discouraged and dejected. Some clients just seem to have bad luck, and apply for hundreds of positions, and never receive a response from employers.

Some clients write letters expressing their discouragements:

“I am an IT professional with 14 years of project management experience and specialty IT certifications. My résumé had always worked well in the past. But my current job search has been a dismal failure. Can you help me?”

Statistics are very low on receiving a return response from companies that receive résumés. In today’s employment marketplace, recruiters may receive hundreds, and in some cases thousands, of résumés for one management level position. Competition is very tough.

Online job boards boast the posting of millions of résumés to their sites. Rejection letters are simply part of the process. Just as distressful is the “no response” from most companies. It keeps the client wondering, “That was the perfect job fit for me. Why is the company not calling me?”

Doctors Frank Minirth and Paul Meier, authors of Happiness is a Choice, use a stress test, listing major life issues and quantifying the stress of adjusting to change. The list has 42 entries and starts with the death of a spouse and ends with minor violations of the law. Each of the 42 items are scored, as they happen in a single year. A high score is an indication of a person who may give way to some form of depression.

Interestingly, loss of a job ranks number seven of 42. The items that ranked higher include death of a family member, marriage, divorce, separation, jail term, and personal injury or illness. Following job loss at number seven, is retirement at number nine, business readjustment at 14, career change at 17, and change in responsibilities at work is listed as number 21. It is noteworthy to recognize that “stresses” related to work rank in the top 50% of the scale and job loss is very high up on the scale.

This helps us to understand why people who lose their jobs, particularly men who are the family breadwinners, become depressed and even despondent. Remember, from module one, most people wear a label around that says, “I am a _____.” So, if someone is laid off, they can no longer attach themselves to that label and they don’t know how to answer the question, if they are unemployed. Some are

embarrassed to say, “I am unemployed.” Some are too prideful. Others are just disappointed.

In one example, a career-seeker said he had been reduced to accepting a position that paid \$8.25 per hour for the past three years, even though he previously had a high paying position with salary, commission, and company car, as a salesman.

He continued to tell me that he was flown to a different state for an interview. He assumed that if he was flown in for an interview, he must have the job in the bag. At the airport, the junior executive picked him up, where the client made some off color jokes. Consequently, he never met the senior executive.

This career-seeker was dejected and experienced a sense of supreme frustration of being devalued throughout the career search process, and this level of frustration was demonstrated in his emotions and comments during the pre-interview session.

Clients can become overconfident, negative, sarcastic, or just plain despondent/uninterested during the career search campaign and these emotions can easily be conveyed in interviews.

Now, obviously, the above career seeker, needs Career Coaching to explore what he said and why he said it to the junior executive. He also needs guidance in professional etiquette, manners, and courtesy. The motto here: Everyone you meet, during the course of an interview day, is a potential interviewer: A smart manager will ask his secretary, “What did you think of John Jones today?” Alternatively, he may ask the custodian who was in the bathroom at the same time with client, “Did John Jones say anything to you?”

In another example, a client wrote an employment profile for his umbrella organization. He worked for a church and was laid off by the most recent congregation, after only a few short months. He simply could not compete with his predecessor, who had worked at the church for 20 years. Consequently, his headquarters said they would place him in another location.

Unfortunately, he wrote his profile to communicate the sadness and disdain of the lay off and he used the résumé format to describe his version of the circumstances that ensued, leading to his lay off.

The profile should have been written in a positive light highlighting his substantial career accomplishments and impressive credentials. His sad, doomed, emotional state contributed to his poorly written profile. This candidate remained unemployed and in a state of denial for a year. He did not circulate résumés or make other advances to secure a satisfying career in a year. He finally received

treatment for depression from a licensed psychologist and accepted a position as an administrative assistant for his wife's company.

The Grief Cycle

Grief is defined as sorrow, deep mental anguish, annoyance, frustration, and a feeling of being doomed, melancholy, and despondent in response to *any* type of loss. Losing a job or not obtaining a position (losing out on interviews), or the process of rejection letters, can bring about the symptoms of grief.

Grief is presented in five stages:

- 1) **Shock:** Employees who find themselves laid off experience a sense of numbness and anxiety. Some are nearly paralyzed – unable to take actions to remedy the situation.
- 2) **Denial:** Employees who lose their positions often do not believe it is actually happening and they seriously delay or postpone any viable means of seeking new employment, i.e., they wait for six months after a lay off to seek a professional Career Coach and résumé writer; they place all their eggs in one basket and depend on a friend who told them they could get them a job; or they wait until they run out of money.
- 3) **Anger and Guilt:** Laid off employees wonder what they did wrong (even if their performance had no impact on the layoff). This anger permeates every aspect of their life and can make family life difficult. Employees, men in particular, wear a label that says, “I am an _____ (accountant, executive, engineer, etc.)” When they are laid off, they no longer wear that label and they can experience frustration.
- 4) **Depression and Despair:** Symptoms of depression include sadness, crying, sobbing, anxiousness, helplessness, sleep problems, an out-of-control feeling, abandonment, and other physical aches and pains. Depression in America is nearly epidemic, as indicated by the sale of anti-depressant drugs. The Journal of The American Medical Association published a study in 2003 indicating that 16% of America's adults will experience major depression at some point in their lives. More than 40,000 depressed Americans kill themselves each year. (As Career Coaches, you probably do not want to work with severely depressed clients – but you should recognize the signs between normal grief over losing employment and a severely depressed client who may need medical treatment.)

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- 5) **Acceptance and Hope/Resolution:** At this point, the client has overcome the mental anguish, accepted the new circumstances, learned to work with the new circumstances, or attained new and satisfying employment.

Most physically healthy and well-adjusted adults move through the five stages of grief fairly quickly and without much fuss. However, some clients set into each stage for much longer periods of time and become overwhelmed with grief and anger as time moves forward.

During interview role-playing, when you ask a client why they left their last employment – some go off on long tangents why they were let go and how it was not their fault. They focus and dwell on the negative. Consequently, it is imperative to allow depressed or grieving clients an opportunity to vent – to explain their point of view – and learn how to control the negative and angry emotions during a real interview situation with a hiring manager. They need to be encouraged to focus on the positive, the value they offered their former employers, their skills and education.

Clients who lose employment can be encouraged, consoled, and motivated by Career Coaches, who express empathy and recognition for their situations:

- “I understand that you are concerned about your finances and debt. That is very normal.”
- “I am sorry to hear that your spouse is so angry at you for not having a paycheck right now.”
- “I can understand that you miss the camaraderie from your last employer...you really bonded with your colleagues.”
- “I know that obtaining new medical and dental benefits are important to you.”
- “I hear you saying you are unsure about how to seek new employment. I’ll guide you in the right direction...that is why you called a Career Coach.”

Encourage clients to be honest and share their thoughts and emotions – explaining to them how important it is to vent with the Career Coach, but not with search professionals. Most medical professionals and counselors agree that talking about misery brings resolution, quicker than withholding angry or frustrating thoughts and feelings. Talking begins the healing process and relieves pent up stress and frustration. Clients may also benefit from writing in a daily journal – helping them to express their feelings in a safe environment.

When a client is laid off, it may be a perfect time to engage in career assessment testing and goal planning to pursue a career change, which may even include more college or specific training. Some clients may need a referral to a financial counselor to learn how to roll over retirement funds, consolidate loans, or refinance mortgages.

Career Coaches guide clients in assessing their experiences. Career Coaches want their clients to understand the value they have to offer an employer and believe they have personal worth – that they are acceptable, good, important, needed, respected, valuable, confident, powerful, fulfilled, capable, strong, special, and deserving. Furthermore, you want your clients to feel at ease, calm, comfortable, satisfied, content, peaceful, relaxed, rested, untroubled, and consoled by working through their career search fears and worries.

To help guide in this process you may want to ask your clients to note their common responses to failure (specifically failure on a job):

- Embarrassment
- Hibernation
- Blaming others (Boss, co-workers)
- Overly determined to fix the situation
- Shame
- Denial
- Guilt
- Resentment
- Unwillingness to move forward

Followed by:

- How did you overcome that failure/disappointment – what are the results of overcoming past failures?
- How do you encourage yourself in times of disappointment?
- How can I encourage you best during this difficult time?
- Compare the current disappointment or failure to the most painful failure in your life. How did that failure affect you and does it have an impact with today's failure/disappointment (or considered failure)?

The anxiety and fear of losing a position and not bringing in an income or losing medical benefits, is in the mind of the client, oftentimes failure and will often lead a

client to accept the first position that is offered. Nevertheless, the clients need to realize two things:

- 1) The perceived failure may really only be a disappointment that can be seen as an opportunity to succeed in a new career search.
- 2) They need to make viable decisions about accepting the first offer, or they may become resentful at accepting a position that is not suitable to their career values and motivations. Alternatively, some clients need to be encouraged to accept interim or temporary positions that will pay the bills while they wait for the perfect position.

You may encounter career seekers with any number of tough challenges and circumstances. What encumbers them from moving forward? And, how can you nudge them to move forward to meet their career goals? A collaborative conversation of brainstorming and query from the Career Coach will help the client get to the bottom of their career issues. Clients want give and take. Clients want to hear the Career Coach offer suggestions, and most clients desire to be personally challenged – to think hard about their career goals and how they will attain such goals.

The Shy and Nervous Client

- Apply practice, practice, and more practice
- Encourage and motivate
- Move at the client's pace

Shy: to avoid a person or thing; hesitant to commitment; bashful; timid; shrinking from contact with others (Webster's Dictionary).

Networking may be a major challenge for a shy client. They have to grab the courage to shake hands and introduce themselves to new people at networking events. It is tempting to stand in the corner and not network, but shy clients have to work hard to mingle.

Shy clients require a lot of handholding and encouragement. Some shy clients are visibly nervous during interview training; some even sweat profusely. Some shy clients are very unsure of the career search and interview process, because they have never conducted a career search before or for a long time.

Some of them view themselves as much worse at interviewing and networking techniques than they give themselves credit for.

Shy clients benefit from a query-dialogue session to help them explore the dynamics of being shy in a career search, networking, or interview situation:

Client: I am shy.

Coach: Tell me about your shyness.

Client: I am scared to interview, I'm scared to network, and I really don't know anybody anyway.

Coach: What are you afraid of?

Client: Rejection.

Coach: How long have you been un-employed?

Client: Six months.

Coach: What are you more afraid of, rejection or being unemployed?

Client: I don't know. I don't like being unemployed, but what if I fail at every interview?

Coach: Can you manage one interview at a time and evaluate the interview and the outcome, one at a time?

Client: Yea, I can try that. Will you tape me first?

Coach: Yes, we can conduct a mock interview and I'll review the tape with you.

Client: My hands sweat real badly when I interview and what if I can't remember an answer to a question?

Coach: What can you do to help your sweaty hands and remember answers to questions?

Client: Can I carry a handkerchief in my pocket and use it discreetly to wipe my hands before I greet the interviewer?

Coach: That sounds like a great idea. What else can you do?

Client: Maybe use powder in the car before the interview.

Coach: Great. What about remembering your answers?

Client: I'm trying to memorize my answers.

Coach: What if you are asked a question that you did not memorize an answer to?

Client: I don't know. That is scary. I will be rejected.

Coach: How will you sound if you memorize all of your questions?

Client: Stupid. I'm just so worried I will forget something.

Coach: What if you don't know the answer to a question...some acronym you have never heard of for example?

Client: I'll blow it.

Coach: Let's try a question: Tell me about a time when you made a mistake and had to correct it on the job. How did you fix the problem and what did you learn from the experience?

Client: Well, let's see. Once I was late for a very important meeting. I scheduled it on the wrong day. I was embarrassed, but I explained the mix up and the team rescheduled the meeting for the next week. Fortunately, there were not any negative impacts from me missing the meeting. I purchased a palm pilot after that incident and now I am always on time for meetings and I don't forget scheduled activities.

Coach: Great answer. How did that feel?

Client: Okay, I guess.

Coach: Would you like me to offer some suggestions to help you prepare for your interview? Do you have time for more role-playing?

Client: Yes, please.

This is a typical dialog that may ensue with clients who are shy and nervous about interviews. Of course, the dialog extends over several sessions as the client realizes that making a change, taking the plunge, and managing the interviews and networking is less painful than originally thought.

When you wear your trainer hat, you may offer the following suggestions to help the shy client ease into interviewing and networking, hopefully helping them to manage well the stressful situations:

Network with people you know: Start the networking process with family and friends, college alumni, and other community members who you already know. Ask your family, friends, and neighbors to suggest people you can network with. Network using Social Media. Using Social Media venues may help with eh shyness, as you do not have to “meet people in person” initially.

Conduct professional career development/investigative interviews with friends and colleagues of friends: Networking with family and friends is easier than networking with strangers, especially managers within corporations that you are targeting, as that is more intimidating. After your clients practices a while, then they can branch out and contact company managers to interview.

Learn to network: Challenge yourself to shake hands and introduce yourself to others in networking venues. Meet a quota, “I will introduce myself to four new people tonight and get their business cards.” Or sit at two tables during a conference, one for dinner, and one for dessert, to meet more people.

Research companies: Thorough research of a company, its products, services and competition, prior to an interview, will help you to answer direct questions and present yourself as informed and savvy about the company. Knowing about the company will also boost your confidence when responding to questions from the interviewer. Moreover, you will be able to ask insightful questions of the interviewer. If you don’t know the answer to a question, then simply offer an honest response, “I am not familiar with that system, can you tell me more about it?”

Join LEADS or other community groups including Toastmasters: Join community groups that facilitate networking. Many organizations offer membership services that include networking, mentorships, and Q&A forums. Also, don’t forget to contact your alumni association or community organizations where you offer volunteer services. Toastmasters may help with overcoming speaking before others.

Attend job fairs: Job fairs are great opportunities to network, speak with recruiters, learn about companies, obtain company materials, learn about the employment process, engage in short informational or employment interviews, and circulate résumés, in a rather non-threatening environment. The job fair may attract several hundred individuals who are also like you, seeking new employment.

Overcome your feelings of failure and rejection (this applies to all clients, not just shy clients): Create a quality résumé that offers confidence as you circulate it—you can tell by responses, “Hey great, thanks for your résumé...it looks great. I’ll pass it along to my colleagues.” Also, recognize that failure and rejection are not necessarily the same thing.

Failure is “inability to perform” and rejection is “to refuse to acknowledge.” Rejection letters, as they are commonly referred to, are standard mass circulated notes telling you that the company received your résumé and it will go on file. You have not been rejected; you were just told that you are on file. Résumés don’t get jobs; they help you generate interviews and networking contacts. *So, you cannot fail at a career search, if your résumé does not get you a job. You can fail at a job search if you don’t use every possible method to circulate your résumé and obtain leads and interviews.*

Practice interviewing and networking: Practice potential interview questions, shaking hands, eye contact, and working a room. Don’t forget to develop a strong sound-bite.

Shy career seekers definitely have a challenge compared to their more extroverted competition. When all else fails, be honest with recruiters: “I have not interviewed in a really long time. I’m a little nervous, so I’ll do the best I can do today.” Most often, the interviewer will offer a word of comfort and try to appreciate the candidate’s anxiousness.

Exhausted and Crunched for Time

Do you have clients who are always complaining about having too much to do? They can never seem to accomplish anything or complete a project? They are always late for work and tired? You may want to work with these clients using the following techniques:

- Apply time management skills and personal attention techniques
- Conduct a one to two week time management survey and rearrange schedules to better accommodate activities
- Prioritize activities and schedule day time work activities in blocks of time
- Ask your clients the following questions:
 - o How is your diet?
 - o When do you exercise?
 - o When did you become so tired?
 - o What are you willing to remove from your schedule?
 - o What activities are not as important on your schedule?
 - o What are the top three most important activities on your schedule right now?
 - o What do you do to relax?
 - o When was the last time you relaxed?
 - o How much sleep do you get each night?
 - o What is your favorite leisure activity?
 - o Are you willing to conduct a time management survey and proactively rearrange your schedule?

Resistant to Change: I Can't. I Can't. I Can't.

This client has an excuse for every suggestion and they do not like thinking! Do you ever work with clients who have the “But, I can’t” syndrome? And, that seems to be their only response to any collaborative discussions or suggestions. Moving these clients forward to set and get goals may be challenging. Career Coaches need to change the “I can’t” syndrome to “I think I can. I’ll try.”

- This client needs to be challenged often with small challenges – that they determine for themselves.
- Guide this client into thinking they came up with the idea for the challenge and commitment themselves – it needs to be a real revelation.
- Do your “I can’t” clients set the right goals? Is it possible your clients are striving toward wrong, unrealistic, or unattainable goals? Are your clients focused in their career searches? How far do you need to mine to trigger the “real issue” behind their “need” to find a job?

Here is a sample laser Career Coaching session with an “I can’t” syndrome client:

Client: I know I need to get my Microsoft certification to get the raise or even get a new job.

Career Coach: How committed are you to obtaining this certification?

Client: Oh, I need to get it by summer.

Career Coach: Well if you are committed to obtaining this credential, let’s think of a way for you to get it soon. Have you considered taking college classes at night to get your computer certification?

Client: I can’t. I have kids and I have to be home by 5:30 each evening.

Career Coach: Okay. Have you considered online classes? You can accomplish the entire certification from your home.

Client: I can’t. My computer broke and I can’t get it fixed.

Career Coach: What suggestions do you have to complete the certification? If it is going to be this difficult, tell me what value it has for you if you complete it?

Client: Oh yes, if I complete it, I get an extra \$200 per month raise and a bonus at the end of the year. It also makes me more marketable if I leave my employer and move somewhere else. But, I just can't right now.

Career Coach: So, at \$200 a month, how much money are you losing by waiting? How long will it take you to complete the program?

Client: Well, I figure three to four months to complete the program. So, even at four months, I am losing \$800 dollars by not starting right away.

Career Coach: So, you see the value of completing the certification. Do you have a local library? Where is it?

Client: Yes, right down the block.

Career Coach: Perhaps you could use the library computer to compete the course.

Client: I can't. I would have to take the kids.

Career Coach: Do your children like the library? What kind of homework do they have?

Client: Yes, they have a lot of homework each evening.

Career Coach: Would it be reasonable for you to create a schedule to work online in the library, while your children complete homework and read books?

Client: Well, maybe. If the library will let me print some of the materials I need, I suppose I could. The kids like the library and it would only be for three or four months.

Career Coach: Good. So you **are** committed and I'll hold you accountable as you complete the program.

This client had a time management problem and needed some ammunition to propel him forward to make a commitment to obtain a certification, which was worth a significant amount of money in salary and bonuses over time – boosting his quality of life. This process clarified what he wanted to accomplish and attached a value to it (the above discussion was the short version – there were many more “I can't's” along the way).

I Don't Have Achievements, I Just Do My Job

This type of client will require many hours of dialogue to draw information from him – like pulling teeth. These types of clients need to be coached to express their achievements and accept them with some pride.

- They will benefit from a superior résumé with powerful value-based bullets, describing their accomplishments. Questions you may pose include:
 - Define your “job duties.”
 - Define your scope of authority.
 - Define the type of organization you work in and who you report to.
 - Tell me about stories where you solved problems and presented viable solutions to management, that resulted in measurable change.
 - Did you receive awards or other recognitions? Tell me about it.
 - What did you receive the awards for? What was the justification for the awards you received?

I Know What I Do; I Just Can't Explain It to You

Some clients find it difficult to describe their achievements and provide quantifiable and qualify-able examples. Ask this client:

- What did you create on the job that provided tangible results? What were the results?
- What did you do that became used by the company? Tell me about it.
- What does your boss say about your work performance? Why?
- What do your colleagues say about your work strengths? Why?
- What do you do every day – describe a workday to me?
- What special projects do you work on? What are the outcomes?

The Overwhelmed Client

This client does not have direction, they do not know what to do next.

- They need to work with a Career Coach to design and implement a career search campaign with structure and processes – using checklists and accountability reports.
- Encourage personal attention techniques.
- Speak slowly and determine the client's learning style, i.e., visual or auditory.
- Note the client's strengths and talents and build the client's confidence level with small challenges that they can complete, one after another.

What other types of challenging clients have you worked with? What was the outcome?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____
- 9) _____
- 10) _____

What are techniques you will use with your tough clients who bring life circumstances to the dialogues?

- 1) _____
- 2) _____
- 3) _____
- 4) _____
- 5) _____
- 6) _____
- 7) _____
- 8) _____

9)

10)

More Client Scenarios and Coaching Strategies

As you move through the Career Coaching Program, and begin to coach clients in your practice, you will learn to identify client types and situations. You will also begin to apply specific career coaching competencies and communications to best facilitate each client scenario. A career transition can be very difficult for some. Change often causes resistance. But, change is inevitable. However, most people prefer stability and security. Thus, clients must develop and navigate viable career search action plans. Clients need to define or redefine their career goals and determine alignment with their lifestyle goals. Below are several examples of various types of client scenarios and how you might work with each client:

Likes Career, Likes Compensation, Does Not Like Quality of Life

When John first came to me, he said he needed a new job. After a few meetings he said, "I can't do my job anymore." He is a successful executive-level medical facility administrator, audiologist, and university instructor. "I love my job," he said, "but I hate the commute."

Wow, a simple revelation – he hates the commute and long days. After working for 20 years progressing into a very senior level position with great accountability for personnel and resources globally, he has decided to quit. After working with John for a few sessions, he determined that he wanted to move to Florida (from Washington, D.C.) and be near the ocean. He loves teaching and clinical work – but he wants a position that is "9 to 5" not "7 to 7", which are the hours he has been working for so many years. Moreover, he no longer wants to commute in traffic. He calculated that at an average of 1.5 hours per day on the highways commuting to and from work, he has spent a minimum of the equivalent of driving 14 days straight (24/7) on the road...not including travel and other road trips, during his career.

Therefore, he is now generating leads in Florida, researching medical facilities and universities in the region, and designing a new career that will facilitate more family and vacation time by working fewer hours, less commuting, and generally less overall stress and level of responsibility. He has set a realistic goal of one year to make the change happen.

Company Closed

One client discovered on a Saturday night, via a national television news program, that his company had declared bankruptcy and all employees should call a special 800 number for instructions. The recorded message instructed employees not to show up for work on Monday morning. Fifteen-thousand employees lost their jobs in one fell swoop. The client never received a paycheck for the previous two weeks of work, and he lost his medical benefits, retirement, and accrued vacation and sick leave. His attitude was positive and he responded to the upheaval by polishing his résumé, contacting a number of colleagues and friends, and quickly landing a new position. The new position only paid two-thirds the salary and only offered minimal medical benefits.

But, he decided to continue his job search, while maintaining a new position, so that he could continue to feed his family and pay the mortgage. He responded gracefully to an extremely difficult career change.

For Cause

Another client was let go from his place of employment for cause. He spent eight months dreaming about new positions and hoping that the only “one” résumé he sent out would land a job with the only employer he would accept a position with, in a management role. After eight months, his wife prompted him to contact a professional résumé writer and Career Coach to develop his résumé portfolio and plan a campaign strategy. The new résumé was not sent out. His wife ended up taking a position with her former employer, leaving the client with three young children. He became more depressed and withdrawn, unable to circulate his résumé or network. After nearly two years, he accepted a part-time position as an administrative assistant. He is still seeking employment. He resisted change and almost refused to accept the transition in his career and life.

Transition Coaching

Those who experience career change span a broad spectrum of circumstances. Here are a few examples of career changers, their average outlook, suggestions for facilitating the transition process unique to each situation, and questions to prompt coaching sessions (please note, all of these categories will benefit from a full Career Coach package and career marketing tools – this is just a basic profile of each category – many questions and suggestions overlap):

Mother/housewife entering or returning to the work world, probably about 45 years old, with a 20-25 year gap in employment

This career-changer is usually excited and apprehensive. She is concerned that no one will want a candidate with “no skills.” She can offer an employer full-time employment and reliability (as she no longer has children in the home to manage). She is a quick learner and ready to join corporate America. She may enjoy career assessment testing to determine values, interests, and motivations. She needs to explore career options, conduct industry research and professional career development interviews, consider training to develop new skills sets, i.e., computer training or college to obtain a degree or certification, develop a résumé and other career marketing tools, and commit to a campaign strategy.

To best develop his résumé, she needs to work with the coach to draw out her skills developed during 20 years as a mother and homemaker including volunteer positions:

- Tell me about your communication skills? Where and how did you use them?
- Tell me about your interpersonal skills? Where and how did you use them?
- What volunteer positions did you hold over the years?
- What do you consider your greatest strengths that you think an employer would need in the workplace?
- What strengths do your friends or volunteer supervisors say you possess?
- How do you manage challenges or crises?
- Tell me about budgeting and finances.
- Tell me about your ability to coordinate calendars, schedules, and projects for multiple people/ activities.

College graduate seeking first professional position

College graduates who are serious about obtaining employment are confident and encouraged. They usually know the field and industry they are seeking and the type of position they want (this is not true for the college graduate who majors in liberal or general studies – they need more focusing to guide their transition). They also fear rejection, which is a common problem with college graduates. Often they are not selected over competition that has a “few years of experience.”

College graduates need to engage in actively seeking positions using all marketing channels available. They will benefit from speaking with mentors, college

professors, and CEOs of successful businesses. Networking is critical. Also, they may consider federal or state employment, or entry level training programs with corporations. The cover letter should persuade the reader that the candidate is hard working, loyal, and very willing to learn on the job.

- What were your achievements in college?
- What awards did you receive?
- What activities did you participate in?
- Have you held any paid or volunteer positions during college? Tell me about those.
- What do you consider your greatest strengths that you think an employer would need in the workplace?
- What positive feedback have you received from your professors during college?

Military members returning to or entering corporate America for the first time

Most have never owned a résumé or experienced a position interview. Military members entering corporate America are energized, highly trained, extremely capable – and very intimidated by the employment process. For 20 years, they never interviewed for a position. They ask, “What value do I have against my competition?” Military members benefit from a full package of Career Coaching and career marketing documents to include exploring career options or industries (or for those who know what field of expertise they are pursuing they need research in companies and locations), career exploration interviews, training for interviews, image, and salary negotiations; and developing a campaign strategy.

- Tell me about your career history.
- What do you like to do best?
- Where do you want to live and work?
- How much money do you need to make?
- Have you ever been in an employment interview?
- When someone asks, “What do you do?” how do you respond?
- Tell me a little about yourself.
- What do you need the most help with in your career transition?

Long-term employee, laid-off due to economy or other circumstances

This type of career-changer is either very upset and anxious, or confident of the challenge to find new employment. They will benefit from a new résumé, networking, strong cover letters, sound bites, and a solid campaign strategy. They need encouragement to remain active in community associations, to stave off depression and isolationism. Many long-term employees who experience layoff, request interview training. They are often concerned about how to explain the reason for unemployment and a gap on their résumé.

- Tell me why you were laid off.
- How do you feel about being laid off?
- How do you feel about seeking new employment?
- How committed are you to seeking new employment?
- Tell me about your network of colleagues, friends, and supervisors. Are you a member of community associations?

Short- or long-term employee let go for poor work performance

Fired employees (if this is not a pattern) are either ashamed and upset, or are certain that it was the employers' fault and not their own. They will benefit from a new résumé, coaching to determine responses to the questions, "Why did you leave your last job," or "Have you ever been fired from a job," and reference checking to determine what type of reference the employer will offer the candidate.

- Why were you fired? What reason were you given (if it was poor performance, bad habits, i.e., chronic lateness, personality differences, un-PC, or unskilled/untrained, then a line of questioning to establish the exact problem and determine solutions should be implemented). For example:
- Since you were fired for chronic lateness, what always makes you late?
- How late are you on an average?
- Are you late for social engagements?
- What measures can be put in place to prevent lateness in future positions?
- When do you work best, i.e., morning, afternoon, evening? Is it reasonable to work different hours?

Employees who lose their positions due to medical reasons

These career-changers are afflicted by physical circumstances beyond their control. Some are no longer able to perform certain tasks as before, when they recover. Many have long gaps on their résumé and they are concerned about explaining this to an employer. Some are worried that new employers will not hire them with a preexisting medical condition. They may benefit from the development of a combination or functional style résumé and coaching to build confidence in responding to questions regarding the illness or time of unemployment.

- How does it make you feel when someone asks you about your illness?
- Are you willing to share your circumstances in an interview?
- How do you want an interviewer to perceive you?
- What traits and skills do you consider prominent for an employer to know about you?

Promotion or Transfer

Even a promotion within a company presents change with a new level of responsibility. Promotions may require learning about new projects, programs, or developing new skill sets. Some must prepare for a physical move, which may include the spouse changing jobs and children relocating to new schools.

- How do you feel about the promotion?
- What do you plan to accomplish?
- Are you required to develop new skills sets? What will that include?
- How does your family feel about the move?
- What measures do you have in place to help your family adjust to relocation?
- How will you balance your time with family and the new responsibilities?

Coaching career-changers through their unique circumstances, allows them to reveal their true feelings and develop viable expectations for the career transition. Career change can be hard. However, with the teaming of a Career Coach experienced in a broad range of career change situations, the transition can be eased, insights revealed, goals established and met, and career search campaign strategies moved into action.

|| CAREER COACHING IN ACTION – A CASE STUDY

“She gave me homework!” -Brent Powell, client

In this module, I interviewed a client: Brent Powell.

The session went well. This was Brent’s first Career Coaching session, in the process of seeking employment over the next year.

Here are the notes and commentary from the interview:

Client Challenges

- Lives overseas
- Needs military translation résumé
- Seeking employment in only two states
- Has a specific timeline
- Does not own a résumé
- Does not know how to interview
- Has preconceived ideas about how to manage a career search campaign – almost entirely online (release résumé online – shotgun – mass mailings; online headhunters, etc.)

Client Motivations

- Seeking a new salary
- Seeking employment in a new career field
- Seeking a position with minimal travel
- Very willing to learn and apply techniques to the search

Client Needs

- Résumé and career marketing documents
- Research (industry, company, and position)
- Goal development
- Interview training

Client Expectations

- Military translation résumés and career marketing documents (what words to use and what words not to use/translate military language)
- Assistance with seeking employment (circulation methods and networking opportunities)
- Help to figure out what to do

Coach Comments

- Coach wore coach, consultant, and trainer hats
- Coach rephrased, brainstormed, challenged, and motivated client
- Coach issued homework and received initial commitment from client

Summary

Brent described himself as being in a vacuum for 20 years with no career search skills. He has an AA degree in general studies and is seeking a Bachelor's degree in OSHA (Occupational Safety and Health). He wants to change careers from Ammunition Supply Management to Fire Prevention or Safety Inspector, Auditor, Manager, or Fire Code Enforcement Manager (these types of positions will provide job satisfaction). He really wanted to be a Fire Fighter, but he is past the age limit.

He is seeking employment in Ohio and West Virginia with both federal agencies and corporate employers.

He has a timeline and must be employed with a paycheck in 13 months.

Brent described the greatest values that he has to offer a new employer as work ethic, loyalty, and team effort. However, he also said, he was not sure and might need help with describing his value to an employer using the right words.

He admitted that he has no networking contacts or follow-up skills.

After the taping, Brent said, "She gave me homework!?" He was surprised that I asked him to complete some initial tasks to start his career search program and help guide in the development of his résumé. "Yes, I want my clients to work hard, research, study, plan, and practice for their career futures," I replied.

As this was Brent's first Career Coaching session, in a series yet to come, we learned quite a bit through careful listening, query, reframing, and brainstorming. I was able to put on my trainer hat and offer some suggestions for networking (i.e., prepare a retirement from the military letter), and shared the employment opportunities pie chart...it equals 100% and if you don't use a section of the pie, you lose opportunities). He agreed to allow me to offer thoughts and suggestions. He was interested and willing to learn more about developing a career search campaign.

I challenged him and asked for a commitment with the homework assignments.

In subsequent sessions, I will engage Brent in more queries:

- How do you feel about leaving the military after 20 years?

-
- What is your salary requirement?
 - What are your greatest obstacles in this career search?
 - How can I help you manage and prioritize your obstacles?
 - How is your family impacted by this major move and career change?
 - Since you said work ethic, loyalty, and team effort are the greatest values you offer an employer, please define work ethic.
 - Define teamwork.
 - Define loyalty.
 - Describe examples of teamwork.
 - Describe examples of loyalty.
 - Describe examples of work ethic.
 - Using these values, what achievements did you accomplish...that provided measurable results?
 - If an employer asks you, "Why should I hire you?" what will you say?
 - Please describe your contact list and network of influence.
 - What organizations are you a member of? Are there OSHA organizations?
 - How committed are you to this career search campaign?
 - What will happen if you are not employed in 13 months? How will it impact your life, career, future?
 - When can you interview in person (since you are seeking employment from overseas)?
 - When will you finish your bachelor's degree?
 - How will you start your career search campaign?
 - What methods will you employ to circulate your résumé?
 - How comfortable are you with follow-up and initiating contacts?
 - What companies do you want to target and why?
 - What research have you conducted thus far?
 - Can you provide samples of positions you might like to apply to?
 - Do you have any contacts in any of the targeted companies?
 - Do you prefer leading or being led? Why?

I will also spend a great deal of time with Brent to translate his military work history and language to corporate speak, as well as have him describe in detail, his experience as a volunteer Fire Fighter and Safety Professional, as he only spent 10% of his time “doing” the collateral duties. We need to identify additional skill sets applicable to safety, which draws directly from his position as an ammunition supervisor.