

Introduction to Integral Coaching from the Perspective of CDF:

How to Master Combining Cognitive and Social-Emotional Coaching Through Apprenticing in Four Skill Areas

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Dedicated to Paul Anwandter

Introduction

One of the greatest achievements of social science in the last quarter of the 20th century, in my view, has been the pioneering discovery of the structural changes in consciousness that take place over the adult lifespan. Equally groundbreaking has been the associated discovery that these changes take a different form in the emotional and cognitive realms of consciousness. The political and educational relevance of these discoveries, predominantly made at the Harvard School of Education under the leadership of Lawrence Kohlberg, has not been duly registered to this day, especially not in the field that needs these discoveries most, that of human resources and their development. There is a time lag of at least 25 years.

It is as a direct outcome of the Kohlberg School discoveries that I put in place the *Constructive Developmental Framework* (CDF) in the year 2000. For years, CDF (see http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/constructive_developmental_framework) has been used at the Interdevelopmental Institute (IDM) for educating coaches and consultants who are mature enough to want to let go of the generic client models they have learned and, instead build their own, customized models, by using structured developmental interviewing and text analysis of transcribed interview texts.

To this day, IDM students are introduced to, and educated in, four well-defined CDF skill areas (practice areas) that I will refer to as **(1) comprehension, (2) interviewing, (3) text analysis, and (4) cognitive and social-emotional coaching (CITC)**.

The peculiar nature of CDF-based coaching lies in being able to address, directly, a coachee's developmental profile, whether it concerns making meaning of the world or making cognitive sense of it. This ability has to do with the fact that coaches knowing CDF use "prompts" (keywords) whose meaning derives directly from developmental theory. When used, these prompts conjure up, for the coach, the theory they represent.

Concretely, a social-emotional prompt such as "success", when used in coaching, focuses the conversation directly and intensely on what internal obstacles a coachee has had to overcome to experience success. Likewise, a cognitive prompt such as "process" (which could be circumscribed by "tell me more about the unceasing change that has occurred"), focuses the conversation on the question whether and to what extent a coachee can transcend thinking in

terms of static systems and thus can engage with such crucial dialectical aspects of his/her world as motion, negativity, and absence.

By “cognitive coaching”, then, I refer to coaching sessions that are conversationally structured in terms of dialectical quadrants and their thought form extensions, and have been found to determine a coachee’s present flexibility of thinking (thus level of cognitive development toward dialectic). By “social-emotional coaching” I refer to coaching sessions in which the coach uses social-emotional keywords that open the door for the coachee to explore and clarify his/her own intentions and goals, whether private or professional.

A Short View on the History of Coaching

It seems to me that coaching based on CDF prompts is an evolutionary step beyond both classical coaching that started in the late 1980s as well as the more comprehensive models (such as P. Anwandter’s ICI) that embraced, and brought together, several extant generic client models. CDF marks a level of cognitive maturity of adults (as well as of coaching professionals) on which it becomes possible to question and transcend abstract universals (such as generic client models). Thus, a master coach who by definition is a “thinker” and not just a “doer”, is able to stop downloading the generic client models s(he) has learned, and build client models based on empirical client data.

As indicated, social-emotional and cognitive coaching is taught at IDM by leading students through four interrelated skill areas (indicated above). **In this paper, it is my task to elucidate the relationship between the four practice areas mentioned above through which vertical-developmental coaching is learned and carried out.** In all four practice areas, interventions of the coach are based on keywords I call “prompts”, provided by the coachee in interviewing and by the coach in coaching sessions. Since in CDF one finds 10 social-emotional and 4 cognitive prompts (“quadrants”) extending into 28 thought forms, the tool repertory of a CDF-coach is of considerable size and flexibility for adapting to a unique coachee’s capacity as well as need.

While in this paper I am focusing on the practice area called “coaching”, other skill areas such as leadership development, corporate and eco-conversations, and strategic role re-design could be elaborated in its stead. All such elaborations would be critical of generic models – abstract universals -- that professionals can simply download, which in most cases occludes clients’ real problems, or worse, hides them completely.

A Definition of the Four CDF Practice Areas that Enable Vertical Coaching

As an analysis of IDM’s educational program (<http://www.interdevelopmentals.org/assessment-certification.php>) and a deeper reflection on it will readily show, the program is based upon a tight connection and feedback loop between four components relating developmental listening to

thinking. According to training experience developed at the Interdevelopmental Institute, these four components can be mastered at five different levels, such that one level builds on the preceding ones:

1. **Comprehension [“get to know the findings of adult-developmental theory”]:**
Developmental theories are used to build up, in the learner’s mind, the theoretical constructs needed to begin seeing clients as unique human beings “under development” that are very different one from the other. The universal sameness of clients as “I” is thereby debunked and shown to be occluding deep differences between individual clients. Absorbing these theories is not instantaneous but takes time (at IDM about 1 year).
2. **Interviewing [“demonstrate your understanding of the theory in practice”]:**
Although almost a misnomer in light of what it entails, this 2nd CDF skill area entails deep listening both in terms of interview prompts such as “success”, “important me”, and “outside of”, etc., and in terms of 4 moments of dialectic called context (positive being), process (negative being), relationship (being as a totality and ground), and transformation (being in terms of transformative interventions). Both of these kinds of prompts lend themselves to powerful self explorations, in interviewing itself as well as subsequent coaching. Learning these prompts enables coaches to become “researchers” of their clients’ developmental profile as a basis of assisting them in reaching their self- and other goals.
3. **Text Analysis [“demonstrate your understanding of what your client has told you from a structural perspective”]:** A third CDF skill area is the analysis of transcribed interviews, typically of interviews done by somebody else than the student (because understanding one’s own interview(ing) requires a cohort of witnesses and critics). In this skill area, students’ comprehension of developmental theory is brought to bear on interviewing, thereby linking skill areas 1 and 2. The goal here is to become expert in telling “what social-emotional stage or dialectical quadrant a particular interview fragment is spoken from”, at a high level of correctness (assisted by a cohort of students and the trainer).

While “interviewing” schools “deep listening”, “text analysis” schools “deep thinking”, both based on developmental theory as a tightly defined domain of discourse, and this tight definition of the domain is felicitously promotes deep practice.
4. **Coaching [“demonstrate that you can use the client’s structural developmental profile to be of help”]:** This fourth skill area has been introduced into IDM teaching explicitly only in 2013, and in a sense redefines the entire IDM teaching program.

The four practice areas just detailed form a system in which one component intrinsically links to all others. The prompts used in these four area are all tools of self exploration, thus tools for transcending one’s illusory self defined by social convention, in order to delve into what

connects each of us with all other human beings and the nature we are embedded in (Bhaskar, Reflections on Meta-Reality, Sage, 2002, especially chapter 2).

Two Forms of Deep Thinking in Coaching

Deep Thinking is the opposite of *downloading* abstract universals, such as generic client models of whatever ilk and name (Jan DeVisch, 2013). Deep Thinking puts the client into the foreground in his or her uniqueness, in a way generic models cannot accomplish.

First, Cognitive Coaching

I think that the appropriate way of framing what happens in CITC-based cognitive and social-emotional coaching is the self-transcendence of the conventional coaching role defined by the use of generic coaching models.

By this I mean that a CDF-based coach is able to realize an exploratory search that helps answer the client's question WHO AM I? in a way behavioral coaching cannot and does not afford. The essential answer to this question in coaching, philosophically speaking, is to move the client away from his/her sense of being an isolated monad standing against (and under) an overwhelming "outer" reality essentially separate from the him or her, and to do so based on using adult-developmental theory in the form of socio-emotional and cognitive prompts.

I would consider the use of developmental prompts in coaching the conscious alternative of hypnosis in which the coach attempts to stimulate processes that break apart the isolation of a individual by which suffering is caused.

How this works is not difficult to understand.

Example 1: The coach, using CITC, hypothesizes during a coaching session that the client is firmly ensconced in the "ontological" Context quadrant, thus cloistering herself within an unmovable reality characteristically filled with "white-water change" (the exact opposite of Context), but unable to see the intrinsic relationship between stasis and motion.

What are the coach's obligations here? There are two related obligations. First, the coach has to honor where the client is, namely cloistered in Context, and second, has to use her knowledge of dialectical quadrants in order to guide the client toward thinking being not only positively (Context), but also negatively (as Process) and as a totality or ground

(Relationship), and ultimately transformationally (as in being ready to take action by opening oneself to one's connectedness with other human beings).

A concrete example of using cognitive mind openers in a coaching session follows.

Coachee: My goal is to define this project together with my team and ask my boss for her support.

Coach: [context] Tell me more, please.

Coachee: [context] I see this as a two-year project, and so far my boss has not considered it a worthwhile undertaking, despite my urging.

Coach: [context] What makes the project worthwhile for you?

Coachee: [context] There are several reasons for that. First, it shows off my team whose level of excellence has not been sufficiently acknowledged. Second, It is directly focused on a major weakness of our company in the sales department. Third, I might be promoted if it succeeds.

Coach [process]: Let's take each of these at a time. In what way would work on the project highlight the excellence of your team and your own agency?

Coachee [process]: The project would energize the team; it would force team members to interact more willingly and this interaction could become the driving force behind the unfolding of the project over time.

Coach [process]: Can you give a concrete example of team members' interaction during the project?

Coach [process]: Right from the start, team members would have to ask themselves "how can I best contribute to the effort, and with whom could I work most productively"? Each of them would have to find out what part of the project suits them best, and how they could initiate an affiliation with one or more other members of the team. So, the emphasis would be on collaboration.

Coach [relationship]: Would this emphasis on collaboration and exchange heighten your own involvement with the team, and if so, in what way?

Coachee [relationship]: Team members would become aware of the interweaving of each contributor's work and they would be inclined to engage my support as a mediator between them if conflicts arose, and if they needed guidance.

Coach [transformation]: So it seems you are inclined to view the present state of interaction between team members as somewhat fragile and not living up to its potential?

Coachee [context]: How did you guess? I think that the excellence of the team is predicated upon members' greater awareness of the benefit of close interaction, both in developing a set of goals and in carrying them out.

Coach [process or transformation]: So, the project seems to be a kind of launching pad for your own professional development and a possible promotion?

Coachee [content]: If successful in its outcome, the project would remove a major weakness of the present sales team, which is that so far members of the team have worked in too isolated a fashion, and in addition, somewhat unconnected to myself as the leader.

Second, Social-Emotional Coaching

In socio-emotional coaching the coach directly addresses the client's emotional self-cloistering by using prompts such as "success", "important to me", "control", etc. The purpose of this intervention is to break through the client's illusion of being an isolated monad unconnected to other selves, both in the client's internal workplace and the external work environment. The coach listens to the client in order to discern what is presently the client's meaning making anchor, and uses this exploratory insight in order to lead the client beyond conventional self understanding, thereby shifting both the coaching "problem" and opening up alternative "solutions".

A concrete example of using a social-emotional mind opener ("important to me") in a coaching session follows

(Importantly, here the central prompt the client's meaning making is closest to is not "success" but "important to me", as anybody knowing social-emotional interviewing as taught at IDM will be able to see.)

Coach: [Searching for a prompt to deepen the social-emotional discourse] You just told me that your goal in improving your team's performance is to make members of the team more effective both in their collaboration with others as well as more disciplined in your own terms.

Coachee: That's right.

Coach: [Trying to make the prompt more precise] Which of these 2 aspects, would you say, has priority for you?

Coachee: I think the two really belong together because it was mainly lack of discipline in their work that hindered team members from seeing that they needed to collaborate more closely with colleagues.

Coach: [Still sharpening the prompt] So it seems that for you collaboration is a discipline that largely decides the success of team work, and that your definition of success has a lot to do with your own way of working with others.

Coachee: That's how I would see it also.

Coach: [Sharpening the prompt *important to me* selected by her *so as to turn the topic under discussion into a matter of personal meaning making.*] What I hear is that your own criteria for success and those of team success are either the same or very closely linked.

Coachee: I would say so. Thinking of my team succeeding is not really different from my thoughts about my own success. After all, in the company as a whole it is "my" team.

Coach: [Trying to find out the coachee's center of gravity in this discourse] So it seems you would think of yourself as unsuccessful, if not as failing in your role, if your team would be seen as unsuccessful by others?

Coachee: That's interesting, the way you put that! I had never quite thought of it that way. You make me aware of how much I actually identify with how my team is seen by others in the company, as if it were an extension of myself.

Coach: [Preparing to deepen the discourse around the coachee's meaning making, specifically testing for S-4/3 versus S-4(3)] So let's take the case that the team fails in the eyes of others as well as your own – although perhaps for different reasons – would that diminish your own standing in the company as you perceive it internally?

Coachee: Well, I would maintain that I am not the team, nor in full control of it, but it is true that I would probably develop doubts about myself based on the supervisor's and/or company's assessment of my team.

Coach [testing for S-4/3 versus S-4(3)] So let's say your supervisor told you that (s)he considered your team as weak and unlikely to succeed in the present context, would you take that on as an indirect personal blame (of yourself)?

Coachee: I would find it hard not to see it that way, frankly.

Coach: [now testing for S-4(3)] How then would you defend yourself, so to speak, to feel better about the situation you are in with your team?

Coachee: I would try to explain to the supervisor all I have done already to bring the team in order and increase its effectiveness, as well as laying out the criteria for success that I hold myself to in leading the team, I guess.

Coachee [further testing for S-4(3)] Tell me more about how explaining yourself and your value system to your supervisor would put you back into a kind of emotional balance where you could actually continue feeling good about yourself.

Pensamiento Dialectico: The Moment of Transcendence in CITC-Centered CDF Coaching

In CDF-based coaching there often occurs, in my experience, a moment in which the client's conventional self – which is based on his/her self-cloistering as a monad standing over against an unforgiving external reality [including other people] – falls apart.

We can view this falling apart as the outcome of joining cognitive and social-emotional prompts in coaching, which in CDF defines **coaching mastery**.

I am not claiming that his moment of transcendence can be realized ONLY through CDF. But I am claiming that a coach mastering CDF through the four skill areas called CITC has a stronger chance of moving into a mental space in which “out of the blue” the client's self perception dramatically (i.e., discontinuously) changes in the direction of greater fluidity and openness, comparable to effectively induced hypnosis.

I will here forego a philosophical discourse on this matter, however tempting it may be (a discourse that would owe much to Roy Bhaskar's talking about a client's meta-reality in the “fifth quadrant”). I will simply indicate that moving away from generic coaching models through the discipline of CITC facilitates an enactment of dialectical thinking not only in cognitive, but also in social-emotional, terms.

Why should this be so?

Anybody can learn “developmental theories”, which abound. But ideas are cheap! The pragmatic crux of the matter is that actually using such theories liberates coaches who have learned CDF-interviewing and –text analysis by enabling them to leave behind the downloading of generic coaching models (which also abound).

In CDF, this kind of liberation is strongly intended, which is why CDF attracts mostly mature coaches who find there is “something missing” in conventional coach education. These coaches have developed into *thinkers*, and have thereby transcended conventional coaching practice which can be learned in a few weeks. They have a need to master coaching as an art of self transcendence through a disciplined use of the four CDF skill areas outlined above.

Here is what each of these practice areas contributes to self transcendence, both in the coach and the coachee:

- *Comprehension of CDF* leads to the re-design of one's role as a coach based on self exploration of a kind not afforded by using generic coaching models.
- *Structured interviewing in CDF* leads to a type of deep listening that is focused on how the coachee presently projects him- or herself into the social world, and makes visible (and measurable) the boundedness of that projection that is at the bottom of the client's self-engendered "problems".
- *Text Analysis of transcribed cognitive and social-emotional CDF-interviews* (made by a person other than the student) disciplines the coaching student's deep thinking in the form of hypothesis testing, which is needed in both cognitive and social-emotional coaching, but in different ways. It also enables the student coach to use CDF prompts as tools for opening one's own as well as the client's mind.
- Coaching based on cognitive and social-emotional prompts used as *mind openers* (learned in interviewing and text analysis and brought into coaching) opens the way to transcending conventional coaching roles which are bound to generic client models.

Redefining Coaching Mastery

So far, coaching mastery has predominantly been defined as linking different generic coaching models in an accumulative rather than truly integrative fashion. This narrow definition of mastery based on downloading rather than deep thinking has been left behind at IDM from the very start. Mastery in the sense of CDF requires more than taking multiple perspectives and switching between them.

Rather, coaching mastery in the sense of CDF is based on dialectical thinking that leads to an integration of social-emotional and cognitive coaching. It's hallmark, pragmatically, is the use of two different classes of prompts, seen as intrinsically, not externally, linked, without any "switching" back and forth between them.

For example, a social-emotional prompt such as "success" -- in which the central theme is overcoming internal obstacles -- can be realized in a coaching session in terms of all four moments of dialectic (C>P>R>T) since "overcoming internal obstacles" can be articulated contextually, in a process-related way, focused on internal obstacles as ground of relationships to oneself and, finally, in the form of transcending internalized others. In this way an intrinsic linkage between social-emotional and cognitive prompts is created that realizes truly integrative interventions.

Example:

Coach: It seems that the success you are speaking about is rooted in overcoming a narrower notion of yourself that has hindered you from envisioning a breakthrough in your performance ...

Coachee: That is how I feel, too. I used to see success only as an outcome, especially viewed in light of what others would think about it.

Coach: So you made “success” a topic relative to internalized others and moreover saw it as something static, like a thing.

Coachee: Exactly. But I have now learned through my sessions with you that success has to do with overcoming internal obstacles, and also has several dialectical dimensions, so that if I view it in terms of all of them, I can no longer separate the process of achieving success from its outcome.

Coach: Can you say a little more about that using dialectical deep thinking:

Coachee: It seems to me that I can now see myself as related to a common ground shared by my colleagues through which I am defined, in my performance, as inseparable from them, rather than an outsider to them working in isolation, or even against them.

Coach: Right. And how would you now characterize the feeling you have about yourself as a professional as you discipline your performance further as part of this common ground?

Coachee: I would say that I perceive overcoming internal obstacles in myself as being an integral piece of moving forward the culture in which we do our work here; as a consequence, I feel like a moment of the larger process by which this culture evolves through me and others alike.

Coach: Well, it seems you really got your CDF down now!

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