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*This technique recognises there are many more conversations to explore than the coaching dialogue itself. Change does not happen in the coaching session, nor should you expect it to. Coaches sometimes overlook the work that is expected of their clients outside of the session. This is an opportunity for stronger contracting on roles and responsibilities. Also, there may be parallel process at play here, where a client is not paying attention to what is being thought about beyond the interactions they are having with others.*

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#### When to use it

When you sense:

- Your client is missing something.
- When your client's engagement appears good, however you are questioning their progress towards achieving their coaching goals.
- When your client is not taking responsibility for action between sessions.

These might be indicators that your client is expecting change to happen in the coaching session.



#### What it is

This technique recognises there are many more conversations to explore than the coaching dialogue itself. Each conversation may hold clues about the coaching dynamic.

According to Lancer et al. (2016), the seven conversations are:

1. The client's conversation with themselves as they prepare for the coaching session.
2. The coach's conversation with themselves as they prepare for the coaching session.
3. The unspoken conversation that takes place in the client's head during the coaching session.
4. The actual conversation between client and coach.
5. The unspoken conversation that takes place in the coach's head during the coaching session.
6. The client's conversation with themselves as they reflect afterwards.
7. The coach's conversation with themselves as they reflect afterwards.



#### How it fits

It is most useful to hold the seven conversations as a mental map to inform their exploration of them with your client. It can be used during contracting or to help your client accept responsibility for taking action between sessions.

If you have not contracted for work to happen between sessions, you may need to re-contract explicitly for it.



### How to use it

Before your next session:

1. Bring to mind what you have been thinking but not saying as you worked with your client. Explore what has thus far held you back from raising this.
2. Use your best guess as to what your client might have been thinking but were not prepared to say, and why that might be.
3. Consider what you know about how your client prepares for and/or reflects on your coaching sessions. What do you truly know and what is an assumption?
4. Consider how you prepare and reflect on your work with this client. How similar or different is it to how you work with other clients?

You may wish to explore these questions with your supervisor before your next coaching session.

During your next session:

5. Enquire whether exploring what is happening beyond the coaching session itself would be of interest.
6. With consent, the coach then evaluates which of the other conversations might be a useful start point.

NOTE: Steps 3-6 could be explored in any order.

7. Raise what you have been thinking but not saying as a demonstration of your own vulnerability with your client and, if known, state what you think might have been holding you back from saying it. Invite your client to explore what they have been thinking, but not saying.



### More ideas

#### Further reading

Lancer N., Clutterbuck, D. and Megginson, D. (2016) *Techniques for coaching and Mentoring, 2<sup>nd</sup> Ed.*, London, Routledge.